

observation, and the question—When shall the education of the child commence?—remains unsettled, in the minds of many earnest inquirers.

It is generally admitted, that the earliest impressions are the most enduring—this being so, then it would seem to be a fair deduction—that as soon as the child is susceptible of comprehending impressions made upon the mind by words and by observation, should his systematic training and education be begun. The capacity of children like that of adults, differs, and so of necessity will the most suitable time to begin educating, be earlier or later according to the ability to understand and know.

The arts of reading and spelling are not generally easily acquired. Yet there are examples where boys and girls read and spell well at the age of four and five years; it has been remarked by a teacher of great observation, that if a child who has attained the age of six years, cannot read easy lessons fluently, the difficulty of doing so increases with increasing years. It is very disheartening to a child who has attained the age of seven or eight, to be still unable to read easy lessons with fluency. He feels keenly the odium that seems quietly to distil upon him who is denominated a bad reader—it is worse than being a bad speller. Early inferiority when one is fully conscious of it, is almost sure to prevent future progress, because it begets hatred for books and literary society.

Education then, as we have often urged, should be commenced in the home circle, and the mother should be the first teacher—for education of some sort is sure to be given and received by the child while at home, whether it be systematic or accidental—such as surrounding circumstances are calculated to impart. Every child should be taught to read the letters of the alphabet at home. This should not be required of a public teacher except under the most extraordinary circumstances. No one is so well adapted to do this as the mother, in our favored country—and not only should she teach the child its letters, but she should also teach it how to put them together so as to form words, and afterwards to put the words together so as to form sentences, which constitute the first steps in learning the art of reading. An old English teacher remarked many

years since, that he always found those boys to be the best readers that had been taught by their mothers. Further, he remarked that boys thus instructed seldom had vulgar tones, but generally have read with unusual ease and elegance. This teacher says:

“Let then, the child be taught to read as soon as the infant faculties begin to exhibit symptoms of improvable expansion; his attention active in the extreme, must fix on a variety of objects, though by no means the only one. Let no long confinement, and no severity of reprimand or correction attend the lesson. A little will be learned at the earliest age, and with the easiest discipline. That little will infallibly lead to further improvement and the boy will soon, and with little pains to himself, or others, learn to read; an acquisition considered in its difficulty and in its consequences, truly great.

He, on the other hand, who is retarded by the theoretical wisdom of his friends, till he is seven or eight years of age, has this burdensome task to begin, when habits of idleness have been contracted, and when he ought to be laying the foundation of classical knowledge.

Rural New Yorker.

THE CLASSIFICATION, RECITATIONS, AND GOVERNMENT OF SCHOOLS.

The first object of the teacher, on commencing a school term, should be to classify the pupils. The usual time for school instruction is about six hours daily. Hence, generally, not more than *three hundred minutes* can be spent in actual instruction, after deducting time for recess, changes of classes, &c. Now, if a school contains thirty pupils (which is a less number than most schools average), it leaves about *ten minutes* of instruction for each pupil, if not classified.

By arranging these thirty pupils in *ten* classes, each class might receive *thirty minutes*; and as many of the pupils would be in four or five classes, as spelling, reading, geography, arithmetic, and grammar, they would receive from two to two and a half hours' instruction each day. Here, then, is a great gain of time to the scholars from classification. Be-