



THE

JOURNAL OF EDUCATION

Devoted to Education, Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Volume XXII.

Quebec, Province of Quebec, February, 1878.

No. 2.

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The Cultivation of the Memory.

Some time ago, in starting a class in Latin, I found pupils who had been taught to desire knowledge and seek for it, to reason in a degree consistent with their age and attainments, and to express themselves with some ease, but who seemed to lack the ability to acquire readily and recall accurately.

Only exercise develops strength. The hand unused loses its cunning; the foot which has not walked for some time refuses to bear the weight of the body. Symmetry of the body is found when every member has its proper development; symmetry of mind, when each faculty, through training, has its proportionate growth.

One of the tendencies of the age undoubtedly is to underrate or neglect the memory. The cry is that children must be taught to observe. Well and good; but it is not desirable that observations should be remembered if the knowledge gained through the perception is to be made available?

Again we hear that pupils must learn to reason for themselves. That, too, is well. We would not underrate the reason, though we might question its attaining

any great strength in children; but is one member to be stunted that another may grow? On all sides there is an outcry against "Cram"; the word "Parrot" slips off of our tongues so easily: it is such a common thing to say in a contemptuous way, "She does not reason, she only memorizes"; besides it is so easy to despise what we do not possess, that we, as teachers, will do well to examine our footing and see where we stand in regard to the importance of cultivating the memory, and the best manner of the training.

There is a serious danger in following the methods and plans of others without studying the child's mind; without knowing what are its faculties, and what their order of development. As Noah Porter has well said:—"The clear, methodical, and satisfactory communication of knowledge follows from often asking, 'What truths are most easily and naturally received at first or as foundations for others? What illustrations and examples are most pertinent and satisfactory? What degree of repetition and inculcation is required in order to cause the instruction to remain? How can individual peculiarities of intellect be successfully addressed, and, if need be, corrected?'"

When we have passed by serious dangers in our profession, and have secured as our pilot experience, it is so natural to wonder why others do not avoid the quicksands of error. We forget the painful process of learning through mistakes. Yet while we should have charity for the younger member of our profession, surely it is right to warn them of dangers ahead; and it seems to me there is imminent danger of their falling into the mistake of adopting the mere exercises of some eminent teacher in their department, without considering the great truths which underlie all genuine education, and whose wealth of power can never be exhausted. This results in that most serious obstacle to mental improvement,—the belief that everything concerning teaching in their own grade is already known.

We can never enter with energy of soul into any work so long as we are indifferent to it, or so long as we consider it a matter of trivial interest. Consequently we shall speak first concerning the importance of the cultivation of memory.