

Current Thought.

A DULL boy's mind is a wise man's problem.—*Thring.*

"THOUGHT is the beginning, thought the middle, and thought the end of a learner's work. Let not the teacher pile in lumber that is not thought."—*Thring.*

A LECTURER lecturing to one is an absurdity. But a teacher teaching one may be perfection. A large audience excites ambition in the lecturer, and gives an artificial glow to the familiar theme. But a large class overwhelms the teacher with despair.—*Thring.*

JUST praise is a debt. To a noble nature there is no stimulus like honest commendation. A kind word at the right moment might have saved many a soul from despair. In reviewing my professional life I regret that I did not more often indulge in generous praise to my subordinate teachers.—*Prof. Payne.*

THE school is primarily a moral gymnasium. From the first moment of discipline, the sole purpose of education is the formation of a complete and full-orbed character, the central and indispensable element of which is a *good will*, which, as Kant maintains, is the only absolutely good thing in the world.—*Ex.*

THERE is more in the voice of the primary teacher than is generally suspected. The ear is the child's first sense, as it is the man's last sense, but it catches sounds that are delicate, rhythmic, and shrinks from overloud tones. A loud report will kill a chick in the egg, and a loud-voiced teacher of little children will destroy many a gentle aspiration, many a hope and purpose. Attend carefully to the voice, if you would lead and develop children in their best thought, feeling, choice.—*American Teacher.*

AT its best, language is inadequate to express thought. Thought is of the spirit, and language is of the body; thought is infinite, language finite. On account of this incapacity of language, our thoughts must be definite before we can express them in words. Language can only be a Delphic oracle for vagueness. In an ideal sentence there is an exact balance between the thought and the expression, so that there are just words enough to express the thought. Writers whose vocabulary is ample, and whose ideas are comprehensive, strive to keep this balance of thought and language. Those whose ideas are vague are apt to be lavish of words. The English rustic relatively makes a greater draft upon his little stock of words to express his dim notions, than did either Shakespeare or Milton to utter their grand ideas. The words of the wise are few and well chosen; every utterance shows that they would rather meditate than speak. Hence their sayings are often oracular, and if they err it is on the side of speaking too little rather than too much.—*The Chautauquan.*

NO man should choose a line of work where there is no opening for promotion. Life must be open to the sky. There must be room upstairs. From the beginning of his life work, he should aim to take an active part in forming, maintaining, and improving the institutions of his country. He has no right to shut himself up in any cloister, or study, where he shall be so cabined that he cannot do the largest work. If a man be really fond of children, if sure of his own temper, and if he can keep it under control in every temptation, let him try the profession of a schoolmaster. This is the best opportunity of studying human nature. Some young men like to see finished and complete works, the tangible and visible result of their labor, and these would make engineers, mechanics, builders, inventors, and architects. As regards a business life, each young man should choose that which he can do best and with the least friction. Earnestness, simplicity, and industry are as sure of success now as they ever were. A shoemaker who makes good shoes will find that his work makes for itself an opening. He who does the best his circumstances will allow, does well, does nobly. Angels could do no more.—*Edward Everett Hale.*

Special Papers.

METHODS IN GEOGRAPHY.

GEOGRAPHY is often considered a dry and dull study, but there is no reason why it may not be made a most interesting subject in our schools. Instead of being disliked by the pupils, it should be heartily enjoyed, and almost any teacher may, I am sure, make the geography recitation the most delightful hour of the day.

The most cultivated woman whom I have the honor of knowing spent many of her evenings, when teaching, in planning her geography lessons to interest her pupils. She probably had very few helps *then*—as her teaching was done years ago—*now* helps are to be found everywhere. In every possible way we should strive to impress upon our pupils the fact that geography has to do with our everyday life, and that, instead of being dropped at the end of our school-days, the study should be continued through life. Teach the children that no place mentioned in any book we may be reading should be passed by without being looked up on a map. Atlases are so cheap now—a fairly good one may be had for twenty-five cents—that few are too poor to possess one.

All schoolrooms should be furnished with a globe and a set of wall-maps; but, besides these, books and pictures are needed. "The books," you say, "are not to be had." Perhaps not as many as you wish, but if you search your districts through you may find several that will be of great service to you. Those of you who are fortunate enough to have access to a public library will find a great many books that will help you very much, and many, too, in which you may be able to interest your pupils; for children can be led to read and enjoy books which their elders fancy too old for them. I know a boy who, at the age of eleven, would tell in an entertaining manner the stories from most of Shakespeare's plays; not because he had read Lamb's "Tales from Shakespeare," but because he had read the plays themselves. Pictures may be gathered from illustrated papers and magazines, and, if you enlist the children, you will soon have a fine collection, which may be mounted on large sheets of pasteboard or put into scrap-books.

Written reviews should be begun as soon as possible, being careful not to give more work than can be neatly done in the allotted time. In criticising these papers it is well to give two marks—one for the subject-matter, and the other, which may be called a language-mark, for spelling, punctuation, as far as it has been taught, and the use of capitals, and neatness. In this connection I wish to say that we have never seen so great improvement in spelling as since we have taken the spelling lessons from the arithmetic, geography, history and reading-book, dropping the speller altogether.

As our text-books are usually arranged, we begin with the definition of geography, which may be explained more fully by giving the meaning of the words from which it is derived. In connection with the definition of the earth, a little instruction may be given concerning the other planets, and the sun and moon. One book of much interest to children, on this subject is entitled "Overhead."

In teaching the form of the earth some of the proofs should be given and explained. If there is no globe in your room, you can illustrate this and other points very tolerably by means of a ball. Globes may be had so cheaply, however, that it is hoped all will be provided with them. The rotation and revolution of the earth, the length of the days and nights, the changes of seasons, and the position of the different geographical circles may be made exceedingly interesting by explanation and simple illustrations.

It is hoped that no child will be allowed to remain ignorant of the *reasons* for the location of the tropics and polar circles. The second time I was examined to teach, I was asked the reasons why the tropics were placed twenty-three and a half degrees from the equator, and was obliged to say I did not know. It was never explained to me at school. In connection with these topics, it is well to take up what is given of vegetation and animals in the different zones, whether it is next in order or not. With pupils ten years of age or younger it is, I am sure, much better to omit for the present the

chapter on the "Races of Men," "States of Society," and "Religion."

In teaching the definitions of the different bodies of land and water, illustrate from nature if possible. The teacher cannot be too careful, in all her explanations, to make herself understood, and must question closely to find out whether the children understand the meaning of the *words* used. It does not do, even with children twelve or fourteen years of age, to take much for granted. The other day, in a review lesson, one of my pupils wrote of an "expense of dessert." Some years ago I read of a child who had been studying of the surface of the earth. He was asked whether we live upon the outside or inside of the earth. He replied, "Upon the inside."

In teaching the continents explain as fully as possible the effect of mountain ranges upon temperature and moisture; the advantages of a location near some large body of water; the effect of elevation and of sea-winds.

North America should, of course, receive attention first, and should be most carefully studied. Guyot's description of the physical features of the continent is excellent.

Map-drawing should be begun with North America, and continue through the course. It is an exceedingly useful plan to have the maps based upon the parallels and meridians, instead of following any of the systems given in the text-books. At first the maps should be drawn the size of the one in the book, and after a time larger ones may be required, if it is thought desirable. The teacher should first draw upon the board the framework of the map, enlarging it perhaps four times, and show the pupils how to place the parallels and meridians correctly. Then she should insist upon its being done with accuracy and neatness. It adds much to the appearance of a map if no names are written upon it. Of course the maps should be considered a part of the geography work, and be marked as such. A method has been suggested by one of our teachers, which may be very useful, not as an exercise in map-drawing, but as a help in preparing the lessons in map studies. Each child is furnished with a sheet of *thin* paper and carefully traces upon it the outlines of the map over which it is placed. Then in studying the lesson each question is numbered, and when its answer is found upon the map the child puts it with its number upon *his* map. The teacher is thus enabled to see, almost at a glance, whether the places have been looked out and properly located.—*Education.*

EDUCATION IN MUSIC.

BY H. E. HOLT.

WE have progressed far enough in our study of educational principles and their application in teaching to believe that there is but one true educational method of teaching any subject, and that this true educational method is *applied educational science*. While every teacher should have his own manner, ways, and means of making the application of educational principles in teaching any subject, he is a good or poor teacher to just the extent that his manner, ways, and means, are made to conform to the natural laws which underlie the growth and development of the mind. The person who knows nothing of these mental laws and their application in teaching a subject, can not be considered in any sense a *teacher* of that subject, however learned he may be in it. Children in our primary schools can be taught tones and semitones, major and minor thirds, perfect and augmented fourths, perfect and diminished fifths as *mental objects*, just as readily as they can be taught simple numbers and their combinations. Great improvements have been made in the teaching of all languages in all countries by means of a closer application of educational principles. Music is the "*universal language*," it is more universally taught than any other language. Such is the simplicity of the elements upon which the language of music is based, that the principles in educational science can be more successfully applied to it than to the teaching of any other language. Notwithstanding this fact, there is no language in the teaching of which so little is known about the application of educational principles.—*Popular Educator.*