

to pieces, sounded letter by letter, backwards, forwards, every way, with marked distinctness and energy." It is more than doubtful whether this sentence can be matched for its absurdity amid the whole mass of rubbish that has ever been penned on this, or any other subject. The same writer goes on to say that, "There is always a tendency to run one word into another, so as to leave the preceding word unfinished. Thus in reading, 'safe from temptation,' the careless reader leaves out the *f* of *safe*, and sounds the words as if written, *safrom temptation*." Now, we contend that one of the prime factors in good reading consists in this very ability, "to run one word into another," except in a comparatively few instances where ambiguity is likely to arise. None but the mere pedant would ever think of so measuring his words as not to run them into each other. Standing upon 'Change, in a great maritime city, the untutored ear is struck with what is sometimes called the "interminable lingo" of foreigners; they, on their part, making precisely the same complaint about English, declaring that when we utter a sentence it appears to them *only one long word*.

Now, what is good reading but a close imitation of speech? This, and nothing more. Surely then, it should suffice that we teach pupils to read *naturally*—not finically, not mechanically, not pedantically. The writer, in the article from which we have quoted, says, "All teachers agree that the only way to teach *expressive* reading to young children is by giving them a correct example for imitation." But, not satisfied with this statement, which is scarcely original, he proceeds in the next sentence on this wise, "Unfortunately, however, many teachers throughout Ontario, even in the more prominent schools, have understood this statement to

mean too much. Imitation is everything with them." It is a matter of some curiosity to know just the position occupied by those who believe in both these *didda*. If, as "all teachers agree, the *only* way to teach expressive reading to young children is by giving them a correct example for imitation," how is it possible to understand this as meaning "too much?" The position is absurd. Let no teacher think the less of his own honest efforts to produce good readers, by even the oldest-fashioned plan, in consequence of perusing such apparently learned disquisitions as those to which we have made reference. Whether it be in arriving at the value of a given letter, apart from its name, or in the matter of modulation, accent, emphasis, tone, inflection, or general expression, there is not, nor can there be, any other way of bringing about the desired effect than simply to utter the required sound in the hearing of the pupil, and to labour persistently until a correct imitation has been secured. The teacher who is himself a bad reader need only expect to reap what he sows. It is as vain in this as in other respects to look for "grapes from thistles, or figs from thorns." Most of the twaddle that has seen the light on the teaching of reading, and other subjects, appears to have been written upon the assumption that young human beings are pretty much like lumps of clay—here is your mould, here is your mud, and there's your model! It is not venturing too much to affirm that, in proportion to the number of educated people ten or ten hundred years ago, the *percentage* of good readers was equal to what it is to-day, and that, unless something better than the "self-consistent phonic method," should turn up, the position will not differ materially, during similar periods, hereafter. To quote the writer again, and in this instance—if we understand him