

and educated, she had grace to cast aside her long cherished plans and devote herself with such a will and such a ready heart to lightening the home cares, that no one suspected that this brave young girl—the light of the house,—was undergoing the keenest disappointment of her life. As years roll on she is not released from her self-imposed cares, although she does not despair that at some future time she may achieve something of that for which she has so hoped. But the way never opens. At length she marries an honest man who though he loves, does not fully understand her. As children are added to the little home, one by one until they number five, the noble traits of her character seem to shine with redoubled loveliness. In her are blended faith, hope and unbounded charity. Never complaining she toils for her children over obstacles so rugged one would think human endurance could never surmount them. She is their comfort in sorrow, their joy in gladness. I have never known anything more beautiful or touching than to enter that home, in nothing elegant, but made pleasant by the work of loving hands, and see the brave patient little mother surrounded by the boys and girls who have risen up to call her blessed. They know something of her life and try to compensate for her bravely borne disappointments by the wealth of their love, and to smooth the remaining paths of life for the weary feet. And the mother is happy in her children. She looks to them to carry out the early purposes of her own life in which she failed,—but failed so nobly. Where she has lost, they will succeed. As this thought fills her mind she cannot regret that she submitted her own will to the Divine, and a happy look crosses the weary face as she thinks that it is God who knoweth what is best.

“And she smiles to think His greatness flows around our incompleteness,  
Round our restlessness, His rest.”

ATTY L. COLBY.

Stanstead, 1878.

### On Book Learning *versus* Oral Teaching.

In the early days of the pupil-teacher it was thought by those who superintended its working on the part of the Government, that the only instruction worth anything in the elementary schools was that which was given in form of oral lessons. The direct contact between the minds of the teacher and his pupils, when the instruction given without the intervention of text-books was considered of such paramount importance as to put all other forms of instruction and means of learning and of account. Thus a royal road to learning had been formed, for the pupils under this system had no hard work to do in silent solitude; they were always working under the influence of excitement from class rivalry, or else listening to an oral lesson in which the lion's share of the work fell on the principal teacher, who was expected to spend most of his time in oral instruction, the classes coming to the gallery in rotation for that purpose. Had this system long

continued it is probable that only a few teachers who were its victims would still survive. But its hollowness was soon perceived, and the necessity of private study with the aid of a suitable text-book, reasserted itself, whilst the special advantages of the oral lesson system, were not forgotten; and thus in time has grown up a system in which are combined the advantages of silent study from books and oral instruction in class.

The proportion to be observed between these two modes of getting instruction, varies with the age and standing of the pupil; the more advanced he becomes in age and attainments, the more he should be required to do by his own individual exertions with the aid of his silent teacher—the text-book. In this way he will gradually acquire the power of carrying on his own education; but if he has been accustomed when at school to get every idea direct from his teacher, he will be in a poor position for educating himself when his school days are ended. It should be the aim of every teacher “to make himself *useless* to his pupils,” that is, to train them to dispense with his help. The Press is the great educator of the age, and they are the best trained at school who are the best able to profit by the instruction awaiting them in the works of eminent authors, both past and present. Hence the most important thing in the instruction of young pupils is to teach them to read with facility; for reading is the key of knowledge, and a key that will certainly rust for want of use, if the pupil does not acquire the easy mastery of it before his school-days are over. And next to this in importance, is instruction and guidance in the art of acquiring knowledge from a book, such as can only be obtained by questioning its pages as to their meaning, analysing, comparing, and criticising its several propositions and arguments.

It will thus appear that as a pupil advances in his school career, the oral teaching he receives should bear more directly on the subject matter of his text-books, and thus help him by degrees to acquire knowledge for himself from their pages. The oral-lesson in school should either prepare the pupil for the intelligent study of his text-book, or else serve to vivify and impress the information already obtained therefrom from private study. If the subject is one that requires the elucidation of principles and the explanation of rules and definitions, then the oral lesson should precede the study of the text-book, and *vice versa*, if it is one on matters of fact chiefly.

Oral lessons, pure and simple, that is, such as are given without the intervention of books at the time of the lesson, and without reference to any particular lesson in the pupils' text-book, are, it will be seen, chiefly of use in the instruction of young children, who cannot read with sufficient ease and intelligence to gather knowledge from books. With pupils, however, of all ages, such lessons are very valuable as a means of introducing them to the study of some subject quite new to them. A series of oral lessons should always be given preliminary