

the committee are to be mainly advisory, but it will form a direct means of consultation and intercommunication between Faculty and students. The workings of the scheme will be studied with interest in other institutions.

In a recent speech at an Academy dinner James Russell Lowell is reported as saying that he is "heretic enough to doubt whether the common schools are the panacea we have been inclined to think them," and that in his opinion they teach more than they ought. We have not enough of the context of the speech to enable us to interpret the meaning of the sentences. The *St. Paul Globe* traces in them the effects of Lowell's association with the British aristocracy, and almost expects "that Mr. Lowell will next be preaching the doctrine that Massachusetts would be better off than now with a landed aristocracy and a contented peasantry." If Mr. Lowell really meant that it is not good for the children of the common people to learn all that can be taught them in the sense of acquiring the best possible education, he must have been taking lessons from the worst type of British aristocrats. But if he only means, as seems more probable, that there are as yet many faults in our most vaunted school systems and that one of the worst of these faults is the attempting to crowd too many subjects within a given space, there is much truth in his remarks. There is too much teaching and too little training in most of our schools.

School teaching, like hard study and other typical forms of brain work, gets credit for doing a good deal of harm which properly does not belong to it, but results from something quite different. Physicians in New York, are calling attention to the large numbers of young women in that city who are worn out in the service at a comparatively early age. The case of one is particularized who has recently died of nervous exhaustion, at an age which ought to be the very prime of life and the culmination of physical and intellectual vigor—thirty-eight. But then it is naively added that this lady had been teaching constantly since she was sixteen years old, and had taken actually no time for recreation, and little for rest. That explains the whole matter. Had she taken very little food and scarcely any sleep, the end might have been a little more swift but hardly more sure. But it is too bad to hold the profession of teaching responsible for results with which it has no connection.

The same mistake is made by many in regard to the effects of hard study. The fact is, we believe, demonstrable that, other things being equal, brain-workers live longer than those who use their brains very little. This is as we should expect. Nature intended all a man's faculties for use. Activity is the law of their being and the vigorous exercise of each is conducive to the health of all. But many a young man or woman, leaving the farm, or some other sphere of great physical activity, to commence a course of study at college, eschews all common sense. Needful rest, recreation and physical exercise are neglected, with the absurd notion that the hours thus stolen can be turned to account in study. Sooner or later comes the inevitable breakdown, and sympathizing friends declare the poor

fellow has killed himself with hard study, when the fact is that it is only indirectly that study has anything to do with the result. He has outraged Nature and violated some of her plainest laws and is paying the penalty. That is all. Such an one, unless his ignorance was very dense, deserves not the pity, much less the praise, too often bestowed.

A new theory has been broached by a physician who has been studying the causes of insanity. He thinks that time is required for the human brain, through the operation of the laws of heredity, to adapt itself to the greater demands made upon it in modern life. He argues that over-pressure in the schools affects chiefly children whose parents were uneducated and unused to brain-work, and who therefore did not transmit a capacity for such work to their children. There may be something in the theory but the same facts would seem to admit of a much simpler explanation. The children of educated or thinking parents are naturally trained to think from their earliest years. Even apart from any conscious effort on the part of the parents, the very atmosphere of intelligence by which such a child is surrounded stimulates mental action. The consequence is that he enters school with a brain already inured to exertion and accustomed to healthful activity. The child whose whole surroundings have been unintellectual, on the other hand, has to begin with almost the simplest mental movements, and is as incapable of keeping pace with the other, as a village loafer to cope with a trained athlete.

RELIGIOUS TRAINING IN THE SCHOOLS.

This is one of the questions that "will not down." It refuses to stay settled, even upon the basis of the most diluted religious exercises, or the most astute compromises. We have before us at this writing, two articles upon the subject, in two of our ablest exchanges. The one is a *Secular*, the other a *School Journal*; the one Canadian, the other American. The writers approach the subject by divergent routes, and view it from different elevations, but reach virtually the same conclusion. The chief contributor to *The Week*, quotes, with approval, a recent remark of Lord Salisbury: "Believe me," said the British Premier, "the essence of true religious teaching is that the teacher should believe that which he teaches, and should be delivering, as he believes it, the whole message of truth. Unless there is that sympathetic, that magnetic feeling established between children and teachers, that the teacher is dealing honestly with them, the public will believe that the religious teaching is a sham."

"If we grant this," says *The Week*, "then it necessarily follows that religious instruction must be left to the parent, the pastor, and the denominational college, for no public or State educational institution can be relied on for such religious instruction as that for which Lord Salisbury contends. The alternative—that religious bodies should possess schools and colleges of their own, supported by Government funds—is the thin edge of a wedge, which if driven in to its logical extent, would necessitate Government aid to every religious and, indeed, irreligious body, from the Ritualists to the Agnostics."

Side by side with this let us put a quotation from the *N. E.*