

"The love of the beautiful is part of human nature, and one of the evidences of its dignity. It should therefore be educated for its own sake as elevating that nature and increasing its means of happiness. . . . Where there exists a love of the beautiful, its influence may easily be reflected on personal circumstances and habits. Cheerfulness, tidiness, cleanliness, and order are immediately associated with the cultivation of taste. For it is natural that we should strive to imitate in our own arrangements the qualities we admire in what we see around us."

Of the influences at the teacher's command for cultivating and refining the taste, "next in power to his references in conversation and oral descriptions, should be reckoned the influence that may be exerted by the pupil's reading-books," if the books are worthy of the name. But the same authority states again that "whilst reading-books properly constructed will refine the taste of the pupil who reads solely that he may apprehend their contents, they will still more refine the taste of him who is taught to read with those qualities of elocution which constitute expressive reading." I claim then for expressive reading a foremost place as an influence for refining and cultivating the taste. I claim also that, as an educative force, expressive reading ranks very high—so high that a man of taste, hearing a reader render in an intelligent but inexpressive manner a passage which demands great expression, is reminded of Wordsworth's description of poor Peter Bell:—

"A primrose by the river's brim,  
A yellow primrose was to him,  
And it was nothing more."

With that higher and more perfect understanding of the piece, which is so elevating and so quickening he seems to have no concern. I say seems, for it may be that to himself the passage has many beauties and sentiments which he is not capable of interpreting to his hearers, because he has not been educated and trained in this higher branch of the art of reading.

But is expressive reading so difficult of attainment, after all? I maintain not, if the study is pursued on rational principles. Children themselves are elocutionists born. A child at a very early age can wheedle and coax, can storm and exhibit anger. He seems to have the voice under perfect control, even when the feelings and incipient passions are not so. He is an adept in the use of inflections, emphases, tones, pitch, modulation and all the elements of elocution whose names he has never heard.

Now all these elements of expressive reading are there at the teacher's hands, fixed by nature and custom, and he has only to use and cultivate them. They are there, but how to get at them! Boys and girls, and even men and women are in some respects

like sensitive plants, *but* breathe on them and they close up. Although we do often see people of their own accord make fools of themselves, to use a common expression, yet it seems tolerably certain that there is in human nature a strong dislike to appear ridiculous. Now there is no study that requires a greater forgetfulness of self than expressive reading. And when the teacher has succeeded in breaking down this barrier of self and reserve which stands between him and his pupils, he has accomplished a great deal, and satisfactory results of his teaching will speedily appear. To do this great tact and skill in conducting the reading lessons are required on the part of the teacher.

Expression entirely depends on the cultivation of three things—the voice, the ear, and taste—the first two of which can most readily be cultivated in youth, taste which supposes a (fairly) ripened judgment only in a limited though an extensive degree. Voice culture is a subject in itself, on which excellent works of reference may be easily obtained by those desiring to be informed. In England, of late years, a good deal of care and labor has been devoted to this pursuit, but it is in the United States that it receives the attention which it deserves. Before undertaking to practise on the voices of others, the teacher should himself have some sound knowledge on the subject of voice culture, as a wrong course might do more harm than good. Still, there are many exercises which every teacher could safely employ, well adapted to strengthen the voice, and to increase its flexibility and purity—such as simple exercises on pitch, tone, inflection, force and stress, which may be used also to vary the monotony of the ordinary reading lesson, and to impart additional interest to the teaching of reading.

Now, it is really by imitation that a child learns to speak, and imitation is an all-important factor in the process of learning to read with expression. Hence the necessity of cultivating the ear and of training it to detect the difference of tones, stress, etc. Now, the ear is cultivated by the exercises used for the culture of the voice; and thus with voice and ear trained a student's possibilities of acquiring expressiveness are greatly increased. With the power of imitating comes the necessity for good models, and these it is the duty of the teacher to furnish. Teachers of reading, therefore, should themselves be able to read with expression. The fact that reading, and especially this higher class of reading, is an art, and must be taught as an art, should never be lost sight of by the teacher. In the teaching of an art, as a means of acquiring, practice ranks first. The power to do is best strengthened and increased by practice. It is not sufficient to

instruct by word of mouth, not sufficient to supply a good model—no!—the hardest though most profitable part of the lesson remains yet to be taught, namely, the doing of the work by the pupils themselves. It is on this that the teacher must lavishly spend his energy, his tact, his skill, his patience, and by dint of examples, by instruction, by illustration, by repetition, by drill, by imbuing the minds of his pupils with the spirit of the passage, lead them into rendering it, not merely with intelligence, but with all that expression of voice, tone, etc., which imparts a natural music to the words, and forms a most pleasing accompaniment to the sense.

Finally, due attention must be paid to the cultivation of taste in the delivery. The sense, the thoughts and feelings of the writer should be closely analyzed with a view to interpreting them truly to the minds of others. The moving power of the human voice over the human heart is marvelous. A cry, a sob, a groan, an exclamation of horror or delight, all mere efforts of the voice are more powerful than words, and why? Because they are the natural expression of the deepest feelings. Here, then, is the key to good taste in reading. The voice, the tones, the stress, the inflections, the time and pauses should be natural. Nature should be followed as closely as possible. In connection with this I may remark, that readers are almost as liable to err by over-stepping the bounds of nature, as by not rising to the natural. Hence, not unfrequently, arises a false taste, an exaggerated, would-be impressive style of reading which is commonly called affected. This is always offensive, and when it inopportunely and unnaturally assumes the grandiose it is called bombastic and becomes positively ludicrous.

Shakespeare, the grand exponent of humanity, in all its phases of weakness and of strength, that sublime teacher of language and eloquence, who has done more to advance good reading and elocution than any other writer of ancient or modern times, has in Hamlet's famous advice to the players, indicated the qualities of taste in delivery, in terms beside which mine would but betray their own insufficiency.

He says to the players: "Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue," etc., etc.

*How Sweet!*

MR. D. MCKAY, B.A., has been appointed head master of Elora High School.

DR. G. STERLING RYERSON has returned from service with the Royal Grenadiers, and has resumed practice.

MR. DICKSON, for a number of years past principal of Hamilton Collegiate Institute, has been appointed successor to the late Mr. Buchan as principal of Upper Canada College.