one military drum, one set of cymbals and one triangle. The orchestra perform many celebrated overtures and other compositions of the great masters; among them are the overtures of Midsummer's Night Dream, by *Mendelssohn;* William Tell, by *Rossini;* La Serment, by *Auber;* &c.

The institution possesses a large church organ, with twenty-six stops, on which the pupils are daily instructed; and those having the requisite talent are prepared to become organists in churches, some are now actually so engaged, and others are being fitted for it. Some of the pupils are also engaged as leaders of church choirs, and teachers on the piano forte. There are twelve pianos in the institution, which are in constant use. Music is therefore taught as a profession, as well as a source of enjoyment. Shut out from the beautiful in nature, the privation is bountifully compensated by the higher enjoyment which the blind receive from the harmony of sweet sounds.

Nearly all the pupils are engaged in acquiring some useful handicraft. The males are employed on brush-making, (which is the principal branch) broom making, weaving rug carpet and door mats. The last annual report to January 1856, shows that the male pupils and employed workmen, made, during the past year, thirty-three thousand, eight hundred and thirteen brushes, two thousand and twenty-one corn brooms, two hundred and forty-two whisks, two hundred and twenty-two door mats, one thousand eight hundred and forty-two yards carpet, and twenty mattresses; valued at $8,744.78.

The female pupils made four thousand four hundred and seventy-five articles of bead work, two hundred and twenty-seven tidies and other articles, valued at $1,224. Total $9,968.00. The sales for the year amounted to $10,243.76.

When pupils have remained their full term of eight years and have no home to return to, or fail to succeed elsewhere, they are received into another department of the institution, called, *The Home for the industrious blind.* They are employed, at regular wages, charged a very moderate price for board, barely covering the price of provisions, and are paid the balance monthly in cash. Some eighteen are now so employed. Many leave and support themselves on the professions and trades they have acquired.

The buildings of the institution are substantially built of brick, roughcast, large and conveniently adapted to their several purposes. The main edifice, with the two wings, has a front of one hundred and fifty feet, and a depth of about sixty feet, the centre building is four stories in height. These are divided into school and music rooms, dormitories, laundry, dining room, kitchens, &c., affording accommodation for one hundred and thirty pupils with their teachers and officers. The workshops are in a separate building, one hundred and seventy feet long and two stories high. Another building contains the infirmary, wash and bathing rooms. The second story of the main building, contains a fine music hall, eighty by forty feet in size, in which a musical exhibition by the pupils, with other exercises, is given every Wednesday afternoon, the public visiting day for citizens, and which is always crowded.

Blind persons from other states and countries are received on the same terms as those from Pennsylvania, viz., $200 a year, which covers all expenses.—*Com.*

TEACHING COMMON THINGS.

IN the Report of the Superintendent of Common Schools of the State of Connecticut, we find the following extract from the Report of the School committee of New London.

"In regard to the general course of instruction as pursued here and in the schools of the country generally, the committee believe that the attention bestowed, so almost exclusively, on arithmetic and other branches of mathematics, tends to the development of a power of the mind inferior to the reasoning powers; that mere calculation has been too much encouraged, and that observation of practical facts, the deduction of inferences, the relation of cause and effect, and, in short, the *power of reasoning*, have been too much neglected. With this view, the committee recommended to the principal, that in the course of instruction to be pursued, more attention should be paid to the cultivation of independent thought, than has heretofore been bestowed upon it.

This remark will apply equally well to schools of every grade. Young children are more easily taught through their powers of observation than by any other means. The abstract knowledge of facts in geography, or of principles in arithmetic, is difficult to be acquired by them, and is generally only an effort of mere memory. It is consequently acquired without interest, and by dint of a force put upon the attention, which is greater than should be expected from such young and tender minds; while, on the other hand, those same minds are interested, aroused, and taught to reason and to think, without effort and almost without knowing it, by illustration from common life. Thus, a simple story may be made the means of awakening interest, drawing out questions, illustrating principles, and conferring more educational benefit, than weeks of poring over dry rules, or abstract statements of fact. Children, as a general rule, should not be forced to learn what cannot be explained to their comprehension. Learning a fact or a principle merely by rote, adds nothing to practical, useful knowledge."

We cannot help thinking that this extract points to a very serious defect in much of the teaching in our schools. It is not that the teaching *per se* is not good, but pains enough is not taken to adapt it closely to the wants, and connect it immediately with the experience of the child. The consequence is, that school and school learning stand in their minds as something apart from the rest of life, something which they take as a matter of course, with docility enough perhaps, but not seeing its real use and immediate application, not having it brought home to their own experience in any way, it awakens but a languid interest, makes but a faint impression, and is therefore soon effaced from their memory. The difference we speak of is not so much in the matter of the instruction, as in the manner. We will suppose two teachers, for instance, one with a dry and learned text-book on Mechanics, and a set of the most approved apparatus, elegant with mahogany, and glittering with brass and varnish, and another with no text-book at all, save the one at home in his own library, and for aparatus, we will say, the well-wheel and bucket in the yard, the fire-tongs by the stove, a rod and a few pound and ounce weights, a pair of scissors, and the school room door. Which of those teachers is likely to give his pupils of any grade below the High School, the clearer notions of the lever, and the wheel and axle? We say the former, if he has any teaching faculty; and if he has not he ought not to be in the school-room. For in the one case the subject becomes a reality to the child, and is connected with what he already knows by his own little experience; in the other, the only association is with the dry text-book, and the glass doors of the aparatus-case. One pupil will see levers wherever they are to be found; he will make plaything levers, and curiously compare the different kinds, and if he has a mechanical turn, everything out of doors will develop it; while it is a chance if the other does not lock up his mechanical knowledge with the aparatus, and forget all about it till he is bored with the next lessons. Or suppose the subject to be chemistry. Many a pedant teacher will manage to give learned instruction on oxygen and hydrogen and carbon, and manipulate with vessels of uncouth form, and dazzle his pupils' eyes with sparks, and blow himself with explosions, and though it is good fun to the boys, (especially the blowing-up part,) yet they will not dream of connecting the subject with the bread they go home and eat for dinner, the china plate they eat from, the skins they pass hanging in the tan-yard, or the soap their clothes are washed with. The utmost stretch of practical application will be perhaps to extend the subject as far as the apothecary, because his glass phials do look like those the teacher uses, and perhaps he writes himself chemist on his sign. We suppose the unhesitating faith with which his drugs are swallowed sometimes arises from the association with this still "occult" science.

Hence comes a wide-spread prejudice in the minds of many uneducated, but often very intelligent people against what they call "school-learning." They cannot see the use of it. They think their children's brains are "muddled" by it, and that they are spoiled for active and useful life. Better *not* to know such things, they say—they only spoil you for being useful. And so they cut short their children's education with the bare rudiments of reading, writing, and ciphering, put them early to a trade, which can never be to them, so ill prepared, any thing but mechanical drudgery for want of the very knowledge they thus, not without reason, are so prejudiced against.

We think there is no ground for this prejudice. So many teachers cram all sorts of learning only that they in turn may cram their pupils with it, so many make a dull, lifeless routine out of the most pleasing and interesting of subjects, so many are led away by the foolish desire of seeming learned, and of attaining some higher, and in their view more dignified position, that we are afraid there is a sad amount of this routine and *ex officio* teaching. We are greatly wanting in simplicity and homely thoroughness. Instead of being content with being more learned than we seem, we are too prone to desire to seem more learned than we are. The teacher who knows enough to become, with care and patience, a good primary instructor, is straining every nerve to get a grammar school, while the grammar teacher, instead of laboring zealously to perfect himself in his most important sphere, is striving to rise to the dignity of the High School. For our part we believe that the last named is the easiest kind of teaching, and that the difficulty, delicacy, and real importance increases as we descend the scale

There is, on the other hand, a very foolish prejudice in the minds of many half-thinkers, against anything bearing the name of "practical." It immediately conjures up the image of Materialism, and the cry is raised, that schools are being unspiritualized. As though there were any necessary contradiction between the practical and the spiritual! As though learning were vulgarized by being made useful! Is not this the old monkish ascetic doctrine which we all in words repudiate?