

"Of all motives," says Dr. Lyman Abbott, in a recent number of the *Christian Union*, "fear is the lowest, and of all forms of fear, fear of physical pain is the lowest. Of all motives, fear of bodily suffering is the least efficacious in changing the heart or affecting the character." These words, if true, as most persons will readily admit, are of special interest to teachers. We commend them to the study of those teachers who are perpetually flinging threats across the school-room, and who enforce every order and regulation at the point of the ferule. He can scarcely be a good character-builder who appeals habitually to the lowest and least efficacious of motives.

"Blundering in the right direction is infinitely better than persistently going in the wrong direction," So says the *Practical Teacher* in answer to the suggestion that fearful blundering would be a result of enfranchising the teachers who are now, in so many cases, playing the part of *automata* in the Government machine shops. Col. Parker is undoubtedly right. Never will our modern schools approach any high educational ideal until each school, or section of a school, comes to have a living individuality imparted to it by the presence and power of one cultivated and earnest mind, free to do its own work in its own way.

A writer in the Illinois *School Journal* is in favor of the old method of requiring children to learn by rote rules of Syntax and similar exercises to be understood, if ever, at some future day. We had thought such methods dead on this continent and buried beyond hope of resurrection. The writer asks how many children comprehend the 23rd Psalm when committing it to memory. We should say that whoever compels a child to memorize that or any other portion of Scripture before he is able to comprehend its meaning, is incurring a heavy responsibility. He is associating the sacred book in the child's mind with the dreary task-work, and is in danger of thus creating a distaste and prejudice which may follow the pupil through life. But he must be a very young or very dull child who cannot, with the aid of suitable explanations, understand the meaning of that simple and sublime song. Children who are taught to look for the meaning of what they read will generally be found able to understand much more than teachers of the ilk of the correspondent referred to, suppose.

The teacher who compels a child to commit to memory a farrago of words whose meaning it cannot grasp, sins against the child in at least three ways. He deprives it of the legitimate benefits of study in mental expansion, for the mere strengthening of the verbal memory can scarcely be considered an enlargement of mind. He encourages it in the formation of a vicious mental habit, whose pernicious effects will be felt in after life—the habit of taking in a string of words without thinking of the ideas they represent. And, worst of all, he robs it of the pleasure which Nature bestows as the high reward of all healthful mental exertion,—the delight which attends the conscious exercise of reason, judgment and all the higher faculties, and which is never keener than in the school days. It is true that the meaning of some sentence or formula, which may

have lain for years as dry rubbish in the brain, may flash upon one in after years like a revelation. But the revelation will usually be accompanied with a feeling akin to indignation against the teacher who could permit the germ of a useful thought to be put into the mind encased in a crust of dry words, which is dissolved only after so many long years.

The Wisconsin *Journal of Education* for October contains an interesting article by A. F. North upon Indian Education in Wisconsin. There have, it seems, been Government schools in Kishena, the headquarters of the reservation of the Menominee, the Stockbridge and Munsee, and the Oneida Indians, who number altogether over 3,000, for twenty or thirty years. How little these schools have accomplished is apparent from the fact that not more than twenty of those who receive supplies from Government agents can sign their names to the receipts. A new era seems now to be dawning. Within the past two years the Government has erected a very fine school building having the capacity for boarding and instructing 120 scholars. The dimensions are as follows:—Main building, 108 ft. x 40, with a wing 45x25, both two stories in height, with capacious attics. There are, at the present time, about eighty scholars in attendance, with the prospect of the whole being fully occupied within a week or two. The intention of the Government is to make these *industrial* schools, in the best sense of the word, and to have every child there so master the English language as to be able to think in it. There is also in the same place another school under the care of the Franciscan Brothers and the Sisters after the order of St. Joseph. The buildings for the male and female departments of this school will together accommodate about 120 pupils. There were at the time the article was written about 80 occupants, with the prospect of full buildings in a very short time. In addition to the arrangements for industrial training, these institutions have a beautiful flower garden attached. The foregoing is one of many indications that better days are in store for the poor Indian.

THE TRUE END OF PUBLIC SCHOOL EDUCATION.

The London *School Guardian* of Sept. 25th, in its Notes of the Week, gives prominence to this intrepid statement: "Nowhere, on the Continent, or in the Queen's dominions, are the schools so inefficient, so badly attended, and so unsatisfactory in all their results as in the American Union." This rather startling opinion is supposed to find confirmation in the recent letter of an occasional correspondent of the *Times*, who declares that the one universal but ignoble result is that the child emerging from the American Common School has only one idea before him,—“How can I make money?”

"In the Common School education of the States there is, in general, nothing taught that is not directly, and to the commonest perception, available in making money. And this central idea remains, to a greater extent than in any other of the educating countries, the motive of the higher education—when there is any higher education. The farm-boy goes to the District School to learn to write, cipher, and spell correctly, and learns geography as a useful branch of study because he does not always mean to remain on a farm. He looks forward to a translation to city life and a money-making business."