

NEW READING METHODS.

WHEN "Doctor" Burlibus, mounted on the biggest wood-pile in Hopkinsville, endeavours to shew the intelligent denizens of that flourishing village that the study of medicine throughout all past ages, and in every part of the world, has only proved to be the most miserable of failures, and that it has been reserved for him, after many years of profound study, to elaborate a pill which is the true panacea for every human ailment, we, who don't happen to be Hopkinsvillians, can afford to smile incredulously at the lofty pretensions of the impudent quack, and when we see Bill Grimes, eyes agog, and mouth agape, pushing his way to the front, and holding aloft his "quarter" for a package of soap pellets, we sigh, reflecting on the gullibility of so many fellow-beings on the one hand, and the gross deception practised by so many more on the other. Thus it has always been, and, we suppose, thus it will ever be. The quack earns a livelihood, his deluded patient swallows the physic, and the world wags on. But medicine possesseth not either all the humbugs, or all the humbugged. In every department of human knowledge the charlatan has made his presence felt, and, not unfrequently in such guise as to deceive the very "elect." In many instances, without a doubt, the deceiver is the subject of self-delusion, but in such cases, owing to the intense earnestness thereby engendered, the mischief entailed by his teaching is only the more serious and wide-spread.

It would almost appear as if Pedagogy had greater reason to groan under the infliction of the quack-plague,

than has the pursuit of any other occupation that engages our attention. Far be it from us to deny that room has existed and yet exists for vast improvements in the *art* of education, and it is only as an art that we intend to deal with it, despite the attempts of the quack to convince us that he holds *scientific* ground. Improved methods of teaching this, that, and the other subject crop up incessantly, and each nostrum has its day. In a few instances the "day" may be equal to "a thousand years," but only in a few. To parody a well-known line, plan after plan departs, who hath not lost a plan?

Just now, reading seems to be most grossly neglected in the public schools of Ontario, and we are treated (!) by a writer or two, to page after page of apparent wisdom on this really important subject. The most minutely-detailed directions are given as to how the pupils are to arrange their lips, tongue and teeth, and as to the exact quantity of breath that should be emitted in pronouncing every letter. That this is no exaggerated statement will appear evident by the following quotation from an article in a local contemporary of high (!) educational repute:—

"1. Let each child place a small piece of paper on its open hand.

"2. At a signal given by the teacher, let each one blow his paper from his hand. This should be done three or four times.

"3. Let each one pretend to blow off a paper without really having it on his hand. In doing this they should carefully watch the action of their lips.

"4. With the papers again on their