

## PRACTICAL HINTS TO TEACHERS—READING.

It has often justly been observed, that very few persons read well. To read simply and naturally, with animation and expression, is indeed a high and rare attainment. To attain a correct pronunciation, a proper tone of voice, and the right inflections, such as will convey clearly to the minds of those who listen, the real sentiments and ideas which the writer intended should be conveyed, is a degree of perfection in the art of reading that few, very few, ever arrive at.

Besides, what is by many called *good reading*, is far from it. We mean that which calls the attention of the listener from the subject of the discourse, to the supposed taste and skill in pronouncing it. As the best window is that through which the light passes most freely, and affords the most natural view of the landscape without, so is he the best reader who brings before us the mind of the author, unencumbered by the tints and tracery of his own style and manner. Still, it must be remembered that with most persons reading is an art. The best readers are those who have most diligently studied their art; and yet studied it so well that you can scarcely perceive they have studied it at all. You so thoroughly understand, and so sensibly feel the force of *what* they read, that you never think *how* they are saying it.

The principal reason why there are no more good readers is owing to defects in education. The error begins with teaching the alphabet. This is often an unmeaning exercise; nay, in the great majority of schools it is a tedious affair to children. The child is called out and required to repeat the alphabet from A to Z, and from Z to A, alternately, day after day, week after week, and, in many instances, this is continued for months; after which the pupil is set at reading "bla, ble, bli,"—those unmeaning and worse than useless monosyllables. Instead of this the child should be taught ideas, and words which convey ideas, at first. For example; at the first lesson the pupil may be taught the letter *a*, then the letter *x*, and next the word *ax*. At the second lesson he may be taught *a*, *e*, and then the word *axe*; or *b* and *y*, which, with *a*, learned at the first lesson, forms the word *boy*. Thus he learns words that convey thoughts to his mind, and from the conversation of the teacher concerning them, and the questions asked, he finds, at the first lessons, that learning the alphabet, and learning to read, are not dull, monotonous, meaningless tasks. He becomes at once interested; hence can not fail to improve rapidly.

It is during the early training of children that the greatest fault in teaching reading consists. Bad habits then formed are exceedingly difficult to get rid of. But as teachers will not only have scholars who have not been taught at all, but those who have been taught badly, the inquiry naturally arises, "How can we make good readers of those who now read *badly*, as well as those who cannot read at all?" In reply, we give a few rules, which, if observed, will be of much service in suggesting modes of teaching reading successfully. [The "Spelling Book Superseded" might also be consulted with advantage.—Ed. Jour. or Ed.]

*Be sure that the pupil thoroughly understands what he reads.* Probably there can be no one direction given, which is of more importance, especially in teaching children, than this. Attention to it will sweep away those unmeaning combinations before alluded to, such as "blo, blu, dac, hec," and all the rest of this ridiculous tribe, found in nearly every spelling-book. It is in reading these that a habit is formed of separating the sight and sound of words from the sense; and this habit once formed, clings to the mind long after the years of childhood have passed away.

Here, then, while teaching the first principles of reading, is the place to commence the observance of the above rule. This is absolutely essential to success. Indeed, it is during the child's first instruction that the habit of fully comprehending in the mind that which is presented to the eye, must be formed. So with the more advanced pupils, if you would have them read well, *they must understand what they read*. How can a person be expected to express the language of a thought properly, if he does not comprehend the thought itself? If, therefore, you would have a sentence well read, read so as to be understood and felt by the hearer, take care that the reader himself both understands and feels it.

*Remember that the tones and emphasis which we use in conversation are those which form the basis of good elocution.* Children should therefore be instructed to read as they talk; particularly in

regard to emphasis and inflection. But there are some children who talk so badly that they can scarcely be understood. This is owing to defects in articulation. To remove this habit, we know of no better way than thorough drilling in uttering the elementary sounds of the language. This may be practiced, at first, by the class in concert, then by each pupil singly.

The first exercise should be pronouncing the word, then the vowel sound in the word, as follows: *ale, a; arm, a; all, a; at a; eat, e; bet, e; ice, i*, etc. Then the sub-vocals should be spoken in the same manner, thus: *ebb, b; odd, d; him in; buzz, z*. Then the aspirates: *up, p; it, t; sin s; thin, th*. When these have been well learned, words should be pronounced and spelled by sounds as: *m...a...n—man; d...a—day, e...t—eat*. These exercises will give command of the organs of articulation, and teach the habit of speaking distinctly.—*Student*.

## HOW TO TEACH CHILDREN.

If you find an error in the child's mind, follow it up till he is rid of it. If a word is spelled wrong, be sure that the class is right before it is dismissed. Repeat, and fix attention on the exact error, till it can never be committed again. One clear and distinct idea, is worth a world of misty ones. Time is of no consequence in comparison with the object. Give the child possession of one clear, distinct truth, and it becomes to him a centre of light. In all your teaching—no matter what time it takes—never leave your pupil till you know he has in his mind your exact thought.

## DIGNITY OF THE TEACHER'S EMPLOYMENT.

A large part of the present generation are employed in some capacity as teachers of the rising generation. Parents by a divine constitution and by the necessity of their relations, are teachers, and their teaching affects both the interests of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. The teachers who conduct the intellectual training in all its grades in our schools, are doing a work whose proper grandeur is little realized. The Sabbath-school teachers are working towards results, which contrast strongly with the humble and noiseless mode of their labour. The ministry is evidently a teaching office, doing as much to elevate and invigorate the common mass of intellect, as it does for moral and spiritual impression.

And next in importance to the creation of the human mind, is that work which develops the powers of thought, and adds to the stature and the strength of mind, and determines the rank which it is to hold, and the sway which it is to exert over fellow minds. In the darkness of the middle ages, the name of Abelard shone afar with a brilliant, though stained light. That prince of scholars had first and last among his pupils twenty persons who afterwards became cardinals, and more than fifty who became bishops or archbishops. Here is an illustration of the teacher's power. He who made his influence over the world to be felt through that of twenty cardinals, and fifty bishops, experienced a vast multiplication of his power for good or harm. There is a dignity more than appears to the eye, in the office of the teacher of an infant prince. It is the office of an artificer, forming the enginery that is to play upon the destinies of an empire. But that parent or teacher, who trains a child to be great in the kingdom of heaven, does a work of higher import, than he who has the education of cardinals and kings.

## DERIVATION OF THE NAME CANADA.

It is ever a matter of some interest, especially to the young, to know the occasion or circumstances which may have given rise to the name of the country of their nativity or adoption; and this interest seems sometimes to be heightened in proportion to the mysteriousness of its origin. In respect to our own Province, though yet in its infancy, the origin of its name—"CANADA"—is matter of speculation for the curious; and as few of our readers are familiar with those speculations, we have thought that the following would not be out of place:

Some writers, in offering their learned conjectures on this subject, tell us that *Canada* is derived from two Spanish words, "*ACA*," nothing; and "*NADA*," here; that is, *nothing here*.

Others have advanced the hypothesis that the name "*Canada*" comes from the Iroquois tongue—the Indian term being *KANNATA*," a word which signifies an assemblage of houses, a city or town.