

Worth Trying.

BY ANNA C. BRACKETT.

It is very true that the schools are often asked to shoulder more than their just share of the work of education, and that they are often unjustly blamed for evils which they have neither the time nor the power to prevent.

They have only a limited sphere of work, and their teaching and influence are often most powerfully counteracted by home society influences. But it would seem that the proper use of the English language would fall within their legitimate sphere, and also that constant correction of the most prevalent errors might do something towards overcoming the careless and incorrect speech to which children are too often accustomed at home.

It is a very easy matter to substitute one expression for another, in our own words. I think two weeks is quite sufficient time to break up a bad habit in speech, if—and this is an important point—if, after having noticed the expression, we always repeat it corrected as soon as we have used it.

It is not enough to think, "There, I have said that again!" We must actually go back and repeat the thought in the correct words, and this no matter with whom we are talking. If we have not courage enough to acknowledge the mistake in this way, we shall hardly get over the trouble, but with this heroic treatment I am quite sure that the most inveterate habit of evil speaking may be corrected in two weeks.

What we have to do for ourselves, we ought to make the children do, *i. e.*, they ought always to be made to correct orally a bad expression, and soon we shall find that they will begin to notice it in others, and as it is an important thing to preserve and guard the language in its purity, this ought to be done in any and every recitation, and at all times during conversation with the pupils.

Of course the teachers must all work together on such matters. If they are not accustomed to do this, however, we have no school at all, properly speaking. I believe that there is no school of children in existence that can withstand the quiet but firm presence of all its teachers, acting for two weeks consistently and constantly on any point of discipline or against any bad habit of language.

Acting in this way, the most

common bad habits in English speaking can be almost abolished in a year, and after the expression has become noticed by the majority of the pupils, the new-comers will be swept along with a current.

May I speak of just a few of the most common errors—errors which I know can be almost banished from a school by this constant effort?

I know that it is often unjust to judge a school by one of its pupils; but when I meet a young girl of fourteen whose English, both in pronunciation and grammar, is simply shocking, and when I know that she has attended the same school for several years, I ask myself whether it would be quite unfair to suspect that that school does not do quite all its sustained duty by the English language. In Breal's remarks on German schools, he suggests that possibly the French schools spend too much effort and time on expression, and that the Germans err in the opposite direction.

We in America are certainly in no danger of making the French mistake. Ought not the public schools of this country to spend a little more effort in weeding out some of the most common and worst errors from the daily conversation of the girls and boys who are growing up in them?

One of the most common and most disagreeable errors in pronunciation is the dropping of the *g* from the termination, *ing*. It is disagreeable because slovenly. It reminds one of the Swiss German, where the peasants drop the *n* from the *en* of the infinitive. This is causeless and inexcusable. A little higher up in grade comes the pronunciation of the *t* in *often*. This *t* is properly silent.

About as common and as bad errors as one can make are the use of the past participles "come" and "seen," for the past tenses "came" and "saw." Then comes the word "aint" for "aren't," and a little higher still, the use of "don't" for "doesn't."

Of course it is perfectly justifiable to say "Don't they do so and so?" but it is not proper to say "Don't he do it?" *don't* being the abbreviation for *do not*.

Then comes the error in this sentence: "If any one comes, tell them to wait." The trouble here probably has been caused by the lack of a pronoun applicable to both sexes; but there is no reason why *him*

should not be used in the same sense as *man*. When we say: "Man was made to mourn," we do not thereby exclude women from that privilege.

There is one more error of still a higher grade, of which I will speak.

It is this: "I don't know as I shall do it," for "I don't know that I shall do it."

Will not some school try the experiment of attempting to banish some one, to begin with, of these expressions. It can be done, for it has been done.—*Journal of Education*.

Weather Report.

During Nov. 1882, there were 12 days during which rain fell, and an aggregate of 3.59 in. of water, 9 clear and 9 cloudy days, other than those on which rain fell.

The mean temperature for the month was 41.33°. Highest daily mean temperature for the month 49° on the 5th. Lowest daily-mean 34° on the 12th.

Mean temperature for the month at 2 o'clock P. M., 46.26°.

Highest temperature for the month 53° at 2 o'clock P. M., on the 4th. Lowest temperature 21° at 7 o'clock A. M., on the 12th.

Frosts occurred on the 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 16th, 17th, 23d, 24th, 27th, 28th, 29th.

The prevailing winds for the month were from the S. W. during 9 days, North 17 days, South 4 days.

During Nov. 1881, there were 11 rainy days and 3.16 in. of water, 5 clear and 14 cloudy days.

Mean temperature for the month 40.80°. Highest daily, 50° on the 11th. Lowest daily, 30° on the 26th.

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God is better served in resisting a temptation to evil than in many formal prayers.—*Wm. Penn.*

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