

a few in a day. A fact, a principle, a truth, imperfectly grasped, makes no deep impression, and that impression speedily passes away. The few thoughts that are received by the mind while perfectly fresh and vigorous, may remain, and, if often renewed, become a part of the mind's treasures. If the lessons are very short, the child may be able to retain all the thoughts; if too long, he will be likely to retain none of them permanently.

Besides, one great object of study is to form habits of vigorous mental action. If the mind is allowed to act only so long as it can act vigorously, such habits will be formed. While, if the mind is forced to act when it has become weak, and has lost its elasticity, it will form habits of feeble and sluggish action. If, therefore, habits of energetic action are to be formed; if the mind is to be furnished with thoughts which shall be lasting and therefore valuable, short lessons only must be given to children.

3. Long lessons are dangerous to the health of the moral nature of the child. Every child that is in perfect health, physical, moral, and mental, is full of inquisitiveness and curiosity, and receives new ideas suited to his condition and state of progress, with satisfaction and delight. And, with proper management, this mode of feeling may be made habitual. But if more facts, principles, or truths, of any kind, be forced upon the child than he has power and time to receive fully and comprehend perfectly, he becomes wearied with the unavailing effort and pained by the indistinctness of the images presented to his mind; and truths which, presented properly, would have been gratifying and delightful, become distasteful and repulsive. This feeling, daily repeated, is transferred to the subject of the lessons. He comes to dislike a study which might have been a source of enjoyment to him for his life. This feeling of dislike may extend itself to the teacher who assigns the lessons, and to the place where they are given, so that he may cease to love his teacher, and begin to hate his school. All this might have been prevented by lessons so short that he could learn them easily and readily, before he began to feel weary and to be incapable of his best and most vigorous action.

4. Long lessons thus become dangerous to the happiness of childhood. Whoever will watch a child growing up in health and under judicious management, cannot but see what interest he takes in everything about him. He listens with delight to every story he can understand. He examines curiously every object he sees. Every plant, every animal, every stone, is beautiful to him. He asks a thousand questions; and if tolerably satisfactory answers are given, he will continue to ask others, almost without end. Day after day, he likes to hear the same story, and to handle and examine the same things; and he continues to do so until he understands them. Then every new object is a new source of delight, provided that too many new objects are not presented on the same day. To be happy and healthy, he must be much in the open air, at liberty to go hither and thither, and to play with—really to study,—what he pleases.

How soon we interfere with this liberty and happiness! We transfer him to a school, and keep him there two, or three, or four times as long every day as he ought to be confined. This is, often apparently, sometimes really, necessary. The teacher cannot help receiving the child into her school. The mother cannot help sending him. But a great deal may be done to prevent this school from being, or from being considered, a prison.

I visited, not long ago, a primary school filled with little children who had just left their mother's arms; and a pleasant school it was. Every arrangement seemed to have been dictated by a wisdom in perfect sympathy with the hearts of children; and they were happier than I ever saw children in any school before. One of the secrets of this happiness was to teach very little at a time and to make the lessons cease as soon as any one of the little things began to flag in his attention. Yet the children were making excellent progress. These short lessons, gladly and perfectly learned, carried the class on steadily, and, in comparison with classes differently managed, rapidly. Rapid, however, is not the word to apply to the true progress of mind. The growth of the oak is not seen, from day to day, or even from month to month; and the mind is a plant of still slower growth.

Not only at this early stage, but all through boyhood and girlhood, it is of the utmost importance to a child's future happiness that he should feel, at all times, free, and gay, and cheerful. Joyous cheerfulness is the natural mood of a healthy child's nature. It is an unspeakable misfortune to contract, in childhood, a sad and sombre habit. But how can this misfortune be averted, if the child carries home, day after day, for months and years, a lesson which is much too long for him to learn well, without sacrificing

the time for rest and for play, and the happy feeling of freedom from care?

5. Long lessons are unfavorable to *real progress* in study. I watched daily for many weeks, the course pursued in some of the best gymnasia in Germany. Nothing was more surprising, at first, than the shortness of the lessons. All through the early part of every course of study, the daily task seemed to me almost ridiculously short. Yet I soon became convinced that these short tasks were better than longer ones. In the first place, the short lesson was perfectly learned; every thing about every word. In language, for example, the pupil was ready to give every new verb of his lesson in every required mode and tense, number and person, and every new noun and adjective in every required case in both numbers. Then the words of to-day's lesson were combined with those of yesterday's and those of every previous day; sentences innumerable were made, so that the exercise became a review of everything previously studied. Then the thought of the lesson became a subject of conversation, and, as this had been anticipated, many bright and ingenious things were often said. By these processes, the substance of the day's lesson was incorporated with the previous furniture of the mind; just as, in scientific road-making, the new metal, as it is called who skilfully applied in sufficiently small quantities, and in a moist season, becomes speedily incorporated with the material of the old road-bed, and forms a substantial and permanent foundation for a good way.

Every new lesson thus became an occasion for observation and inquiry, and for new and pleasant thought. The observant teacher knows that the progress of a pupil is not measured by the ground travelled over, but by the number of clear thoughts perfectly mastered and combined with previous attainments, so as to form part of the permanent furniture of the mind. Exactness and thoroughness are the essential things; and these are possible only with easy lessons quickly and joyously learned and made a part of the mind's stock by frequent and faithful reviews.—*Massachusetts Teacher.*

E.

## OFFICIAL NOTICES.



### APPOINTMENTS:

#### EXAMINERS.

His Excellency the Governor General in Council was pleased, on the 15th November, to appoint the Reverend Charles Flavien Baillargeon, member of the Board of Examiners of Three Rivers vice the Reverend Telephore Toupin, deceased.

#### SCHOOL COMMISSIONERS.

His Excellency the Governor General in Council was pleased, on the 15th November, to approve of the following appointments of School Commissioners:

County of Drummond.—Durham: Messrs. William Purcell, George A. Placey and John Harriman.

On the 23rd November:

County of Ottawa.—Waterloo Village: Messrs. Joseph Lafontaine, Michel Desrosiers, Joseph Galipeau, François Laurin and Adolphe Villeneuve.

County of Shefford.—South Ely: Rev. François Paul Côté.

County of Arthabaska.—Stanford: Louis Roux dit Sanschagrin, Esq.

On the 30th November:

County of Wolfe.—Wolfestown: Rev. Anaclet Olivier Pélissier and Patrick Larkin, Esq.