

While one is a child, he must 'speak as a child, understand as a child, think as a child;' and must therefore be 'reared as a child, and be fed with milk, and not with meat,' until he be 'able to bear it.' Even the infant mind, indeed, is 'able to hear,' and to relish, and digest far more than those are inclined to imagine, who have never witnessed its workings in a due state of exercise and vigor. Still, however, it is, and only can be the mind of a child, and not of a perfect man. It must not be crammed with the strong meats, either of the theologian or the philosopher.

To fix, indeed, precise limits in a matter of this kind, is of course quite out of the question; much in this, as well as in every thing else connected with the education of young people, must depend upon the discretion and skill of the instructor. Great care, however, must obviously be taken, to distinguish between the kind of information and mode of communication applicable to the younger children, and those which may be employed in the more advanced classes of the same seminary. A single year at the opening of life, it ought ever to be remembered, makes a prodigious difference in the capacity of the human mind. So also in schools, where children are retained till they arrive at twelve or fourteen years of age, a much wider range of information may be attempted, than would be at all proper where they leave it at eight or nine. In a school also, for children of the humbler ranks of life, whose whole education is in all probability to be confined within its walls, it may be advisable to crowd a greater quantity of useful information into a narrow space, than will be either necessary or expedient, in the case of those more highly favored individuals, whose circumstances hold out to them the prospect of a more protracted education, and leisure for a more gradual, extensive, and systematic course of study. But nothing, in short, can be more injurious to the young, draw down greater ridicule on any system of education, or give more countenance to the old and pernicious practice of learning by rote, than a teacher indulging his own vanity, or that of his pupils and their friends, by allowing them to converse, to read, and to write, on subjects entirely beyond the capacity of their years.

#### DIFFICULTIES OF YOUNG CHILDREN.

The school-house is not generally the most inviting place that ever was to a little child. There is nothing about it, that is so interesting as to awaken a child's mind to new and nobler thoughts. It is often located in the highway, and frequently on the top of a hill, exposed to the fierce wintry blast, or in some low, sunken spot, where, in wet weather, it is inaccessible except by wading. The inside looks dreary to a child; there is no-

thing to attract attention, but naked walls stained with smoke, uncomfortable, rickety benches, carved by unskilful hands, a three-legged table, and a broken chair.— Each child, on going to school, goes through a fit of home-sickness, about as regularly as the young seaman does with a fit of sea-sickness. I have heard of a child, who endured it till nearly noon the first day and absconded. He went home crying and said he did not want to stay there, for they did not hang on any pot; another assigned as a reason for not wishing to go again, that there was no pantry; another child on returning home, was asked what he did at school. "Nothing but sit on a bench and say A, B." These facts show that the first impressions made upon children on entering a school-house are unfavorable to their success in learning.

It is my opinion that the fondness of children for study, and the rapidity of mental acquisitions, depend in part, upon the manner in which they are first instructed. At the age of three or four years, children are placed in school, and commence with learning the alphabet.— They are usually seated on the most uncomfortable seats in the school-room, and required to observe perfect silence. This is entirely contrary to the habits and inclinations of children. The dulness of the scene is varied only by being called into the floor two or three times each day, to repeat the names of the letters. Of all this they cannot be expected to know the use, and if told, it is difficult to make them felt that the benefit will ever compensate for the present inconvenience.

It is a duty, binding upon every school-teacher, to devise or use such a mode of teaching as shall interest little children. He should enter the school-room feeling that the future history of the children committed to his care, will depend very much upon the manner in which they are now taught. If the exercises of the school are so conducted that the child becomes interested, he will be likely to make great acquisitions in knowledge, and be more extensively useful. If the exercises of the school are dull and tedious, the child will go to school with reluctance, acquire a disrelish for books, grow up in comparative ignorance, and be less extensively useful.

How important then that Teachers feel the necessity of beginning aright, and of bending the twig as it ought to be inclined.

It is not uncommon for children to attend school three, or even six months, before they can pronounce the letters of the alphabet. Little children, before they are one and a half years old, before they can speak five

words so as to be understood, generally know the names of the members of the family, of the articles of furniture in the room, the names of various domestic animals, and of parts of the body. If a little child, without the labor of being taught, learns so many names, it would seem that one, four years old, ought to be able to call the names of twenty-five letters in less than three months. An intelligent child three years old, put into a family with twenty-five children, will learn the names of all in one day so perfectly as to retain them in memory. I will not ask whether little children cannot learn the names of all the letters in one day; but if the requisite pains were taken they can learn them in one week.—*The Teacher Taught.*

#### NATIONS CANNOT AFFORD TO BE IGNORANT.

These are not the times in which it is safe for a nation to repose on the lap of ignorance. If there ever was a season when the public tranquillity was ensured by the absence of knowledge, that season is past. The convulsed state of the world will not permit unthinking stupidity to sleep without being appalled by phantoms and shaken by terrors, to which reason, which defines her objects and limits her apprehension to the reality of things, is a stranger. Everything in the condition of mankind announces the approach of some great crisis, for which nothing can prepare us but the diffusion of knowledge, probity, and the fear of the Lord. While the world is impelled with such violence in opposite directions; while a spirit of giddiness and revolt is shed upon the nations, and the seeds of mutation are so thickly sown, the improvement of the mass of the people will be our grand security; in the neglect of which, the politeness, the refinement and the knowledge accumulated in the higher orders, weak and unprotected, will be exposed to imminent danger, and perish like a garland in the grasp of popular fury. *Wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times, and strength of salvation; the fear of the Lord is his treasure.*

¶ We beg to direct attention to the articles in this number referring to the state of Education in Upper Canada.— That on the School System of Upper Canada, shows that means of improvement similar in principle to those now proposed here, though differing somewhat in details, have been adopted successfully there.— The address of the Governor-General, on the occasion of laying the foundation stone of the noble Normal School building now in process of erection, evidences the high value there attached to Common School Education.