

parts of the mechanism by which it is held together, to be handled by the machinist.

The 'Working-out' of a Lesson—Regularity.

In working out a lesson—which is the real difficulty—it is taken for granted that there is regularity of procedure from part to part. If the teacher have presence of mind and a firm grasp of the subject, this will follow as a matter of course. Somewhat more difficult is it to preserve the proportion of treatment amongst the parts. For this purpose the teacher must have the whole plan of his lesson at every moment in his mind's eye, so that he may see how far he has come, and how far he has still to go.

Intelligence.

The lesson must be wrought out with intelligence. It is easier to say when this is absent, and how the absence shows itself, than to give any directions for exhibiting it. If the teacher is not of a practical turn of mind, he will probably present his subject to the children in a strange unpractical way, not giving it any connection with what they daily observe and think about. If he has no perception of the characteristics of childhood, he will try to put his own ideas of the subject into their minds, instead of getting them to form their own from his materials. If he be the slave of rule, his instruction will be dry and pedantic—a skeleton instead of a living frame, destitute of any human interest. In all these cases the teacher gives his lesson without intelligence or common-sense—does not address the children in a natural manner—is not really in conversation with them.

Two opposite Errors in the Manner of Address.

The child's mind must be active throughout the lesson; whatever prevents this is a fault in teaching. A lesson should, therefore, not be given by direct address, or in the form of lecture; for whilst this communicates ample materials for thought, it gives the class no opportunity of exercising their minds on what is communicated. Accordingly, attention is never sustained in this way. A fault of an opposite kind, and not less common, is too exclusive questioning. This gives the class ample opportunity for thinking, but communicates no material for thought. The children are addressed as if they had prepared the subject and were undergoing examination, which is in no respect the ideal of an infant-school lesson. A very few questions given in this spirit exhaust their attention. We must preserve a medium between these two extremes. We shall not greatly err if we make our lessons literally a conversation. To this there are two parties, standing for the time on the same level, mutually supporting and sympathizing with each other, the obligation to listen as well as to speak being the same to both. Exclusive lecturing, or exclusive questioning, places a gap between the teacher and the children which bars this mutual support and sympathy. A successful lesson exhibits direct communication of facts and questioning intermingled. What the child can discover for himself, he should by no means be told; but he cannot discover everything. It is a waste of time, and the misapprehension of a sound rule to act as if he could. In almost all lessons beyond the very earliest series, the groundwork of instruction will have to be communicated. This must be done by graphic description. The art of the teacher is shown in communicating no more than what is indispensable, and in communicating it as materials out of which the children are to form their own thoughts under his guidance. This communication should never be long, and it is never necessary that it should be long, on any one topic. There are always at hand familiar analogies, by means of which the aid of the children may be called in either to initiate or to complete the description. The teacher should be careful to encourage spontaneous action on the part of the children by listening to what they have to say; and, even when their lessons are only partially right, by accepting with approval the amount of truth which may be in them, and expanding that with the help of the class, or the pupil himself, till it reach the full truth of the case.

On Illustration.

The intellectual feature in a lesson which beyond all others makes it attractive is happy illustration. To be successful this must be apposite, i. e., bearing directly on the point to be illustrated, clearly put so that it may be really an illustration, and interesting, i. e., drawn from some case falling within the sympathies of the children. Illustration is two kinds, verbal and pictorial.

Verbal Illustration.

Verbal illustration must be distinguished from explanation. "Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not" this is explained when it is said that 'suffer' means to 'let' or 'allow'; and that 'forbid' means to 'hinder' or 'prevent.' It is illustrated when a familiar example of 'suffering' or 'forbidding' is set before the children. "Whosoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap;" this is explained when it is said to mean that a man will reap the consequences of his actions, and that these consequences will correspond to the actions. It is illustrated by tracing the operations of the husbandman, who sows his seed of wheat or corn, expecting that in the spring his crop will be of wheat or corn. A teacher in giving a lesson on the sugar cane, had occasion to use the word *impurities* to denote chips of cane, dust, &c., which have to be skimmed off in boiling down the sugar-cane. She just told the children that a great deal of straw and dust mingled with the juice, and that these *impurities* had to be taken off. Another approached this word in a different way; she referred them to what they had seen at home in the making of jelly. Another referred them to the straining of milk; another spoke of turbid water which becomes clear when allowed to be still. The first process is one of explanation; the other three are illustrations. Explanation appeals to the understanding alone, and is therefore not suitable to the infant school; it is by illustration alone, which appeals to the observation, that ideas are conveyed to the child's mind.

Pictorial and Blackboard Illustration.

Pictures are very useful for illustrating all kinds of lessons, particularly lessons on Scripture incidents and object-lessons on natural history. They do not relieve the teacher, however, from the necessity of using ample verbal illustration. The picture should, as a rule, not be introduced at the beginning of the lesson. When interest has been roused by appeal to the children's imagination, they will scrutinize it more minutely when they are asked to compare the idea they have themselves formed of the object with its representation in the picture. It is better

not to have the pictures suspended on the school-walls till they have been used for lessons in this way. After they have been made *symbols* by having instruction attached to them, the children may be allowed to see them for a time, to become familiar with them; but as far as possible they should be new to the children when first used in illustration of lessons. Pictures do not supersede the use of sketching on the blackboard, as is sometimes thought. The teacher who can draw the outline, say of an animal or a tree, or any familiar object, has in the mere act of constructing the figure under the eyes of the children, a resource for engaging their interest quite distinct from that which a picture affords.

The use of Definitions.

Illustration serves the purpose of definition in the infant school. If a child is asked, What is a good boy? he answers that it is one who does not lie, or who obeys his parents, or who loves God. His mind naturally turns to the concrete, for he has experience of that. Definitions are from their nature abstract; standing alone, they have no meaning to the child. They cannot be dispensed with in teaching, but the teacher must observe for himself when his class is capable of any particular definition; and he will give it not at the beginning of his lesson, but towards the end, after illustration.

The means of Impressing Instruction.

The degree of impression made by a lesson, in so far as that is influenced by the manner of giving it, depends on two circumstances. On the one hand the successive topics must be clearly and forcibly stated, and dwelt upon for a sufficient length of time to enable the child's mind to grasp them. It is a frequent fault in lessons to introduce topics apparently only for the sake of leaving them, or to pass from topic to topic in a way which leaves the pupil unaware that a new one has been introduced. It is impossible that lessons so destitute of character can make any lasting impression. The teacher should advert to nothing which he cannot press home by illustration.

On Repetition.

The other means for making a lesson impressive is repetition. The concluding part of the lesson is generally devoted to a recapitulation of the leading points; but opportunities for incidental repetition continually occur in course of the lesson itself. Repetition is essential to the whole of elementary teaching; particularly so in the infant school, where every thing is new to the children, and where their minds have so little power of tension. Every fact communicated should be repeated more than once in one form or other, and nothing should be told which is not worthy of this frequent repetition. There are two ways of repeating; the direct and the indirect. Both are necessary. In the former the thing is repeated in the precise form in which it was communicated; the design being simply to impress the memory. In the latter the thing is repeated in another form; the class are got to express from one point of view what was communicated from another. Besides appealing to the memory, this process exercises the minds of the class; it is, in great part, the educating process in every lesson. The tact of the teacher has great room to show itself in this indirect repetition.

The Ultimate Test of a Lesson.

"What are the children likely to carry away of this lesson?" is a question the teacher should always be putting to himself. It is the ultimate test of a lesson; for they will carry away what they have been told only so far as they have been interested and their minds exercised.

ON THE LANGUAGE OF TEACHING.

Simplicity of Language.

As language is the medium through which lessons are conveyed, the nature of the language employed is an important element in successful lessons. The recommendations of style are the same in teaching as for any purpose. First of all, the teacher's language should be simple; simple both in respect of individual words and of the structure of sentences. The Saxon part of English is, characteristically, our mother tongue; it is that part which should be used in the infant school, so far as it goes. Style is not made simple by the use of monosyllables; nor is anything gained, but the contrary, by always affecting to talk to children in monosyllables. Words of two and of three syllables are quite intelligible, provided the thing has been illustrated before its symbol is given. Sentences of intricate nature should not be used, even though their several parts are quite clear; the children cannot follow the chain of their connection. Simplicity of style is not to be attained in teaching without study and practice; if it were, it would not be a virtue in style, instead of being, as it is, one of the highest.

Precision.

The teacher's language should be precise; in other words, should express neither more nor less than the idea he intends to convey. Failing this, he is obliged to repeat himself. An excess of words has an injurious effect on a lesson; it almost always obscures and confuses instead of illustrating. It is only when the style is precise that the teacher can afford to dispense with this unsatisfactory verbal repetition.

Fluency.

A ready command over language is indispensable to the teacher. Breaks in the progress of a lesson disturb the attention by shaking the confidence of a class. Further, the same point has often to be presented in different lights to suit different capacities; which cannot be done without ready power of speech.

Correctness of Enunciation, Grammar, and Expression.

In striving to be familiar, the teacher must preserve correctness of style. Slang or cant phrases must be scrupulously avoided. He should raise up the children to his level in purity of speech rather than descend to theirs. Nor must strict grammatical correctness be sacrificed under the notion of attaining greater familiarity. It is by imitation that the children learn to speak; so far as the school is concerned, therefore, they should have correct models before them. And the teacher should make a point of uniformly correcting any incorrect expressions used by the children, whether in pronunciation, grammar, or idiom.