

CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE.

THE CULTIVATION OF THE MEMORY; ON THE USE OF WORDS. Philadelphia: Eldredge & Bro. 1879.

These are the second and third of the "Manuals for Teachers," the first of which, on "The Cultivation of the Senses," we have already noticed. The work on "Memory" is apparently the production of the writer of the initial volume of the series. It shows the same admirable characteristics in closeness of thought, practical bearing, and thorough acquaintance with the subject.

The author points out that the two great aids to the cultivation of the memory are:

"(1) Attention, slow, grave, deliberate, to secure clear well-marked ideas or mental pictures acquired through each of the senses that can be employed.

"(2) Association of these ideas, through common qualities, by which you can connect them with each other, so that each idea may eventually and immediately suggest its appropriate companion idea or ideas."

He makes a meagre and unsatisfactory expansion of his first statement, but a very instructive one of the second. Indeed the chapter on Association is worthy of the most careful perusal by all young teachers who have an anxious desire to improve the memory of their scholars. In the fourth chapter some admirable suggestions are made for employing special subjects such as arithmetic, geography, etc., for the development of memory. Take the following for example:—"Success in logical reasoning is the first and most important aid to memory in arithmetic. Next to this we place neatness of work, where each figure is formed in large and legible characters, and each step of reasoning is clearly marked with detailed explanations at the side."

The illustrations of object lessons might have been more happy and some of them

more within the range of possibility. For example, what teacher in giving a lesson on Physical Geography would go to the length of making "a model in clay or sand so that the class could see the basin, water-shed, tributaries, etc." Yet our author would consider that teacher an indifferent one who would not adopt some such plan.

The chief fault of the work is its brevity, but even this is not a sufficient excuse for omitting Repetition as one of the chief factors in aiding memory. The American Publishers have added to the size of the work, but by no means to its value, by incorporating a chapter on the Cultivation of the Memory in youth from an American author. It will interest the reader to contrast this with the third chapter for the sake of seeing the difference in style, matter, and opinion, between the English and the American writers.

The Manual on "The Use of Words" has the same practical bearing, shows the same activity of mind on the part of the writer, and as much acquaintance with school-room work as the two preceding Manuals, but this is certainly not done by a strict adherence to the title.

There is for example an admirable explanation of syllogistic reasoning in one chapter, some thoroughly practical remarks upon the art of school-room questioning in another, while a third is devoted to the study of words, not their use. This last, however, we must do the English author the justice to say he is not responsible for. It is taken from a work by Mr. Webb already noticed in these pages, and is more germane to the matter than the chapter appended to the Manual on Memory.

It will not be the author's fault if the reader does not always grasp his meaning, for wherever there is the slightest obscurity he dispels it by an apt illustration. His ideas are worth all the pains he has taken to make