

social and moral education that reaches beyond school life, and is more important than the ordinary lesson work. Some who know by happy experience the power, the comfort, the restfulness of a good book, long, with a spirit of true benevolence, to transmit their own delight to their pupils. But objections are made to any effort; difficulties are suggested; it is said that we have neither the time, the books, nor the public sympathy which are necessary to successful work.

In the first place, as I have already said, reading must receive more attention in the lower grades. Pupils should read more in a month than they now do in a year. They should read more stories, and fewer detached sentences. Fortunately we have good juvenile magazines, published monthly, possessing the important requisites of good paper, clear type, choice engravings, and interesting matter, ranging from the charming little *Nursery* and *Wide Awake* up to *St. Nicholas*. There are several schools which are using these magazines with excellent results and with trifling expense. In using these books the aim of the teacher should be largely to make the pupils master the sense fully and to read in an easy, natural way.

I wonder if it has ever occurred to my fellow-teachers that all the reading matter of a whole series of ordinary readers, as high up as the Fifth, is actually less than that of an ordinary eight-page, first-class daily paper. I believe this to be the fact. Now, as far as the comprehension of the existing world is concerned, it would be far better, educationally, to read one newspaper than four or five readers. At some time in the latter part of my school course, I frequently introduce the daily paper, as a regular lesson, and have spent a month upon a single copy, so much of study is required to appreciate it fully.

The proper place for a school reader seems to me to be after the pupils have learned to read common stories fluently and naturally, and to think about the sense of what they read; so as to be able to tell correctly in their own words, either orally or by writing, what they have read. At that time there can be taken up a reader which contains a treatise upon the principles of good reading, something upon elementary phonics, and pieces selected partly for their elocutionary value; such as are suitable for drill pieces, both for thought and for expression. Then, for a time, a well-selected school library should be used in place of a reader. Each pupil should read one book, and prepare himself to report upon it to the class. Class reading should give place to class listening and criticism. The books will, of course, be exchanged, and read in time by most or all of the class. They will mutually correct statements of facts as to the narratives, and unconsciously acquire much of valuable regard to the important subject of successful presentation.

At this point the teacher will have enough to do. He must train the class to notice in the books, read any inconsistencies, contradictions, or absurdities. He must test their judgment of probabilities. He must draw out their thoughts upon the characters presented, upon their fidelity to nature, whether they are the counterparts of those people whom they know and see. The language put into the mouth of a character must be tested, to decide whether it is natural or not. By talks upon books, by comparison and judicious questioning, a class of intelligent pupils can be led on to make judgments of value, and to acquire the habit of deliberate and careful study of what they read. Knowing that they are to be held accountable, they will read, not merely for the story, but to grasp and retain plot, characters, language style and moral. If any one objects to the cost of this, it may be answered that books suitable for this use cost little, if any, more than school readers, and will serve for several generations of pupils. A year of library reading, with general criticism, may be followed by the

reading of some standard author with critical study. Briefly I would say, Read with a class nothing that is not classic, and read exhaustively; with the closest grammatical analysis; with attention to position of words and arrangement of sentences as affecting clearness and emphasis; with development of all figures of speech; with study of all geographical, historical, biographical and mythological allusions; with special attention to derivation and composition of words; with study of synonyms, inquiring closely as to the reason why the author chooses one word rather than another; and, above all, seeking to "read between the lines" as the phrase is; to see what fine and subtle thought may lurk in a seeming riddle or an apparent paradox. Such teaching is twice blessed—"it blesseth him that gives and him that takes." It is because of such close and persistent study that some of the ancient classics have become such a power among men—influencing, perhaps unconsciously, so much of modern thought, and pervading so much of modern literature.

After this work is done, a text-book in literature may be introduced to advantage, and the pupil may be made familiar with the great names in our own literature and that of the world. He is prepared to recognize that it is unpardonable in a fairly educated person not to know something of those great thinkers whose books have lighted up their respective centuries; "those dead, but sceptred sovereigns, who still rule our spirits from their graves." Great names in literature impress him now, because he has learned that there is a greatness of mind displayed in clear thought, and in successful marshalling of words, as well as in planning campaigns and marshalling armies. He has learned that a book may be more powerful than an army; that a nobler immortality may be won by the pen than by the sword. Therefore he is willing to study authors as he studies other great men.

The most common fault in this study is the attempt to grasp too much—to fix in the memory names of unimportant books and of obscure authors. This should be most studiously avoided. Cut down unflinchingly the briefest text book, if it mentions a single author who is not really a man of mark and influence.

It seems to me a waste of time to attempt to teach historic English Literature without a previous study of English History. The significance and power of many books is to a degree lost, unless one knows the time which either called them forth, or gave them form and shape.—*Chicago Educational Weekly*.

SCIENCE NOTES.

RAPIDITY OF THOUGHT.—By way of ascertaining just how fast we can think, experiments, with the use of several forms of apparatus, have been made by scientific men. In all the experiments the time required for a simple thought was never less than a fortieth of a second. In other words the mind can perform not more than 2,400 simple acts a minute, 1,500 a minute being the rate for middle age. From these figures it will be seen how absurd are many popular notions in regard to the fleetness of thought, how exaggerated are the terrors of remorseful memory that moralists have invented for the moment of dying. And we may reasonably "discount" all the stories told by men saved from drowning, cut down before death by hanging, or rescued from sudden peril from other causes. No doubt a man may think of a great multitude of experiences, good or bad, in a few minutes; but that the thoughts and emotions of a long life may surge through the mind during the seconds of asphyxiation is manifestly impossible.

—From Havre comes the tidings that there need be no more sea sickness. A number of persons, it is said, have repeatedly been taken on board the steam-tug *L'Avant-port*, and have put out to sea just where they were most likely to meet with severe tests, and it has been found that those who were provided with a certain electro-magnetic girdle were entirely exempted from sea-sickness, while those who became sea-sick without this appliance were almost