

tice and loss which it often inflicts on this very account, is perhaps but little known to its framers.

In rural districts it not infrequently happens that a number of over-grown boys, who have been kept at home for the summer months to assist in the labours of the farm, are sent to school during the winter season. Their parents hope, and perhaps they themselves expect, to add something to their mental treasury which may be of use to them in after-life. But whatever may be their aims, ambition, or mental activity, the poor fellows are wofully disappointed when they discover that because they are behind in some piece of—to them useless—memory work, they must take their places in a class of children not half their own size or age, where at the end of five months they find themselves little further advanced than at the beginning. But worse than all, whatever little ambition they may have had in the desire for mental improvement has been wholly crushed out of them, and their school-boy history has closed in disappointment or disgust. Had they received, however, a little encouragement and assistance in the studies for which they might manifest an aptitude, such proficiency might have been attained as would have been of material benefit at least to themselves.

In looking over the lives and history of those who have attained the highest places in science, literature, and philosophy, it is surprising to find how many of them in early youth escaped the regular system of education in vogue in their own day, while not one of them had ever been subjected to the hydraulic pressure of such an educational machine as our public school programme. Had they been so treated, it is more than probable that the world would have yet remained ignorant of the laws of gravitation, that our most sublime epics and tragedies would never have been written, and that the most startling discoveries of science would have remained locked up in the store-house of nature.

We feel perfectly satisfied that the tendency of the hot-house system to which chil-

dren are subjected during the six or eight years of their public school life has a tendency to crush out whatever originality there may be in their mental constitution, by the subversion or repression of every inherent tendency of their nature.

"So far and no farther shalt thou go," is the edict that greets every child on the threshold of all his numerous studies. It matters not what his abilities or inabilities, likes or dislikes, may be, "so far and no farther," is the fixed destiny that overhangs them all.

"He has failed in the promise of his schoolboy days," is our final verdict in hundreds of cases; but we fail to connect cause and effect. We do not see that our system tends no higher at least than a respectable mediocrity in everything, but greatness in nothing; that it dethrones the man and sets up the automaton, leaving him through life the mere echo of the thoughts, opinions, and even principles of others.

It is a most mistaken idea of education to suppose it can only be measured by the number of studies through which a child has been dragged or forced. A much higher and more useful type is that which enables the pupil to gather and digest knowledge for himself, and it is surely preferable to the system which forces the unmastered material into his intellectual stomach, leaving him throughout his whole after-life the victim of a kind of mental dyspepsia.

The highest effort of the true educationist should be employed in directing the expanding and maturing intellect, rather than in forcing upon it indigestible and highly seasoned food, altogether beyond its assimilating power.

We have a very strong suspicion that the present relation subsisting between our high and public schools, by which the latter are looked upon merely as feeders to the former, is responsible for much of the evil complained of in Dr. Clark's report. The number of successful high school entrants is now very generally accepted as the measure of the public school teacher's success. Failure here is the almost certain and