

written percented examinations in this subject should be abolished. What is said in the text-book upon the topic under consideration should be read by the pupils under the direction of the teacher. The teacher should see that they thoroughly understand what they read, and at each lesson question them in brief review of the previous lesson. She should read, or cause to be read, parts of other histories or reference books (encyclopædias, gazetteers, etc.) that bear upon the subject of the lesson. She should also give out questions, the answers to which the pupils are to find for themselves; and should encourage them in relating historical anecdotes and in giving sketches of noted events to their classmates.

But history should be taught principally by *biography*. Biography is the *soul* of history. The life of a great personage, as of Cromwell, Napoleon, or Washington, contains nearly everything of importance in the history of the time and country in which he lived. Nothing is more entertaining to the young than the lives of the great men and women who have borne a prominent part in the world. I am not advocating a new theory. This method has been tried for two years in Cincinnati: and in one school alone, more than five hundred historical and biographical sketches were read within the past year, and in one class sixty-one biographical sketches were given by the pupils to their classmates; and the constant allusion to other lives than those under actual discussion led to a wide field of further research. Let me say here, that in a class in United States history, I would not confine the biographical work to our own country, but would encourage the children to read and recite sketches of noted personages of other countries and of different ages. If the method briefly indicated above be pursued, the pu-

pils will become enthusiastic in the subject of history, and will gain a vast amount of valuable information of which they would otherwise remain in ignorance; but above all, they will form the habit of and a taste for reading good books, which will remain with them through life.

Another mistake consists in giving too much time in the reading lesson to mere *imitative* reading, and not enough to logical analysis, to ascertaining the meaning of the words and sentences. Children should be impressed with the fact that the principal object of reading is to obtain the ideas and thoughts of others; and therefore they should early accustom themselves to ascertaining the meaning of what they read, that no word, no sentence, may be passed over without being understood. Let me say that the dictionary should be the almost constant companion of the pupils of our Grammar and High Schools. Would you neglect the elocutionary side of the subject? I am asked. By no means. No one places a higher value on elocution, on the beautiful rendering of the reading lesson, than I do; but I insist that it is the duty of the teacher to see that the passage is thoroughly understood by the pupils before the attempt is made to drill them in elocution.

Another mistake is to be found in the fact that the almost universal tendency in this country of late years has been to crowd too much into the High School course, by putting in subjects which properly belong to Colleges and Universities. To attempt, as I said in one of my annual reports, to make the High School a substitute for the College and University, must result in failure. The pupils are too young. They have not the maturity of mind required to comprehend thoroughly such a course of study. In my opinion, much of the present opposition to the High