

The teachers have not been slow to perceive the popular complaint; at least, not so slow as the pungent newspaper articles indicate. The supply is, sooner or later, regulated by the demand, in teaching as well as in other callings, and so it has come to pass that in an anxiety to rectify this subject of complaint, we find a disposition to put the cultivation of the memory in the back ground, and to elevate to its place the training of the reasoning powers. In that remarkable treatise on Education, the "Emile" of Rousseau, this great educational reformer, in his anxiety to free the minds of children from the pedantic training of the times, opens the flood-gates of his passionate soul in appeals to his readers to free the children from compulsory training of the faculties. It was the revolt of a powerfully sympathetic mind against what is believed to be the ignorant oppression of the schools. But, as a revolt, it carried the point quite too far, although unquestionably it served an admirable purpose in releasing educational methods from the choking ligatures of the age. It is the same tendency we notice in the disciples of Rousseau—the German school—to exaggerate the method, or system of methods, which for the time was uppermost in their minds. And precisely because such a reaction must be vigorous in its attempt to overthrow the deeply-rooted wrong methods which have provoked the reaction, arises the danger that the attack will be pushed much too far.

Through just such an anxiety to escape from the evil of excessive use, or abuse, of the memory in the public schools we have been brought face to face with the danger that we may be led to undervalue that faculty in our new methods in the school-room. There is something very fascinating in the cry, "Cultivate the reasoning powers of the children," and something quite as powerful on the teacher's mind in the ridicule and caricature of the memory-work. Unquestionably the child is, to some extent, a reasoning being, and, as such, there can be no doubt as to the propriety of our recognizing this in our educational methods. But is equally true that the reasoning faculty is very slow of development. The discipline of the intellectual faculties, from the simple habit of correct observation onward to the complex habit of weighing and testing the value of evidence, which, more or less, becomes the great business of human intellect, is a well-nigh never-ending process of development. Nor can there be any doubt that this training should be begun at a very early day, both in school and at home. The reasons for right conduct, in particular, in connection with some personal experience, are reasons which a child soon apprehends. The reasons for certain operations in science are much more difficult of apprehension, and must be proceeded with more carefully. But whether in conduct or in school studies, are not attempts by way of excessive explanation or talk, very likely to deceive the instructor in his endeavors to develop the reasoning powers? Scarcely an idea is more delusive than that our constant preachments to children, however plain they may appear to ourselves, must appear equally so to them; and look at it as we may, spontaneity in thinking is in great danger of being destroyed by excessive anxiety on the part of the teacher to impress his modes of thinking and reasoning on the pupil under twelve or thirteen years of age. How is this spontaneity to expand itself? Not by the child slipping its mind into the shell that the instructor or teacher has prepared for it.

There are a great many points in the morals or conduct, as well as in school studies, that we can not wait to reason into a young child. These must be accepted through the force of authority and as settled truths. There are other cases where the pupil must be left to puzzle

them out for himself, or wait for the dawning of light that sooner or later comes to even the most moderately endowed intellect. These we trust to the operation of well ascertained mental processes. But the great majority of young instructors, in particular, are in a hurry for results, and think that by constant talk their children will become reasoning, thinking beings. In this way they fancy that in some unexplained way they will be able to meet this new demand for the cultivation of the reasoning faculties and the abolishment of "parrotting."

These remarks are only incidental to the object of this short article, a plea for the cultivation of the memory in our schools. Youth is the time for the exercise of this faculty. If it be neglected then, it becomes more difficult to perfect it as the years advance. Besides, the proper training of the memory is our main dependence for correctly-learned lessons. If the use of text books is to be continued—and there is no prospect in the immediate future that they will be abandoned—what reliance is to be placed on our homework if the memory be neglected? It will be said that it is only the sense of the author that the teacher wants; he will be satisfied with the pupil's own language. But when is the young child to obtain its vocabulary? From clever children of twelve years, or from others of fourteen, there is some prospect of obtaining an approach to a connected, intelligent answer in their own language; but most teachers know that it is frightfully wearisome work to place dependence on that. The truth is that very few children have a vocabulary of any extent from which they can draw, and one of the first things that we ought to do is to assist them in enlarging it. For this there can be no better plan than committing to memory, with the utmost exactness, well-explained, simple language of a good writer. We say well-explained, because it is utterly wrong to require young children to learn what they do not understand. Possibly it was the doing of this that partly created the revolt in public opinion, expressing itself in that forcible word "parrotting." A thoughtful teacher, on speaking of this very matter with the writer, remarked, that if he had the entire training of twelve children uninterruptedly, from seven years of age to twelve or thirteen years, he would undertake to furnish them with such a vocabulary and faculty of expression as would surprise me. He then added that he would do it by requiring them to commit to memory, at first, short pieces of pleasing poetry at least once a week. As the months flew on he would increase the amount. He would review these from time to time. When they learned to write, they should write these as exercises. As the years passed, prose pieces would be mingled with poetical extracts, and in the last two years, perhaps more, he would exercise them in turning the poetry into prose, and in expressing the prose in other prose of their own. Three things would thus be gained, the habit of exact memory, fullness of vocabulary, with facility of expression, and a well-stored collection of short, beautiful, and serviceable extracts for future life. There can be no question but that such a process of training would also powerfully influence the thinking of children. Just as constant contact with good society influences the manners of youth, so would the habit of memorizing beautiful thoughts in time affect the mind, and weave itself in with all the processes of thought.

There can be no doubt that an exact memory is an immense blessing. The power of producing at pleasure not only the thought but its very form and texture just as it left the writer, every word marshaled in its proper place, instinct with life and vigor and beauty—what would not one give for this in certain moods? But the words have floated away, the form has gone: we are