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## THE EDUCATIONALIST

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## THE EDUCATIONALIST.

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## HINTS ON THE QUALIFICATIONS OF THE TEACHER.

It has been truly said by one of the greatest scholars of the age—Lord Brougham—that a knowledge of reading, writing, arithmetic and English Grammar, does not qualify an individual for the teaching of youth. To read well, however, is essentially necessary to every one who proposes to teach, and no man or woman can teach reading who does not from habit pronounce the English Language with accuracy and ease. This qualification which stands at the threshold, and may be called the foundation and the key of knowledge can only be acquired by untiring industry and persevering application. To be able to pronounce well, when, as the most important qualification required by every teacher. Children, eye

and men too, are creatures of imitation, and they will imperceptibly imbibe the peculiarities of the teacher and especially his pronunciation, and if that pronunciation be inaccurate and corrupt, no after care or training in mature years will prevent involuntary blunders. A young man of sound mind may obtain as much knowledge of Arithmetic in six months as would be sufficient to qualify him to cast up the accounts of the largest mercantile house in Canada, but every man who at the age of puberty has commenced to qualify himself for teaching will admit that a period of six months would be too limited to learn to read accurately the works required in a third rate school. Counsellor Haydon, in his autobiography, states that he suffered much inconvenience when he entered into society at the close of his school career, from the trifling attention that was given in the school to reading and pronunciation, compared with arithmetic. The domine, as he calls him, was considered the best arithmetical scholar in the city—Philadelphia. He could solve all the arithmetical puzzles from the "scuffle to the cube root," yet this same domine could not read accurately five lines of a common newspaper, nor would he in any place, even among his private friends in a social circle, read aloud, from the dread of being laughed at. If he had devoted the extra time which he wasted in puzzling arithmetical questions in the Chinese language, it might eventually have been more profitable to him in a pecuniary way.

It will be admitted that every teacher ought to be acquainted with English Grammar. And in what does an acquaintance with English Grammar consist? It most certainly does not consist in being able to parse any, even the most involved, or obscure sentence in the language. English Grammar is the Art and Science of Speaking and Writing the English Language correctly. This definition is logically a good one, and from the time of Lowth to the present, it has never been disputed by any competent authority. This part of the qualifications of a teacher is one of the most difficult to be acquired, and it is at the same time one of the most practical importance and the most useful for the every day business of life. The exercise of attention, thought, and memory, in studying the English language, has always been allowed to be one of the most effective means for training and invigorating the mental powers. It turns the mind inward upon itself,

causes it to reflect on its own operations, and aids in forming and strengthening that habit of self-examination which is so valuable to man as a moral, intellectual and religious being. A particular knowledge of our language is requisite before we can fully appreciate and enjoy the beauties and delicacies of our rich and varied literature, whether in the rude and simple ballads of old, or in the more refined writings of modern periods, such as those of Shakspeare, Milton, Addison, Robertson, Gibbon, Cowper, Burns, Burke, Scott, Byron, Wordsworth, Dickens, Macaulay.

By this particular knowledge of our language I do not mean as I have already stated, the ability to parse an English sentence, but an ability to write with ease and accuracy our thoughts and feelings, and present them to the minds of others in living language, which will be a faithful mirror of our own minds. The subject of language is intimately interwoven with that of history, and the student of the latter finds at every turn, the advantage of being acquainted with the general nature and structure of languages, and of his own language as a foundation. A teacher who would instruct his pupils faithfully in English Grammar, should in addition to the ability of teaching them to parse, as it is called, be also qualified to instruct them in the principles of English composition, and in order to be successful here, he must have practised the art himself. It would be preposterous for a teacher to expect his pupils to excel in the composition of a familiar epistle, while said teacher had never exemplified by his own practice this useful acquirement which every man who claims to be educated should undoubtedly possess. He is the best instructor who devotes most time in the school to those objects of study which his pupils will require in the daily pursuits of life, and which if not learned at school must either remain unknown, or be acquired at great disadvantage amidst the absorbing cares and employments of manhood. I shall conclude these observations by a quotation from a recent London Periodical of high literary fame: "By the term 'educated classes,' we are too apt to consider those only who can read, write, parse and cast up accounts, and possess such other knowledge as may grow out of these primary elements,—which are not knowledge, but simply the tools of knowledge, and by no means comprise that education which is essential to independence and life."