

take anything and everything in which they are interested. Get them to talk to you by all the means at your command. Sometimes read them a story, or a poem, but the very youngest children like better to listen to what you tell them than what you read to them. As they grow older, *read on* and *less*. As soon as possible let the children have the benefit of hearing the very best authors. It will do them more good than getting it second hand. A child will often be intensely interested and very much benefited by hearing a poem or story or bit of description read, long before he is advanced enough to read it for himself, for the teacher's voice and manner of reading will interpret to him what he would fail to comprehend without this medium.

As soon as they can write and spell with some degree of ease, let written composition be begun. All that should be attempted in the lower grades, is reproduction. Originality may safely be left alone until the mind is more developed. Some time ago, Professor MacMechan lectured to the Halifax teachers on this subject. At the beginning of this school year, finding myself in a position to carry out his counsels, I began to read to my class, consisting of grades V, VI and VII, Kingsley's "Water Babies." I would read a paragraph, and then require the class to write. If there were any words in the paragraph which they would be likely to misspell, I wrote them on the black board; for in the matter of the "disease of bad spelling" it is undoubtedly true that "prevention is better than cure." From the very first, the children were delighted with the exercise and have continued so. When December came, we left Tom and his friends in the water, and took up Dickens' Christmas Carol. This was more difficult, but it was seasonable, and most of the pupils did fairly well with it. When we came to the end of the carol, the pupils having reproduced a great deal of it, day by day, I asked them to write me the story just as they would tell it to any one who had never read or heard it. These abstracts were, on the whole, quite satisfactory. Now what had the children been gaining by this work which occupied about half an hour a day for the children—more for the teacher, for of course the exercises had to be corrected very carefully. In the first place it was practice in listening attentively, for they soon found that even in a short paragraph, some things would slip out of the mind before they could be written down, if they only half listened. Then they had been listening to good English, and in writing the paragraph they imitate this good English. It is an exercise in writing, for a carelessly written exercise must be done over again. Incidentally, they are getting a taste for good

literature, and more interest in books and in reading generally. This brings us to another important factor in language teaching, namely, the reading lesson. How much more we, as teachers, could do in inculcating a love for good literature, if we only had better reading books. A great many of the pieces in the reading books are dull and uninteresting even to the teacher, how much more so to the pupils. For instance, what is there in the royal readers to inspire the pupils with a love for poetry? I might mention the poem "Grace Darling," by Wordsworth, which is to be found in the first part of the fifth reader. A child of eleven or twelve years of age, will not be very likely to wish to make any further acquaintance with Wordsworth from reading that poem.

Children do not like blank verse; they like poetry that rhymes, and while there is so much rhyme that is beautiful why shouldn't they have it and enjoy it? Take just a couple of lines from "Grace Darling." "But why prolong the tale." Casting weak words amid a host of thoughts armed to repel them. What idea can such a sentence convey to the average child of twelve? Pupils who have been brought up in refined homes where they have been surrounded with the best books, and whose parents are cultured people, may comprehend and enjoy such a selection, but in how many homes do the school books of the children of the family form the whole library? Such children, even where the teachers do their best to form a taste for good literature, will not be likely to appreciate such selections. I candidly confess that I have come to hate and detest that particular poem, because I have found it so impossible to get my pupils to understand and enjoy it. Then look at the prose selections in the same reading book. Some of them just collections of hard words, dreary, dry as dust productions that are enough to disgust a child with reading altogether. One lesson comes to my mind, "Living Stones." It is called a humorous article. Perhaps it is. But it has never evoked a smile from the children so far as I have seen. I could mention many other selections that are by no means calculated to encourage in the children that love for reading which should be one of the chief aims of the school to impart.

Sir Joshua Fitch recommends the paraphrase in teaching language and gives some plain and simple rules for the guidance of both teacher and pupils. These are briefly: Read over the passage, think over it, and then re-write it so as to convey the meaning, not a translation of the words. Do not be afraid of using the same word if it is clearly the best. Make the sentences short and simple. Never use two words where one will do, or a hard one where an easy one will do. Change figurative