

action. In other words, it may receive impressions, or it may inherently manifest mental power. It may merely be filled with easily acquired knowledge, which may be the work of others, or it may give out its own energizing creations. In the former class of impressions it is only receptive, which is merely an appeal to memory; in the latter, is exercised in mental dynamics, and brings into being new ideas and native conceptions. To imbibe as a sponge gives no energy and no strength, but to grow as a tree gives power by virtue of the exercise of its increasing activity. Not only so, but this energizing entity increases the volume and stability of the organ, as physical exercise increases muscular tone and fibre. Inertia means debility, for

‘Labor i life.
Tis the still water faileth.’

“On the other hand early precocity mostly means adult enfeeblement. It is taxing the future by unduly straining the brain, from which it seldom recovers, and as a result we have a languid organ and a stunted intellect. Those who educate scout this idea, because their handiwork is best seen in forced effort and juvenile automatic memorizing. These prodigies of learning astonish trustees and parents and redound to the teachers’ credit. Those who teach believe that there is an unlimited capacity for thinking in all directions in every person. All the mental powers are pushed on all sides without respect to weak points.

“It is self-evident that to merely cultivate memory is one thing and to evolve thinking is quite another. Cramming means mere remembrance, and may be indulged in with no more originality than are the chatterings of a parrot. This system carried to extremes gives mental dyspepsia, because there is not sufficient intellectual energy to assimilate the pabulum provided. Memory has its function, but to put mere recollection in the place of education is to dwarf all originality of thought for want of mental development. The good memory is the means of carrying off all the prizes at competitive examinations, yet the best average mind will eclipsed such in life’s struggles for the mastery. There are, no doubt, a great many of our educated people who depend largely on remembered learning, and that many self-made men are distinguished by virtue of inherent power to originate. The great are not mere receptive machines; they put their talents out to usury; they are not merely recording instruments, but add to the common stock of knowledge by exploring new fields and by giving their experiences and discoveries to the world. Were it not for these pioneers we would still be floundering in the slough of barbarism.

(Vide “Education in relation to Health, by Dr. D. Clark.”)

We have the two extremes of danger. On the one hand the brain inertia, which means loose organization, and which is too often called “mental laziness,” in which extra effort means using up the limited reserves of such feeble intellects. On the other hand we have the active mind and brain, which need to be checked in their mettlesome ambition to go ahead. Such a constitution will go at headlong speed in its race for