

special note, he is in danger of losing the connection, which the teacher has, of course, taken care to make essential; and if the teacher pauses on every such occasion, he must necessarily do much less in the time, besides giving the rest of the class an opportunity for disorganization during his silence. If he arranges to tell the class when notes are to be taken, there is danger of the rest of the lesson being considered of minor importance, and hence of relaxed attention to all; while the faculty of observation, by which the pupils would for themselves have noticed these salient points, is left without sufficient exercise. If, at the close of the lesson, the pupil at once enters the leading particulars in his note-book, he thereby frees himself from the immediate necessity of reflecting upon and mentally reproducing the chain of association by which those particulars were presented and could be retained. On the other hand, when the pupils have nothing to do but to listen, and the teacher has nothing to do but to talk, there is danger of their seeking unauthorized relief from the monotony of continued mental effort, while he is expending much valuable but misdirected energy in talking over their heads. From all these considerations, confirmed by many experiments, it appears that the oral lesson produces the best effect, as regards both information and mental training, when the teacher drives home and relieves it by questions, pertinent but not too numerous, and elliptical sentences to be filled up by the pupils; and that it is better that the obligation to reproduce the lesson should be deferred till after the lapse of at least one day, a period in which it would probably be forgotten but for the exercise of attention, observation, and reflection during its delivery.

Next in order comes the Catechetical System, in which the lesson is first prepared by the pupil alone, and afterwards worked out with the teacher. Lessons in this section consist of those in which verbal accuracy is required, and those wherein the substance only is insisted upon. On the subject of learning by rote, many grave objections have been raised, to which may probably be traced the almost entire expulsion of catechisms from the lists of approved the school books. I may, perhaps, be pardoned for citing one or two examples, from personal observation, of the way in which this system sometimes tends to mislead both teachers and pupils. I was once brought into personal contact with a practitioner of some twenty years' standing, whose boys used a little French phrase book (very fair of its kind) having the French and English on opposite pages. The weekly lesson from this book consisted of *one page only*, but this had to be repeated *verbatim*. Another case:—A young friend whose education was within three months of being "finished," was compelled by adverse circumstances to seek some remunerative occupation. Her talents and attainments removed all difficulty as to the choice of her future career, so it was arranged that she should come to us on stated days, just to keep her acquirements from getting rusty till she could be placed out as a junior governess. Having ascertained that she had "been through" the History of England more than once, I requested a few particulars as to early times, for my guidance in the advanced course which alone could be suitable in such a case. I was instantly informed with the most alarming glibness, that "the ancient British army consisted of infantry and cavalry; they also used chariots in war, to which scythes were attached, which spread terror and devastation wherever they drove." On my expressing astonishment at the accuracy and despatch of her recitation, she kindly offered to favour me with three or four pages in the same style. It was with some trepidation that, under these circumstances, I ventured to put a few questions (merely as a matter of form) relative to the meaning of some important

words. I thus learned that "cavalry" was a kind of sword, that a scythe was a forest, and that a chariot was a noble quadruped used in war.

There are, however, many studies in which some portion at least must be learned by heart; and it is well known that great results can be attained by a judicious use of the faculty of mere memory. But it must never be forgotten that those systems in which most success has been achieved in this way, make the memory-work merely the basis of a most thorough and searching inquiry into the minutiae of the subject. Only very recently we have been reminded of the value of such training in the study of English verse; and it may almost be accepted as an axiom, that the best results are gained in any subject when memory and judgment are exercised together. This principle applies to the method of fixing historical dates by means of jingling rhymes, which, when well constructed, give a fair outline of the events referred to. No part of such a lesson will be lost, if the pupil be led to think out the connection as well as to learn it. He will thus avoid fatal mistakes, and learn punctuation as well as history. Pardon me for making one extract in illustration from a very popular school book.

"In 450 the Jutes arrive,
Horsa was slain in 455,
And two years more established Kent;
Before year 490 was spent
Ella another kingdom tore
From Britain; twenty-nine years more
Saw Wessex on the southern shore."

Allow this to be a sing-song rote lesson, and the pupil, however will he may remember it, will not be sure as to the agreement of dates and events. Make it an intellectual exercise, and he will gladly read all he can about each portion of it, and recite it with just appreciation and emphasis, finding in this plan for retaining the dates an index to his future reading. In this connection an example occurs to me from the work of a few days ago. To the question on this lesson, "Who was Horsa?" a nervous young boy answered, "A Roman general." The following questions on the lesson of the previous week were then put to him: "When did the Romans first land?" "Why did they leave?" "Who was then Emperor?" "Why did he not keep his troops here?" "When were they recalled?" "How did the Britons suffer in consequence?" "How long?" "Who was Horsa?" The correct answer followed as a matter of course. Here nothing had been said either to discourage him, or even to tell him that he was mistaken. Many of his class-fellows had, of course, perceived this, and their interest was roused as well as his own by the process, which always forms a source of amusement, of what I cannot help thinking a profitable character.

While referring to this section, I fear that I shall incur considerable disapprobation when I acknowledge that I believe much advantage can be gained from the use of the "Spelling Book with Meanings," in conjunction with lessons in etymology. The *modus operandi* is this: On Thursday morning a dictation lesson is given, based on two pages of the Spelling-book, from which words are selected irregularly by the teacher, who spells out each root, naming the language and stating the meaning. These are written on the slates in three columns, a fourth being left blank. When about twenty primitives have thus taken down, the boys open their Spelling-books, and search on the indicated pages for the derivatives, guided by similarity of form and signification. The lesson is checked by questions in these two forms: "What words can you find derived from—?" "What is the derivation of—?" no answer being accepted without proof. This lesson seems to remove from the Tuesday's rote lesson much, if not all, of the repulsiveness generally ascribed