

sunshine and without cheer—harassed my heart during those long years while Lord Shaftesbury was labouring with Parliament to mitigate their sufferings. But more cruel than King Herod, more obdurate than the heart of the British legislator, is the system which condemns little children of a tender age to spend long, weary hours of every day in constrained positions in crowded rooms and stifled air, loading their little minds with burdens which they cannot bear. In the words of the Rev. Henry Latham, “the receptive and carrying power of the mind of a child has a limit, and must carefully be measured.” Dr Carpenter, in his “Principles of Mental Physiology,” explains the necessity of time for the forming of permanent impressions on the brain, and the slow processes of intellectual development; he says this “assimilation cannot be hurried; the mind will only absorb at a certain rate.” This verdict, though by one of the most careful observers, and the wisest of modern men, is the one which the intelligent educator has the most difficulty in carrying out. Many parents, especially with their first children, wish to see results immediately, and judge of the progress of the pupil by the amount of memorized knowledge, which, as by a draft at sight, can be produced on demand. It is also astonishing to find how many, who are called good teachers, insist on this process of cramming the memory with knowledge, which Mr. Latham says “has no educational value to expand the mind or; arouse the intellectual activity of the child, that strengthens no faculty but memory, and, in the end, by weakening others, may destroy even that.”

I have been called to the school-room to witness feats of memory prepared as an agreeable surprise for me. I would find the children standing in a line, with hands behind them and

their little tongues would rattle off the names of the rivers of Asia and all the capes of South America. In higher classes I would be edified by a long column of dates and difficult rules of grammar. I always praised the children for their work; and in *their presence*, to preserve the proper *morale*, I praised the teacher also. But if failing in subsequent efforts to convince her of the mischief of this method, upon psychological principles, I was constrained to change her for one more to my mind, it was with the sure knowledge that the credulous ear of parents would listen to, and sympathize with, her sufferings in the cause of education, and that the struggle to define the mysteries of qualitative and quantitative and participial adjectives by children who could not even pronounce the words, would still go on where no protecting hand would be stretched out over their heads.

In taking charge of little children the head of the school stands in the place of the parents. With children of tender age this parental care must ever be quick and vigilant. The judgment of children is imperfect and their feelings sensitive; and with them the instructor holds the key of happiness or of misery. Teachers of little children are often more anxious to impose their own routine and methods than to develop the power and the faculties of the pupil. It is in this department that I have suffered my greatest trials, and it is here that I feel almost constrained to acknowledge that I have suffered defeat—not as the world calls defeat; but in not having been permitted to do with these little ones that which in honour and conscience I felt bound to do.

The true teacher must be a true artist and have an insight into the nature of the child; she must bring imagination and all the highest faculties to bear upon her work. But the