

tomes or tabulated reports with a score of points differentiated and averaged. Trained teachers are not to be ciphered into existence by filling up blank forms; they will not spring forth as the result of petty hypercriticism and constant nagging; nor will they be produced by the 'everlasting nay,' thou shalt not. The student needs encouragement and help in self-development, rather than repression and a constant fire of little irritating snubs well calculated to spoil his temper and disgust him with professional training. Instead of scribbling notes, he should be carefully observing and telling the results of his observation; should be freely discussing methods, his teacher directing the discussion. His energies should have free play, and he should be led up to a thorough grasp of great general principles, by the free force of his own fresh observations, wisely directed, rather than by scraps of other men's opinions collected from the four winds, undigested and indigestible.

How many teachers do we now turn out fully permeated with the dignity of educational work, fired with enthusiasm, filled with professional *esprit de corps*, heart and soul devoted to the great work of fighting the powers of darkness and ignorance? How many do we send out without any comprehensive grasp of the true meaning of education, knowing only blind rules, and practising only mechanical drill?

"I saw lessons given in reading, number, color, form, measure, and all were given with the educational power of the true teacher. The fundamental maxims of education . . . had entered thoroughly into the teacher's conception . . . and spontaneously governed every act and element of her teaching. She did not 'communicate' knowledge; she helped her pupils to acquire knowledge. . . The discipline was admirable. . . The teacher never went beyond the 'fatigue point.' . . I am not sure that the entire discipline would have been quite satisfactory to the martinet of the new school, whose ideas of order and attention are centered in the rectilinear attitude, the metallic rigidity of limb and feature, the staring look, and the death-like silence of the prison-house where 'all the air a solemn stillness holds.' Here were rather the graceful posture, the bright, intelligent attention, the pleasant expectation of delightful things to come—the free, natural movement of the little child, . . . guided by the hand of Love along the pleasant ways that lead to strong and cultured life." This passage of the report fairly represents the spirit and tone of the whole. To every "gerund-grinder" and purblind drill-sergeant it echoes the words of Froede, "Meditate, O owl, meditate!"

In the special report of Mr. J. L. Hughes on *The Kindergarten System* we get valuable information respecting its aims and its progress in St. Louis. Mr. Hughes recommends the introduction into our schools of so much of the system as seems most likely to be generally useful. We sincerely wish to see the exercise songs, the plays, the marching, and the drawing in every primary department of every school. In the fine weather many of these exercises might be conducted out of doors. They would communicate brightness and interest,

spirit and life,—yes, joy and sweetness, to which many schools are total strangers. If kindergartens are established at each of the provincial model schools, the system will soon find its way through this open door to every part of the province. We believe that educative power and living interest are eternally connected. Children are very fond of these exercises, which may thus be effectively used to lay the foundation of primary education. Only those who have seen the system in actual operation can realize its importance and power, and in Mr. Hughes we have a specialist who has taken great pains to investigate it thoroughly, who is now its earnest advocate. Let every teacher aim at assimilating Froebel's principles and incorporating them in his practice.

### OVER-WORK.

A considerable percentage of our very best teachers and leaders of educational thought break down after a comparatively short term of service. The love of play, the inherent laziness of the average school boy, the number of hours spent each day in the open air at games and sports, the perfect freedom from corroding care, the elastic buoyancy of spirits natural to healthy, hopeful childhood, the cheerful society of companions, the general light-hearted thoughtlessness of youth—these combined are in the main sufficient safeguards against over-work by the great mass of public school pupils. Notwithstanding all that has been said anent over-drill, over-teaching, and endless ranges of examinations of more than Alpine difficulty, the slaughter of the innocents by over-work goes on very slowly indeed, and the greater part of what is written concerning cramming and examining to death has really no foundation in the actual facts of life in public schools.

We admit that in certain exceptional cases excessive school work, sanguine, excitable temperament, indulgent parents, improper food, foul air, thin shoes, dime novels, hereditary disease, and other similar concurrent causes hasten the death of a few delicate and precocious children. It is admitted also that the danger to the average girl is somewhat greater than that incurred by her male analagon, but chiefly because her amusements are too much confined within doors.

The nervous strain required day after day by the intensity of the highest style of teaching is enormous; and we use the word guardedly. We say *enormous*, for how otherwise can we account for the multitude of premature deaths of those who enter the ranks in rosy health and youthful vigor, rejoicing in their strength and wholly unaware until the irreparable mischief is done of the tremendous demands to be made daily on their energies. "Death loves a shining mark." The most active minds, the most vivacious dispositions, the greatest and most earnest souls, in one word, the very best teachers run by far the greatest risk. How often in this province, during the last twenty-five years, has prolonged overwork in the school-room and in the study proved the self-destruction of brilliant genius! These graves opened, alas, too soon; they hold some of the most excellent of the earth.