

The man who is a good reader possesses a power which no other art or accomplishment can give him. In every situation in life it is of use to him. In the school, in the public meeting, in the social circle, in the nursery, a good reader can comfort, amuse, and give pleasure. If, then, Reading is of so much importance, why is it that there are so many poor readers? One reason for this state of affairs is that the *teachers themselves cannot read well.*

Now, we know that it is quite possible for a person who cannot sing very well to teach others to make more music than he can himself. So it is in reading. A teacher, who cannot himself read very well, can, by careful and judicious criticism, help his pupils to read more than passably well. But too often the teacher looks upon reading as one of the unimportant subjects, as one which requires little or no study at home. He will carefully prepare his problems in arithmetic and make notes of the points in the grammar lesson that he wishes to bring out, while the 'Reader' is never looked at until the class is called up; and then he will open the book, and reclining in his chair, listen to scholars saying over words, and correct them only when some flagrant mispronunciation is made.

To teach a reading lesson well, the teacher should be familiar with his lesson. He should have some well-defined plan of the manner in which the lesson ought to be taught. He should know clearly the meaning intended to be conveyed by the author, and be prepared with questions calculated to rouse the attention of his class and fix the lesson on the mind of each pupil.

Secondly: *The matter of the lesson is beyond the comprehension of the pupil.*

We often hear scholars labouring over "Belial's Address," or "Thanatopsis," without understanding the

meaning of a single sentence. This, of course, produces in the child a distaste for his lesson, and instead of his reading being a useful and pleasure-giving exercise, it becomes hateful drudgery. Let the teacher then select a lesson that the child can comprehend and then read this over to the class carefully, sometimes enunciating passages incorrectly, and teach his scholars to criticize the various renderings given.

Again, *The lesson is often too lengthy.*

A class is sometimes permitted to read five or six pages at a lesson and then only once over. And this is done as hurriedly as if the child's well-being depended on getting through his book in the very shortest space of time possible. The effect of such a course is to make the pupil lose all interest in this branch of study. A page or two at the most is quite sufficient for a lesson. The piece should be read in sections, every word defined, and the whole lesson carefully reviewed.

Again, *Children read after the teacher, having no more intellectual drill than if they were parrots.* How often we hear such a sentence as, "*It is an ox,*" drawled out "*It—is—an—ox.*" Many teachers seem to have the idea that there is no use in teaching simple sentences with a view to anything more than the pronunciation of single words. They think that it is time enough to teach reading when the pupil is in the Fourth Book. This is a great mistake. If the pupil is correctly taught the sounds of the vowels and consonants, the work is half done. The scholars will grow up to be good readers, because from the outset, they are taught to think what they are doing; they are taught to be natural. But how often we hear scholars who, when asked to read a selection, pronounce the words in a monotonous voice, and in a dull dispiriting manner, while not a thought of the meaning enters their minds!