

right conception of the object to be attained, and of the best means to be employed for that purpose. He must study man before he can teach him—he must thoroughly understand, and wholly sympathize with children before he can educate them. Bonds of parental love, and brotherly affection, must rule in school, out of school and all must be taught to sacrifice self if necessary to serve others. The qualifications—natural and acquired—which the teachers should possess, far excel those of any other member of the community. How deeply, therefore, should the people reverence him, who, by his skill and knowledge, is capable and willing to educate, develop and build up the mental faculties and physical powers of the rising generation, so that our sons and daughters may be an honor to us and to themselves—shining lights to generations yet unborn!

(To be continued.)

II. Papers on Practical Education.

1. OVERWORK IN AMERICAN SCHOOLS.

A great deal is said of late about the poor health of Americans—especially American women—and about the decay and failure of the native born element in our country. This topic is certainly a serious one; and if the facts are at all such as they are claimed to be, it behooves us to consider well what are their causes, and what may be their remedy. A variety of circumstances, doubtless, are combined, in producing such a result; and hence to no single one, perhaps, can be traced the main responsibility. Still, it is well to observe everything that can be seen to bear upon the subject; and to remove, as far as possible, every detected source of peril.

One very serious and dangerous evil, in our opinion, is the overstraining study frequently exacted from pupils in our colleges and schools. This is more apt to be the case in large boarding institutions than in those where the scholars return daily to their homes. But if, as is sometimes said, the American nation is wearing itself out with brain work, the root of the trouble is found in this heavy mental strain early in life. A very great number of young people are worn down and enfeebled by study during the period between ten or twelve and twenty years of age, during which the child is passing into the adult. This is no light evil; it is fraught with grave consequences to the future of our nation, and needs to be taken into most serious consideration in the arrangement of our colleges and schools.

The danger arising from this source has, within recent years, attracted some attention, but as yet, we fear, with little improvement. On the contrary, in many quarters the idea would seem to be that if only a gymnasium is established in connection with the school, any amount of labour may be imposed without danger on the scholars' minds. May we be delivered from such a theory! Nay, indeed, physical can never afford a remedy for the intellectual overexertion. To march a class of worn and wearied pupils into a gymnasium, thinking to counteract by an hour's violent exercise, the mental strain of the day, is little better than an added severity. The mind requires a certain amount of ease and freedom—a portion in each day in which the feeling of restriction and of rule shall be withdrawn: and without this there is no relief, no relaxation of that constant tension which is the dangerous element in our culture.

It is painful to know how far this terrible forcing process is carried in some prominent female boarding seminaries; institutions, too, which are organized on the best and latest principles, and are in many respects models of excellence. Let us beware of this peril to our youth. Never should the pupil's exercise be confined to the gymnasium; let them have a daily walk in the open air, and above all let there be an hour in the day not covered by a "scheme," in which the student may feel free from restraint, and to relax the mind.

Of course, care has to be taken that pupils give due attention to their work, and that no time is needlessly wasted. A really competent teacher, however, can easily see who among the scholars are disposed to evade their duty, and who are conscientious in fulfilling it. Here it is that special judgment is needed; for while strict regulations and abundance of work are indispensable to the progress and advantage of the former class, they are oppressive, and sometimes even destructive, to the latter.

It seems to be an error also that frequently the same course of study is required from all the pupils of an institution, without regard to the fact that individual capacities are widely different. Many young ladies' seminaries, for example, prescribe a very elaborate scheme of mathematics, and carry all their candidates for graduation through not only those principles which every lady should know, but through long and laborious applications of mathematics to astronomy, surveying, &c. Now, without discussing the pro-

bable importance to the majority of ladies of being able to lay out a railroad or determine the elements of a comet's orbit, we would remark that in nothing do minds differ more than in the capacity for mathematical investigation. We do not question for an instant the general advantage of such studies, nor the desirableness to every educated woman of knowing something of those wonderful and beautiful principles by which science is guided from star to star through the immensity of space, and commerce from shore to shore over the heaving deep. We should not undervalue this element in our culture. It is not the study to be censured, but the excessive degree to which it is pursued while many valuable practical branches are almost if not wholly neglected, and many minds worn down and weakened by very laborious exertion.

The experience of the United States Military Academy at West Point, is highly instructive in this respect. The institution began by requiring from all its students a most extensive and elaborate mathematical course. All who could not sustain this course were dismissed at the close of the year; although among these were many young men of the best character and conduct, and of excellent capacity for the general duties of the service. In the meantime, the practical training of the officers were greatly neglected; so that the West Point graduate went into the army an accomplished mathematician, indeed, but with many daily duties of his position yet to be learnt by experience. After this mode of instruction had prevailed for some years the Government found it necessary to intimate to the managers that young men were sent to West Point to be educated for the service, and not to be sent home again in a year. The effect of this hint was to produce a modification of the course; and since that time the very elaborate mathematical work has been required of students for the corps of engineers, where alone it is really needed.

It would, therefore, be highly useful if a greater option were given in regard to the studies of our girls' seminaries at least. In determining the course most suitable for each individual, several considerations would have weight; the wishes of parents or guardians, the probable position of the pupil in life, the degree of physical health and vigor, and the adaptation of the mind to certain forms of effort. This last fact could soon be ascertained by a careful and discriminating teacher, and would afford good indication as to whether a given course of study were operating with nature or against it.

The optional arrangement of work has been introduced into some of our colleges with very happy success. In the University of our city, for instance, there are two parallel courses of study; one of four years, embracing the classics, and one of three years, in which other branches occupy their place. The degree of bachelor of arts is given in one, that of bachelor of science in the other; and when a young man is not disposed, or not adapted to the entire classical curriculum, he is given the choice of the scientific course, in which all other elements of a liberal education are furnished with equal fullness.

The trustees of the Rutgers Female Institute, so long and favorably known to our community, have obtained from Albany a change in their act of incorporation, by which the institute becomes a college. New York city has needed a true college for ladies, and it is cause for congratulation that she is henceforth to have one. We hope to see this institution, which is now both new and old, placed upon a good foundation, and made in all respects what such a college ought to be—morally, intellectually, aesthetically and physically. An important meeting is soon to be held, at which prominent persons connected with education will be present, and the new plans of organization will be made public. These, it is understood, are to comprise not only a valuable extension of the present course, but some new and striking features in the way of supplementary departments, for the imparting of various forms of additional instruction, adapted to the latest principles of female training in the practical affairs of life.

2. WARNING TO HARD MENTAL WORKERS.

A medical friend calls our attention to an article in the last number of the *Lancet*, referring to the recent deaths of Sir James Simpson, Dr. Nunneley and Charles Dickens. The article comments upon the cause of the premature death of these eminent men in a strain that our correspondent thinks might be seriously pondered upon by Canadians of middle age, who forget, in the excitement of business, that they are no longer in possession of the recuperative powers of youth. The *Lancet* says:—

"If we find ourselves wanting in vital power, we must thrust aside the scarlet cloak of nerve stimulants—alcohol, coffee, tea, by means of which, I believe, it is that efforts inconsistent with real vital and nutritive power are made by workers in general, and by medical men amongst the number."