

If I am allowed, I may speak at another time of other corruptions which have crept into our newspaper dialect."—*Buffalo Com. Advertiser.*

¶ We often make life unhappy in wishing things to have turned otherwise than they do, merely because that is possible to the imagination which is impossible in fact.—*Hazlet.*

¶ He that knows useful things, and not he that knows many things, is the wise man.

HOW TO READ.—No. 2.

The use of the pauses, or points of punctuation, in Reading, is a matter of very great importance, and might, with propriety, be introduced here as the lesson next in order; but we prefer to treat of this subject at some length in future articles. It is a part of composition to employ these significant characters, and for the present, we shall merely observe them as pauses; at the proper time we may try to explain their uses. Therefore we shall continue our lesson from the October number, as promised, yet we may not be able to speak of modulation until next month.

INFLECTION.

2. This word comes from a Latin word meaning to bend; it implies a bending or sliding of the voice up or down in the utterance of sounds or words. If we are careful to observe, we will detect a pleasing variety of tone to the voice in ordinary conversation,—a graceful and recurring rise\* and fall to suit the sentiment conveyed to the ears of others. Nature accords even the tones of the little, prattling child to the thought it wishes to express. In talking, or laughing, or crying, the child will use the proper inflections, without rule, or without a thought about commas, semi-colons or periods! It is not difficult to give graceful expression to what is really understood; it is only in reading that we need to be careful.

3. There are two slides of the voice,—the upward and downward. When these two are blended, we have the circumflex inflection, or wave, which is used to express sarcasm, irony, or doubt. In the School Reading Books and in the Visitor this mark [ ] represents a falling, and this [ ^ ] a rising inflection.

4. The circumflex "is a significant twisting or waving of the voice, generally downward, and then upward, but sometimes the reverse, and is attended with a sensible protraction of sound on the syllable thus inflected."† The circumflex is indicated by this mark [ ^ ] or this [ ]].

FALLING INFLECTION.

5. We will give some examples in the use of inflections. It must be remembered that the falling inflection is required where the sentence is complete, or where the clause indicates finished sense. This rule is always applicable, regardless

\*Pronounced *rice*. *Rice*, when a verb, is pronounced *ri:ze*. When a noun—*rice*.  
† Willson.

of punctuation, or auxiliary words in subsequent sentences.

- (1.) The rain' has ceased.'
- (2.) By virtuo' we secure happiness.
- (3.) Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth' not itself; is not puffed up; doth not behave itself unseemly; seeketh not her own; is not easily provoked; thinketh no evil.'

[NOTE.] In the example we find the reading claims a rule like this, in addition to the above. Members of sentences which express complete and independent sense, require the falling inflection on the last accented syllable, and on all that follow it.

6. Questions which can not be answered by yes or no, generally require the falling inflection, as,

- (1.) How many horses are there in the field?'
- (2.) Where is the teacher?'
- (3.) What did you see in the meadow?'
- (4.) Why do you speak so?'
- (5.) When will he return?'
- (6.) Who is here so base that he would be a bondman?'

7. When questions requiring the falling inflection are repeated, or when they become emphatic, they then take the rising inflection. For example, take the fifth question above, and, after it has been once asked and called forth no answer, it is repeated, with the added interrogatory, (not spoken but implied,) "Did you not hear me?" indicated in the tone of voice, giving the original question the inflection strictly belonging to the implied one. To illustrate:

1st time. When will he return?'

No satisfactory answer is received.

2d time { Implied.—Did you not hear me?'

{ Spoken.—When will he return?'

8. The language of command or authority usually requires the falling inflection. Such tones,—imperative, determined,—are best given when the voice is abrupt, full and emphatic.

- (1.) Charge, Chester, charge, on, Stanley, on.'
- (2.) Hence, horrible shadow, unreal mockery.'

(9.) Reverence, awe, or adoration is most appropriately expressed by words taking the falling inflection. The deeper, nobler feelings of our nature are fitly told in words deliberate, full-toned, earnest, decided, which can not be given without using the falling inflection. How irreverent and unbecoming the manner of some who address our All-Father thus.

Our Father who art in Heaven.'

Hear the difference when the falling inflection is substituted,

Our Father who art in Heaven.'

10. Just here we would call attention to the beautiful and patriotic poem, familiar to many, *The American Fly*, published in this number of the *Visitor*. Now for something practical. We love our country. We glory in her welfare. We honor her name and her emblem—the American Flag. Let it call out hearty good-cheer from our hearts, and let this feeling be evidenced by the tones of the voice while we read. The lesson is before us. We see the very Flag waving proudly in the free air of Heaven and over the heads of freemen. We call our

Flag by noble names—let our words be patriotic and endearing.

- (1.) Majestic monarch of the cloud!'
- (2.) Child of the sun!'
- (3.) Flag of the brave!'
- (4.) Flag of the seas!'
- (5.) *Flag of the free heart's only home!'*

To show how insignificant these thrilling appellations may be made, let the reader but use the rising instead of the falling inflection. We shall refer to this poem again when speaking of modulation.—Then we shall tell why we have italicized the last line of addresses. Meanwhile let our readers practice upon this lesson.

RIISING INFLECTION.

11. The rising inflection is usually employed as follows.—After direct questions, or those that can be answered by yes or no, (a); at the pause of suspension, showing unfinished sense, (b); after conditional sentences, (c), in direct addresses, where reverence, awe or adoration is not expressed, (d), before words and clauses connected by the disjunctive, or, (e); when negation is opposed to affirmation, (f); in a succession of particulars, after the one before the last, (g), in expostution, tender entreaty, &c., (h); and in kind reproof, (i)

- (a.) Did you see William to-day?'
- (b.) Has God, thou fool, worked solely for thy good, thy joy, thy pastime, thy attire, thy food?'
- (c.) John, Henry, James, and Robert, come to me.
- (d.) If, then, his Providence, out of our evil, seek to bring forth good, our labor must be to prevent that end.
- (e.) Thomas, do as I bid you.

[NOTE.] When an address is repeated, it takes the falling inflection, thus, Thomas, Thomas.'

- (f.) The baptism of John, was it from Heaven, or of men?'
- He may go to Boston, or New York, or Philadelphia; or, he may remain in Baltimore.

- (g.) I did not hear him, I saw him.
- (h.) The rocks crumble; the trees fall; the leaves fade, and the grass withers.'

- (i.) My mother! when I learned that thou wast dead, Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed?'

Hovered thy spirit o'er thy sorrowing son, Wretch, even then, life's journey just begun?'

- (j.) My child, do not do so.

12. There are other instances of the use of both the rising and falling inflections; but these are the principal ones. At most we can but suggest helps to the pupil.—The surest and pleasantest method of study in elocution and reading is to enter into the spirit of the lesson, whatever it may be; to mean what the author means for the time being; to feel what the author feels, to enjoy what he enjoys. If this be done, there will be but little difficulty in observing the inflections in reading. The greater trouble would be to avoid their right use. It is more difficult for a good reader to read badly, than for a poor reader to read well.

13. We must close the present lesson by giving an exercise or two for practice. The circumflex and modulation will remain for our next article.