

hands let them get ready to blow them off—pressing the air forcibly against their lips, but keeping them tightly shut until a signal is given.

"5. With all eyes fixed on the teacher, the pupils should be led in repeating the action of closing the lips, pressing the air against them, and then opening them suddenly. By moving his hands, the teacher can lead as many pupils as can see him in this exercise. When his hands are brought together, all lips should be shut and the air pressed against them; when the hands are separated, the lips should be opened so as to allow the air to escape.

"In this way every pupil will learn the sound of *p* in from one to two minutes in such a way that they will never forget it."

If this were not intended for a piece of seriousness, it might readily be taken (if we except the clumsiness and inaccuracy of the composition—notably in sections three and four) as a very fair attempt at burlesque.

In the name of Cadmus, how much wiser will a child be after such an exercise? But take another example: This time it is how to produce the Italian *a*.

"1. The mouth should be opened well.

"2. The lips should be drawn back at the sides.

"3. The tongue should lie at the bottom of the mouth, without being arched at all.

"The pupils will make the sound readily by imitation, if they are warned to open their mouths properly. After the class has repeated the sound a few times to impress it on their ears ('impress it on their ears' is good), and to give the teacher an opportunity of correcting any tendencies to *aw* on the one hand, or too sharp a sound on the other, the lesson should proceed in the following manner." After this comes an inverted cone of

*p*'s and *a*'s, the apex being *pa*, and we are gravely informed that by-and-by, "several if not all of the pupils will discover the fact that they are saying the shortest name applied to their fathers." And that, "By using these letters twice the word *papa* will be formed." Would it astonish the writer to be told that there is no such word in English? The word is *papa*, and therefore, according to the "self-consistent phonic method," it would be necessary to make the patients, we mean the pupils, perform another series of lingual, labial, and facial contortions, and to construct another inverted cone to arrive at the value of the second *a*.

It is really sad to think of the untold suffering that is so often inflicted upon school children, sometimes thoughtlessly, and sometimes as the result of thought that has been woefully misdirected. Can it be doubted for a moment that any child able to pronounce *p* distinctly is "master of the situation?" We can very readily understand why an instructor of the deaf and dumb should insist upon such a course in training a class of mutes according to Professor Bell's system of Visible Speech, or, why any teacher should adopt such artificial methods with pupils of congenitally defective utterance; but, beyond this, exercises of the kind in question seem to us little short of a diabolically devised scheme for the mystification of the few ounces of brain that five or six-year old youngsters are usually provided with. It must be consolatory to the advocates of this "phonic method" to be assured in their own minds that it is "self-consistent." For, certainly it does not appear to be consistent with anything else.

Another writer, in the same journal, some time ago, undertook to tell us how *he* thought reading should be taught. This is one of his plans:—"Words," said he; "should be taken