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THE OLD SCHOOLMASTER.

CHAPTER V.

Seek ye the truth within, the truth without ?
Is't but a secret hid away in doubt ?
Draw nearer still, draw near thyself to find,
What reads the book that's writ upon thy mind.

Whatever effect our discussion concerning memory may have had upon the reader, who, let me say, must not run away with the idea that we spent the whole evening in talking pedagogics, it seemed to have made some impression on the school-mistress, for, as I walked home with her after our little party had broken up, she, of her own will, returned to the subject by remarking that, in her opinion, the success of a teacher depends very much upon the knowledge which he or she has of what John Locke has called the *tabula rasa* of the child's mind. In such knowledge, as she said, there is really to be found the difference between the skilled and unskilled teacher.

"If the best method of imparting instruction," said I, "be that which reduces to a minimum the number of repetitions the child has to make in learning a lesson, there is certainly no element in the child's being which ought to be more carefully examined by us teachers than the memory. Nay, to go further, I hold that the teacher is wilfully careless who, unmindful of the inequalities of memory-force in his pupils, demands as much of a task from one pupil as from another."