

bered that the teacher is not wholly at fault. He is but a principal wheel in the educational machine which is grinding many young lives into semi-imbecility. The chief fault lies in our high pressure school system. One of the chief evils of that is *too much teaching is done in classes*. The teacher cannot take sufficient cognizance of individuals who need special help, where the class is large. Now he urges the indolent; the effect of the urging falls upon the mentally active, but it may be physically weak. Now he coaxes by rewards and distinctions; he influences those most who need it least. If the sluggish and phlegmatic do not respond, he applies a stronger stimulus; the response comes feebly from those intended to be influenced, but tells with injurious effect in other parts of the line. It is very easy for worthy doctors in council at Ottawa to utter diatribes against cramming; it is not so easy to prescribe and especially to apply the remedy just where it is required. We believe that smaller classes, with a general recognition both by the people and the educators as a class, of the paramount importance of having all the *bodily* functions in good working order, as a basis on which to build, is the remedy. Let teachers foster great intellectual advancement in those pupils only who have suitable mental and bodily material therefor.

EVILS OF THE KINDERGARTEN.

The annual meeting of the American Social Science Association was held at Saratoga in September. One of the subjects most fully discussed was that

of the education of children and women. The subject was opened with a paper by Col. T. W. Higginson on the Kindergarten system. There is, he said, danger of overstimulating the brain in a manner injurious to and incompatible with child-life. This arises in a measure from the fact that the disposition of the child's time is made by persons of mature age and strength, who can seldom rightly gauge and estimate the importance of frequent changes and variety of occupations, and the place that absolute idleness and repose hold in the healthy development of all children. As says Margaret Fuller of the forcing process insisted upon by her father in her own education, "Children should not cull the fruits of reflection and observation early, but expand in the sunshine, and let thoughts come to them." The child, when left largely to its own resources, often defends itself from a tension of mind at once premature and injurious. There is the danger of overstimulating the nervous system, by which the digestion becomes so much weakened as to seriously interfere with the proper nourishment of the child's system, a danger the more perilous as teacher is not likely to know of such a result until the family physician is called upon for counsel when the difficulty has become a serious matter. And there is the danger of straining the eyes; a trouble whose symptoms are unknown to the pupil, and often unsuspected by the teacher. The sight of children in some instances has been thus permanently impaired.

If this be true of the Kindergarten system, it is, *a fortiori*, true of our ordinary school system.