

many foreign teachers—Let me say, for example, German teachers of German, however accomplished as Germans—is often that they can not divest themselves of *instinct* that German is the mother-tongue and English the foreign language to be taught. For them German is *subjective*, English is *objective*. Thus they will unconsciously regard German from the German not from the English stand point, or, tempted from the one to the other, they will lose themselves and mislead their pupils in the confusion of a double point of view. So in the text-books of such authors one might sometimes imagine they were meant to teach English rather than German. Explanations will be directed, unconsciously, to difficulties in the English idiom, while the difficulties in the German will pass unnoticed and unexplained; and at other times the *form* of the statement will show that the writer has the German in his mind and the English *outside* of it. Such books reverse for us the natural order of thought and of acquisition. Such a teacher in a classroom is a foreigner to his pupils, and they are foreigners to him. There can be no full intellectual sympathy. He can not understand their difficulties, nor explain them as they need to have them explained; nor can he realize, often, why they do not see what is so clear, because so wholly instinctive, to him. Such books and such teachings not only increase the difficulty of learning, but breed confusion of method and of thought. Let us insist that French and German, as much as Latin and Greek, are for us foreign languages, and must be taught as such, with objective reference to English as the only subjective to the mother-tongue. Confessing this, we shall perhaps admit the consequence that birth implies only an added caution in the selection of our text-books and of our teachers. Nay, rather, if I could, I would have the German to teach French and the Frenchman to teach German; for then at least each will be teaching a language which he has himself learned by objective study, and by experience he will understand the wants of those who must learn it likewise. This experience will compensate for much of mere practical skill in the language. But, rather than either, I would have both French and German taught by our own American scholars, so far as these can be found with requisite qualification. Such scholars are becoming rapidly more numerous in our country. It is, we believe, only through their influence that the department of modern languages can be elevated to its proper rank and dignity in the course of higher education. I state this conviction because I believe it due to my subject, not without the profoundest respect for those French or German authors and teachers who constitute the numerous and brilliant exceptions.—(From September "Home and School.")

The Ideal and the Real.

BY MARY H. LEONARD.

One man lives prose, and another lives poetry. One sees the bald, stiff, hard actualities of his life and circumstances; the other invests these with the drapery of his own imaginations, and changes them into forms of beauty. One watches the clouds to determine whether the weather will favor his plans; the other sees in them snow-capped mountains and silver palaces, and in their changing forms finds constant and ever varying delight. One hears the call of duty, and without flinching accepts the task she gives. The other looks at his life-work in relations which emancipate it from drudgery and materialism; he sees in it something more

than its use, something which is a symbol of its higher and more perfect meaning.

Shall the practical man call the imaginative man an idle dreamer? What is the ideal, and is it of necessity opposed to the real? It is the often-repeated question, "what is substance, and what is shadow?" It is like that other question which goes echoing down the centuries without an answer: "What is truth?"

Is a diamond any less a diamond when it is placed in a golden setting, than when it was encrusted in the rough stone? Is not a cloud a cloud still when the setting sun gilds it with its glory? Would a painter better interpret nature, if he should refuse to see the lights and shadows which fleck the landscape, and paint only the bare forms of hills and clouds and trees? Do we make the truth any more true, when we refuse to see the divine light shining round about it, and persist in looking at it only in the blaze and glare of this every day world? The ideal, in its best sense, is *the truth looked at lovingly*.

It is true that there may be such a thing as idle dreaming. But because the imagination *may* consume itself in wild, wasteful combustion, there is no reason why we should allow this God-given power to dwindle into deadness. It need not be like the wind harp, sounding idly to every wind that blows. It may be the master-musician which creates and sends down to the ages sweet and soul-inspiring harmonies. This power, rightly used, shows us the possible and the true in its most beautiful form. It is wrong only when it makes us find our sole delight in that which is impossible and untrue. It is right to idealize, if we will not forget the realities of life. A modern writer has said, "Every life has its actual blanks which the ideal must fill up, or which else remain bare and profitless forever."

We walk on the seashore. Here is a little brown ball, dry and mixed with sand. It is not beautiful. A wave breaks over it and sweeps it away. We look again. The sand has been washed out; the fibres have straightened and expanded themselves, and the brown, unsightly thing is transformed into the most delicate of sea-mosses. Here is a pebble, dull, and scratched, and coarse. Put it in the edge of the water; its colors brighten, and what seemed like scratches, become delicate, white-lined tracery. Is the second view less true than the first? Nay, it is the more true, for it reveals to us the beauty that already existed. So the translucent medium of our own idealizations need not distort and render false; it may only brighten and vivify.

There is no work which can be more ennobled and beautified by ideal conception than the teacher's. There is no work which, wanting this, can become more irksome, painful drudgery. A young teacher comes to her work with earnestness and zeal, with a willingness to labor, and with faith and hope strong; but with powers all untried, and no real knowledge of the difficulties before her. She is met at the threshold by those who have been longer in the work with the remark, "Your enthusiasm will not last long. You will soon find that there isn't much poetry in teaching school." She enters the school room. The children are not like the children in her dreams of teaching. They seem bent on doing mischief, and every energy of her mind and body is called into action to control them. With a determination to succeed, she at last brings the school to order, and experience slowly teaches the best way of meeting difficulties that may arise; but alas, with the added power of experience, comes a lessening of interest, and at last, it may be, a positive dislike for the work. Then the teacher confesses "They were right. There