

CHILDREN'S FIRST YEAR'S WORK.

Imagine before us a class of little people just on turning upon a new experience,—their first year of school. The first day finds before us a class of twenty new pupils, all on the alert to see every movement of teacher and pupils. Now what shall we do? The first thing after forming our class is to get acquainted with the children, and we know of no better way to accomplish this than to hold a little "accessible"; talk frooly with the children, and get them to do the same with you. Have the children feel at once that this is home to them.

Right here is also a good chance to introduce your name, if you do not want to be called "teacher" during your stay with them. We make this emphatic, for we find this error so prevalent in many of our schools. At the beginning of the year, while talking with our class, we ask how many knew our name. A number of hands raised. We called on several to tell us. The majority thought it *Teacher*; some did not know. Perseverance obviated this difficulty, and "teacher" has become almost unknown in our school room.

One recitation hour has closed. We send the class to their seats, giving them some busy work which we have previously prepared. In the afternoon we have another social talk in the form of language-work; for example, "Nonie, what did you see on your way to school?" What a benefit to us, as teachers, if we could all feel as Supt. Raab once said, that education means "to lose time, not to gain it."

A day of new experience passed. The little ones, upon reaching home, are interrogated as to how much they have learned to read and write. Because of the fact that the children can do neither, we are set down in the minds of a few as not being competent to fill our place. However, we are not discouraged, for something has been gained for us that is worth more than the reading and writing. We will thus plod on, keeping in mind the thought that "true growth is slow growth."

The second day finds us entering more upon the realities of the school room. We must start with a foundation well grounded. Let us note a few points in this foundation. First, we must gain attention, second, do something, third, have class tell what was done; fourth, have class do the same, fifth, give name to what was done, sixth, class repeat name; seventh, practice and corrections.

The first recitation hour finds each member of the class supplied with a primer which the thoughtful parents have provided. Must we use these books? We say no. A book is not the first thing to be put into the child's hands. What the children need is a preparatory drill which will teach them to see, to hear, and to speak properly.

We must be supplied with numerous objects and pictures to correspond, so as to teach the children to distinguish between object and picture. After presenting the written word, a good deal of time must be spent in the study of it, as to the number of letters composing it, and the sounds of the letters. Action-words, corresponding to the name words, should be given very soon. The slates should be ruled immediately, and words written on the board should be ruled likewise corresponding to those on the slates.

After a fair list of names and action-words can be recognized quickly, we would present the chart. The first half of the year should find the children started in the first reader, and by the close of the year it should be nearly completed, if not quite. They should not only be able to read in the reader, but should be able to do some sight-reading from other first readers and from little papers, such as "Valo's Easy Lines." It must be understood that the children can now write anything they can read. No much stress cannot be put upon the use of capitals and punctuation marks. The singular and

plural forms of nouns, and the apostrophe, should have a due amount of attention.

For language-lessons, objects with which children are already familiar furnish abundant materials. Provide objects which will excite the interest of the class. Keep the object from sight until time to use it. Two or three talks on familiar objects may be followed by picture lessons on domestic animals, or a lesson or two on sounds made by different animals. We have found lessons in color, on the human body, and also on leaves of different trees, to be very interesting.

In number-work great caution is needed not to advance too rapidly. For the first three or four months deal entirely with number until the children are thoroughly immersed in it. If this work is well done, the introduction of figures will be much more rapid. In introducing figures, insist, as far as you can, upon the making of good ones.

If we are able to teach all about number and figure through ten, we think we have accomplished a good year's work. A vast amount of practice is needed to secure correct and rapid work.

It is difficult to conceive of any human occupation in which a knowledge of drawing would not be beneficial. As a study it disciplines the mind; it leads the children to observe objects more closely, as to their size and shape; it also creates a love for the beautiful.

A love for drawing is a marked characteristic of almost every child. How often we see children spending their time with slate and pencil, and taking great delight in their rude pictures. While this is true, ought it not to be an incentive for the teacher to try to develop in her pupils a love for something better?

Should drawing be taught in the first year's work? Without doubt it should. Just how far this subject can be carried depends largely on the size of the school and the facilities for work. The children should be taught, at least, in form, such as the making of pictures from bits of coloured cardboard or coloured sticks. Clay-moulding is one of the most excellent means by which the idea of form can be developed in the child.

The children should be taught to use pencil and crayon readily. In all cases where pictures occur the children should be encouraged to try to draw from them. To quite an extent drawing from objects can be carried out, also simple dictation exercises.

We have now tried to give a general outline for the first year's work. This cannot be accomplished without great diligence on the part of the teacher. It must be "line upon line, precept upon precept; here a little and there a little."—*Isabella L. Grant, in The American Teacher.*

PERSONAL.

We regret to learn that Mr. Thos. Hart, teacher, of St. Andrews, is lying seriously ill from inflammation of the brain.

Mr. Edward Cenley died recently at Apohaqui at the age of 32. He was well known as an industrious and energetic teacher.

Prof. C. G. D. Roberts has in press a volume of verse, of which high expectations have been formed by those conversant with the bard's previous poems.—*Sun.*

The once mighty Euphrates seems likely to disappear altogether. For some years past the river banks below Babylon have been giving way, so that the stream spread out into a marsh, until steamers could not pass, and only a narrow channel remained for the native boats. Now this passage is becoming obliterated, and unless matters improve, the towns on the banks will be ruined, and the famous river itself swallowed up by the desert.

LITERARY NOTES.

St. Nicholas for March is at hand and as usual is filled with admirable articles and illustrations for young people, and interesting as well to their elders. Among many entertaining sketches, forming a list of contents nowhere equalled for excellence and variety, may be found the following: The Boyhood of Thomas Bailey Aldrich, giving a lively sketch of the school days of this distinguished American author; No. 7, sketch of Historic Girls; What a Boy saw in Madeira, is a story of adventure in boys' own style; Among the Gas Wells is further continued and illustrated in an instructive manner; the St. Nicholas Dog Stories, New Leaf from Washington's Boy-life, with many others, combining instruction and amusement. The story of the diligent ichthyosaurus with an accompanying sketch is good:

There once was an Ichthyosaurus,
Who lived when the earth was all porous,
But he fainted with shame
When he first heard his name,
And departed a long time before us.

THE SWISS CROSS for February (the second number) is at hand. This is the organ of the Agassiz Association, which is destined to have a far wider and more general influence from the circulation of this useful periodical. Apart from its value to the members of the Agassiz Association, it is of great interest to all instructors and students in natural history, the articles being comprehensive and written in a popular and pleasing style. Among the features of interest in the present number are two subjects continued from the last, Early Man in America, and Water Crystals; an interesting and instructive lesson on Rivers and River Valleys; Submerged Trees of Columbia; with various others on useful and entertaining topics. Edited by Harlan H. Ballard, and published by the Science Company, New York.

SCIENCE AND EDUCATION.—This periodical, a special monthly edition of Science, devoted to educational topics, is, or should be, gradually winning its way in favor, both on account of its advanced ideas on education and the thoroughly practical modes in which such subjects are treated. Nor is the magazine confined to the theory and practice of education, but a careful study of its pages shows a broader scope—an intelligent discussion of living subjects practical and scientific in character. To no class are these publications—*Science and Science and Education*—more valuable than the progressive teacher. With the one he is enabled to keep abreast of scientific progress and discovery,—with the other he is brought in contact with practical and progressive education.

THE CENTURY magazine just received is one of the best numbers of the year. Its illustrations are admirable, with a table of contents fully up to what is expected of this great people's periodical.

PRONUNCIATION.

A writer in the *New England Journal of Education* gives the following directions for teaching pupils pronunciation:—

1. Insist on deliberate enunciation. Even in rapid class-work there can be no need for haste at the expense of correctness. The best work is that which is done with the greatest care and slowly.
2. Do not reserve this work of correct enunciation for the reading lesson. This is too often the case, and as the reading is not often than once a day, and then only for a stated period of time, there is little gained in the way of proper sounding of the commoner words of our language.
3. Have a care for the colloquial words, the words of every-day conversation. The more pretentious words will probably secure for themselves their proper sounding, while the "whites," "ands," terminals in "ing," etc., etc., will pass unnoticed.
4. Cultivate the habit of correct spelling, and take the time to correct all errors as they occur. If a scholar is reciting and pronounces a word incorrectly, immediately sound it and require its correct sound in return. The time it takes to do this is inappreciable, and the gain is much.
5. Have a daily exercise in pronouncing. Place several words on the blackboard each morning, to be looked up by the children and pronounced by them some time during the day.
6. Finally, and above all, be correct yourself. Set an example of deliberateness and plain, clear enunciation of words that shall be worthy of emulation.