

upon the influence which even in its insignificance, is emitting to the world. Though we smile at the thought, still if we ponder a moment we are convinced that there is much of importance attached to the characters of those it has sent forth into life's great conflict. None will be idle. The bearing of each, even the least, will affect the conquest to be gained—Let us trust they will all do battle under the "banner of Right," that they may share the glory of a victory over Error, and you, dear old Academy, be able to render a worthy account of your labors. Oakwood, Mich., 1859.

AMY SUMMERS.

From the N. Y. Teachers' Advocate.

### SUPERFICIAL TEACHING.

It was the custom of a former age to study much in order to become good scholars. Every great attainment in literature and science was accomplished by much toil and application. No one even suspected that there was any short cut to superior scholarship. It was even a standard adage that there was no royal road to geometry. Or in other words, that the learner cannot overcome difficulties without his own exertions. It was the custom that teachers should exact tasks of the scholars—that scholars should be required to study—that teachers should labor to inculcate moral precepts, and store the minds of learners with the elements of those sciences which they were required to teach. In order to this end, there was line upon line and precept upon precept to be given. It was the duty of the teacher to use all the means of enforcement consistent with a proper exercise of wildness and authority, to encourage and persuade the pupil to the exercise of judgment and memory, and sometimes to correct his delinquency if necessary, by penal proceedings.

But the people of this age of progression cannot rest upon antiquated theories, nor be content to re-enact what has been done a thousand times in a prescribed way. Possibly there is a better way, and why should not the psychological discoveries of transcendental philosophy in other lands, be applicable to the unfolding mind in ours? And why should we not make progress in teaching, and find out new processes and labour-saving methods of mental expansion and development comparable with the discoveries in other departments of philosophical research? These inquiries are specious and plausible, but they betray great ignorance of the human mind. We had thought that the pointing-in process had by this time revealed its own fallacy, and that teachers would betake themselves to teaching, and put their scholars to study, instead of substituting pleasing lectures. Illustrations in many places are the peculiar business of the teacher, and lectures, to minds somewhat matured, will seldom be over-estimated; but the substitution of these for reading and reflection cannot be too severely condemned. They seem to be a device by which the immature mind is dazzled by the trappings and adornments of an interesting presentation, instead of becoming indoctrinated and instructed in the preliminary details of an

elementary education. The mind must be trained. Continuous and regular exercise give to the mental faculties strength and power, just as they do to the physical. Repetition and tautology, though a fault in rhetoric, is necessary in teaching. He who supposes a whole class has learned a subject because he told them, once, will beyond all controversy be a very poor teacher. He must illustrate, explain, repeat again and again, if he would have a class of well-taught scholars, and the scholar must read and consider again and again, if he would be a good scholar.—The good teacher is patient, persevering, industrious, good tempered,—indeed a man of all the virtues.

### TASTE FOR READING.

Sir John Herschell has some admirable remarks on this subject—"Give a man his taste," says he, "and you place him in contact with the best society in every period of history—with the wisest, the wittyest, with the tenderest, the bravest, and the purest characters which have adorned humanity. You make him a denizen of all nations—a contemporary of all ages. This world has been created for him. It is hardly possible but his character should take a higher and better tone from the constant habit of associating with a class of thinkers, to say the least of it, above the average of human nature." What is still farther in favor of this habit, it may be cultivated as amusement, not as an occupation, and therefore may be possessed by any one: for it need not interfere with any business of life. The testimony of literary men indeed goes to show that literature itself should never be the sole employment even of an author, that should be pursued only in the intervals of business as a relaxation. Mr. Coleridge speaks feelingly on this point, and recommends to every literary man to have some occupation more or less mechanical, which, requiring no labor of the mind, hours of leisure, when he can turn to his books, to be looked for with pleasing anticipations.

It will be found that the authors who have written most and who have written best, were chiefly men of active lives whose literary labors were their amusement. Cicero, one of the most voluminous of ancient writers, was a lawyer and a statesman, whose whole life was passed in a contention of the forum or in the service of the republic, inasmuch that no great political event of the period is without some mark of his active participation therein. Milton was a schoolmaster and a warm controversialist. He was better known to his contemporaries as the antagonist of Salmassius than as the author of Paradise Lost. What was Shakspeare's life but a continued scene of active labors, and those too of a very vexatious kind—for he was the manager of a theatre. The voluminous works of Sir Walter Scott were written, no one could tell how or when, so numerous were his other occupations.

The knowledge derived from books, and that which is gained by a practical acquaintance with the world, are not of such diverse natures that both can not be pursued together. On the other hand,

they act mutually as correctives; the one tends to liberate from narrow views, the other to give reality and truth to intellectual conceptions. There is moreover a certain freshness and elasticity of mind required by mingling with the business of life which enables one to use efficiently the knowledge derived from reading. He learns to understand the character of men in various points of development, to comprehend the spirit of the age, its wants, its tendencies, and to know how to accommodate himself accordingly.

### TALKING AND WRITING.

A man never knows what he has read until he has either talked about it or written about it. Talking and writing are digestive processes which are absolutely essential to the mental constitution of the man who devours many books. But it is not every man that can talk. Talking implies, first of all, a readiness on the part of the speaker, and next a sympathetic listener. It is, therefore, as a digestive process, the most difficult, if it is the most rapid, in its operation. Writing is a different affair; a man may take his time to it, and not require a reader; he can be his own reader. It is an easier, although more formal, process of digestion than talking. It is in everybody's power; and everybody who reads much makes more or less use of it, because, as Bacon says, if he does not write, then he ought to have extraordinary faculties to compensate for such neglect. It is in this view that we are to understand the complaint of a well-known author that he was ignorant of a certain subject, and the means by which he was to dispel his ignorance—namely, by writing on it. It is in this view that the monitorial system of instruction has its great value—to the monitor it is the best sort of teaching. It is from the same point of view that Sir William Hamilton used to lament the decay of teaching as a part of the education of students at the universities. In the olden time it was necessary to the obtaining of a degree that the graduate should give evidence of his capacity as a teacher; and in the very titles of his degree; as a magister, and doctor, he was designated a teacher. "A man never knows anything," Sir William used to say, "until he has taught it in some way or other—it may be orally, it may be writing a book." It is a grand truth, and points a fine moral. Knowledge is knowledge, say the philosophers; it is precious for its own sake, it is an end to itself. But nature says the opposite. Knowledge is not knowledge until we use it; it is not ours until we have brought it under the command of the great social faculty, speech; we exist for society, and knowledge is null until we give it expression, and in so doing make it over to the social instinct.—Blackwood.

Humboldt said ten years ago, "Governments, religion, property, books, are nothing but the scaffolding to educate a man. Earth holds up to her Master no fruit but the finished man. Education is the only interest worthy the deep controlling anxiety of the thoughtful man."