

Furthermore, the teacher must have some reference to his own acquaintance with things and the appropriate popular terms to be applied to them, in making his selection. The plan may be more or less systematic, according to circumstances, without injury, provided it be natural, and dispose of the several objects of attention by putting them in their true place and relations.*

During this early period it is advisable to accustom the children to make free use of the blackboard, and of the pencil and slate. It will furnish amusement and occupations while the teacher is attending to other classes. The muscles of the arm and hand will thus be trained. The first lesson in drawing can be conveniently given and practised now. Singing can also be introduced, provided it be wholly by rote, and be limited to one or two simple and appropriate school songs, in which style of delivery and expression shall be chiefly regarded. There are various other bodily exercises, partly for recreation and change, and partly for improvement in manners, and for preserving order, which are with great propriety introduced into many of the Public Schools.

We have thus far supposed the child to be employed in oral exercises upon objects. The next great work to be accomplished, much greater and much more unattractive than what has gone before, is to learn how the same language which he has learned to speak, and which has hitherto been addressed to the ear only, can be represented to the eye, and used in the printed form. Here arises one of the greatest of all the difficulties which the teacher has to overcome. That barely tolerable degree of success which attended the old methods of teaching was not so much produced by the instruction given as by the great aptness of children to learn in spite of the defects of method. Though the power to read words correctly, at sight, must always be the result of great labour on the part of the young, and though certain steps of the process are almost purely mechanical, yet it is generally conceded that much of the effort commonly made does not tend at all to the end in view, and that much of the time spent in learning the alphabet, and in applying it to its uses, is but little better than thrown away. Few

* Many methods have been given by different writers on the subject. From one of the latest authors on education, I will extract a few of the exercises which he lays down in his course of object lessons.

1. *The school-room.* The names of the things to be seen in it, and the parts of which each is composed, but without the technicalities of the artisan. The comparison of their form, size, color, and material. Which of them are found but in one, and which are common to more than one. Which are single articles of the kind, and which exist in larger number. Counting of corners, seats, and desks to the number of four or ten. But avoid nice geometrical ideas and terms which do not occur in the child's daily life.

2. *Apparatus, whatever is used in the school, whether by the teacher or by the pupils; which of these belong to the school, which to the teacher, and which to the pupils.* Connect with this the idea of ownership, of mine and thine, and the pronouns and cases used to express the idea of the possession.

3. *The teacher and the pupils, and their respective tasks.* Exercise on the use of the verb. The number of children on one row of seats. The idea of more and less, and that of persons coming together for a common object.

4. *The human body.* Those parts which address themselves to the eye, omitting the internal organization for the present. The actions of men,—"every person has, &c." "every person can, &c." "Some men have—can, &c." "Old, young; large, small; strong, weak. The five senses, motion, voice. The nature and powers of the human mind do not belong here.

5. *Animals, compared with men.* Select from the mammalia, (which can easily be shown) a dog, cat, squirrel, also, a bird. Compare them part by part, and their action. "I should not like to be a brute animal, because, &c."

6. *Food.* Common, uncommon articles. Whence does it come; what its use; and how prepared? Wrong use of food, improper quantities; at improper times; what does not belong to us, but to others, as fruit on trees and in gardens

7. *Clothing, of children, of adults, of foreigners, compared with that of animals.* Whence does it come; and how is it made? Washing garments. Order and neatness. Costly and cheap dress.

8. *Dwelling-houses.* Parlor, sleeping-chamber, kitchen, cellar, store-room. The use of each. The furniture of each. The kind of work done in each. Lights, fires, provisions, and arrangements for the coming season. Who built the house? Who will hereafter occupy it? The dwelling-place of animals.

9. *The family.* Father, mother, brother, sister, domestics. What does each perform for the others? Division of labour. Mutual care. •Sickness. What does each owe to the others?

10. *Domestic animals.* Dog, cat, cow, ox, horse, sheep, swine, hen, goose, duck, dove, sparrow, swallow, rat, mouse, mosquito. Description and comparison of the form, size, color, covering, members voice, motions, actions, food, use, or noxious character of each. Show the animals or pictures of them. Anecdotes respecting animals. "Never torture an animal for sport."

(For the remaining topics, I will merely give the subject, omitting the details given by the author, which can easily be supplied after the analogy of the preceding.) 11. The environs of the house. 12. The village, or city. 13. The professions and occupations of men. 14. Sunday. 15. The farm. 16. The forest, (trees and animals.) 17. Adjoining towns or villages, (direction, comparison, size,) roads, bridges. 18. Hills, valleys, and plains. 19. Animals, tame and wild. 20. Plants. 21. Stones and common minerals, (they must be exhibited.) 22. The heavens, sun, moon, stars. 23. Varieties of weather in various seasons of the year, (the use of the impersonal verb, "it rains, snows, thaws.") 24. Time, its measurement, and what is appropriate at each season and period, (its effects on man, and other things.) 25. Holidays. 26. Public buildings and industrial establishments. 27. Magistrates, rulers and public officers and their duties. 28. The military. 29. Manufactures (articles materials, machines, operations.) 30. Coins, (kinds, value, national, by whom coined.) 31. Weights and measures. 32. Commerce and trade. 33. Health and sickness, (causes and remedies.) 34. Death, (causes, effects upon others, burial, and the departed spirit.)

teachers have so carefully analyzed this complex process as to have a method of their own, founded on well established and clear principles; and hence the very common practice of merely doing what others do, or have done before them. The whole process needs to be resolved into its parts, and those parts to be kept as distinct from each other as possible, and arranged in the most natural order, so that the pupil, by mastering one difficulty at a time, may securely proceed, step by step, till he finds his way through. It is of the utmost consequence, also, to preserve, the natural freshness and spirit of language, and prevent its passing from the character of a living to that of a dead language, when, instead of being the medium of personal intercourse by the voice, it takes on the more dignified air of a printed book. This enormous evil in the schools reaches far and wide, and spreads itself into a thousand ramifications. The interest which was taken in the exercises of the school, when they related to objects, and were conducted by the living voice, abates, and it is nearly lost, when nothing but dull exercises or dry syllables and hard words are given, as if to puzzle the ingenuity of the learner. The mental faculties, except the memory and the power of divination, in respect to the sounds of letters, lie almost dormant. If the mind should chance to busy itself much with thought, it will be as likely to form false and ludicrous conceptions as right ones, in connection with the long columns of new strange words. Reading will be the mere putting together of the sounds of syllables, words and sentences, which will call up that ghost known as the genius of school reading.

Men may differ in opinion as to the number and order of the successive steps to be taken in teaching the use and the powers of letters. There is probably no one method equally adapted to all. But the principle of laying the process carefully out into its several parts, and of attending to them only one by one, can hardly be called in question. The old, and in many places obsolete, method, first, of teaching the alphabet by showing the letters, causing their names to be repeated without any regard to the sounds as they represent, and then of teaching spelling by calling the names of certain letters in combination, and of pronouncing the syllable or word without any reference to the separate elementary sounds which, when united, constitute the word, will now find but few intelligent defenders. It is conceded, on all hands, that the name of a letter does not, except by accident, give any clue to its power, and that the connection between the first and second parts of the act of spelling a word, naming the letters and pronouncing the word, is purely arbitrary. It is, indeed, necessary to know the names of the letters, and it will often be convenient to resort to the arbitrary practice, but not till the natural and philosophical one, the phonetic, has become familiar. There is, furthermore, no propriety in making a child learn the names of all the letters of the alphabet in their order at first. It is, in itself considered, unnecessary; and, in its immediate effects, it damps the spirit and stifles the interest of the young learner. The most natural process would seem to be something like the following: to begin with what is already well known, a simple word, consisting of but two letters when it can be so, and resolve it into its elementary sounds; then to unite the sounds again so as to produce the word. When the appropriate words of this class have been exhausted, others of three letters, and finally words of more syllables than one, may be analyzed in the same way, giving preference to dissyllabic words over monosyllabic ones, which have silent letters in them. Such exercises may be commenced before looking at a book, or knowing anything of the forms or names of letters, and continued till the various easy words, composed of single consonants and vowels, with either long or short sounds, shall be readily resolved into their elementary parts and then reproduced by the union of those parts. This should be the first step, because the previous use of words, or sounds in combination, gives all the means necessary for the analysis of these sounds. The pupil is still within the sphere of his own knowledge and experience. Again, as the name of a letter is but a mere symbol of its form, and as the letter itself in its visible form is but a symbol of the sound or sounds it represents, it is clear that we ought to begin with the sound as the source, and proceed from things to their signs, and the names of these signs.

The next step would naturally be to direct attention to the outward forms or visible characters used to represent those sounds. This work is also one of great complexity, and will need to be simplified. Whether it will be expedient to begin with the vowels alone,