LB 1576
.S4

THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

English in the Public Schools.

H. W. SHRYOCK.

ENGLISH IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

——BY——

H. W. SHRYOCK,

TEACHER OF

LITERATURE, RHETORIC, READING
AND ELOCUTION,

SOUTHERN ILLINOIS STATE
NORMAL UNIVERSITY,

CARBONDALE.

LB1576
.S4

CARBONDALE, ILL , February 10, 1902.

This address was delivered before the "School Council" at its meeting held in the parlor of the Southern Illinois Normal University on November 8, 1901.

By a unanimous vote of the Council, the authorities of the institution were asked to have the address published in suitable form for distribution among the teachers of Southern Illinois. Upon the recommendation of the President of the University, the Board of Trustees, at its meeting held on January 30, 1902, ordered its publication.

D. B. PARKINSON, President.

D. of D.
MAR 12 1915

Exc. C., Libr. 24/'10

*ENGLISH IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

Before we can discuss intelligently either the amount of work to be done in English or the method to be followed it is necessary for us to examine at least briefly, the aim set up in the work. From my point of view the aim is twofold : First, the development of power ; second, the acquisition of culture. I do not mean that these two results are always separable in fact, that the acquiring of power must not also in a measure contribute to culture, nor that culture can fail reflexively to augment power ; but in their type forms these two ends of all literary training are separable and readily distinguishable. Capacity for power is essentially an attribute of the intellect ; it is the capacity for seeing, knowing, understanding ; while capacity for culture is just as essentially an attribute of man's emotional being, is the capacity for feeling, for discriminating between pleasurable and unpleasant experiences, for discerning the ideal, and for responding, not volitionally but involuntarily, to its appeals. Mathematics, logic, physical science—these are the handmaidens of intellectual power ; while poetry, painting, sculpture and music are the

---

*Sufficient warrant for the choice of a theme covering so broad a range of thought will, I believe, be found in the fact that this paper was intended to serve as a general introduction to the special phases of the subject to be discussed at subsequent sessions of the School Council under the following heads : Choice of Subjects for Composition Work, Stimulation of Thought by the Teacher, Correcting of Papers, Function of Grammar, Extensive and Intensive Reading, The Relative Values of Wholes and of Selections, Supplementary Reading, Etc. H. W. S.

ministering angels of culture. I conceive it to be possible—I know it to be possible—for the mathematician, the logician or the scientist to develop mental power until he becomes a splendid and almost unerring machine, or rather an unerring intelligence, to which there are, within his own domain, no obscurities, no mysteries ; and yet devoid of higher emotional capacity he may, in comparison with untrained poet or painter, be as cold and unsympathetic as Sir Artegal's Iron Man Talus. I do not mean that this is a necessary result of a study of mathematics, logic or science, or that this unemotionalism must always accompany the development of power ; but I do mean that this result is always possible.

On the other hand, culture sensitizes and disciplines the emotions, conferring an almost infinite capacity for enjoying the transports of pleasure, but inflicting, too, an almost exquisite sensibility to the torture of pain ; this latter is the awful penalty that we pay for the development of that which is most God-like within us. I do not, of course, refer merely to physical experiences, but the intensity of even physical pleasure or pain is augmented by culture ; what I have said, however, relates more directly to our idealistic weal or woe. It is because of this increased sensibility that poets are usually the most melancholy of men ; not cursed by the hopeless sadness of the pessimist, but gifted with the sublime melancholy of him who wept over Jerusalem, of Him who agonized in Gethsemane

The development of power, then, and the acquisition of culture in the above expressed meaning of these terms, I hold to be specifically the aim of the English work in our schools. In the development of power, and in a large measure in that enrichment of soul-life which is the end of culture, the process is dual in its nature; it is first a process of increment, and then of expression. There must be a regular and systematic increase of experiences; first of sense experiences, and later to these must be added idealistic experiences. The former class the learner gets by looking upon leaf or flower or bird or insect or rock or stream or cloud or sunlit slope; and the human interest is added by looking upon the succession of human events flowing by in a never-ending stream. Or these sense experiences are obtained in still other ways. They are caught from the sob and wail of Autumn winds, from the rustle of leaves, the song of bird, the music of Summer shower, the crash of elemental strife, or, in Tenyson's phrase, "The lin-lan-lone of mellow bells;" or again they are gathered from the incense-like fragrance scenting the air in depths of woodland or over fields of wheat or hay or corn, or the rainbow spray of flowers cresting every earth-wave of living green. And touch and taste and the temperature and muscular senses contribute to the augmenting of these sense experiences.

Then, to enrich all this, the learner must add his idealistic experiences. From the lips of parents or teacher, or from books and pictures, he learns of the deeds of all the yesterdays, and of the strange world beyond his native hills. And thus to increase and intensify his experiences he lays under tribute the entire universe.

The individual increments of sense knowledge can never be entirely the learner's, however, until he has found fitting expression for each. Furthermore, outside the contributions of pictorial and statuary art his idealistic knowledge is obtained through the medium of the spoken or the written word ; hence the acquisition of vocabulary is a matter of the highest importance. Nothing can handicap a child's mental growth more than a meagre vocabulary. Unless one possesses a wide range of words one can not possibly think the widest range of thoughts ; and still more must one fail to make those sharp discriminations of thought that are the crowning achievements of intellectual power ; and yet systematic acquisition of vocabulary is seldom planned for in our courses of study or striven for by the teacher who directs the work. The teacher somehow relies upon the child's ability to pick up by accident the symbols by which he is to gain knowledge and interpret ideas.

I am almost afraid to say how wide the range of one's vocabulary should be, because a statement of the truth will seem extravagant to those who have not given special thought to the subject. On the part of those who have taken the old text-books on rhetoric as authority there is a great misconception as to the number of words that a person of good intelligence must have at his command. Reasoning from the known fact that Shakespeare used but fifteen thousand words, and that Milton had but eight thousand, the older writers on rhetoric concluded that persons of only ordinary literary ability must of necessity have vocabularies limited to three or four thousand words. Each new writer in turn copied this statement, and so through mere force of iteration the claim that but few persons possess vocabularies of more than four or five thousand words has come to be accepted without question. And, strangely enough, no effort has yet been made by any text-book writer to find out even approximately the word-range of a person of fairly good intelligence.

I believe that a person who does not possess a vocabulary of twenty thousand words is a linguistic pauper ; and that every person who finishes the high school course has a right to demand that the course be so planned as to provide for the acquisition of this number of words.

Briefly stated, my reasons for believing that persons of fair literary attainments possess the above indicated vocabulary are as follows : From fairly comprehensive sectional tests with the words in the Shakespeare concordance I am convinced that the graduate of a good high school will read all of Shakespeare's works without consulting the glossary more than fifteen hundred times at the outside limit. This would argue that he possesses a vocabulary of nearly fourteen thousand words. By actual count I have found in Milton's works approximately four hundred words, barring proper nouns, not found in the works of Shakespeare ; and of the four hundred new words at least three hundred are words within the range of a high school graduate's vocabulary. Incomplete but fairly satisfactory tests have led me to believe that there is no great original writer that does not make use of at least one hundred words familiar to persons of good intelligence, but not found within the works of any other classic author ; simply because each author has his own peculiar range of thought that draws to itself its own symbols for expression. To say that Shakespeare used only fifteen thousand words is not to affirm that he did not possess thirty thousand or even more. His mind passed over certain ranges of thought, and those thoughts he set down in portraiture of Portia, or the Jew, or Macbeth, or other of his splendid creations ; and in this portraiture he employed a little more than fifteen thousand of the words at his command. The countless trains of thought that surged through his brain sometimes unuttered, at other times spoken with a brilliancy that gave him an ascendancy over all his associates—these thoughts may have called up other and still vaster linguistic treasures.

If to the above fourteen thousand Shakespearean words at the student's command we add the vocabulary that he gathers from his other literature studies, his history, geography, mathematics and the sciences (the latter contribution alone amounting to over two thousand words) it will readily be seen that I have not overestimated the range of the requisite vocabulary.

Now it must be evident to anyone that a reasonable degree of mastery of twenty thousand words must be a tremenduous task. It perhaps should be stated in passing that one's vocabulary of increment is vastly larger than one's vocabulary of expression. The vocabulary of increment fluctuates but slightly, if at all, but ordinarily its movement is that of a slow but steady increase after the academic years are passed until the approach of senility. The vocabulary of expression, on the other hand, is constantly fluctuating, or ebbing and flowing through an exceedingly wide range. One's command for words for oral expression is, of course, less regular than one's command of diction of written discourse. Today, as the orator speaks, an idea rises in his mind and troops of words come thronging before his mental vision, each in a general way, at least, fitting itself to the idea in his mind. For example, he wishes to express the thought that destruction follows in the footsteps of war, and a train of words,—demolition, subversion, overthrow, ruin, havoc, shipwreck, desolation, devastation, ravage, eradication, extirpation, extinction, death, slaughter, murder, massacre,—with no end of phrasal combinations,—all these present themselves; and from the list he selects that locution that most perfectly symbolizes the pictures bodied forth by his kindled imagination. Tomorrow, perhaps, the same general notion is in his mind; but because abnormal self-consciousness has produced a mental auto-intoxication with its accompanying numbness, only one or two of the most neutral-tinted of these carriers of thought present themselves, or possibly not even one will rise at his frantic but feeble call. The writer, of course, is much less at the mercy of disturbing causes than the speaker; but every writer knows that there are times when words simply will not come at his bidding. The above will, I think, make clear my reason for using the phrase, "reasonable degree of mastery," and will, at the same time, indicate the difficulties of composition.

The greater part of the English that we hear is of the colloquial order; and these home locutions we well nigh get a complete mastery of. But, unfortunately, most of our conversation themes are commonplace and shallow, and we are under no special obligation to call up from our phrasal stores the expressions that sound the deeper depths. And still more unfortunately, when we do try to send the plummet farther down, through a mistaken notion of propriety, we send with it usually the least significant of our thought symbols. Let me illustrate: there is perhaps not a member of this organization who does not have at his command the word "obloquy," and yet I am willing to hazard a guess that not one of you ever used the word in conversation, although it is a word that has no exact synonym, and anyone who has seen the fine use that Lord Macaulay makes of it must have appreciated how effective the word is, and how perfectly it fits itself to an idea that we have abundant occasion to express. The word "deprecate" is another word in point. It has no exact synonym, and without it the idea can be expressed only in an awkward, round-about way, and the speaker is almost certain to make his expression say too little or too much. Now the idea back of the word "deprecate" does not lie outside the range of our conversation themes; and I am certain, too, that the word is unquestionably the linguistic property of every member of the Council; but I doubt if a half dozen of us have ever used it in colloquial discourse. We thus wilfully cripple ourselves because of a certain language bashfulness or timidity. I am not so much concerned, however, with regard to this condition as with another immediately dependent upon it,—a condition that vitally affects the subject of this evening's discussion. What I have said of the two words above cited is essentially true of several thousands of other words. We know them and their phrasal combinations, we appreciate the exactness of expression that they carry with them, we use them freely in writing, but we put them in the list tabooed in our conversation English.

As a result we restrict our spoken vocabulary to about four thousand words; consequently the remaining sixteen thousand words that every person needs for thinking the widest range of thought with the necessary sharpness of discrimination must be obtained from our reading. Fortunately the four thousand words that we learn at home, in the shop, and on the street, are the words that have the greatest variety of uses, and the widest range of idiomatic combinations. For example, the word "for" is used in thirty-five different constructions, the word "beat" forty-three, and the verb "to bear" forty-four, and the word "cut," as noun, adjective and verb, two hundred and eight. These may seem like extreme cases, but there are scores of words equally prolific in uses and combinations.

In this work of extending our vocabulary beyond its conversation limits we are compelled to rely largely, and we may do it safely, too, upon the context in which the word occurs. The ordinary dictionary, such as the International, affords but little real help. This may have a strange sound to those who have made a fetich of the dictionary ; but anyone who has given any thought at all to the subject knows that we do not get a mastery of words by the dictionary use. I am certain that not one of us has ever added five hundred words to his vocabulary through the help given by the dictionary.

I do not wish to be understood as opposed to rational dictionary work. The dictionary must always remain the court of last appeal, but like all higher courts it should not be resorted to for trivial cause. What I protest against is, the practice of selecting long lists of words for the child to "look up in the dictionary"; and particularly the practice of requiring the child to memorize the definitions thus found and to recite them in the class. This is not only barbarous but idiotic. There are two reasons why this is so : the definition is usually by synonyms, or in abstract terms that may mean much to the trained thinker but can mean nothing to the child.

In the second place, every word, with the exception of mathematical terms, both denotes and connotes. The denotation is merely the dictionary definition ; it is the ugly skeleton that must be clothed upon with life and beauty of connotation before the word can make an appeal to us with anything like power. I should explain, perhaps, that I do not use the word "connotation" as it is used in logic, but as it is now commonly employed in the text-books on rhetoric.

Allow me to illustrate: Webster says : "An exile is one who quits or is banished from his native soil; the person expelled from his country by authority; also one who separates himself from his home; or, forced separation form one's native country; expulsion from one's home by the civil authority, banishment; sometimes voluntary separation from one's native country." Then are added the following supposed synonyms : "Banishment, proscription, punishment." Thus the denotation is adaquately provided for, but the real meaning of the word has not even been hinted at. Its connotation has begun to be secured when the child has met with the word in the Landing of the Pilgrim Fathers:

The breaking waves dashed high
On a stern and rock-bound coast;
And the woods against a stormy sky
Their giant branches tossed;
The heavy night hung dark
The hills and waters o'er,—
When a band of exiles moored their bark
On the wild New England shore.

And when he has put into the word the splendid story of heroic courage and dauntless faith, the suffering and the heartaches, and the unutterable sadness that swathes the memory of those fifty-two forgotten graves upon the Plymouth shore; and when to all these associated ideas he adds the unlanguaged homesickness that breathes through John Howard Paine's

> "An exile from home, splendor dazzles in vain,—
> Ah! give me my lowly thatched cottage again!
> With the birds singing sweetly that came at my call,
> And give me that peace of mind dearer than all!"

Then henceforth there are heart-throbs that are called forth by either sight or sound of the word exile, and through its connotation it becomes a part of his life.

The dictionary makers realize the futility of their efforts to put the learner into possession of the real meaning of a word through the process of defining, and seek, in some measure, to supply the connotation by quoting passages illustrating the use of the word whose meaning is sought. How far this falls short will readily be seen when we remember that the quotations given in the dictionaries are mere fragments; fragments, too, that the pupil is liable to misunderstand unless the teacher is by his side with suggestions and help.

The work of expression is of course only just begun when the requisite words are at our command; the next step is the framing of the phrasal combinations that go to make up the symbol for the entire thought unit. The work should begin with spoken discourse or conversation English; and there is no part of the course where this form of composition ought to be entirely omitted. The reasons are readily seen. Perhaps ninety-nine per cent. of all the sentences that any person ever forms are spoken sentences. It is manifestly unwise, therefore, to neglect to give to the learner a training in that form of discourse that he will use almost to the exclusion of the other. Besides, if a child is permitted to be as careless in his spoken language as his native indolence prompts every person to be, it is evident that when he does come to written discourse he will have to correct a habit of carelessness that he has been all his life fostering. It may be urged that every conscientious teacher will correct the pupil's misuse of language wherever he hears it, and that every recitation in every study becomes a composition exercise. At first glance this seemingly ought to be so, but as a matter of fact it never is so, and it ought not to be. If a child were to set a constant and conscious watch upon his expression, he would develop his self-consciousness to such an extent that his faculties would absolutely be paralyzed. Now this lamentable result may be obviated if a regular exercise is planned for in which the spoken English is constantly and carefully watched ; while in all other exercises the pupil trusts for accuracy to the habit set up through the critical exercise just mentioned. In this way he will establish a subconscious-selfmonitorship that will awaken only at a threatened error, and the conscious self will thus be left free to devote all of its energies to the thought that it is developing.

I have just said that no teacher ever does try to make all of his recitations exercises in critical composition. Now and then there is a teacher who really believes that he does this, but as a matter of fact his criticisms are usually reserved for the grosser solecisms, those errors that fall within the purview of technical grammar. The supervision of the work of selecting the exact symbol, the making of proper phrasal combinations, the organization of the separate propositions into the larger units of thought, all of these things he ignores entirely.

Composition work should begin with narration, because the child is more interested in deeds than in things; furthermore, it is much easier to fit words to events than to objects. In narrative writing, fortunately, the composition outlines itself, because the time order in which the events occurred suggests the natural order for the story movement, and the composition work is thus comparatively simplified.

The difficulties in *descriptive* writing are, however, very great. When we look upon an object all of the details break upon the retina simultaneously, and time does not enter into the making of the picture. But when we come to make the word picture the time element must be taken into account. The writer selects all of the details that help to make the object an individual; each detail is imaged in words, one detail being given after the other, and all must be held in mind until the list of essentials is completed; then all must be rethought into the unity that constitutes the picture. It must readily be seen that it requires admirable judgment to select those details that contribute to individuality, and to organize these so that all may combine in the final unity.

In spite, however, of the inherent difficulties in descriptive composition, this kind of work can not long be delayed; its educative value is too great. The nature study work must furnish a considerable part of the subject matter of the early composition. And while much of this may lend itself to the story form of discourse, a larger part will not. Besides, the nature study has a right to demand the help that only descriptive composition work can give. In objective description the pupil must keep every sense on the alert. It is his business to fit words to color, form, motion, sound and the like, and reflexively the nature study is the gainer.

Exposition naturally follows descriptive writing and must be provided for. All of the earlier work here, however, should be confined to that form of exposition that we sometimes call objective exposition ; the form that concerns itself with explaining the general nature of objects, their uses and the like, and thus links itself closely with descriptive writing.

Thus far I have emphasized the expression side of the work, or the composition work. Let us glance briefly now at the increment or reading side. The earliest reading work has for its aim the enlargement of vocabulary, and, as I have already tried to show, this purpose is never lost sight of. But a stage is soon reached where the acquisition of vocabulary is not the chief aim. Furthermore, a still more marked shift occurs in the placing of the higher purpose emphasis. With the introduction of the study of literature proper the dominant aim ceases to be the development of power and passes over to the higher domain, the aquisition of culture. Although the field of literature is so wide, one can hardly go astray in the selection of material for the work ; still there will be an economy of effort if a wise choice is made from the vast treasures that literature offers. A little further on I shall present a list of readings, so for the present I pass by this point.

We hear much said about a method in reading. In so far as the phrase, "a method in reading," is a recognition of the essential unity underlying all the creations of literary art, its validity must of course be recognized, But when the idea is made use of to warrant the same line of procedure in presenting The Bugle Song as that which would be followed in teaching one of the Spectator Papers, it is time for every lover of art to cry out vehemently in protest, as he would against wanton sacrilege anywhere. The purpose and the method in the presentation of any piece of literature must be dictated by the purpose and the method of the author, and the universal child nature. The literature that we use in the school room presents five different and clearly marked types. And the method in each case, in so far as it is dictated by the subject matter, differs widely from that of each of the others. The types that we make use of are the poem, the novel, the drama, the essay, the oration.

The poem makes its appeal to the emotions, never to the intellect. If the appeal is to the intellect, although it be expressed in rhythm and in rhyme, it does not belong to the domain of poetry, but it is merely a rhymed essay, a thing that can not in any sense justify its own existence ; if the poem makes its appeal to the will, and aims to rouse men to action, to uplift them, to bring about reform, it is not a true poem but a rhymed oration, a sermon or an exhortation. If the poem seeks to portray character, then it becomes a rhymed novel, or perhaps a drama in monologue. Pure poetry makes its dominant appeal to the emotions.

In order to understand the significance of any work of art it is absolutely necessary that we understand something of the technique of that art. A poem is the product of one of the most complex and difficult of all the arts ; and it is the very foolishness of folly to think that anyone can interpret a poem properly if he is ignorant of the technical means employed by the poet in the expression of his thought. I do not mean that the child must be put through a long course in poetics before being allowed to read poetry ; but the teacher must have a clear knowledge of the subject and he must possess sufficient vocal skill, and a sufficiently sympathetic insight to enable him to understand and illustrate the leading technical effects. The poet has at his command ~~two~~ three co-efficients of expression ; on the content side, connotation, a subject which I have already discussed, and all I need to add is that there is a connotation of phrase, of proposition, and, some extremists insist, even of stanza structure ; and imagery owes its entire effectiveness to connotation.

On the form side there are two co-efficients of expression, rhythm and tone color. Space will not permit me to discuss these with any fullness, but that I may make my thought clear allow me to select one point from each for emphasis. *Organic variation in rhythm:* The poet always assumes a basic rhythm that shall dominate the entire poem. Now, special emphasis may be secured by any rhythmic variation. Suppose the measure is iambic. For the purpose of enforcement the poet may substitute atrochee, an anapest, dactyl, spondee, pyrrhic, amphibrach or amphimazer. *That phase of tone color that we call harmony:* There are certain words that by their very sound suggest their sense ; and since poetry on its form side is the science of sound, the poet will of course make a large use of these imitative words.

Now it is not necessary for the teacher to lecture learnedly concerning primary, secondary, tertiary and quaternary rhythms and organic variations and enforcements ; nor to talk to his class about the simple or compound tone color, rhyme, melody, harmony, initial assonance, interior assonance or phonetic syzygy ; but if he expects to be genuinely helpful he must have a clear conception of the nature and effectiveness of each of these instruments of expression ; and he needs sufficient elocutionary skill so that he may take a passage in which the poet has displayed unusual art and read it and reread it before the class until the children have caught, as they readily will, the significance of the vocal movement. It should never be forgotten that all poetry is written to be read aloud.

On the content side the same principle holds true. The teacher need not discuss the philosophy of connotation, but he must have a sympathetic insight and the skill to make the pupils feel the expressiveness of connotation. He must never forget that the poet's mission is to make us love the ideally good and to hate that which is ideally evil. It is not within his province to enlighten our understanding as to just what the ideally good is, or as to the essential nature of the ideally bad.

Finally, there is one heresy somewhat prevalent at present in the teaching of reading against which I wish to protest most earnestly ; it is the tendency in the study of a poem to put the emphasis upon the organization. Now in the study of an essay the organization is everything, but in a genuine poem there is no conscious effort at organization. One of the greatest poems in our language, or in any language, a poem that for more than three hundred years has been making poets, is absolutely formless. It would defy the efforts of the traditional Philadelphia lawyer to find in it any plan or continuity of idea. But what of that? The very absence of definite organization is one of its charms. We wander now in enchanted forests, now in labyrinthine caverns, now in the crystal palaces in the depth of ocean. Now we see knights engaged in desperate combat, or dragons overthrown, and fair ladies rescued. It is a vast congeries of fancies more splendid, more disordered than any devotee of hasheesh or opium ever dreamed; and this is the abiding charm of Spenser's Faerie Queen.

In the case of the novels and dramas that we use as reading material in the schools, the dominant purpose is the delineation of character, and the pedagogical purpose is the leading of the child to form ethical judgments. There are other aims both in the writer's mind and in the pedagogical plan, but they are all subordinate to the one just noticed, and the one dominant idea in the main dictates the method. Among the technical features of the novel that need to be advertised to the child are the author's use of plot, personal adventure, accessories, method of portraying character, whether objective or subjective ; his attitude toward the objective world, whether of animal sympathy, artistic sympathy, or pantheistic sympathy ; his skill in the handling of dialogue ; his handling of suggestion and antithesis, and under this latter head his use of humor and the like.

The oration requires essentially a composite method, because in its nature it is composite. It makes its appeal, first to the understanding, second to the emotions, and lastly to the will ; hence, as in the essay, the organization must be emphasized ; as in the poem, the æsthetic or emotional enforcement must be secured ; and, finally, the moral judgments formed must lead to resolution terminating in at least a potential deed.

In all of these methods there are some features in common, because the child nature is of course one of the factors in the method, and because of the basic unity in all the products of the literary art. Some of these common features are as follows : first, the assignments of the studies as wholes, regardless of the length of the production being studied ; second, the quest for the author's purpose ; third, the word and phrase study, including the mastery of words for the enlarging of the pupil's vocabulary ; fourth, the discussion of the art problems involved in the work ; fifth, the pupil's literary judgment must be trained, he must be set to work to discover the finest phrases in order that he may develop "the intoxication of the fine phrase"; and finally, there must be composition work planned for, not only because admirable subject matter is thus provided for the expression work, but also because the expression may help to clarify and intensify the idealistic experience through which the reader has passed.

It should be remembered though that there are some things in literature that no beginner should attempt to express in words. In Matthew Arnold's phrase, every sensible person must feel a loathing at the attempt to "Express the inexpressible or to define the indefinable." There is one kind of expression, however, that we may attempt in the case of these transcendently beautiful thoughts, that is, elocutionary expression. It is not my purpose to make a plea for special training in elocution, but I would insist that all poetry is written to be read aloud, and that we fail to interpret its meaning fully if we do not read it aloud, and read it well. This is true, too, of all impassioned prose.

To read well we must have some technical training. I know that it is common for those who have given but little thought to the subject to assert that all that is necessary is for the reader to get the thought in mind and the elocutionary expression will take care of itself. I do not think, though, that I have ever heard even a reasonably good reader make this claim. These people who say "get the thought and the expression will take care of itself" argue that we get abundant elocutionary practice in our conversation. Now it is even possible that our conversational elocution is bad and inexpressive. But, if our tones are good and expressive in ordinary discourse, still it does not follow that we can interpret great thought by means of the voice.

In the first place, practically all of our conversation is on commonplace, unemotional themes that require the expulsive form of voice with its quick, emphatic down stroke. The average spoken sentence of today is only seven words long.* The average written sentence of today is twenty-one words long. The average written sentence of all of English literature is somewhere in the thirties, probably not far from thirty-three.

Not only are written sentences much longer than spoken sentences, but they are out of all proportion more complex. Children speak almost entirely in independent propositions. A child says: "I went down town, and I saw uncle John, and he took me into his buggy and I rode with him," etc. I have found in our Sub-Normal class in oral composition that where the student is absorbed in the subject matter of his sentence, giving no conscious thought to the form, ninety-five per cent. of the propositions are independent. Careful observation leads me to believe that the person who, in conversation, makes use of less than ninety per cent. of independent propositions, is exceptional. From the foregoing it will be seen that nearly all of our natural drill in oral expression is upon commonplace themes, expressed in short, simple, independent propositions. Now, every positive, independent proposition requires a full fall of the voice; while the dependent proposition requires the suspension of the voice, or what is still more difficult and more finely expressive, the half bend of the voice. Besides all this, the genuinely great poems, such as Paradise Lost and In Memoriam, owe a large part of their beauty to their long drawn out, highly involved sentences, through which no one but the trained reader can effectively send his voice.

---

*Since the above was written I have learned that Prof. Sherman, of the University of Nebraska, estimates the average English spoken sentence at ten words.

There remains still a most important consideration. Nearly all of our conversation themes are commonplace and unemotional. In the main they require the expulsive form of voice, pure tone, radical stress, medium rate, volume and pitch. In contrast with all this I think it may be safely affirmed that there is not one line in a thousand in true poetry, or in impassioned prose, that requires this combination of the vocal elements. I suppose the dominant combination for the greater part of poetry and impassioned prose would be as follows: effusive or explosive form, pure-orotund quality, median-thorough stress, with wide variations in volume, pitch and rate. It is sheer nonsense to insist that these unusual combinations will be natural and easy for the reader to make simply because he grasps the thought that he is trying to interpret by means of the voice.

I know that sensible persons are sometimes afraid to attempt to read well because they have a dread of appearing affected. It should be remembered, though, that there are two kinds of affectation in reading ; the one consists in the overdoing of expression, the other consists in the underdoing of it. Good taste is as seriously offended by the one method of procedure as by the other.

In closing this paper I wish to submit a list of selections offering about one-half the material for the reading work beyond the Fourth Grade. I believe these selections should be read in every school :

Lucy Gray, Song of Marion's Men, Lord Ullin's Daughter, Queen of May, Lochiel's Warning, The Old Arm Chair, We Are Seven, Horatius at the Bridge, Marco Bozzaris, Landing of the Pilgrim Fathers, Sheridan's Ride, Battle of Beal an Duine, Inch Cape Rock, Three Fishers, The Heritage, Elegy in a Country Church-yard, Those Evening Bells, The Universal Prayer, The Closing Scene, The Bugle Song, Lines on Receipt of my Mother's Picture, For a' That and a' That, The Death of the Flowers, The Fringed Gentian, Lines to a Water Fowl, The Chambered Nautilus, Tintern Abbey, Intimations of Immortality, L'Allegro, Il Penseroso, Prisoner of Chillon, Miles Standish, Enoch Arden, Snow Bound, Deserted Village, Sella, Michael, Vision of Sir Launfal, Evangeline, Marmion, Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner, Merchant of Venice, Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, Webster's Bunker Hill Address, Macaulay's Essay on Milton, Silas Marner, House of Seven Gables, Ivanhoe.

A part of these works might have to be read extensively instead of intensively; but there is no considerable portion that may well be omitted. Matthew Arnold said, "Culture consists in knowing the best thoughts that have ever been spoken or written." I believe the above list contains nothing that does not belong in this category. In these works we find imaged every form of objective beauty, whether of wood or field or stream, light or shade, calm or tumultuous seas, cloudland or sun-gilt mountain peak. Man's noblest thoughts are here expressed, and in these works the noblest deeds that men have ever done have found time-defying monuments. These masterpieces reveal human life not as utterly commonplace, sordid and hopeless; but they exhibit it surrounded with an atmosphere of beauty, irradiated by a gleam of that "light that never was on sea or land—the consecration and the poet's dream."

BIBLIOGRAPHY.

Every teacher of English should be familiar with the following books in order that he may get the larger view of his subject:

Teaching the Language Arts—*Hinsdale*.....Appleton.
Aim of Literary Study—*Corson*............Macmillan.
How to Teach Reading in the Public Schools—*Clark*..
........................Scott, Foresman & Co.
Literary Interpretation—*Tompkins*........Ginn & Co.
Special Method in Reading—*McMurray*..............
...................Public School Publishing Co.
Science of English Verse—*Lanier*...........Scribners.
Primer of English Verse—*Corson*..........Ginn & Co.
Science of Discourse—*Tompkins*..........Ginn & Co.
Working Principles of Rhetoric—*Genung*..Ginn & Co.

The teacher of English will get much valuable help from Scott and Denny's Elementary Composition, Allyn & Bacon; and from Lynch and McNeil's Introduction to English Literature, American Book Co.

Carbondale, Ill.:
Herald Steam Print,
1902.

H 114 81 1

THE HECKMAN BINDERY, INC. BOUND TO PLEASE

N. MANCHESTER,
INDIANA 46962

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
0 021 729 913 5