

## TO THE TEACHER.

IN explanation and defense of the system of instruction in reading adopted in the First and the Second Readers, and here continued in the Third Reader, to wit, the formation, at the *very beginning* of the pupil's course, of correct *habits* of reading, we submit to teachers the following remarks :

If the rules for correct reading which we find in our Reading Books are worth any thing, they are worth being *applied* when they can be made of most utility : they are worth being used *by the teacher* to teach correct habits in his pupils before bad habits have been formed. But instead of this, we find these rules in the more advanced Reading Books only, and there they are almost wholly ineffectual to accomplish any good, because they are brought into use after pupils have already formed bad habits of reading. In fact, the greater part of the pupils in our public schools leave school before they are sufficiently advanced to get into the classes which use the Reading Books that give any instruction in rhetorical reading ; and those who remain longer, and *then* are drilled in the *Rules*, make very little progress against the inveteracy of *habit*. So true is this, that many eminent teachers, and several distinguished compilers of Reading Books, pointedly discard, as positively injurious, the use of any formal rules in teaching reading.

We have taken a different course in these Readers, and one that meets the objectors of both extremes. We begin, at the very outset, in the First Reader, to teach correct reading, by giving numerous examples, in nearly every lesson, of the various kinds of easy and natural questions and answers—thus exercising the pupils in *reading*, with the proper inflections, and the very sentences which they are constantly *speaking*. We give them no rules here. Children do not *speak* by rule : why should they learn rules to read by, if they can read correctly *by habit*, just as they speak ? We continue the same system in the Second Reader ; and here we introduce it also in the Third Reader. Here we first lay down a few general rules of inflection, because we think they will be of service to many *teachers* ; and not because we think it desirable, in many cases, that the pupils should yet learn them. Let the pupils constantly practice reading aright, from the very beginning, just as Nature teaches them to speak aright, and they will need no rules to insure correctness. On the contrary, a continual recurrence to rules is a serious impediment to advancement in reading. Indeed, the only use of a rule in reading is to aid in forming a *habit* which shall eventually take the place of *thinking what the rule is*.

The *marks* in the early Readers, denoting the inflections to be used, are therefore designed merely to aid in the formation of correct habits at a period before bad habits have been formed.