

happy in the choice of words nor in the manner of combining them than is Shelley. The pupils might write notes on such expressions as, "thirsting flowers," "sweet buds," "skyeey bowers," "lured by the love," "heaven's blue smile," "meteor eyes," "morning star," "ardors of rest and love," "swarm of golden bees," "sphere-fire," "cenotaph," "caverns of rain."

Short lectures must be given by the teacher on such topics as evaporative, electricity, cause of lightning, cause of thunder, the appearance of the sky in fine weather, in a storm, the colors of the rainbow, etc., etc.

THE PRACTICAL.*

A remark made in my hearing the other day suggested the subject of this short paper. It was that not enough of the practical was discussed at the meetings of the Convention. I did not agree with the remark. I, for one have looked forward every year to the meetings of the Convention with pleasurable anticipation. I have gone back to my work in school feeling that the meetings have done me good, that every year something has been said that was a real help to me in my work, and I am sure that there are many teachers who feel as I do. There are a great many people who believe that children should be taught nothing in school but what will help them to get on in the world. They want to see direct results. They would like, if possible, to see a money return for the time their children spend in school. How often one hears it said, "of what use will this or that study be to my child? In a few years he will have to earn his living, and I want him taught what will enable him to do that." They regard the education of their children as a means to obtain the great end of advancement in their worldly business. It never seems to occur to them that there is anything else in the world worth striving after but the making of a comfortable living. They forget, or rather they never think, that a good education, no matter what your station or occupation in life is, is your own great reward. Teachers, too, in this practical age are apt to be infected with the same spirit. They sometimes, in spite of their own better judgment, keep grinding away continually at what they think will count up best at their day of reckoning—examination day. There are many by-paths diverging from the hard beaten highway of school work that they know would be both pleasant and profitable to explore; but they are restrained from doing so by the practical consideration—*it'll pay.* On the one hand we see the mischievous tendency of this ultra practical doctrine by the suspicious eye that people cast on all that they think is not of direct and immediate utility, and on the other it is calculated to be equally hurtful in the school-room by the narrowing influence it has upon the teacher. What after all—of all the things we have learned in school, particularly in our early school days, has been of the most practical use to us? In looking back a few things stand out distinctly in my memory. I have forgotten entirely how I learned my letters, or how I acquired the difficult rules of addition, subtraction, and multiplication; but I remember with feelings of pleasure to this day, a beloved teacher telling a class, of which I was a member, the thrilling story of "Little Red Riding Hood," and singing to us the very unpractical song of "Froggie Would a Wooing Go." And once at a later stage I remember a venerable old gentleman coming into our school and examining a class of bare-foot boys and girls in arithmetic. What the exercises were I forget; whether they were hard or easy I forget; but, oh, I distinctly remember that old man's smile, his kindly touch, and his gentle, encouraging words. Such things may be very impracticable, but I did not think so then, and I can't say that I have changed my mind since.

*A paper read by Miss Eliza Lawson, at the Convention of the Prince Edward Island Teachers' Association, last October.

Every teacher must have noticed that it is easier to teach some children than others. Not so much from a difference in their natural ability, as that some do not seem to know how to think. The difference lies in the education the children get out of school, there are many people who look upon home as merely a place to get their meals and sleep. I am not now referring to those people who, in the hard struggle for existence, must of necessity leave their children pretty much to themselves; but to the ultra practical people who look upon cheerful conversation, amusing books and games, as hindrances to the grand object of their life—money making. Of course children from such homes as these will be dull and unimaginative. The teacher has to exercise all his ingenuity to rouse their sleeping intelligences. On the other hand, those people who cultivate the graceful, the beautiful, and all such practical things in their homes, will send to the schools children who can be approached on many sides. The books, the cheerful, intelligent conversation which the children have access to and take part in, are educating the children in the best and most practical way for the business of life, in which they will soon have to engage. I think that the schools should make up to those who do not enjoy those advantages, what they miss at home. In the more advanced classes I am sure it would be much more profitable for the students, instead of learning in their English Literature class at what period such an author lived, and a list of what books he wrote, and perhaps some reviews of those books, for them to spend the time in reading one or more of the works of that author. As things are now, such a course might not count quite as well at an examination, but the difference to the student would more than compensate. Those people who learn and remember a collection of words about books put one in mind of the botanist who can give you the Latin name for every flower and plant—who can classify them all—but who never wandered about in the fresh green woods, and who never experienced the delight in culling a bouquet of flowers. I would give more for the person's knowledge of English literature who laughed over the adventures of Mr. Pickwick and cried over the sorrows of little Nell, than I would for one who could give you day and date for all the authors who ever lived. What can be more enjoyable and more sociable than conversation; but how few people there are, even among those who call themselves well educated, who can talk well on any subject. We need very much to have our hearts enlarged and our sympathies broadened. Anything that helps to do this is practical in the best sense. Can we not begin the work in the school-room? I am really anxious to know. I am very sure that many people are carrying this question of the practical, as they understand it, too far. I hope that some of the teachers here will talk a little on the subject, and give us the benefit of their ideas.

MADAGASCAR.

Madagascar consists of a central plateau or highland rising from 4,000 feet to 5,000 feet above the lowlands of the coast, and from this plateau rise occasional volcanic cones, the highest, Ankaratra, being 3,950 feet above the sea. These volcanoes extend from the northern extremity of the island to the 20th parallel of south latitude. South of this appear granite rocks, at least as far as 22° south latitude. At higher latitudes than this the rocks of the interior are practically unknown to Europeans. According to a recent paper by Mr. F. W. Rudler, F.G.S., several crater lakes and mineral springs abound; and to the north of the volcanic district of Ankaratra there is a tract of country containing silver, lead, zinc, and copper ores. As regards building stones, besides the granite which is so general, there are vast beds of sandstone and slate between the district of Ankaratra and the fossils, according to M. Grandidier, the recent French traveller in the interior, are preferable to the Jurassic system, and comprise remains of hippopotami, gigantic tortoises, and an extinct bird of the ostrich species. The coasts of the country are rich in timber, and it would also appear that the interior is a good mineral field.