

PRIMARY SCHOOLS.

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Erroneous impressions have prevailed, with regard to these schools. The popular idea has been that any body could teach a primary school, even the very young with limited attainments and no experience. This is a mistake; for no schools so imperatively demand all those traits and excellencies of character which constitute a model teacher: namely, gentleness of disposition, courteous and winning manners, self-control, skill in discipline, quick perception, ingenuity, a mind fruitful of expedients, habits of order and neatness, and attachment to children, a love for the profession of teaching, with a full average of mental endowment and intellectual culture. No department of instruction suffers more from inattention. What cultivator who should neglect his plants and young trees while in the nursery, and assign, as an excuse, that they were soon to be transplanted, and then would receive more attention, but would be pronounced exceedingly unwise. Every child, as well as every plant and tree, shows the effect of early culture. Our primary schools are of primary importance. Impressions made here remain through the whole course of instruction. Foundations laid here must modify, as well as sustain, the entire superstructure. The temple cannot be broader than its base. In these schools it is not enough to make right impressions; they should be made in the right way. All the exercises of the school room should be pleasant and attractive. A forbidding manner, or injudicious chiding, should be studiously avoided.

The general impression seems to be, that children naturally love play, and dislike study; that they will run to the one, but must be forced to the other.— That this is, in so great degree true, comes more from the fault of the parent and teacher, than from the nature of the child. From early infancy, we woo a child to his play, and encourage him, if he fails. We certainly never think of chiding him, but how we purane the opposite course when we turn him to his books. Now, suppose we reverse our practice. Insist upon his playing in a particular manner, at a stated time, and for a fixed period, and scold and punish him when he is tardy, indifferent, or plays badly; but, on the other hand,

make everything attractive, encourage and commend him even though he may fail at his study. How soon would his nature be changed? He would love his book, and hate his ball.

Text books are too closely followed in our primary schools, and, indeed, in all our schools. We want more of oral instruction, *more of the living voice*. Object lessons, when skillfully managed, are always attractive and interesting, especially to young children. A bit of glass, a scrap of iron, a sponge, a flower, an ear of corn, a gray stone, a green or dry leaf, any of the most common objects, often furnish a much better text than a printed book. The question in a primary school should be, How can it be entertained, as well as instructed? and so of all schools.

The attention of our best instructors is turning to the improvement of primary schools; and they certainly merit the cordial support, and fostering care, of all who feel an interest in the cause of education. A most valuable aid to oral instruction, in these schools, has recently appeared in the form of "Primary School Tablets," designed by Hon. John D. Philbrick, the accomplished Superintendent of the Public Schools of Boston.— They afford important facilities to oral teaching, which experience has proved to be indispensable to the highest success in elementary instruction. No greater mistake can be made, than to attempt to confine the attention of a young child, for any considerable time, to the printed pages of a school book. It cannot be done. Childhood will be entertained. It is impatient of confinement, and loves variety; and if the teacher does not furnish it, the boy will. All the appliances of severe discipline will not hold him much in check.

The "Tablets" referred to, are well adapted to the purpose for which they were designed, and I cordially commend them to the attention of those entrusted with the management of our schools. A set of them may be seen in the office of your Commissioner.

MEANING OF WORDS.

How many words men have dragged downwards with themselves, and made partakers, more or less, of their own fall! Having, originally an honorable significance, of those that used them, or those about whom they were used, deteriorated, or degenerated thereto. What a multitude of words, originally harmless, have

assumed a harmful meaning, as their secondary lease; how many worthy have acquired an unworthy. Thus "knave" once meant no more than lad, (nor does it now in German mean more); "villain" than peasant; a "boor" was only a farmer; a "varlet" was but a serving-man; a "churl" but a strong fellow; a "minion" a favorite; "man is God's dearest minion," (Sylvester.) "Tyme-server" was used 200 years ago, quite as often for one, in an honorable as in a dishonorable sense, "serving the time." "Conceits" had once nothing conceited in them. "officious" had reference to offices of kindness, not to busy meddling; "moody" was that which pertained to a man's mood, without any gloom or sullenness implied. "Demure" (*des moeurs*, of good manners) conveyed no hint, as it does now, of an overdoing of the outward demonstrations of modesty. In "crafty" and "cunning" there was nothing of crooked wisdom implied, but only knowledge and skill; "craft," indeed, still retains very often its more honorable use, a man's "craft" being his skill, and then the trade in which he is well skilled. And think you that the Magdalene could have ever given us "maudlin" in its present contemptuous application, if the tears of penitential weeping had been held in due honor by the world?

TRIBUTE TO WOMEN.—The celebrated traveler, Ledyard, paid the following handsome tribute to the female sex:—"I have observed," he says, "that women in all countries are civil, obliging, tender and humane. I never addressed myself to them in the language of decency and friendship, without receiving a friendly answer. With man it has, often been otherwise. In wandering over the barrens of inhabitable Denmark; through honest Sweden and frozen Lapland; rude and quarrelsome Finland; unprincipled Russia; and the widely-spread regions of the wandering Tartar; if hungry, dry, wet, cold or sick, the women have ever been friendly, and uniformly so; and to add to this virtue, (so worthy the appellation of benevolence,) these actions have been performed in so free and kind a manner, that if I was dry I drank the sweetest draught, and if hungry coarsest morsel with a double relish.

When Ursula went to school, she was asked why the noun bachelor was singular. "Because," she replied, "it is so very singular they don't get married."