

and buoyant hearts, to be confined day after day to the prison of a school, fixed to one particular place, for a space of time which to us, always seems too long, made to study a set of lessons of which we no wise see the benefit, but merely yield obedience because we are preemptorily told that: "It must be done," exposed to all sorts of little unkindnesses from our companions, confusion and perhaps disgrace from the master, who if he be of harsh mind puts the crowning point upon our child's misery, by holding our little hearts the whole time in a state of momentary apprehension of some, impending visitation of punishment.

We ask why should not the master smooth that necessary course to childhood and youth, by shedding over it a refulgence of that love which he so earnestly teaches through a book, and which put into practice, would make of it one of mutual kind regard, affection and cherished duty?

The answer is this, that although all masters (not excepting the admirers of the application of corporal punishment, a function more worthy the public executioner than the mild instructor of youth,) attempt to gain the regard of their pupils, yet they do so, seeking the end, without caring for the means by which it can alone be obtained. Or if he remember that "love begets love;" what are his professions generally speaking? a display of words or rather of egotism, for with the declaration of it, he promises it to last only so long as the child gives no displeasure, inconvenience, or trouble of any kind! Now the child, who has borne the seal of love upon his birth into the world, and who therefore is never without a certain intuitive perception of it, knows right well how to distinguish the semblance from the reality, therefore his heart continues untouched, and his carelessness, insubordination and petulance remain the same, until further disgraced by hypocrisy and the other attributes of cowardly fear instilled by the influence we already spoke of, that of chastisement exercised as a rule. Some will urge that punishment cannot be banished either the parental hearth-stone, or the school ranks, for that children are in regard to feeling, very often insensible, and moreover ungrateful. To this we answer that these voids lie as often with the accusers as the accused. It is the shorter and easier method of dismissing a subject full of insurmountable details to him, who is without that innate love of his kind, that makes us consider the young as a sacred deposit in our hands destined to happiness in this and the next world, according as our own influence may have been brought to bear upon it.

Let us not be supposed as desirous of wholly withdrawing from schools the resource of punishment. By no means, for have we not the divine authority as an example of its due exercise, and its wholesomeness under certain conditions of the human mind. He chastised his people, but only after repeated chidings most lovingly delivered and as a last recall upon their approaching hardness of heart. After the same example we invite teachers to deal with the little people committed to their care, and will add, love them, for their own sakes with a purely disinterested regard, and that spirit of Christian self-sacrifice without which no master can work any good either to himself or to his scholars, and if punishment be absolutely called for, let it be administered so as to convince the child that it is for his ultimate good, and not for any feeling of harshness or despotism whatever.

### On Teaching Reading.

A LECTURE.

Simpson, the mathematician, obtained his first knowledge of Fluxions, or the Differential Calculus, from Edmund Stone's translation of a French work on that subject—and who was Edmund Stone?

The father of Edmund Stone was gardener to the Duke of Argyle. One day as the Duke was walking in his garden, he observed a Latin copy of Newton's *Principia* lying on the grass, and thinking

it had been brought from his library, he called some one to carry it back to its place. Young Stone, then in his eighteenth year, claimed the book as his own. "Yours?" said the Duke, "Do you understand Geometry, Latin, and Newton?" "I know a little of them," said the young man. The Duke, who had some love for the sciences, entered into conversation with him, and was astonished at the force and accuracy of his observations. "But how came you by the knowledge of all these things?" Stone replied, "A servant taught me, ten years since, to read. Does one need to know anything more than the twenty-four letters in order to learn everything else that one wishes?"

The account of this interview goes on to say that the Duke's curiosity being excited, he sat down on a bank and listened to the following details.

"I first learned to read," said Stone, the masons were then at work upon your house. I observed that the architect used a rule and compasses, and that he made calculations. I inquired the meaning and the use of these things, and I was informed that there was a science called arithmetic. I purchased a book of arithmetic, and I learned it. I was told there was another science called geometry; I purchased books, and learned geometry. I found, by reading, that there were good books in these two sciences in Latin; I bought a dictionary, and I learned Latin. I also learned that there were good books of the same kind in French; I bought a dictionary, and I learned French. And this, my Lord, is what I have done: it seems to me that we may learn everything when we know the twenty-four letters of the alphabet."

I think we may all readily admit that Reading is one of the portals of knowledge, and further, that it is a portal not easily opened by the methods commonly applied—that "Reading," as usually taught, "is the most difficult of human attainments;" but when the art has been acquired, everything else that the masses need in the way of instruction is comparatively easy. Writing is easy, Arithmetic is easy, Geography is not only easy, but full of interest. Reading is the key to History, and a constant exercise in Grammar and language. I recollect an apophthegm that made a strong impression on me when I was a boy, its force has recurred to me very often in the course of my life, but I cannot name its author, neither have I seen it in print during many years. "If the poor man can but read how rich may he soon become in the noblest endowments." Stone's experience confirms its truth.

I shall divide the subject of this paper into two parts, the *first*, comprises my own theory and experience in the art of teaching Reading; the *second*, the means which I would suggest for obtaining a better style of reading in our National Schools.

Thirty years have elapsed since my attention was first directed to this branch of instruction. I was then studying the principles of a work by Duffet on the French language; and it became quite clear to me that we learn French, in England, chiefly by remembering the phases or appearances of the words, and this was one of the principles of the work.

Soon afterwards I became engaged in the instruction of the deaf and dumb, and one of the first observations I made was, that we kept the children six, eight, even twelve months, learning the alphabet on their fingers—learning to distinguish one letter from another—and acquiring the art of forming the letters on their slates. Not an idea was communicated to the children during this process—not even the name of a single object around them, and at the end of the time thus occupied, the children were as much "stocks and stones" as at the commencement.

I will not delay you with minutiae which only concern the instruction of the deaf and dumb, it is enough to say that I commenced a new system—that of teaching the children words from the first day of their admission, and at the end of six months, I had the satisfaction of seeing that the children were acquainted with the name of every common object about them, and in all respects equal to pupils who had been eighteen months under instruction on the old system. I will just add, in passing, that this improvement has found its way into nearly every Institution for the deaf and dumb in the kingdom—though in every case resisted at first.

The more I practiced this course myself, the more I became satisfied that a method somewhat analagous would be applicable to teaching reading to every child—but it was working in my own mind for several years before I ventured to recommend any one to put it in practice. I became confirmed in my views by reading the works of Pestalozzi and Jacotot; and the first time I suggested such a departure from the ordinary course of teaching reading was in the case of a hearing and speaking child in Doncaster.

A lady of this town, the mother of several children, was remarking to me with regard to one of them, that she was just about to commence a task which would extend over two years—that of