

So it is with the human intellect; it grows principally by its own action. The Creator has so constituted it. Every individual must for the most part educate himself. Teachers are helps; so are books, but the work is his own. The farmer does not make the blade of corn grow; he only feeds it, and that is all he means by growing corn.

So with the child; it will educate itself if you manage it properly, and if it never learns to educate itself, it will never become educated in the true sense of the term.

Don't give a child food (I mean mental food) that it cannot or will not digest or assimilate, or, if you please, appropriate to its own mental growth. If you do, it will surely become a mental dyspeptic.

When you enter a school-room and find a teacher almost distracted by a set of little five-year-olds, trying to teach them the alphabet by pointing out to each individual child each individual letter, and naming it and compelling the child to name it after him, in order to remember it, don't you think that teacher deserves pity? But don't the children deserve more? If they learned those letters at all, it was by a simple effort of the memory; there was no arousing of the intelligence, no association of ideas.

Who of us has not some painful recollections of A B C life? Not very long ago I witnessed the misery of a set of little boys who were trying to get a spelling lesson that had been assigned them.

It was evidently an irksome task to remember just how to spell such words as "palladium," "isosceles," "isothermal," "cephalopodous," and a whole string of similar words that they would not probably meet with in their course of studies for three or four years to come.

It seemed not only an absolute waste of time, but a positive injury, for they were words that the little fellows could make no use of; but the teacher said it was cultivating the memory. That seemed about as sensible as a fruit-grower, who would cut back all the boughs of a tree but one, and so producing a one-sided, disproportioned, ungraceful, monstrous limb, rather than a tree. A sensible man would train it and prune it, so that it would grow erect and well balanced, and become an object of healthy attraction.

Our object should be to cultivate the budding intellect symmetrically, to call into action as many of the undeveloped faculties as possible. It is very much with the mind of a child as with its body; confine one of its arms and allow it to exercise the other only, the latter will develop its muscle and strength, while the other will waste and grow feeble. Sometimes we hear a teacher apologizing for want of thoroughness in a certain class in this way. He says, through error of judgment on the part of some former teacher, this boy has been advanced to the third book when he should be in the second; or, that boy is working interest when he ought to be in recitation, and it will not do to put him back, as it would seem to him and his parents as retrograding, and the school would get a bad name. Is not that teacher wanting in moral courage who can sacrifice his convictions to the whims of others? He need not act arbitrary, only prudently and reasonably, to accomplish the end desired. Two results are likely to follow. One is, that the teacher may lose his reputation, and the other is, that that boy will not probably ever make an accurate scholar. He is laying the foundation of superficial habits that will cling to him through life. It

is nonsense that a teacher dare not do as he ought; he is degrading his profession.

Perhaps it is not out of place just to refer to one manner in which history is too often taught in our Common Schools. It seems for the most part an effort to recollect dates of births, of marriages and of deaths, of battles, of victories and defeats, besides of the numbers killed, wounded and taken prisoners. Seldom is a moral enforced or a principle deduced; consequently, it is too often felt to be a dry and irksome study. It is much to be regretted that our young people do not study history more profitably. Historical studies are kept far too much in the background, and are valued much too little. The student of history has the advantage of the tourist if he only knows it. He may, without the cost of transportation, be introduced into new states of society; he may see new passions and hear new modes of expressions. His mind may be enlarged by contemplating the wide diversity of laws, of morals and of manners.

Some persons study history like some excursionists that I know of, who went to the Centennial and returned with minds as contracted as if they had never stepped from their own market town. They saw the big engine, the big horse, the big gun and the big house; they had become fully satiated in a day or a part of a day's seeing, but were no wiser for their pains and their expense. The beautiful paintings had no attractions for them; the vast, complicated machinery produced no admiration; the varied contrivances of human skill as labor-saving implements were merely specimens of humbug to swindle them out of their money. True, they were to the Centennial, but they could hardly say that they saw the exhibition. Most people, says Macaulay, look at past times as princes look at foreign countries. More than one illustrious stranger, said he, has landed on our shore amid the shout of a mob; has dined with the King; has seen the Guards reviewed; has cantered along Regent street; has visited St. Paul's and noted down its dimensions, and has then departed, thinking that he had seen England. But of the vast and complicated system of society, of the fine shades of national character, of the practical operation of government and laws, he knows nothing. If we wish to study English history, we would go at times with Dickens into the crowds of the exchange and the coffee-houses; we would obtain admittance to the convivial table and the domestic hearth; it would not be unprofitable to visit with him the schools and schoolmaster of Ender.

I may be wrong, but I look at the novels of C. Dickens and Sir W. Scott as a good supplement to British history, and, in connection with it, to be read at all times with pleasure and profit. One thing more I wish to say; it is this:—A slur has been cast upon our noble school system by the separate school advocates in calling it a godless system. There may be at best an appearance of truth in that charge, for there is scarcely a question discussed without a little on either side. It is in the province of the teacher, I think, to meet this charge successfully, if there is only the inclination. The teacher deals with moral agents, and he cannot help but exert an influence, whether he will or not, that will tell upon the child's future history. How important, then, it is that he inculcates into the young and tender conscience those great eternal principles of virtue, truth, love, justice and mercy that characterize and lay at the foundation of true Christianity. Teachers as well as parents are