

reading. There is no doubt that one of the greatest difficulties with which our primary-school teachers have to contend in teaching reading arises from the limited vocabulary of the children. The language which many of the children speak and the language which they read are necessarily two different tongues. The words which the children are asked to read are often new to the ear as well as to the eye, and call up no ideas in their minds. It is therefore highly desirable for the teacher to extend the vocabulary of his pupils by every means in his power. All new words found in a reading-lesson should be written (or printed) on a blackboard and carefully explained. But columns of dictionary equivalents are of little use. The children should be asked to write the words in different combinations in sentences on their slates, showing their living organic relations to other words in the sentences. In the upper classes analysis of sentences would be found a valuable help in teaching intelligent reading. On the grammar and composition cards at the late examination I required pupils in Standard VI. to write sentences in which simple equivalent words were substituted for words of Latin origin on the cards, and pupils in the other grammar standards to write sentences using words on the card which were taken from the reading-books of the respective standards. Of course such sentences were required as would bring out the meanings of the words. But questions of this kind were often not attempted, and generally, when attempted, showed very poor answers. I call to mind a Third Standard of seventy-two pupils where fully half the class used the word "guests" in the sense of "guessed."

In Standard IV., and even in Standard V. and Standard VI., it was a very common experience to find pupils unable to make out and read words after several attempts, mainly because they were ignorant of syllables. Such ignorance is partly the result of faulty teaching in the very lowest classes, to be referred to later on. The blackboard should be freely used in educating from, and explaining to, the higher classes the derivations, meanings, &c., of unfamiliar words. Owing to the importance of this, I will now give an example in full. Supposing the word not understood to be "superscription:" after a few minutes' intelligent questioning of the class the blackboard should present something like the following, the number of columns depending upon the attainments of the particular class being taught:—

writ-e	scrib-ere	script	graph-o	gramma
writ-er	a-scrib-e	script-ure	graph-ic	gramma-r
writ-ten	de-scrib-e	de-script-ion	auto-graph	gramma-rian
un-writ-ten	sub-scrib-e	sub-script-ion	geo-graph-y	gramma-tical
under-writ-er	pre-scrib-e	pre-script-ion	ortho-graph-y	un-gramma-tical
&c.	tran(s)-scrib-e	tran(s)-script-ion	para-graph	dia-gram
	circum-scrib-e	SUPER-SCRIPT-ION	tele-graph	tele-gram
	in-scrib-e	post-script	photo-graph	mono-gram
	in-de-scrib-able	manu-script	photo-graph-y	epl-gram
	&c.	&c.	&c.	&c.

What grand opportunities for educating his pupils are presented to the good teacher in this little table! No doubt, the usual objection, "No time," will be urged against such a style of teaching; but I can say from personal experience that the teacher will be well repaid in the end. Also, it must be remembered that "getting through" a book is not teaching reading, and that the pupil that thoroughly understands a few pages of his reading-book will probably read matter before unseen in better style than the pupil that has merely skimmed over his book in an unintelligent fashion will read matter which he has before "got through" in class. Teaching that enables a pupil to read with comfort only matter already gone over is not worthy of the name.

I am afraid the reading-books generally in use in Standards IV., V., and VI. are partly responsible for lack of intelligence in reading, for the mechanical difficulties presented by some of the pieces therein, outside the ordinary difficulty of reading itself, are often very great. Many of the pieces teem with difficult and pedantic words; and of how little help to the pupils are the meanings given the following, taken at haphazard from the book, will show: "luxuriance" = "prolificness," "civilising" = "ameliorating," "predecessor" = "precursor," "gigantic" = "stupendous," "illustrative" = "expository," "reflecting" = "animadverting," "receptacle" = "repository," "invincible" = "invulnerable." What a feast here for the lover of the "high-polite" style of English! but what terrible words to inflict upon a poor, harmless schoolboy, and, too, for no fault of his own! I trust the new "Southern Cross Readers" will not be so "prolific" in "stupendous" words as their "precursors." To my mind, most publishers of reading books make a great mistake in endeavouring to teach by means of the reading lesson too many subjects, as history, science, and geography; for these subjects tax the attention of the pupil so severely that the chief object of the lesson—the teaching of reading—is put in a secondary position. In the higher reading books there is not a sufficient amount of interesting narrative and dialogue.

The limited vocabulary of children was mentioned as one great difficulty which our teachers encounter in teaching reading; but in small schools officered by only one teacher, with all, or nearly all, the standards, another great difficulty is the finding of as much time for reading in every class as the importance of the subject demands. In many schools of this kind when pupils leave the primer class for the class preparing for Standard I. they can read only a few of the simplest sounds, and consequently by the end of the year they cannot read the First Standard book well. In the lower classes I am sorry to say that many teachers still continue to teach reading by the alphabetic method alone. This is a great mistake: the syllabic and look-and-say methods should be largely employed. The long and short sounds of vowels should be carefully treated, and children should be taught the powers or functions of letters, as the effect of consonants before and after the vowels. Also, straight laths, ovals, &c., could be used for forming letters, after the kindergarten system. Thus, an upright lath would form "I," two laths at an angle "V," a lath and an oval "b" or "d," &c. Also, considerable time should be devoted to word-building, with the help of the blackboard and the word-builder. At one time or another I asked most teachers to make a word-builder, but few have yet done so. Indeed, I find it very difficult to get anything made in the way