

mind with armour which, like the borrowed coat of mail, which David at first put on to fight Goliath, encumbers the possessor and

rather detracts from, than adds to, his efficiency and success.

TEACHING READING TO INFANT CLASSES.

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I have come to the conclusion that the time honored system of beginning our instruction in this branch of education, by learning the names of the letters of the alphabet is not the system by which the child will make the most rapid progress, and by which the faculties of his mind are best developed. I believe it is contrary to the way in which he learns naturally, and imposes upon him a large amount of unnecessary drudgery, calculated not only to check any enthusiasm in the commencement of his school life, but give him a positive distaste to study. It is at least open to the following serious objections. It does not harmonize with the well established maxims "Ideas before signs," "Things then words," "Wholes then parts," "Concrete then the abstract," and any system that does not recognize these principles, or which does not have these principles for its foundation stones, should be discarded, and one framed which will better secure the object we have in view in our professional duties. But some will say, is it not the simplest way to begin with the primary elements, and if the letters are not elementary enough, break them up with still simpler forms, straight and curved lines. Those who advocate and adopt the elementary theory forget that the elements of any science, are only arrived at by a long course of study and careful investigation, and therefore by starting with principles and rules, we are beginning at the wrong end, and the mind upon which we are operating loses all that valuable exercise so well calculated to engage its attention, and to promote its

development,—we mean the exercise of presenting facts and leading the mind from these facts up to the principles deducible from them. "We believe the great error in our systems of primary instruction is the prevalent idea that we should view every subject as a completed science, that we should then reduce it to its so-called elements, and begin our teachings with these. But this is a total inversion of the order in which every science has been built up in the growth of the race and opposed, also, to the order of mental development, and consequently to the principles upon which knowledge is acquired by the individual. What we now call the elements of a subject are the expressions of its general truths—the final results—the few general facts or principles which science has deduced from a large collection of facts after the structure has been completed, and as neither nations nor individuals arrive at these elements first, so they should not first be presented to children."—M. WILSON. Our language was not constructed from the letters of the alphabet. If we look at the origin and progress of language we find that the power of speech was conferred upon man by his Creator, that subsequently when he wished to speak to posterity, he sought to represent words by pictures or hieroglyphics, and that it was only when man had advanced to a good degree of civilization that alphabetic writing was invented. Now, if it is a reliable rule for us to follow in the teaching of a subject, that we should proceed in the same manner in which it has been developed, we will begin not with letters but with