

The Teachers Monthly

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Attention is drawn to the Announcement for 1902-3 of the General Assembly's Teacher Training Course on page 423. Read it through carefully. Does it not meet the case of your Sabbath School or Bible Class or Young People's Society? If so, talk it over with those interested, and make a prompt beginning in taking it up. If no one else is ready, there is nothing in the Course to forbid you working it out alone.

TEACHER TRAINING

By Professor Walter C. Murray

X. THE IMAGINATION

There are three varieties in the development of the imagination.

The imagination of the little child is highly fanciful. Sully tells us that a little child seeing dew on the grass said, "the grass is crying." Another called the stars "cinders from God's star." Butterflies were called "flying pansies" by another. A little boy of four, trying to write, turned the second F so as to face the first, and exclaimed, "They're talking." This fanciful imagination is checked by growing experience.

The explanation is not difficult. In the last paper we saw that the little child's growth in knowledge consists in discovering new appearances and in finding out what appearances go together. Thus his knowledge of a particular kind of apple is made up of its color, its taste, its softness, its weight and its size. After a few experiences he can from its color foretell what its taste will be, or how soft it will feel. That is, he knows what

colors, tastes and touches go together. So in the fancies noticed above, the child had in the past found that certain colors went with certain touches, which he called pansies. When he saw the same colors again, this time on the butterfly, they suggested the touches which made up pansies, with the new touches of motion. So the drop on the leaf called up its old associates, the sensations of crying. These fancies are a sign that the child's knowledge is growing, but that it is but beginning. These associations are like the little needles that shoot across the pane of glass upon which the frost is beginning to gather. They may be the beginning of any one of a number of beautiful designs; but later, as other little spines of frost cross and recross, the delicate tracery assumes one definite design. As with the increasing experience of the child, fancy becomes more restrained and the definite scheme of prosaic experience takes its place. Thus growing experience says leaves have no eyes and therefore cannot cry, and fancy is checked. Increased experience denies that pansies fly, and before it fancy dies.

Certain kindergarten methods make use of this fancy in children. So the old nursery jingle about "The big pig that went to market" appeals to the fanciful resemblance between the relative sizes of the toes and the members of a family. So long as the kindergarten confines these methods to the proper years, and does not carry them into the school age, they are to be commended. But if this indifference to fact be cultivated, accurate knowledge and truthful speech becomes difficult.