

a book into their face, and say,—“Here—translate this,” they must be ready to do it on the instant. And I verily believe they would. I believe the sound of that sharp voice, that never tolerates the tick of a watch between question and answer, if heard in the midst of the deepest sleep, would impel them, instinctively, to “rouse and bestir themselves, ere well awake.”

The teacher's success in securing promptness in his pupil will depend very much on his own promptness. There is a wonderful contagion in all mental operations. In ordinary conversation, we almost unconsciously talk faster and think faster than our wont, with a man who speaks fast to us, and we take our time with a man who is himself deliberate. The teacher must be as prompt as his own standard. He must “know what he knows.” If he expects ready answers, he must be ready with his questions. Every appearance of hesitation or doubt in him, sanctions and reproduces hesitation in them. To maintain this alertness will require preparation on his part—but what teachers can expect to succeed in any thing without it?

The teacher to whom the writer was indebted for his early education, had an excellent scheme for stimulating his scholars to rapid performances in Arithmetic. A problem was read to the whole class. If one in Mental Arithmetic, the answer simply was to be written on the slate. If it required an operation, it was to be wrought out and the result under-scored. The first who finished his work laid his slate, face downward, upon a table, the others piling theirs upon it as they severally got ready. When all were done, the pile was turned over and the results read in their order: the first correct answer entitled its author to the head, and so on. It by no means turned out that the quickest were the surest—but the general effect of the exercise was to stimulate the quick to be surer, and the sure to be quicker.—Other exercises we had in other branches, with the same intent. Among others, we had, regularly, on Monday Morning, a half-hour's exercise in turning up texts in the Bible, chapter and verse being given by the master, and the first finder reading the passage aloud.—These exercises were always immensely enjoyed by the school. Any teacher can invent schemes of this sort for himself,—such as best fall in with his own plans. But somethings of the kind, now and then, I believe to be very useful in quickening the faculties.

Of course there is a judicious way of cultivating promptness. Some minds are naturally quicker than others, and can safely be required to react upon a question with more rapidity. But we are not to encourage and commend promptness in a way which will imply that the quickest minds are necessarily the best. We must not so manage our exercises as to discourage those slower but perhaps finer intellects, that will excel where judgment and reflection are in request. We must not force any mind to undue haste, for this will result in a habit of guessing, and jumping at wrong conclusions. But, remembering that the faculties will grow in proportion to the demand made upon them, *up to a certain point*, we must seek to secure in every one the greatest possible promptness consistent with other requirements.—*Vermont School Journal*.

## Thoughts on Education from various Authors. (1)

### I.

#### VALUE AND ESSENCE OF A GOOD EDUCATION.

(Continued from our last.)

At the end of the fourteenth or fifteenth year, school instruction—public education—ought not to cease, but to continue, even if the number of hours is smaller.

A youth of fourteen is yet a child in insight and power, as in years. Now! approaching the period most important for influencing him, and most dangerous. And is it then that we are to leave the youth to himself, to be corrupted by chance, or by the common affairs of life? This would be—to speak mildly—foolish. It would be to begin, but not to finish.

Therefore, instruction, and the further exercising of the powers of the mind, should continue, the number of hours being diminished.

Now should be studied the most important subjects; theories of religion and morals, ethical principles and development of character, theory of the duties and rights of citizens, their relations to the authorities and to the state, general knowledge of the laws of the land, especially of the penal code.

This will accomplish much more than the studies hitherto pursued in schools or infant schools, the miserable practising of mechanical reading, writing, &c.

No one should be graduated from the institutions of public education and training, until he arrives at age. DIESBACH.

What must be done in order to keep pace with the requirements of the progress of the age; which is all the time demanding additional studies for the young?

Shall all new studies be rejected, and only the few retained which the “good old times” admitted? Shall different studies be pursued together?

The former half-way method has seed of death within it.

The spirit of a principle is never comprehended except by those who teach especially some one department; but who in practice connect the various departments in a truly economical manner.

And yet this condensation of knowledge is never a complete solution of the whole problem.

I know of but one key to it—the prolongation of the period of study.

If we are requiring of boys of sixteen what they might learn at fourteen, it is then only worth while to introduce more studies into the common-school course, and to endeavor to make an effective enlargement of it.

But the school should cautiously beware of making sacrifices to the arrogant requirements of the spirit of the age; which, whenever it takes a wrong direction, promotes nonsense, and desires to study by steam.

LLOY.

It is not overloading with dead knowledge, but the purifying and strengthening of the moral feelings, which is the highest aim of education.

LUCIAN.

Education, with relation to men—for both animals and plants can be educated, and the word is derived from the latter—is the gradual change of the immature into the mature man.

This change happens, firstly, by means of the action of nature in the young man himself, impelling him, in body and mind, to the development of his powers; and in the second place through other men, with whom the young man stands in relation; by their constant influence upon him, stimulating him to activity, and thus to the development of all his faculties.

Education by means of men is in part unintentional and purposeless, in part designed, and conducted according to certain rules, conceived with a consciousness more or less clear.

It is this latter to which particularly the name of education is applied; and it is this education which a man needs in order to be truly well-trained.

If all education were left to the operation of nature and of accident, men might, it is true, do well physically, but mentally would remain exceedingly undeveloped.

Education however must be natural; that is, must be adapted to the nature of man as a corporeal, reasoning and free being; and therefore must not be mechanical, merely directory or drilling, as with beasts, but reasonable and admitting of free activity, and neither pampering nor over refining.

Instruction is an important part of this education; inasmuch as it must itself communicate education; that is, must be stimulating, developing, and training, and must not merely hand over to the memory for safe keeping a multitude of words and facts.

Education begins with birth; and is therefore at the beginning, of course, merely physical or corporal; it soon however becomes moral and intellectual also—or, to speak generally, mental; for the mind of the child very soon becomes active; as soon as he answers to the smiles of his mother, and begins to stammer out words.

The mother is therefore the first and most natural teacher.

The father, however, and others who are round the child, partly involuntarily and partly voluntarily, take a part in it.

For this reason the first education must be domestic.

Public education takes place later; and partly continues the former, and partly supplies its deficiencies; especially for boys, who by virtue of their natural destiny enter so much more into public life than girls.

When the youth attains his majority, he becomes his own educator; although the external world continues to have an incessant influence upon him.

This stage of education continues until man, having become a more or less ripe fruit upon the stem of humanity, falls from it and sinks into his grave. KRAU.

It is worth more to be possessed of but few of the lessons of wisdom, but to apply these diligently, than to know many, but not to have them at hand.

The object of education is not external show and splendor, but inward development.

What is the use of a great number of books, when their possessor knows only their names?

An enormous mass of materials is not instructive to the learner, but discouraging.