

CLASS CONVERSATIONS.

BY JAMES L. HUGHES.

The most practical way of teaching children to speak correctly is to let them speak. There are other things besides grammatical accuracy that are essentials in good speaking. The manner of speaking; the tone of voice; the rate of utterance; the pronunciation and articulation of words; the position of the pupil's body, especially as to general erectness, the feet, the hands and the eye; all these should receive the closest attention on the part of the teacher. It will be of little avail, however, to give theoretical rules relating to grammatical construction or any other of the elements of good speaking. "Children learn by doing," and they can only learn to speak by speaking. Correct speaking must become a habit induced by long and frequent practice. To speak well a man must be conscious only of the *thought* he is expressing; he must not be hampered by the consideration of his method of expression. His grammatical accuracy, his pronunciation, his impressive elocution, and his appropriate dramatic action should be certain, but they must be spontaneous. There is only one way to make them so; extensive practice when young.

This practice develops readiness in speaking, and it enables the teacher to correct errors of all kinds made by the pupils.

There are many teachers who allow their pupils a few minutes for conversation at the end of each hour between lessons. It is generally much better to relieve pupils after an hour's hard study, by lively physical exercises, but a conversation once in the forenoon and once in the afternoon is quite an appropriate way of resting a class. The conversations are much more instructive, and more interesting to the pupils if they are class conversations instead of mere talks between the couples in adjoining seats.

The following are suggested as appropriate methods of conducting class conversations.

1. Let the pupils report the inaccuracies of speech both in pronunciation and grammar which they have heard since leaving school on the previous day.

2. Let them relate any items of interest that they have read or heard during the past twenty-four hours.

In the first exercise the pupils should say, "I heard a boy say, 'I seen a elephant', he should have said, 'I saw an elephant.'" etc.; stating the error first and then making the correction.

In both cases the pupil speaking should stand up and speak in complete sentences.

If any errors are made, by a pupil in expressing his thoughts they should be corrected by the other pupils under the guidance of the teacher.

In the higher classes the criticisms may be extended to include a wide range of word analysis and sentence making.

THOUGHTS AND SUGGESTIONS ON EDUCATION.

BY PROF. W. H. VENABLE.

- I. It is not easy to learn to think; nor is it easy to think after learning how. The big-brained Carlyle says: "True effort, in fact, as of a captive struggling to free himself: that is Thought!" We are bound down by many cords of usage and ropes of authority; and it takes force and courage to break the bonds—to think in regard to Education.

- II. Many regard the speculative philosophy of Education as mere fog and delusion. There is much fog and delusion brooding over the subject; but the solid land of True Science must be somewhere beyond the mist.

- III. Before we can safely run the train of Right Method along

the track of Practice, the head light of Theory must shine into the opening way.

- IV. Doctor Harris, the Great American Philosopher of Education, has benefited the system more by his lectures and writings than any twelve mere unthinking, practical superintendents.

- V. The teacher can not teach anything: the pupil *must* learn. You can no more think for your pupil than you can digest food for him. The mind is solitary in its real achievements. We must work out our intellectual salvation, alone. Teachers can order the "environment" but not do the vital work of another spirit.

- VI. Not the studies, but the study, makes the scholar.

- VII. Education is the Science of Life, and conduct is its cognate art.

- VIII. I do not believe in fitting boys for college, if that fitting unfits them for life. The one fitting should be the other.

- IX. You are all your ancestors, including the Old Adam. Judge your pupil in the light of his heredity.

- X. The perfect work of Education can not be accomplished except in the individual who comes of a stock cultivated for generations. Training your pupil, you may be training his great grandson. Infinite are the reaches of the schoolmaster.

- XI. Stupidity, stolidity, inaptitude for special studies, vicious tendencies, are to be regarded as chronic disease—the pupil may slowly be cured.

- XII. Many teachers of morality destroy the good effects of judicious counsel by too much talk, as a chemical precipitate is redissolved in an excess of the precipitating agent.

- XIII. The best teacher has in view not his own education, but that of his pupils. They are his study; not the subject he teaches.

- XIV. Take care of the blockheads and the heads will take care of themselves.

- XV. All schooling in school should be supplemented and tested by schooling out of school.

- XVI. The school must recognize its constant vital connection with the world around. Every teacher's desk should be in sight of the great facts of the times in which we live. Boys are men, girls are women, *to-morrow*.

- XVII. Like the ancients, we must teach virtue as well as smartness. No good education can be based on mere intellectuality.

- XVIII. Bain is wrong in assuming that affection can play but a small part in teaching. Human love and sympathy play the greatest part in early training. They play the greatest part even in a class in mental arithmetic.

- XIX. We should have a "Science of Education" written by a Platonist. The best works we now have are based on the Materialistic Philosophy. Let us see both sides.

- XX. We neglect political education in our schools. Every boy and girl should be taught the elements of politics and economics; and especially, in these times, should the young be inspired with a pure patriotism and a religious devotion to the duties of citizenship.

- XXI. Educational theory and practice should proceed from the faith that there is a God at the center of the Universe, and a soul at the center of Man.—*The Normal Teacher*.

LESSON IN NUMBERS.

Mine is a class of about thirty-eight young pupils, and they know but little about numbers; in fact, but one or two could read. These were the first lessons given after counting, etc. I taught by means of sticks, saying: "One stick", "two sticks", etc. Then each pupil had a box of sticks, and he counted them singly at first, and then in concert with the rest. I taught them to write figures by saying 1 stick, and have a pupil at the blackboard write 1, and all the others write the same on their slates. Then I took up two sticks, having them look at me, and the pupil at the board write 2, and all the rest the same on their slates. So 5, 3, 8, 7, 2, etc., were written, until they became perfectly familiar with the relation of the character to the number. It was done over and over. I gave them straws (because they were plentier than sticks), and they counted to ten; then I took away one straw at a time, saying 10 straws, 9 straws, etc.

Then we went up to 20, then up to 30, and so up to 100 by slow degrees. I did not have them go backward except from 10 down. They could count quite rapidly from one up to one hundred. Then I let them tie up the straws into bundles of 10 each. Telling them to put up things by tens was quite common. Each pupil had ten bundles and a box of straws besides. I said: I have here one bundle and one straw. I write on the board thus: 11; the left hand