

bear out with unpleasant uniformity the observations of Lord Sherbrooke upon the kind of reading which is to be had from the higher classes in elementary schools. Without a single exception they all tell the same story, and that story is one of the most discouraging character. The reading is bad all round. The children never read readily except when the exercise they are going through, though it may be called reading, is really recitation. Even then, though they may read readily, they read entirely without expression; and when they are asked to explain the meanings of the words they have used they shew that they have not attached the slightest meaning to what they have been reading."

And Mr. Robert Lowe, member of Parliament, who is almost blind, sent a letter to a phonetic-spelling-reform convention, complaining that he could not find a boy or girl who could read the newspapers intelligibly to him.

Now, the cause of this is bad teaching by incompetent persons—teaching which amounts really to no teaching at all. Upon this point the Rev. Mr. Stewart, whose report I referred to lately, speaks to the purpose, when he says "schools are not now as successful as they once were in giving children the real education which is wholly never lost;" and he is also right in regarding "the ambitious multiplicity of subjects" which teachers introduce into their courses of instruction as one of the chief causes of this failure. True, they do this in a measure to meet the views of ignorant parents, who desire that their children should be possessed of some knowledge, which is on the one hand showy or on the other money-getting, rather than that they should be well settled in the groundwork of all knowledge, and so disciplined in mind and in conduct that they shall be fitted to go on effectually in a well-systematized education, should that be possible and desirable. But none the less is this sort of so-called education in the higher branches equally injurious and foolish. I saw a school-girl the other afternoon in a street car

going home from a public school; and in her strap she had thirteen books, all of them school-books, as I saw. Thirteen books! one, at least, for every year of her life! and after confinement at school from eight o'clock in the morning, and a luncheon of pie and pickles, she was going home to more confinement, and more pie and more pickles. And we wonder that nervous diseases abound among women; and that many of our young mothers have unnatural trouble at the birth of their children. It would be better for that girl, it would be better for the husband that she hopes to have and the children that she will probably have, it would be better for society, if she lived upon oat-meal and milk, and knew only how to read well aloud, to write a plain hand, to add and multiply and divide correctly, and how to make her own clothes with her own fingers. Not one of these can she probably do, and her school-mates are most of them as incapable in these respects as she is. So likewise are boys in general of the same age and position, although both boys and girls have a smattering of more ambitious "branches" of knowledge. To these remarks there are, of course, exceptions; the exceptions being the exceptional boys and girls, born thinkers and brain workers, whose acquirement of knowledge and of education in some way or other it is not easy to restrain.

Of all knowledge and mental training, however, reading is in our day the principal means, and reading aloud intelligently the unmistakable, if not the only, sign. Yet this, which was so common when the present generation of mature men were boys, is just what our highly and scientifically educational educators seem either most incapable or most neglectful of teaching. And yet the means by which children were made intelligent and intelligible readers thirty-five or