

evening exercise, bring it written from memory on paper. It is a great thing if the teacher can get them to write out in their own words at all correctly, the sense conveyed to their minds of a sentence in prose or verse.

In teaching a lesson, such as the following two verses from *Lesson Book*, No. 3.

Thus far, on life's perplexing path,
Thus far the Lord our steps hath led,
Safe from the world's pursuing wrath,
Unharm'd though floods hung o'er our head;
Here then we pause, look back, adore,
Like ransom'd Israel from the shore.

Strangers and pilgrims here below,
As all our fathers in their day,
We to a land of promise go,
Lord, by thine own appointed way,
Still guide, illumine, cheer our flight,
In cloud by day, in fire by night.

After explaining the first two lines, the teacher asks perhaps the grammar of a part of it; but from the words not coming in prose order, the children find a difficulty; he should, therefore, read them thus:—The Lord hath led our steps, thus far, on the perplexing path of life; and they will at once get the grammar of it, as well as the meaning; *safe*—what part of speech, and what word does it agree with? The verb from the same root is what? *save*: and the noun? *safety*. What does the fourth line mean? does it mean that waters are suspended over our heads? And then read to them the plain meaning of the lines in something like the following words:—

The Lord hath led our steps, thus far, on the troublesome path of life; protecting us from the pursuing wrath of the world uninjured, notwithstanding dangers have surrounded us: here, then, we stop, we review the past, we thank God for his protection from danger, as the Israelites did when they found themselves set free from the Egyptians and on the other side of the Red Sea.

We, Lord, as strangers and pilgrims in this world, go in the way in which thou hast appointed, to a land of promise, in the same way as all our fathers have done in their time; but we pray thee still to continue to guide, to enlighten, and to cheer our passage through this life, in the same way as Thou didst the Israelites in their journeyings from Egypt to the desert:—in cloud by day, in fire by night.

Then referring them to the 13th chapter of Exodus—

"And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night. He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people."

After having had the lesson explained in this way, they are then told, perhaps, to sit down and write the meaning which it conveys to their minds of one verse, and on a Monday morning to bring the first two, or any other two, verses, as an exercise written in prose.

The teacher should be in the habit of calling attention to the composition of particular words, and asking them to mention any others of a similar kind which they can call to mind; for instance—

Words with a prefix or affix, such as *ungodly*, *unholy*, *inhospitable*, *incorrigible*, *irregular*, occur; they should then be told to quote all the words they know with *un*, *in*, and *ir*, as prefixes meaning *not* when *in* is changed into *im*, as in the words *improper*, *imperfect*, etc., and why; or such words as *leaflet*, etc., with an affix; ask if they know any others—*streamlet*, *ringlet*, etc. A noun ending in *ist*, as *chemist*; quote any others, as *botanist*, *druggist*, *mechanist*, *copyist*, etc.; or an adjective in *al*, *ive*, etc., such as *national*, *local*, *vocal*, *destructive*—quote others; *extensive*, *positive*, etc., and the nouns made from them.

I merely mention a few cases that occur to me at the moment of writing; but these are quite sufficient to show what is meant.

After having heard the lesson, the monitor or teacher should tell them to sit down and write on their slates a certain number (or as many as they know) of words, nouns, adjectives, etc., having any particular prefix or affix, which may have occurred in their lesson; for instance—

Write down six adjectives ending in *al* and *ive*, six nouns ending in *ist*, in *let*.

When a word occurs which has a common root with many others, the teacher ought to ask what others we have from the same root; for instance, the word *extent* occurs as a noun; what is the word we use as a verb? *extend*; extending, present participle; past participle, *extended*: as an adjective? *extensive*; adverb? *extensively*; also *extension* and *extensiveness* as nouns.

It is also useful to show them how the same word may be used as an adjective, a noun, or a verb: for instance, such a line as the following occurs;—

How calm is the summer sea's wave.

They see the word "*calm*" here used as an adjective; let them form a sentence, using it as a noun, a verb, etc.: there was a great *calm*—he *calmed* the sea—a *calm* day; and they should occasionally be asked to quote passages from their books, where the word is used in all these different ways; to call to mind passages either in prose or in poetry containing particular usages of words. This teaches them their own language, and makes them recollect particular passages, both of poetry and prose, which they may have read. Lines descriptive of any particular country—of its physical character—character of its people—love of country, etc.; such as Scott's—

O Caledonia! stern and wild,
Meet nurse for a poetic child;
Land of brown heath and shaggy wood—
Land of the mountain and the flood,

Or—

Dear to my spirit, Scotland, thou hast been
Since infant years, in all thy glens of green;

Land of wild beauty and romantic shapes,
Of shelter'd valleys and of stormy capes.

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Or the following from Cowper's "*Task*."

England with all thy faults, I love thee still—
My country! and, while yet a nook is left
Where English minds and manners may be found,
Shall be constrained to love thee. Though thy clime
Be tickle, and thy year most part deform'd
With dripping rains, or wither'd by a frost,
I would not yet exchange thy sullen skies
And fields without a flower for warmer France
With all her vines: nor for Ausonia's groves
Of golden fruitage and her myrtle bowers.

And most of the upper children here can repeat the poetry of their Reading Books by heart, should a passage of this kind happen to be called up, they would be asked to bring it next morning written down from memory, as an evening task.

In the later printed copies of the Dublin Reading Books, I am sorry to observe they have omitted much of the poetry; as I know of nothing which has tended so much to humanize the children in this school, and improve their minds, by calling forth the gentler feelings of their nature, as the poetry of these books.

With many of the pieces by Cowper, Scott, Mrs. Hemans, and others, such as—*On Cruelty to Animals*—*Human Frailty*—*The Stately Homes of England*—*Birds of Passage*—*The Graves of a Household*—the more advanced children are so thoroughly acquainted, as to be able to admire their beauties and to feel the force of them: this also has given a character to their reading which nothing else could have done, and shed a softening influence over their minds which will last through life.

The following may be taken as a specimen how children may be amused into instruction if the teacher is well up to his work (page 204, *Lesson Book*, No. 3):—

O'er the heath the heifer strays
Free (the furrow'd task is done);
Now the village windows blaze,
Burnish'd by the setting sun.

Now he hides behind a hill,
Sinking from a golden sky;
Can the pencil's mimic skill
Copy the refulgent dye?

Trudging as the ploughmen go
(To the smoking hamlet bound);
Giant-like their shadows grow,
Lengthen'd o'er the level ground.

In what direction do you go home from school? West. Did you ever observe your shadow in going home? Yes, Sir. Behind you or before you? Behind me, to the east of me. Does it lengthen or shorten as the sun gets low? Lengthen. You who go home to the east, in what direction do your shadows? before you or behind