

For the Review.]

Primary Work.

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* * If we realize, as we all must, that the child's success or lack of success in obtaining an education depends largely upon the beginning, I claim that the teacher who takes from fifty to sixty little ones, and becomes responsible for their launching out upon the sea of learning, takes upon herself a great and sacred responsibility, the extent and influence of which cannot be measured in time. In my opinion primary work affords a grand field in which to labor for the betterment of humanity and the Master's "Well done;" and notwithstanding the varied environments, dispositions, tendencies and capabilities of these little ones the good seeds of morality and temperance should be so thickly sown, with all other instruction, that when the weeds of sin do spring up they will soon die out for want of moisture. In the present age a boy needs to go forth from the primary grades filled with respect and love for temperance, and a perfect hatred for intemperance in all its phases, in order to make any use of the education he has struggled for, or the capabilities he may possess; and to withstand manfully the evils and temptations which so thickly beset his pathway on all sides. View primary work from whatever standpoint we may and we cannot but conclude that it is of vast importance, and is well worthy the concentrated energies of the educated men and women of to-day.

Speaking now more definitely of the general work of Grade I, I have learned from experience that the first thing that the teacher should do is to create in the little ones, upon their entrance at school, a love for both school and teacher. He will then have started the child upon the high road to success with all the chances in his favor. What parent could keep at home the little one who says, "I just love my teacher," and "I just love to go to school?" My experience is that the mother in such cases will contend against untold difficulties, poverty and inconvenience, and make any, and every, sacrifice to send them. On the other hand it seems but natural that the mother worried with her multiplicity of domestic duties, when she finds that the little one has acquired a distaste for school, and worries and cries to stay at home, to feel and say that he is young yet, and that perhaps after a little he will go without being forced to do so. In this way many children have lost the golden opportunity.

We should be very careful not to bring about this great stumbling block by attempting to secure perfect order on the part of small children at the first. Of course I know that this order is very desirable and essential to the satisfactory working of the school, but we should not forget that these little ones have become habituated to the freedom of home life, and that they must find the restraint and confinement of school life very irksome at the first. No wise teacher can expect to change the habits of years in a few days or even weeks. Such radical changes are not in accordance with human nature either in young or old. The little ones should be led into this order and obedience gradually and almost unconsciously—not forced into it.

I claim that it is much wiser, with small children, not to see many little things that you do see, and not to hear many little things that you do hear. If the teacher notes and punishes every little act of thoughtlessness on the part of these small pupils the chances are that she will do more punishing than teaching, and the children will avail themselves of every opportunity to stay at home. This method of punishing continually only tends to develop in the child the spirit of rebellion, for it is but natural for the little one to resent punishment or authority exerted by any one but the parent. Again, it does seem such a mistake to deal with little acts of thoughtless disobedience as wilful disobedience. This should not be done even in the most extreme cases. The child's own sense of helplessness and timidity prevent wilful disobedience being habitual on his part; and the teacher generally brings this about by being too hasty or indiscreet. In such cases we are too apt to think and say that the fault is all with the little one, when we might have spared him as well as ourselves the worry of it. If we have our programme properly arranged, and keep the little ones interested and employed, we will not have to contend much with disobedience of either kind in this grade. We should teach everything through the medium of objects and pictures. This method always awakens and retains the interest on the part of small children.

The next important consideration for the primary teacher is the forming of the child's habits in the school room. For this the teacher alone is responsible. It is a well known saying that "habit becomes second nature," and I think that it is also true that a person's success or lack of success in any position in life depends largely upon his habits. The habits of accuracy or inaccuracy; industry or idleness; neatness or lack of neatness, which the child may acquire and put into practice during the first years at school, will have become habitual, and will follow him all through his school life.

Of course the great aim and duty of the teacher is to enable the pupil to master intelligently the work of Grade I in accordance with the Course of Instruction. This achievement is not always possible on the part of every pupil in this grade. It depends upon certain conditions, as the pupil's age, attendance and ability, as well as the teacher's tact and ability to impart knowledge and to assist the young faculties to develop quickly.

The most important subject is that of Reading, and I claim that if the teacher can teach this in a satisfactory manner the same methods will apply to numbers, print-script and the other subjects. A lesson in reading may at the same time afford a lesson in form and colour. To illustrate this I will explain the method I am adopting at present to teach the first steps of reading. It is a simple method, but I find it very satisfactory. Taking wholes before parts I teach the sentence first after the "look and say" method, and then deal with the separate words. Upon printing the second and following sentences upon the black board I have the pupils read it until familiar with it, after which I require them to tell me how many new words there are in the sentence that they have not learned before. I have the crayons in the primary and secondary colours, and with these I print the new words, to impress them upon the