

Magazines represent the best current literature. Every progressive person should read at least one.

School journals represent present issues in didactics. Two, of different kinds, make a good number.

Professional books treasure up what has been tried and approved. A well read library of good books is indispensable to the growing teacher.

General literature is a name that covers a large scope. To this class belong history, biography, travels, science, and philology. Every teacher should have a knowledge of both general and special history. General history includes ancient, medieval, and modern, treating of all nations. Special history is the history of some particular country, as the United States, France, England, etc.

How shall reading be carried on? Books are not to be read in *masse*. They should be read topically. Thus one may wish to consult Bancroft, Greene, McCarthy, and Hildreth to get a clear idea of the Puritans. Reading by topic is, however, subject to abuse, as the topics may be isolated and have no logical thread running through them. All reading and thought needs to be strung together.

Copious reflection should be made on points read. In this way one is led to exercise more than mere memory. Doctor Franklin tells how he used this method to great advantage. This has been the plan of many superior scholars.

Every one should arrange his reading for himself. In general he may follow any good plan, but in details the plan should be his own.

The scholar should summarize his subjects.

These directions will not fail to give scholarship if persistently followed.—*National Educator*.

CURIOSITY.

BY MRS. EVA D. KELLOGG.

"Curiosity is as much the parent of attention as attention is of memory. To teach one who has no curiosity to learn, is to sow a field without ploughing it."—*Whately*.

A Methodist minister, on being asked why that denomination indulged in such lively music, answered, that they didn't believe in letting the wicked world have all the good tunes. So it may be said of harnessing in that unconquerable attribute of human nature, that turned everything topsy-turvy in Edenic days, to help do the work of the school room in reconstructing this same fallen humanity. It has the logic of the *similia similibus* theory for a foundation, and the favorable testimony of our best thinkers and teachers in the practice of it. Prepare the presentation of a new subject never so carefully, if it comes before the class as a set of affirmatives, they will accept it much in the spirit of the good deacon who slept all through the sermon because of his implicit confidence in the soundness of the preacher. Such an unquestioning acceptance of facts by a class is the death-warrant of its interest and attention, and results as fatally to its enthusiasm as the calm sleep of a man freezing to death. Let the teacher put ingenuity to work, and devise some way in which a lesson can seem to contain some hidden thing that the children are to seek for, and if skillfully done, not much of a clue need be given before the class will begin digging for it, under the sharp spur of curiosity, which, strange to say, has as much impelling force in boys as in girls, the popular heresy to the contrary notwithstanding.

A good principal once came into our school-room, and gave a first lesson in decimal fractions. Taking a half-sheet of paper and a pair of scissors, he stood before the children, and silently began cutting it into slips. Gradually the rustle of the school-room died away. Everybody wondered. As piece after piece of that mysterious paper fluttered down on the boy's desk in the front row, the

wide-eyed children held their breath in suspense as to what it could all mean; and when he had gathered them all up again on a book-cover, making a restored whole out of the ten parts, he held it up to a hundred watchful eyes in a room so quiet that the ticking of the clock alone broke the silence. Not much difficulty in holding the attention of the class after that. To borrow our text figure, curiosity had ploughed the field, and the seed would fall on good soil. Each of these ten pieces were cut into ten others, and these in turn into ten more tiny bits, with the same impenetrable air of mystery. Of course explanations and blackboard work followed, but the class had been led by curiosity alone to walk pleasurably into that bottomless sea of infinitesimals, without knowing that they were in the very Styx of waters, or ever finding it out afterward, for decimals were carried with a furor that year, and the transfer from the little papers to the convenient meter measure, which, though it could not be cut apart, was yet never confusing, was easily made.

It is surprising how much of this way of arousing attention can be introduced into school-work, when once we seek in ourselves for a variety of ways to accomplish it. Individuality has here a limitless field.

SELF-RESPECT.

Let the teacher appreciate the scholar's self-respect and take advantage of it. Above all things, don't harm it. Don't break down this backbone of character. A scholar may be extremely sensitive of ridicule, and knows it. A teacher is sarcastic, and he knows that. He has found out in various ways that he has an aptitude for saying smart, sharp things—that he can put a keen edge to his criticisms and make them cut deep. How many scholars fear the criticism edged with sarcasm! If a teacher draws that knife very often, to some scholars it will be the very opposite of healthy surgery. It will cut down self-respect, cut away all carefulness, and a scholar will say, "I don't care how things go; I can't please my teacher, and I won't try to please." When self-respect is gone, ambition is gone, hope is gone, and the evil one enters.

The rules for marking given to the United States Civil Service examiners require them, in marking penmanship, "to take into account legibility, formation of letters, spacing, and general appearance." A correspondent, whose article we cannot make room for, justly condemns varying degrees of thickness in down strokes and all useless flourishes and ornamental appendages to letters, and argues in favor of good, plain letters, rounded at top and bottom. The rule above given is also a good one for teaching writing. To secure these qualities in chirography is to teach successfully.

Mr. Ruskin has recently expressed a conviction that all right education should include the history of five cities—Athens, Rome, Venice, Florence and London. The history of Athens, rightly understood, teaches all that we need to know of the religion and art of Greece; that of Rome, the victory of Christianity over barbarism; that of Venice and Florence, all that is essential in Christianity as illustrated by Christian painting, sculpture and architecture; that of London, with its sister Paris, Christian chivalry expressed in Gothic Architecture. Mr. Ruskin had once hoped to write the history of these five cities. That he has not found time to carry out his determination in this respect is a cause for regret to all lovers of pure literature.

Any teacher can be of some help to bright pupils; only the best teacher can really aid dull children.—"I wish that boy was one of my school," said of a dull pupil, marks a selfish if not a cruel teacher, while a genuine love for the weak and backward shows the heart of a true teacher. Be thankful that you have dull pupils (if dull pupils must be), for the lower the order of mind the higher the art must be to lift it up, and that lifting up will give you strength. Many pupils are dull because they have dull teachers.