

immediately after school, in order that they may spend their evenings in idle amusement and their mornings in indolence.

Very few need to be told that mental labor should be performed when the intellect is most vigorous; but many do not seem to realize that five or six hours in school is a strain upon the mental powers and nervous force, and that they are incapable of acting vigorously immediately afterwards.

Another great obstacle to improvement is the vast amount of worthless literature in circulation at the present time. One may spend the greater portion of his time in reading and be no better, and probably much worse, both morally and mentally, at the end of the year, than he was at the beginning. A person whose intentions in this respect are really good may have poor judgment in the selection of reading matter; but a taste for good reading may be cultivated, if we make up our minds to lay aside at once all that is sensational, and force an interest for that which we know we ought to read. No matter how inexperienced we may be, we all know of some books the reading of which would benefit us; and after we have made ourselves acquainted with these we will hear of others. But even should we take up a book of which we have never heard, we should be enabled to form an estimate of its contents by reading the introductory chapter.

Besides professional and general reading, the teacher should pursue some particular study until he has perfected himself in that branch. But a mistake may arise here. When we think we understand one branch thoroughly, we are apt to take up another of a similar nature, and which will tend to develop the same faculties. Now, the person who exercises one set of faculties, and allows the rest to remain dormant, is certain to become one-sided, and is too often unconscious of this fact; e. g., a man who has studied classics exclusively will, in common conversation with people who he knows understand no language but their own, use Greek and Latin phrases, and make quotations from authors of whom he knows his auditors have never heard; therefore, after we have gained a pretty thorough acquaintance with one subject we should take up another of a different nature. The constant pursuit of one subject is very well for those whose profession requires only one branch of knowledge; but a teacher's information should be general, and, above all, it should be thorough and practical. It is necessary that we should read the works of eminent educationists of past times; and we should read educational journals to make ourselves acquainted with, and to profit by, the experience of contemporary teachers. But these should only suggest to us ideas upon which to found our methods; for if we are real teachers we will not follow any one's rules, or accept in whole any one's ideas; we will have our own, and we will not accept any statement which our own judgment does not force us to endorse.

But to return to my subject: I will mention another reason why so many of us fail to improve; and that is, the temptation of our positions. The majority of us must teach at a distance from our homes. When we go among strangers, we will, if we are at all socially inclined, make the acquaintance of many of our own age, among whom we will probably meet those who are gay and thoughtless, and we will be tempted to spend our time in such a way as to be of no benefit to ourselves or others. This is decidedly foolish, if not wrong, and the time will certainly come when we shall see the folly of such a course. I do not mean to say that we should not enjoy ourselves; but we will find in the end that that amusement which we take as a recreation is more enjoyable than that in which we might spend the greater portion of our time.

A great many may think that I have put a low estimate on the teacher's general knowledge and ability, but this is not the case. Those whom I have mentioned are not the teachers whom we hear

at institutes, entering into discussions, and boldly expressing their opinions; they are not those who have had a thorough education before entering the profession, but they are those who had very little more than the knowledge required in order to obtain a license; and I believe that at least one-third of our teachers come under this head.

I have heard teachers who had been years in the service acknowledge that they had forgotten nearly all the professional knowledge which they had upon entering it, and which they had received in one term at a Normal School. They surely had not been teaching all those years; they had only been doing mechanical drudgery. A teacher spending his time in such a manner was not only weakening his own intellect, but he was stunting those which he should have been endeavoring to develop.

## THE KINDERGARTEN.

### THE VALUE OF THE SYSTEM IN EDUCATION.

*An Address by Miss M. S. Devereux, at the late American Froebel Union, held in Boston.*

In this article I shall endeavour to make—firstly, a fair statement of the results obtained through the Kindergarten teaching as I have seen them to be from my own experience with its pupils; secondly, I shall endeavour to show that these results are the logical and inevitable results of Froebel's system of education when it is properly followed by a well-trained and capable teacher; and, thirdly, I have tried to refute some of the most common objections made to the Kindergarten, and to offer a few words upon the importance of Kindergarten training classes, not only for teachers, but for all the "sweet girl graduates" who are to assume more fully than before the duties of daughters, sisters and mothers in their own households.

My thoughts never return to the Kindergarten without a thrill of rejoicing in its promise to children, for in it each little one develops into such a reality of individuality that it becomes an independent worker with hands and brain. No longer an idle, passive recipient of accompanied things, it grows into a builder and projector of new efforts. As a consequence, it is no puppet pulled by a string from the teacher's desk, but a soul that more and more grows as God must have meant it should grow when He endowed it with faculties and instincts alive to every influence in the world, without and within. Graduated from a true Kindergarten, a child rejoices in an individual self-poise and power which makes his own skill and judgment important factors of his future progress. He is not like every other child who has been in his class; he is himself. His own genius, whatever it may be, has had room for growth, and encouragement to express itself. He therefore sees some object in his study, some purpose in his effort. Everything in his course has been illuminated by the same informing thought; and therefore, with the attraction that must spring up in the young mind from the use of material objects in his work, instead of a weariness, his way has been marked at every step by a buoyant happiness and an eager interest. Any system that produces such results is educationally a good system. But when you add that all this has been done so naturally and so judiciously that the child has derived as much physical as mental advantage, and an equally wholesome moral development, who can deny that it is superior to any other yet devised or used, and that, as such, it is the inalienable birthright of every child to be given the advantages of its training?

In our country's constitution it is written that in the pursuit of life, liberty and happiness no man shall be called upon to submit