

ing or suspending them for it : who regard the schools as for their sole use and benefit, without regard to the rights and privileges of others.

Then again there are parents who are continually helping their children, so much so that their self-reliance is almost entirely destroyed ; who, not understanding the preparation of home lessons, keep constantly nagging the children until they are disgusted with all home lessons ; if the teacher finds fault with the preparation she is met by the crushing rejoinder that it was made under the eye of parental authority ; who are so interested in the health of their own brood that they send orders for them to remain in school out of draughts, regardless of the bad air of the rooms and the health of others ; who permit their children to go to school from a half hour to an hour too early, and find fault with the teacher because she is not there to admit them ; who wish their children advanced and blame the teacher for not advancing them ; who mark out a course of instruction for themselves and desire their children to be excused from taking certain subjects ; who are continually sending notes to the teacher dictating to her as to her work ; who discuss all school matters before the children, not failing to criticize the teacher and to send insolent messages to her by them ; who object to corporal punishment, but take lenient views of disobedience, lying and truant-playing ; who think they know better than the teacher, and insist upon special treatment for their own children ; who are a nuisance and a terror to trustees and school officers, and go about the district reflecting upon them and the teachers ; who have been teachers ten or fifteen years ago themselves and know it all.

Happily for us all these are the extremes and there is a golden mean, though it is sometimes hard to find in some localities. The status of the teacher in the average district depends largely upon the support she receives from the trustees, and upon their discretion hinges public opinion. If minor complaints are listened to and encouraged, they grow in frequency until in some districts it has become the rule for a teacher to remain but one term. People who are very zealous about interference in the management of their own business think they have a title and are perfectly competent to instruct the teacher in hers. These unwise trustees do not inquire into cause and effect, but openly condemn the teacher. The parents and children at once get hold of it and authority and power of doing good work are weakened. I do not say the teacher is always right, but she should be assumed to be right until enquiry is made, and if she can not sustain her position great care should be taken as to publicity in its relation to the future of the school. The teacher may be discharged, but impaired influence and authority can not easily be restored.

For the REVIEW.

### The Teaching of Language.

How we shall teach English in the common schools depends on what we consider the *end* or *object* of such teaching. I think it may fairly be taken for granted that all will agree in making the object of all language teaching the correct use of our mother tongue—ease and correctness in expressing thought, both in speaking and writing. In the attainment of this practical result, the study of formal grammar will help us very little, if at all. The teacher must talk to the scholars, or rather *with* them, must take care as much as possible that they hear nothing but good English, correct them where they are wrong, see that they read the best authors, etc. The *science* of grammar may better be left to the high school where the scholars have arrived at an age to study abstract subjects with some degree of relish. Some little elementary training may be given in the lower grades, but no study of the textbooks should be required. The true starting point of English grammar is of course the sentence. We may begin by drawing from the pupils the simple facts that in using language there are two essentials—something to talk about and something to say about it, using a great many examples and illustrations, and then giving the name, subject and predicate. Next, draw attention to the fact that the different words in a sentence perform different duties. By this means the pupil soon sees that there are different *classes* of words, and by causing him to note clearly what these words *do* in the different sentences he has been examining, he will be able to give fairly good definitions of the parts of speech. Help him, by careful questioning, to see where his definition is defective or incorrect and get him to reconstruct it, until he has one which is comprehensive. All through the teaching of this subject, keep well in mind the fundamental principles. Proceed from the concrete to the abstract. Proceed from particular examples to general rules.

But by far the most important factor in language teaching in the common school grades is composition. By this we do not mean setting the pupils to write essays on abstract subjects. We must not expect them to make bricks without straw. What is meant is the practice, oral and written, in the use of good language. Here we must begin with the very youngest children. The little ones love to listen to stories, and with a little encouragement they can be led to tell the story themselves. They will like to talk about, to fancy themselves in the place of the hero, and tell what they would have done in the same circumstances. Encourage them to tell about the games they play, the walks they