

pack-horse with corn—to stuff it with principles as you would stuff a purse with coin—not always regarding its actual capacity, being guided more by their conception of what it ought to be than by what it really is. Hence the pride with which teachers and parents often speak of the unusual intelligence of John or Mary. How far John surpasses those of his own age—that his preference is always for the society of men and women, that he takes no delight in the sports and rambles which so much attract boys and girls from their studies, and that his whole soul is on fire with the thoughts of the best writers, and that he always thinks wisely and profoundly on every subject.

One such specimen of precocious boyhood is enough to spoil the gambols of a whole neighbourhood of boys. They cannot indulge an hour in bodily exercises congenial to their tastes, and appropriate to their age, without hearing from their ambitious parents the name of this intellectual prodigy, who has outgrown his boyhood, cast up to them as a model of intellectual greatness, who is not *wasting* his time (?) in childish sports but pursuing knowledge *like a man*. To please their fond but misguided parents, and to meet the unreasonable demands of the school-room, they must drive nature from her stronghold, and restraining their propensity to act rationally, they must enter their study and strive to be intellectually men and women before their time.

While the laws of their physical nature are thus ignored, how is it with the mind? Is its relation to a material organization taken into consideration, by those who are directing and developing its activities? Does the thought ever seriously enter their minds, that the intellectual powers operate through the instru-

mentality of a mysteriously organized brain? That the successful and healthful development of the former must calmly await the growth and development of the latter? That the mind, however wonderful its innate energies, is limited in its capacity by the organism through which it acts? That the brain advances toward maturity and strength only with the healthful growth of the other parts of the body? And that its premature development resulting from the precocious activity of the mind, will abstract physical energy from the other animal functions, and ultimately enervate the whole man? Let us seek an answer by examining the pile of text-books we often find on the study-table of a boy of twelve summers. If a due regard to the laws of the mind and the body and their mutual relations had influenced his parents he would not have been sent to school till he was at least seven years old; but we learn that he has been a pupil under tutors since the bright age of five years. I am glad that this offence against nature is not committed as often as formerly; but I am sorry that school boards do not forbid the admission of scholars before the age of seven years. Boys are thus pressed forward in their studies, till, at twelve, before the brain power is sufficiently developed, they are studying the most abstract rules of arithmetic, and algebra, together with grammar, geography and history, in each of which a lesson must be recited daily, together with the usual filling up of orthography, reading, and penmanship.

A prodigy indeed! But such as we often meet, especially among our young girls, whose haste to become ready for the enjoyments of social life drives them, as with a goad, through their educational training. The result of this undue pressure of the mind, is either very superficial