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THAT each pupil in a class has left the room or finished the lesson with at least one fact thoroughly learned and never to be forgotten, would be a comforting thought to any master. But that this comforting thought is not always obtainable we are afraid is sometimes the case. Yet it is not a failure over which to worry. Facts are not the only things to be learned in a schoolroom—perhaps teaching facts is the smallest part of the functions of a teacher. If each pupil in the class has gone away at the close of the exercise with new light on an old fact learned long ago, with a greater facility in concentrating his attention, with strengthened power of thought, with an added interest in the lesson even, more perhaps has been gained than if a score of new facts had been learned. The sole business of going to school is not to acquire information. Yet to judge from the infinite pains some of us take in imparting information, and the small amount of pains others of us take in teaching our pupils how best they may acquire it for them-

selves, a casual observer might very justly imagine that the schoolroom was merely a place where the master might tell his pupils all the facts, mathematical, scientific, literary, and historical, which up to that time he himself had succeeded in learning and remembering a sort of syphon, in short, in which, by means of blackboard and slate, ideas were to flow from the teacher's brain to the pupil's pate. Not facts, but what to think about facts; not ideas, but the sequence of ideas—are not these of more value than many facts and many ideas? Nine thirds, we tell a class, is a vulgar fraction. That is a fact. But what has the class learned? Perhaps that if they are next asked what twelve thirds is they might answer, a vulgar fraction. But if we explain all that is meant by making nine a numerator and three a denominator, they will properly answer the second question. But, perhaps we shall be told, such explanation is merely the imparting of more facts. Be it so, yet there are facts and facts, and there is such a thing as teaching about facts just as there is such a thing as teaching facts. The latter, perhaps, means nothing more than an exercise of memory; the former means an exercise of thought. Both are good, but which is the better?

A GREAT deal would be gained if, in preparing a lesson for the following day, a teacher, instead of consulting authorities, comparing dictionaries, searching for parallel passages, and by various other means laying in a store of isolated facts, were to put to himself such questions as these: How shall I best excite the curiosity of my class? What will most tend to fix their attention? In what form will the subject appear most attractive? What shall I tell them, and what shall I suppress, in order to make them learn for themselves? Can I recollect any interesting incidents bearing upon the subject which will enliven it? Can I make use of anything within the sphere of their personal experience that will throw light on anything in the lesson? Which of my pupils will take the least interest in this lesson? How can I overcome this? From

how many different points of view may it be approached? Can I make any of these different points of view coincide with the different bents of my pupils? Is there anything going on in the world at the present moment in which my pupils take an interest which will help to fix the subject in the memory? Which is the most difficult part of the lesson? How much time can I afford to spend on this part? What will be the best hints to give my class in order that they may solve the difficulties themselves? Are there any moral lessons to be drawn from the subject? What will be the most attractive shape in which to present them?

If we were to put questions like these to ourselves every day, we should probably soon find, not only that our pupils would leave the room at the end of the lesson, not only with several facts learned, but also with their interest aroused upon old facts, and with a keener appetite for new ones. What is, after all, the object of all the "methods," "instructions," "hints," "suggestions," and what not, with which our educational books and periodicals are filled? Will not the object be at all events partially attained if each day we quietly sit down and think out the best form in which to present a subject to our classes? A few questions such as these, honestly asked and honestly answered to the best of our ability, will help us much in all our teaching.

THE great thing is to bring the subject home to the pupils, to show them that it is of vital importance to them then and there. With even an entirely abstract and apparently wholly uninteresting fact this can be done if only the teacher looks about him carefully for the means of doing it. Even the vulgar fraction nine thirds can be shown to have some practical value if we apply it to something personal and concrete. What we ought to aim at is to bring the driest subject down to "the homes and bosoms" of our pupils. This is the only way to ensure their leaving the class with a fresh store of facts—
for, after all, facts they must learn.