

together with an intellectual mastery of the science of teaching them. Another very important means of preparation is practice. Unfortunately, this practice is, for the most part, first had in the school-room. Even if the teacher has got the intellectual preparation recommended she is not yet ready to enter upon her work. She must acquire a certain grace or tact, in the use of it. Sculptors do not attempt the development of their artistic conceptions in the marble, until they have fashioned a model of them in plastic clay. So, our teachers should first tax their skill upon model classes, in the Normal School, or the Training School, where defects may be at once detected and remedied without detriment to youthful minds.

Happily for the cause of education, public sentiment is growing in the right direction. Soon, there will be few engaged in the profession of teaching, who have not had the benefits of a Normal course and served an apprenticeship in the management of classes. It would be unfair not to admit that there are many excellent teachers who never enjoyed those advantages; but they will acknowledge, with us all, that their attainments have been gained at some expense to the interests of their pupils. It must, on the other hand, be affirmed that Normal training cannot qualify every one that undergoes it; but it certainly improves all. And if we ever must place precious, eternal minds, the best jewels of earth, in the charge of persons unfit for the trust, by temperament, education, and habits; then, at least, give these persons the most thorough and careful training that can be obtained.—ANONYMOUS in Penn. School Journal.

Letter to a Student Who Lamented his Defective Memory.

So far from writing, as you seem to expect me to do, a letter of condolence on the subject of what you are pleased to call your "miserable memory," I feel disposed rather to indite a letter of congratulation. It is possible that you may be blessed with a selecting memory, which is not only useful for what it retains, but for what it rejects. In the immense mass of facts which come before you in literature and in life, it is well that you should suffer from as little bewilderment as possible. The nature of your memory saves you from this by unconsciously selecting what has interested you, and letting the rest go by. What interests you is what concerns you.

In saying this, I speak simply from the intellectual point of view, and suppose you to be an intellectual man by the natural organization of your brain, to begin with. In saying that what interests you is what concerns you, I mean intellectually, not materially. It may concern you, in the pecuniary sense, to take an interest in the law; yet your mind, left to itself, would take little or no interest in law, but an absorbing interest in botany. The passionate studies of the young Goethe, in many different directions, always in obedience to the predominant interests of the moment, are the best example of the way in which a great intellect, with remarkable powers of acquisition and liberty to grow in free luxuriance, sends its roots into various soils, and draws from them the constituents of its sap. As a student of law, as a university student even, he was not of the type which parents and professors consider satisfactory. He neglected jurisprudence, he neglected even his college studies, but took an interest in so many other pursuits that his mind became rich indeed.

Yet the wealth which his mind acquired seems to have been due to that liberty of ranging by which it was permitted to him to seek his own everywhere, according to the

maxim of French law, *chacun prend son bien où il le trouve*. Had he been a poor student, bound down to the exclusively legal studies, which did not greatly interest him, it is likely that no one would ever have suspected his immense faculty of assimilation. In this way men, who are set by others to load their memories with what is not their proper intellectual food, never get the credit of having any memory at all, and end by themselves believing that they have none. These bad memories are often the best, they are often the selecting memories. They seldom win distinction in examinations, but in literature and art, they are quite incomparably superior to the miscellaneous memories, that receive only as boxes and drawers receive what is put into them. A good literary or artistic memory is not like a post-office that takes in every thing, but like a very well-edited periodical, which prints nothing that does not harmonize with its intellectual life. A well-known author gave me this piece of advice: "Take as many notes as you like, but when you write do not look at them—what you remember is what you must write, and you ought to give things exactly the degree of relative importance that they have in your memory. If you forget much it is well, it will only save beforehand the labor of erasure." This advice would not be suitable to every author, he who dealt much in minute facts ought to be allowed to refer to his memoranda; but, from the artistic point of view in literature, the advice was wise indeed. In painting our preference selects while we are in the presence of Nature, and our memory selects when we are away from Nature. The most beautiful compositions are produced by the selecting office of the memory, which retains some features and even greatly exaggerates them, while it diminishes others and often altogether omits them. An artist who blamed himself for these exaggerations and omissions would blame himself for being an artist.

Let me add a protest against the common methods of curing what are called treacherous memories. They are generally founded upon the association of ideas, which is so far rational, but then the sort of association which they have recourse to is unnatural, and produces precisely the sort of disorder which would be produced in dress if a man were insane enough to tie, let us say, a frying-pan to one of his coat-tails and a child's kite to the other. The true discipline of the mind is to be effected only by associating those things together which have a real relation of some kind, and the profounder the relation the more is it based upon the natural constitution of things, and the less it concerns trifling external details, the better will be the order of the intellect. The mnemotechnic art wholly disregards this, and is therefore unsuited for intellectual persons, though it may be of some practical use in ordinary life. A little book on memory, of which many editions have been sold, suggests to men who forget their umbrellas that they ought always to associate the image of an umbrella with that of an open door, so that they could never leave any house without thinking of one. But would it not be preferable to lose two or three guineas annually rather than see a spectral umbrella in every door-way? The same writer suggests an idea which appears even more objectionable. Because we are apt to lose time, we ought, he says, to imagine a skeleton clock-face on the visage of every man we talk with; that is to say, we ought systematically to set about producing in our brains an absurd association of ideas, which is quite closely allied to one of the most common forms of insanity. It is better to forget umbrellas and lose hours than fill our minds with associations of a kind which every disciplined intellect does all it can to get rid of. The rational art of memory is that used in natural science. We remember anatomy and botany because, although