

horror for composition, because it was not to them the expression of thought. The stilted, pedantic, semi-bombast produced was one bad effect of the system. What could be more unnatural than for a child to ape the style of Dr. Johnson, or imitate Webster addressing the senate? Gradually, hard experience has taught us that children can only express the thoughts they have, and that we must set them to write about what they know, even if they produce at first very childish sentences. We must be content with the blade, which contains the power of growth, and wait patiently for the full corn in the ear. It has been found that even before a child can use a pen, it can be led to compose little sentences about the things it knows. The language lessons, which are now becoming a leading feature of our schools, are exercising a great educative power in training our pupils to see, to observe, to discriminate, to classify, in a word to think, and to express their thoughts precisely.

"Good Stories," a book full of suggestive pictures, will be found exceedingly helpful in this direction, and will enable many an over-worked teacher to solve that most difficult problem, how to keep the little people usefully employed at their desks. In many of our schools there is far too much teaching. We destroy the productive, vital, growing power, by pouring in too much and by drawing out too little. Education proceeds from within, and the smallest child can be got to write intelligent sentences about a good picture, by simply asking one or two questions to awaken thought, and touch the sensitive imagination.

What shall we do with our older pupils who are getting beyond pictures and playthings? Shall we leave them to devour the detestable dime novel, and send them from school, at the age of thirteen or fifteen, with no taste for good books, no relish for elevating literature, no intellectual hunger for far-reaching thoughts? Teachers, if they leave you in this mental beggary, "what sairs ye're grammars!"

One of the best solutions we have heard of is the celebration of authors' birthdays. Mr. Goggin, the head master of the Port Hope model school, for example, has worked out an admirable scheme. In each room hangs a portrait of some first-class master in literature,—Hans Andersen, Daniel DeFoe, Charles Dickens, Longfellow, Whittier, Tennyson, &c., purchased by the pupils themselves. The teacher talks to the pupils about these writers, tells stories, relates incidents in their lives, their struggles, their triumphs, reads or recites some gem from their writings, gets the pupils to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest some good passages, and give these in turn before the class. They celebrate the birthdays of these men, come to love them, read them, and derive infinite enjoyment from their writings. Does it not appear reasonable to suppose that a child who has passed through the several departments of such a school, will go out into the world with a loving tenderness for these "lords of the great heart," and with a supreme disgust for "Jack Sheppard" and the "Police Gazette"? The *Present Age* has the following:—

"It ought not to be forgotten that behind speech lies thought. The primary condition of clear and correct language is clear and correct thinking. Errors in words and in the form of speech should doubtless be corrected as they appear, and the teacher should insist upon fit words, correct pronunciation, and clear statement—not in one exercise, but in all. A teacher thus careful to require correct language will teach it, whether he gives set lessons or not. The best users of common speech, are those who grow up in intelligent families, where correct language prevails, and where without lessons, save those given by example, the child grows up to speak properly, as he does to act politely, and for the same reasons. But even where this early training has been wanting, the scholar who has advanced in knowledge and thinking power, till his ideas become clear, logical, and vivid, gradually improves his language, and comes at last to talk or write well simply because he thinks well. In a grown man, inaccuracy of language usually implies inaccuracy of thought and knowledge. We would not discourage the teaching of the mother tongue, but we would teach it by using it in the study of ideas and in the enlargement of knowledge.

"Nor is the study of grammar to be wholly condemned and abandoned. Language is the most wonderful invention, as it is the most useful instrument, of the human family; an invention none the less because invented by the millions through centuries of effort rather than by one mind in a fortunate hour. Language as a gigantic and complex fact is worthy of all the study bestowed upon it, but it is a study for ripe manhood and not for little children. It is the truest transcript of the human mind, and it pictures the finest and most recondite relations of logical thought. If the highest study of man is man, the widest avenue to such study is human speech. In all his works man incarnates more or less clearly himself and his thoughts, but in language he purposely embodies, as far as possible, the very texture and constructive law of his thinking. Hence the study of language must forever remain one of the most interesting, as it is one of the profoundest, to great thinkers. Like all knowledges, it has a body of simple facts which even the child can be interested in, but as a study it must always hold its place among the highest in the curriculum, in the closing instead of the opening period of the school life."

The following article is from the *Chicago Tribune*:—

"Practical methods of teaching are gradually making inroads upon the old system of cramming. At the meeting of the City Board of Education, Thursday evening last, a resolution was adopted directing the committee on text-books to inquire into the expediency of banishing grammar (by the old method of teaching) from the schools. Dr. Burrows was shocked. He proposes to amplify rather than curtail the old rule-cramming system. He thinks pupils "need a big dose of Gould Brown," and "doubts whether the results of the modern system at Quincy and Boston will surpass that of twenty and fifty years ago." On the other hand, Mr. Keith thinks the grammar should be sent to the high school. For the benefit of Dr. Burrows and others who reverence antiquity, we beg to show some grammatical results of the old system in Norfolk county, Massachusetts. When Mr. Walton examined the schools of that county, with a view to ascertain exactly what the pupils acquired under the old system, he established a test of English composition by requiring pupils to read a certain narrative and then write their version of it. The test applied to children who were in the grammar grade, and been eight years in school. Following is the test narrative.

"Cyrus, the Persian Prince, had many masters, who endeavored to teach him everything that was good, and he was educated with several little boys about his own age. He was a boy of a very good disposition and a humane temper; but even in his youthful games he showed a strong desire to command, and other boys used to make him their king. One evening his father asked him what he had done or earned that day. "Sir," said Cyrus; "I was punished to-day for deciding unjustly." "How so?" said his father. "There were two boys," said Cyrus, "one of whom was a great and the other a little boy. Now it happened that the little boy had a coat that was much too big for him, but the great boy had one that scarcely reached below his middle and was too tight for him in every part. The great boy proposed to the little boy to change coats with him; 'because then,' said he, 'we shall be both exactly fitted, for your coat is as much too big for you as mine is too little for me.' The little boy would not consent to the proposal; upon which the great boy took his coat away by force, and gave his own to the little boy in exchange. While they were disputing upon this subject, I chanced to pass by, and they agreed to make me judge of the affair. But I decided that the little boy should keep the little coat and the great boy the great one, for which judgment my master punished me." "Why so?" said Cyrus' father, "was not the little coat most proper for the little boy, and the large coat for the great boy?" "Yes, sir," answered Cyrus, "but my master told me I was not made judge to examine which coat best fitted either of the boys, but to decide whether it was just that the great boy should take away the coat of the little one against his consent; and therefore I decided unjustly, and deserved to be punished."

"The pupils were given an hour, having read the narrative, in which to give their version of the story. Following are a few samples of the result:

"Cyrus was a disobedient boy. The little boy thought that the large coat would be better for him, and the large boy thought the small coat would be better for him. But the large coat was as much too small for the small boy as the large coat was for the large. The large boy had ought to have had the large coat and the small boy the small coat. I think that Cyrus was a greedy boy.

"The boy was whipped because he had the little boy's coat.

"Cyrus a Persian prince was a pleasant educated boy but when he came home that night his father asked him what he had received that day. He said that he got punished at school his father asked him what for he said that there was a great boy and a little boy had a goat and the big boy had a little goat and the little boy had a big goat the big boy wanted to exchange goats he had the big goat and the little boy have the little goat so the big boy took his goat away by force and I came along and they wanted me to judge and I said the little boy should have the little goat and the big boy should have the big goat and so that is what I got punished for in school.

"Cyrus the Persian prince was a boy of sense. One evening he was passing by the house of a small boy had a big goat the goat was much larger than the boy so that they had a dispute over the goat the boys have him for the judge he gave the little boy the goat when he got home his father asked him if he was good at school he said he had he was punished unjustly his father said that he must be kind to one as to the other.