

constantly stretched, they lose their elasticity, and hyperæmia of the brain with its train of evils is the result.

The secret of a thorough education lies in the uniform development of all the powers. One should not be developed at the expense of others. Anatomy and physiology teach us that the brains of children under seven or eight years of age are imperfectly developed. As a rule, they learn from observation and memory, not from understanding. Their bodies and minds require frequent change, consequently they cannot perform long and continued tasks without injury. It has been justly said that a task or lesson of fifteen minutes' duration is long enough for a child between the ages of five and seven years, and twenty minutes for those between seven and ten years.

Daily experience and observation teach us the injurious effects of long-continued and excessive mental strain upon fully developed brains. If such injury is produced, and I think few will dispute it, then how much more injurious must be the effect upon brains, the anatomical structure of which is in no way fitted for the work.

The rule in schools requiring or exacting *all* to accomplish a certain amount of work, regardless of the mental or physical ability to perform it, is *highly wrong*. Indeed, it is cruel to require a feeble and ill-nourished brain to compete with a healthy one. And while a system of rank and rewards, based upon the possession of an arbitrary standard of acquirements, may be desirable as having a stimulating influence upon boys, I think it highly injurious for girls. The eagerness for success, the apprehension of failure, and the dread of disgrace in them, are so much more acute than in boys that they are more easily injured by appeals to these emotions. Well may she sing the song of the school, the last verse of which reads as follows :

Learn, learn, learn,
No time for romp or play ;
And what is the gain ? a lot of marks
And a public prize, they say.
In the oak-roofed hall, with its polished floor,
A noble lord in the chair,
When on its walls my shadow falls,
'Twill be scarcely visible there.

Let me again quote Herbert Spencer, who says that "physical degeneracy is a consequence of excessive study; how grave is the condemnation to be passed upon this cramming system. It is a terrible mistake from whatever point of view regarded. It is a mistake in so far as the acquirement of knowledge is concerned, for it is notorious that the mind, like the body, cannot assimilate beyond a certain rate, and if you ply it with facts faster than it can assimilate them, they are very soon rejected again; they do not become permanently built into the intellectual fabric, but fall out of the recollection after passing the examination for which they were got up."

Again, I think the health of the teachers, who are largely composed of females, is an element for consideration. It is well known that a large proportion of them fall from a condition of health and energy into invalidism, accompanied by all the symptoms of nervous exhaustion and too often followed by tuberculosis. Many causes aid in producing this condition—impure air in school-rooms, teaching by day, studying by night, the "weary, worrying and wearing duty of going over hundreds of grading sheets," etc., haunted by fear of failure and loss of employment, with the knowledge that they are too often judged, not by their work, but by the verbal memory of the pupil.