

Literature in the Primary Grades.

Many of our primary teachers know of the delights that good wholesome children's literature inspires. These teachers have sympathy with childhood; they love what the children love; they know how to tell—not read—a good wholesome story. These stories, if properly selected and well told, are a stepping-stone to the love of good literature—and what more precious possession can any child take away from school than that.

There are many things that go to make up a good story. It should be childlike, and suited to the understanding of children. It should be simple, straightforward, pure. It should be full of fancy. To make a child love good reading, give him something that appeals to his love of the beautiful. Introduce him to thoughts that are worthy of being remembered. He is an active little being, hence the story must have strong healthy action.

Mrs. Nora Archibald Smith tells us that "we must beware of giving a one-sided development by confining ourselves too much to one branch of literature; we must include in our repertory some well selected myths, fairy stories which are pure and spiritual in tone, and a fable now and then. Nature stories, hero tales, animal anecdotes, occasional anecdotes about good, wholesome children, neither prigs nor infant villains, plenty of fine poetry, and for the older ones legends, allegories, and historic happenings."

Dr. G. Stanley Hall says: "Many boys enter college who have never read a book through except cheap novels. On the other hand, no one commends a bookish child. But worse than either is the child whose brain is saturated with low or cheap reading, and is altogether illiterate for all in print that makes the ability to read desirable. In the selection of school reading the children's votes should be carefully taken though not always as final. Of one hundred and twenty-four Boston school-boys of thirteen years old, who were asked what book first fascinated them, "Robinson Crusoe," "Mother Goose," Jack the Giant Killer," were mentioned in that order of preference by the great majority, and might more readily be allowed young children than most others named. "Cinderella," "Jack and the Beanstalk," "Tom Thumb," "Gulliver," "Aesop," "Red Riding Hood," "Arabian Nights," which came next, are unexceptionable, and should be told every child who has not heard them before coming to school."

Miss Sarah Louise Arnold writes: "Learn what the children like and begin with these likes. The field of literature is well suited to the children. The best of literature is that which was written for the children of the world. It should *not* be forgotten that if we would teach the child to like that which is good in reading we must establish the liking in early years. It is not enough that we should tell him in later days that certain books are good and bid him to read them. When he is grown up he will choose that which he likes, and our work is to lead him to like good things. We cannot, then, begin too early. The very cradle songs should be wisely chosen. The nursery tales should be those which have fed the children of many an age and clime."

In the next number we shall begin a series of articles in the literature suited to the different grades of the primary schools.

Dr. Clifford contributes to the *Baptist Times* a letter on the settlement of the education controversy in England. He says:

"We are encouraged to hope that the people of England will obtain these three things: (1) popular control of State education; (2) the abolition of theological and ecclesiastical tests in the State teaching profession; (3) the exclusion of sectarianism of every type from the curriculum of the schools. "Let us," he adds, "municipalize education on the broadest and most democratic lines. Abolish secrecy of management; bring the administration to the light of day. Let the people not only rule themselves through their freely and directly elected representatives, but also let them know all their representatives do, and how they do it."—*Educational Times*.

An "Old Subscriber," on taking leave of the REVIEW, says:

"Your journal keeps improving. Every number is filled with useful hints. I wish to thank all the contributors for the help and pleasure received from the different subjects explained and discussed. I consider the REVIEW of infinite value to the practical teacher. A Happy and Prosperous New Year to you all!"

A good reading lesson always furnishes something worth talking about. The teacher must remember, however, that it is the pupil who needs the practice in talking. The teacher should keep as still as possible. A great talker is seldom a good teacher. Let the pupil do his full share of the talking.—*Selected*.