

would have led him to adorn his surroundings with all that was lovely and fair to behold, and kept him from the pernicious influences of the world.

The attractions of a beautiful garden are always felt by the young as well as the old, and its influence is to restrain them from seeking pleasure in an unlawful manner. A plant costs but a trifle, to be sure, but it possesses a silent power, too often lightly esteemed. Cultivate the love of flowers in your children; cultivate a desire to possess them, and a taste to arrange them; ripper years will show the beneficent power they have exerted. The money expended upon them is not wasted, but frequently returns in full measure to enrich the possessor.—*Exchange*.

2. TRAIN TO ACCURACY.

Suppose you send your child for a book, by a description of the binding; he goes to the library for it, and comes back with a different one. That child is lacking in the valuable habit of attention; he did not notice your description of it with sufficient accuracy; this is the fault of three-fourths of the race. Do not scold him; describe it over again, and with the utmost patience and deliberation keep on sending him back until he brings the right one. But suppose he returns and says it is not there, if you are perfectly sure that it is there, then he lacks thoroughness, and unless this trait is nurtured the whole of after life will be embittered by a slipshod way of doing things, and pecuniary losses in every department of business will be an inevitable result, and always. Keep that child going back for that book if it takes a week; and show him that if he had at first gone over every shelf, book by book, he would have gotten it long ago. Be attentive, be thorough in all things.—*Hall's Journal of Health*.

3. THE BEGINNINGS OF EDUCATION.

The child is no sooner born than its education may be said to begin. The first grasp of air the infant makes, and the pressure it feels at its mother's breast, are lessons learned. With each progressive step in the relationship of the child with persons and things external to itself, its nurse, its food, the light, and the various other beings and objects which may surround it, it is acquiring the elements which form the basis of all education.

The earliest years of childhood are most profitably spent in the development of those observing faculties which the young exercise with instinctive readiness. Easily, however, and spontaneously as the power of observation of the child seems to act, it must not be presumed that all guidance, on the part of parent, nurse, or whoever may have charge of it, is supererogatory. Children may be aided, from the very earliest age, with great advantage even in learning those objective lessons which most of them are so forward in acquiring.

Those who have the constant care of the infant, or even they who may be only brought into casual relation with it, can seldom resist the invitation the little creature, by its many endearing ways, gives to notice. It thus, without any systematic effort, or even with a good deal of apparent negligence, will secure for itself at times the means it requires for the proper development of its observing powers. The playful sympathy of the vivacious nurse with her smiling charge will prompt the troling of a nursery ditty, some lively action or other, or the presentation of a bright object. The child may thus learn its most essential lessons from teachers supremely ignorant of the useful instruction they give, or even of the fact that they are instructors.

There are some, however, who are incapable, from perversity of disposition or want of natural animation, of responding even to the invitation to mirth of an infant's smile. Such should never be allowed, if possible, to have charge of the young. A cheerful disposition should be regarded as one of the most essential requisites of a good nurse. Mothers should, moreover, especially cultivate a lively manner with their children. All the surroundings, if possible, of the child should be animating, and objects noticeable from brightness of colour and distinctness of figure ought to be placed within reach of his daily vision. Sombreness of dress of the child and those who have constant charge of it should be avoided.

Systematic intellectual education of the child should be deferred until he has reached the age of six or seven years. Previous to that period he may be allowed to pick up, like Moses in the "Vicar of Wakefield," a miscellaneous education at home. During the years of infancy, of course, there will be no attempt to do more than arouse and engage the observing powers by those means which naturally suggest themselves to a sympathetic mother and a lively, good-natured attendant.

Those skilful teachers, the Germans, do not admit any pupil into

their most elementary school before the age of six years. This is as early a period as most children can be subjected to the discipline of systematic study. Intellectual pursuits even then cannot be persistently followed unless combined with a careful training of the physical powers. Exclusive culture of the mind is dangerous at all ages, but more especially during the earliest.

While the bodily vigor is carefully promoted by abundance of good food, playful exercise, and cheerfulness of spirits, there is very little risk of the young being intellectually overworked. Most, if not all, of those children who are said to have broken down under the weight of their studies have not been injured by too much work, but too little play. If a proper care should be taken to sustain a just balance between the body and mind, both would be found capable of much greater effort than either is wont to exhibit, and with the result of increased robustness.

John Stuart Mill tells us in his "Autobiography" that he began the study of Greek at an age earlier than he could remember, but which his family assured him was when he was only three years old. Before he reached his teens he had travelled over the vast domains of ancient classical and a large portion of English literature. Although Mill placed a very modest estimate on his natural powers, he accomplished what it will be safe to say was never accomplished before at so early a period of life. It would not only be absurd to attempt to effect the same results by the same means in most children, but, if the experiment were tried, it would fail in ninety-nine hundred cases out of ten thousand by the premature extinction of mind and body, causing either the death or idiocy of those subjected to the process.

III. Competitive Examinations in Schools.

1. COUNTY LANARK COMPETITIVE EXAMINATION.

The County Competitive Examination of Public Schools took place in Perth, on the 23rd ult. It was a very large and interesting gathering, and the competition was keen and close. No less than 24 schools of 8 different townships, sent competitors numbering in all 103, as follows: 2nd class, 30; 3rd class, 31; 4th class, 20; 5th class 22. Ten schools succeeded in carrying away prizes. The medals were awarded as follows:—

Gold Medal—Presented by Wm. Lees, Reeve, Bathurst—1st General Proficiency, 5th Class, to William McIntyre, Balderson.

Gold Medal—Presented by A. Code, M.P.P.—1st General Proficiency, 4th Class, to Peter McNaughton, Balderson.

Silver Medal—Presented by W. W. Berford, Co. Treasurer—1st General Proficiency, 3rd class, to Alex. Menzies, Glen Tay.

Silver Medal—Presented by Thos. Brooke, Co. Clerk—1st General Proficiency, 2nd class, to Mary Brogan, Glen Tay.

Silver Medal—Presented by H. L. Slack, Co. Inspector—Best speller present, to Peter McNaughton, Balderson.

The competition for the medal in spelling was very close between Peter McNaughton and John Bothwell, the latter of whom lost it by merely the omission of one letter in spelling 60 words. The proficiency of these two was exceedingly creditable to themselves and the school which they represent.

The examiners were Mr McGregor, of Almonte; Messrs. McNab, Beer, and Reilly, of Carleton-place; Mr. Moag, of Smith's Falls; Mr. Jas. Stewart, of Lanark; and the Rev. Messrs. Bain, Burns, Chisholm, Dr. Thornton, and Mr. Slack, of Perth.—*Courier*.

2. COMPETITIVE EXAMINATIONS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Mr. A. McGill, teacher at Bracebridge, thus writes to the *Free Grant Gazette*:—

DEAR SIR:—I had the pleasure, on the 15th instant, of attending in the capacity of Examiner, a Competitive Examination of pupils from the Public Schools of the Township of Muskoka. The examination took place at Gravenhurst, and about seventy scholars presented themselves as candidates for the prizes. The prize list is appended and explains itself sufficiently. The prizes, though chiefly books, comprised a microscope, portfolio, box of mathematical instruments, and several boxes of games; and were on the whole, a capital thirty dollars' worth.

We cannot speak too highly of the example set by the Council of Muskoka Township in thus offering an inducement to activity among pupils. We sincerely hope that the Councils of other Townships throughout the District may "go and do likewise."

I desire to offer some suggestions relative to the value of prizes as incentives to energetic action on the part of pupils, and the mode in which they should be offered, so that they may exert their maximum influence for good.

The offer of graded prizes to all members of the class is a method