

A TALK TO YOUNG TEACHERS ON PRIMARY READING.

BY AN INSPECTOR.

THIS is, perhaps, the branch most difficult of all to teach. No other subject calls for so much tact, patience, and enthusiasm on the part of the teacher, and yet there is no other which so richly repays in results when it is well taught, since it is the means by which almost all subsequent knowledge is to be acquired.

"To read intelligently, the young pupil must know that the Reader contains simply spoken language printed, and that reading is simply talking from the book. He must have in his mind the idea, the thought to be expressed: his ear must be educated to distinguish sounds, his tongue to utter them, and his eye to recognize forms which symbolize them.

"The correct theory in teaching reading is, that advancement should keep pace with the additions which the pupil makes to his vocabulary, and should never be pushed beyond it. A real addition is a word whose meaning and use he is able to understand and to apply, and not one which he is merely able to utter or to recognize. His progress must be from the known to the partly known, and thence to the unknown.

"What is known to the child before receiving the first lessons in reading that can be used when giving instruction in this subject? Spoken words, such words as are used by children in their daily talk and conversation, are known; their common use and meaning are known; their sounds as entire words are known; their printed or written forms as words are unknown; the letters of which these written

forms are composed are unknown. In short, words are known to the mind and ear, but they are unknown to the eye."

The unknown, which is most nearly related to the known, should be taught first. Pupils should be taught to know by sight the same words which they already know by use and sound.

In teaching this subject it is of great importance to remember that *thinking* (forming ideas) precedes *talking* (using spoken words as signs of those ideas), and that *reading* (recognizing and speaking printed words) naturally succeeds these two steps. A child observes an object, then talks about it, and lastly reads about it.

PRELIMINARY LESSONS.

Let the pupils name objects in the school-room. Let these be seen, handled, tasted, etc., and then named by the whole class and by each member of it. Let them bring objects that please them, and let these be treated similarly. Then (not at first) take pictures, toy animals and the like, to bring up ideas of things which cannot be presented in reality to the eye. These things may be named, and the pupils then led to tell what they know about them. "What can we do with an apple? What with a knife? What is this a picture of? Did you ever see a cow? Where? Have you one? Name some things you see on the cow. How many legs has she? What are they for? Eyes? Nose?" etc. Bear in mind that the object is not by any means to make