

studies will be comparatively light, and much time saved in their explanation.

To commence with the alphabet, which I shall pass over with but few remarks as practical examples, will be given illustrative of this method by means of the small class that I have brought with me for the purpose; and too much repetition of what is so familiar to every one before me would, without doubt, be to the most of you exceedingly wearisome. I cannot, however, let this opportunity pass without advising all who are engaged in teaching little children, this—the first school lesson to use every possible means of winning the children's attention to the letters; but to be exceedingly cautious not to force them to attend, either by sharp words or angry looks, and much less by any species of punishment; for if severity be resorted to at this early period, it will certainly defeat the object for which every teacher ought to labour most assiduously, viz: to create in the child a fondness for school and love for learning at the very outset of his school career. It will, perhaps, be asked.—How is the attention of every one in the class to be secured during the whole time the teacher is giving a lesson? I am aware it is sometimes rather difficult to effect this, particularly when there is not a separate room in which to give instruction to this class, because if they are to be taught in that amusing and interesting manner, which I have found to be the most conducive to their rapid advancement, there will necessarily be a little noise, caused by their very eagerness to make those remarks to which a desire for information might often prompt them, or to answer the many questions put by the teacher, in his praiseworthy anxiety to impart even more information than they desire. We all know too, that perfect stillness and quietness are very distasteful to the infant mind. Where an infant school is not connected with the other, nothing is so much required as a class room in which little children may be taught their letters, and the formation of these into small words.

Without further preface, then, I will introduce to you these few small children from my own school, and endeavour, by taking a few of the letters of the large alphabet to explain the method I have employed in teaching them to a class. (*Here the lecturer gave copious illustrations of his methods of teaching the large alphabet.*)

All the other letters must be gone over in a manner similar to those which I have selected; the teacher making it his chief study to keep up the interest of the class the whole time. Should any of the children exhibit signs of fatigue or impatience, the best relief from that is to relate a very interesting little anecdote; or if the time is suitable, to let them out to play for a little while. If however, the teacher be not prepared, as he always should be, with an amusing story; or for any reason he cannot allow the class to go out, there are many other things which could be said about the letters to relieve what may have become a monotony. The teacher should be careful during all this time, that each letter so described be repeated several times both by himself and by the children; so that the principal thing for which he is labouring may be accomplished, viz: the learning the names of all the letters by every one in the class. For some time after, I began teaching, my impression was, that every letter should be known perfectly before the children were permitted to take one step in advance; and that it was impossible for them to learn to spell or read the smallest word till this task was fully performed.

For many years past, however, I have worked on a very different plan, which I found, after repeated experiments, to produce results that were scarcely expected when it was first adopted. There is no originality in the method, and it would, therefore, be the height of presumption in me to claim the least credit for adopting a plan originated by another and followed out, no doubt, by many teachers now before me; but for the benefit of those young persons, who are about to become teachers, a few words in regard to it may not, perhaps, be altogether unprofitable. The mode of operation is simply this.—The children are taught the greater part of the large alphabet in the manner before described; and then allowed to spell, pronounce and apply small words. The teacher, of course, must tell them the letters which form the words, many times before they are perfectly known; but while he is doing that, the children are learning much more than simply the names of the letters—they are connecting these letters together in the formation of words; pronouncing the words and applying them in simple and easy sentences of their own, which the teacher assists them to make and use. By a skilful and pains-taking teacher, a good knowledge of small words, with their uses in forming simple sentences, may very easily be imparted while the children are learning the small letters; and frequently in a shorter time than it would have taken him to teach them the letters only; not to mention that the one

method is, to make the best of it, tedious and wearisome both to the teacher and the children; because it is only a repetition of the letters which had been previously learned in a different form; while the other may be made exceedingly interesting, for at every step the children find something new, and much that is really amusing. Nor will this method of teaching prove less interesting to the teacher, if he loves the children and strives to render them pleased and happy, at the same time that he is exerting all the talent with which nature has endowed him, and all the skill acquired by practical experience and observation, to infuse into their young minds the simple truths of which these letters and words in connexion, are the representatives. Many who have not followed this mode will be very likely to say: How can little children of perhaps three or four years of age be made to understand any thing of the ideas of which these small words are the signs? But if the teacher has a happy manner of analyzing the most simple sentence and applying the words—even the smallest—in various ways; always using, in his explanations, words and expressions adapted to the age and capacity of the children, he will soon discover that the ideas are generally more readily acquired and retained in the mind than the bare words which represent them. Take, for example, the simple and amusing sentence, "The cat bit a rat and the dog bit the cat." Here we have a compound sentence consisting of eleven words, seven of them different from each other. Now suppose the children do not know any of their small letters, and perhaps not all the large ones, they can still be taught to know, not only the letters in it, but to spell, read and understand the whole from beginning to end, in as short a time as the same letters could be taught to them were they arranged in alphabetical order. I have tried the experiment several times and found that in every case, the letters were got sooner, the task made more pleasant, and that many simple ideas were drawn out, and the young mind exercised and expanded during the process of instruction. Their first lesson in Grammar, Natural History, and Arithmetic, may be given in connexion with the reading, even at this stage of their progress. Take for instance, the first word of the sentence already given: "*The.*" The teacher repeats to the class the names of the letters, critically examining into their shape, and making many remarks on the proper position of the lips, teeth, tongue, &c., in the pronunciation of each one, as nearly as possible, in the same manner as the large ones were taught. He need not fear that the time spent in this way will be lost, for no other method of teaching will, in my opinion, tend so much to impress the letters upon the memory of every one in the class. The teacher then pronounces the word distinctly; this is done several times before proceeding further. It is necessary that much care be taken on his part that not the slightest impatience or loss of temper be shown, should the children's attention be occasionally diverted from the letters and directed to some other object; or should they exhibit a little of that uneasiness natural to small children, when a repetition of the same thing is so often required. It is better, however, not to weary them with too much repetition, but to proceed with a few questions about the word *the*, in connexion with the next one, *cat*. And here the initiatory lesson in Grammar, might with much advantage be given; but it must be done in a very intelligible and inviting manner or it will be of little benefit. I would question the children, and talk to them somewhat in this way. (*Here illustrations were given by the assistance of the class previously introduced of the manner in which small children are taught to read at the time they are learning their small letters.* It was also shown that the simplest elements of Grammar, Geography, Natural History, &c., might, with considerable facility, be taught at the same time.)

In teaching children, particularly small ones, one important thing ought never to be lost sight of, viz: that not a single word or expression should be made use of which they do not clearly and fully understand. This will necessarily require the repetition of many small words, and common-place expressions: such as I have made use of to the class before me; but we must constantly bear in mind that it is the children's advancement that ought to be the teacher's chief aim, and not his own improvement in eloquence, pleasing perhaps to his own ears, but altogether unintelligible to the children. Talking to them and questioning them in this manner through every stage of their progress in reading, will save much valuable time when they begin to study grammar systematically.

In fact, by this method, they may be taught grammar in so practical a manner, as almost to supersede a text book on that branch of study; and besides, when taught altogether from the text book it is, to most children, dry and insipid; but when taught in the way I have described, it may be rendered pleasant and agreeable to children of every age and at every step they take.

When I began this paper it was my purpose to attempt by copious