

humble opinion, you may probably be as near the truth in saying that nature takes delight in the inequalities of memory you see in your pupils, as is the scientist when he declares that they arise from the differentiation of cell-force in the tissues of the brain."

"But what are we teachers to do?" asked my companion, though not impatiently.

"Ah, *that* is the question," I exclaimed; "that is *the* question, practical and to the point. Yet before we attempt the practical we must search for the truth in its secret place. Before we can realize the best results, we must know what we are about. Now, we cannot dissect the memory of our neighbor, as we would a bone or a nerve-tube, but we can do what is just as good for our purpose: we can examine the elemental principles of our own memory. You know what is meant by mind-wandering. Of course you do, and many a heart-sore it has been to you, when you have seen the habit looking out of the dreamy eyes of your pupils. Yet in this very mind-wandering, a weakness though it be, perhaps, we can trace the fundamental element of memorizing—the law of association. You have often tried the simple experiment of stopping suddenly at some far-away thought, as you called it at the time, and of wandering back to see how it was you came to think such a thought. At some part of the journey back, the association of ideas, in such an experiment, is often difficult to re-establish, at other points in the chain the connection is strikingly easy to find. At last your starting-point is reached—some incident within or without, subjective or objective, some sensation or percept. Now, in that chain of thoughts we have an example of nature's simple method of memory road-making; and if one only takes the trouble to pass over such a road two or three times by way of pursuing the experiment, the associations are likely to become permanent, and, by-and-by it may even become impossible to think of the end of the road without thinking of the beginning."

"This may be a good thing for the pupil who learns by rote," remarked the school-mistress, "but it is anything but convenient at times."

"Very true, indeed," said I, "and much more inconvenient to the person possessed of a keen memory than to the ordinary student. For instance, Dr. Abercrombie tells us of a gentleman who had such an impressible memory that he could repeat an Act of Parliament or any similar document from the beginning to the end, after having read it once. On being congratulated on his wonderful gift, he replied by saying that the gift was