

attention we should make what is already known a stepping-stone to what we want our scholars to know. In fact we should follow the fundamental rule of all correct training—proceed from the concrete to the abstract. In teaching reading, for example, you can only secure general attention by having a running commentary upon every sentence that is at all difficult either to understand, or to read. This commentary should come as much as possible from the scholars, even at the risk of its being a little irrelevant. When attention is once secured, do not weary your scholars by making the lesson too long, nor perplex them by too much repetition, nor overtask them with too many points to be remembered.

The attention of those disposed to be idle should often be tested by asking them what the last question or answer was, what you are explaining, or what has been explained; and that of the whole class should be put to the proof by seeing how many can reproduce what you or some scholar may have said immediately before, particularly if that has been important. It is by such expedients as these that we should aim at making attention what it should be, a habit.

As pupils advance in age, their growing intelligence comes to the aid of the teacher in securing attention; their varied knowledge creates a desire for further acquisition. Any subject that forms part of the stock of digested knowledge can be added to with ease, and perhaps with pleasure; hence attention becomes anything but irksome, and can be given with the full co-operation of the will. Every teacher, to make attention a habit, should try to make each scholar a *good listener*; the task of securing it then ceases to be one of the heaviest duties.

As another aid to sustained attention the teacher should, in every subject he teaches,

KEEP AHEAD OF HIS CLASS.

He may then be able to contribute a spice of freshness from his own mental storehouse to what might otherwise be a stale and dry subject. The scholar will then feel that a lesson is not taught merely because it is pre-

scribed in the time-table, but because his teacher has something valuable to impart in connection with it.

One important result that follows from the habit of attention is the

IMPROVEMENT OF THE MEMORY.

Memory is as much dependent upon attention as attention is upon the interest we take in any subject. It cannot be exercised unless a distinct impression is made on the mind, and this can only be done while attention is active. The more fixed this is, the stronger is the memory. The teacher should be ever on the watch to foster this state of mind. Everything should be avoided that would distract attention. There should be no unnecessary noise on the part of either teacher or scholars, no interruptions by trifling questions, no waste of time by the teacher's having to watch disorderly pupils. There should be no undue wandering from the subject, unless the bye path leads to a richer pasture; and there should be no distraction to attend to the heating and ventilation of the room. These should be arranged before the lesson begins. Attention cannot be sustained with young scholars unless there are spells of physical exercise every half-hour at least. Even the oldest scholars will have their power of concentration invigorated by calisthenic movements at least every hour.

We cannot finish these remarks better than by giving the rules a United States writer lays down for securing and maintaining attention.

Rule 1.—Interest the Pupil. This is the fundamental means of securing, as well as of cultivating, the power of attention. The teacher must have something good to present, and must present it in a suitable manner. Study the secret springs of interest. Keep curiosity and the thirst for knowledge always active. Repulsive lessons, and forced work, are educational mistakes. They repel and repress, rather than develop the power of attention. It is glad activity that gives culture. When study is made more interesting than play, pupils unasked, give the utmost attention. By interest and management, not by force, the soul is reached.