

voice is repeatedly insisted on. At page 306, for instance, he says: "A task may be of a kind to dispense with preliminary explanation, as in learning a string of words, or a verbatim statement. Even then it is well that the teacher should first recite it to the pupils; his doing so once will go further to fix it in the memory than their going over it by themselves six times. There is no harm, but good, in exacting a certain amount of independent preparation, especially with older pupils, but the teacher's first recitation, and the final iteration during the lessons, are the principal instrumentality whereby the lesson is fixed in the memory; the learner's own studies are the smallest contribution to the effect." Explanation is particularly necessary on lessons where the substance only is to be given, inasmuch as it cannot be expected that even the majority of scholars, with their immature judgments, will agree with the teacher as to what is important and what is worthless. Mr. Bain thus speaks of lessons of inordinate length:—"It is bad policy to prescribe lessons of excessive length, expecting only a part to be performed. If, for the sake of the better pupils, the lesson should exceed what the average can perform, the minimum should be a defined portion, to be exacted of everyone. The impossibility (to the teacher) of bringing every pupil in a class to book, on every occasion, is in itself a standing temptation (to them) to run the blockade; but when the quantity prescribed is beyond what can be reasonably required, the do-nothing habit receives positive encouragement."—p. 307.

We had hoped to have seen a positive utterance in this book on the vexed subject of examinations as a means of testing acquired knowledge, but this Mr. Bain cautiously shrinks from, being content to refer the reader to the work of another author upon the subject: we seek for bread and he gives us a stone. Surely the best method of testing the acquisition of knowledge should be clearly indicated in a work such as the one before us; and the merits and defects of examinations to this end deserve a careful investigation in

view of the fact that their efficacy has been questioned by persons whose opinions are eminently entitled to respect.

There are but few intelligent teachers who do not question the value of a good deal they are expected to impart, basing their estimate upon the future use that may be made of each subject in the curriculum. Professor Bain, applying this test, says:—"Such a criterion would attest the high value of the Experimental Sciences, such as Physics and Chemistry, the smaller but yet considerable value of Mineralogy and Botany, and the very small value of many things much more prominent in our education than any of these."—p. 322.

He has nothing very new to say of the method of teaching languages, he recommends, however, as in other subjects, that the teacher should assist and guide the labours of the scholars by a short prelection on each lesson prescribed. He points out clearly the difficulties of learning a foreign language out of the country in which it is spoken, and in the absence of the things the words stand for, and refers to the various expedients to decrease them, such as arranging the words to be learned into verses, making alphabetical lists of them, placing those together to commit to memory that are related in meaning, and copying out case, and conjugation forms, &c.

In dealing with the mother tongue, Mr. Bain has a good deal that is useful to say. He shows that owing to the close relation of names to the things they represent, language lessons at first should be really a series of object lessons. "The best form of introducing a fact to a child would be its real occurrence.

. . . But listening to talk and book-reading bring forward things without any reference to their actual presentation, and then some way of introducing them has to be found, the task in many instances being premature and impossible," without the presence of the things themselves. He points out that the teaching of correct grammatical utterance may precede the formal introduction of grammar, which he thinks should not take place before the child is ten years of age. We are in entire accord with him in this and also in the con-