

Selections from Colonel Parker's New Book—Talks on Pedagogics.

History tells us what man has been ; science, what he should be. My earnest plea, then, to you, my fellow-teachers, is, that our children, the future citizens of our country, shall have the privilege and the means of studying science throughout their whole course. There are countless opportunities for the study of elementary science in primary and grammar schools. * * * * Education can be made so much better, so much richer in means and influence and breadth by making observation the foundation. * * * The isolated study of text-books has for its main product the presumption "not of brains," but of knowledge—a self-satisfaction which is a bar to all future development.

WORD METHOD IN READING

The so-called word method was the first recognition of the plain and simple psychological fact that a word acts as a whole just like any other object, instantaneously, and that there is no instinctive attempt on the part of the child to analyse the word into its parts, or to associate it consciously with its corresponding oral word. Any attempt at analysis, at first, weakens the action of the word, is entirely unnecessary and at the same time unnatural.

HEALTH AND STUDY.

Genuine educative work is the healthiest exercise, both for mind and body, of which the human being is capable ; the power of endurance in unity of action is simply marvelous. All-sided education stimulates the healthful action of the brain, nerve, and muscle. The laws of compensation, of interaction and reflex action, of co-ordination and adjustment, bring about a constant refreshment, building up the physical agencies of the mind, that would otherwise be weakened through one-sided or partial action. The prolific cause of overburdening is not genuine work, but mental drudgery ; one-sided and partial action of the being, in which there is no continual well-spring of joy in the discovery and expression of truth. Excited by the glittering baubles of reward, of per cents., place in the class, of victory over others, ambitious students struggle for the mastery of dead forms until nerve power is exhausted, sympathetic organs fail in their functions and the muscular system collapses. "Oh, what a fine scholar she is!" means too often how rapidly she is using up nerve force and exhausting vital energies. Motive, too, sinks to the lowest plane in this senseless and selfish striving for rewards and approving smiles.

ACCURACY ABNORMAL.

The only excuse for flat copy drawing is the false demand for abnormal and mind-crippling accuracy. True accuracy has only one normal relation, and that is its relation to adequate expression of thought: constant effort in the direction of adequate thought—expression is the one way and means by which adequate thought and skill is acquired. The false assumption that the child must be accurate or nothing, leads to the abnormal demand for minutely detailed forms, and is the preparation that never prepares.

Nothing but the true, the beautiful, and the good, should ever be presented to the child. The principle so often enunciated, that a child should never see a wrong form, should never make a wrong form, is to be applied in all directions.

PUNISHMENTS AND REWARDS.

Bad as corporal punishment has been and is, the substitute of a system of rewards is infinitely worse. Fear of punishment is bad enough, indeed, but the systematic development of selfishness is damnable. The infliction of corporal punishments is degrading to the mind; but the hope of extraneous reward for study destroys the highest motive and sedulously develops its opposite.

CONCENTRATION—VITAL PRINCIPLE.

The pre-eminent virtues of concentration is the economy of mental power, the path to freedom by the shortest line of resistance. It proposes that the action of the mind shall be concentrated from first to last upon intrinsic educative thought; that all modes of expression and attention shall be auxiliaries, and acquired as auxiliaries. It means that the three famous "3 R's" of antiquity may be learned—nay, are learned—far better, far more effectually and efficiently, used as means to an end, than as ends in themselves. * * * It means the early establishment of the habits of self-effort, of attention, of observation.

Don't scold.

Don't forget to smile.

Remember, children act as they feel—therefore reach their feelings.

The moment you feel impatient, drop your voice; never raise it except to express gladness or admiration.

You are not a child; control yourself and be well-behaved at all times. Remember, the children are watching you.