

cottage to lordly hall, the laborer at his work, the monarch on his throne; whether it come as the soft cadence of the home life—the busy, stirring hum of market or exchange, the passionate outpourings of the heart, or the stern, resistless torrent of the forum,—our dear old Saxon tongue,—the sweetest, sublimest language under heaven, shall rise, in one grand refrain—noble, musical, right. "So shall the lips of the nation be filled with power."

How shall this be accomplished? What methods must be used, and who must use them? A answer, to both questions, many. Many methods, many persons to employ them. We cannot be responsible for all methods, we cannot control all persons, in the use of even one of them; but we can be responsible for our own, and we can see to it that we use them wisely and with definite aim. And first, "Thou must be true thyself, if thou the truth would teach," for "We grow like what we contemplate." Then must the teacher himself, at all times and on all occasions, use correct language. Parents and the public should, we must! I trust, however, that I shall not be misunderstood in my use of the words "correct language." Mistakes have occurred. I had the privilege, while teaching for six months in a western town, of the acquaintance of a lady who spoke what she called "correct language," "good English." You shall judge. She never "breathed," that is vulgar; besides, any one can do it; she "inhaled oxygen." Her friends "began," she "commenced." I "lived" with my cousin, she "resided" with her mother, where she never "went to bed," but mysteriously "retired." While the rest of us "said grace" and modestly "ate" our lunch, she "invoked the Divine blessing," and magnificently "partook of refreshment." Some day she will, no doubt, end her days by "deceasing" with due pomp and solemnity. 'Tis a pity that all such "good English" could not be buried—I mean "interred" with her.

We will have many methods, but our method of methods shall be to have each and every one adapted to the especial wants of the child; and to the stage of development of his intellectual faculties. How frequently energy is wasted here, and a child whose mind is but waking up to life and thought, only unfolding leaf by leaf towards fruition, is required and expected to evince in composition the fragrance and beauty of finished growth. Else he is "stupid," or "destitute of all imagination." So, to a great extent, he ought to be. In youth, it is not the diffusing, but the "assimilating and laying up processes that are still in excess." Let them lay up then and assimilate material, good, wholesome, sufficient material for present necessities, and after life. 'Tis not the office of the bud to fill the mission of the flower. Its all of life, is growth—growth, which a modern writer has defined to be "gradual increase by natural processes." Natural processes! What are they?

Setting aside the consideration of minor details, the three great faculties of the mind, with the periods of the developments of which we, as teachers, come most in contact, are the Observant, Conceptive, Imaginative and Reflective. Speaking broadly and generally, we may divide the ten grades of our city schools into three corresponding groups, viz.:—The first comprising the three junior classes, the second the next four, and the third the remaining three. Of course I do not intend by this arrangement to imply that the children in the first group will be found to be prematurely observant, or in the third marvellously imaginative and calmly reflective. By no means. The boy of fifteen, who, being required to evolve from his inner consciousness sundry remarks on the sheep, stated that—"A sheep is an animal with four legs, one in each corner"—certainly was not either. It must have been the same boy, by-the-by, who, discoursing the other day on the sublime subject of pies, touchingly remarked: "Pies is of three kinds, covered, crossbarred, and open; I guess I like the cross-barred ones the best." But I must pass on rapidly, for there comes to my mind the effort of an-

other boy who, having wasted the hour allotted to composition in constructing a series of "art studies" of the master, when time was called seized his pen, and enriched posterity with the following couplet:—

"Time flying fast with rapid wings,
Leaves one no time to do one's things."

By the observant, conceptive and imaginative groups I simply mean that in the order named, and as a rule during the period of time that a child *should* pass through the grades of each, do his mental faculties begin to awaken and claim attention. Then (and I would emphasize this strongly, not only for the teaching of language lessons, but of all other subjects) shall we do wisely, we whose duty it is to train the mind, the end of whose labor, "the attainment by each individual of all the perfection of which he is capable;" we shall do wisely, I say, if we approach our work through the avenue Nature herself indicates to us. Portal after portal, gateway after gateway, to the vast treasure-house of the heart and brain, does this oldest of all teachers roll back before our gaze. Wisely (I can find no better word) shall we work, and moreover in certain hope of success, if availing ourselves of each opportunity as it presents itself we bend it to our need, and cultivate through perception, memory, conception, imagination, reflection and generalization, the whole round man.

A gentleman said to me a few weeks ago, "How delightful it is to go out with children. Everything seems so fresh to them." I think he mistook a little. It is not a question of *seeming* but of *being*. Everything is fresh—everything. The child stands on the threshold of life filled with wonder and delight. Finite, yet with infinitude to apprehend. Nothing too small, nothing too great to be examined and accounted for. His punctuation marks are all exclamation and interrogation points, interspersed with periods—of sleep. "How pretty!" "What is it for?" "Why?" Poor Mrs. Gargery evidently felt this keenly when she testily remarked of Pip, "Drat that boy! What a questioner he is. Answer him one question, and he'll ask you a dozen directly. Hulks are prison ships, and people are put in the hulks because they murder, and rob, and forge, and do all sorts of bad things. And they always begin by asking questions. Now you get along to bed."

It behoves us to "ask a question" just here. How shall we primary teachers best begin at the beginning, and through this earliest of all mental development, cultivate language in the mind of the child? The answer comes in true logical sequence. "By extending his knowledge of objects. By carefully directing his attention to all that is within his power to grasp, and is worthy of consideration. By means of object lessons (not lectures) on form, color, size, number, qualities. By talks (not all on one side) about leaves and animals and birds." Nay more. Let us teach the little ones "never to lose an opportunity of seeing anything that is beautiful," for that "Beauty is God's own handwriting—a wayside sacrament." Teach them then, as citizens of the great commonwealth of nature, to look for this Divine impulse in subtle harmonies of wind and wave and wood. The "sunshine of the meadow," "the shadows of the forest," the rain shower, the snow storm, "winds wild with gambols."

Ask them sometimes to tell you of the pretty things they have seen on their way to or from school. At first you will find most of the objects come from store windows and kindred places. All products of art, man's nature, yet surely they will urge towards the realm of nature, "God's Art." Tell them stories, and make them re-tell you, graphic in description, simple, wholesome, wonderful. I heard a Presbyterian minister once discoursing (that's what he called it) on the subject of children, in the course of which discourse he observed:—"It is deeply to be regretted, that even in these enlightened days so much of the valuable time of early