

uses ; to trees, and plants and flowers ; to the metals and other minerals which, from their properties, are in constant use. It is Physical Science for children ; for it leads them to observe the phenomena of the heavens, sun, moon, and stars, the seasons, with the light and heat which make the changes of the weather, and the properties of the bodies which form the mass of matter around us. It is Domestic Economy for children ; for it exhibits to them the things and processes daily used in their homes, and the way to use them rightly. It is Industrial and Social Economy for children ; for it describes the various trades, processes in different walks of art, and the arrangements as to the division of labor which society has sanctioned for carrying these on in harmony and mutual dependence. It is the Science of Common Things for children ; for it disregards nothing which can come under their notice in their intercourse with their fellows or their superiors. And, finally, it is Geography for children ; since it has favorite subjects of illustration in mountain and river, forest, plain, and desert, the different climates of the earth, with their productions and the habits of their people, the populous city, and the scattered wigwams of the savage."

I have dwelt, perhaps, too long on this system of instruction ; but my apology is, its great importance, and the necessity there exists for making it more popular in our schools, both city and country.

From this system arose the "Conversational Method" and the "Oral Objective Method," by a combination of which it is now proposed to dispense with the use of text-books altogether. Burn up all the text-books in the country, say these reforming enthusiasts ; they are a nuisance, a hindrance, a deadening clog on the car of educational progress. Make

a huge bonfire of them, and let all the genuine, "go-a-head" teachers in the country clap their hands, and sing pæans of joy around the flames, and then let them welcome in, with acclamations of delight, the new era that is to banish forever all text-books from our schools. Look back, they say, at the great men of antiquity, those intellectual giants the productions of whose mighty minds have come down to us, the wonder and the admiration of every age. What text-books, they ask, did Plato, Plutarch, Pythagoras and Socrates make use of ? And who has ever since equalled them as Teachers ? What method of teaching has ever yet excelled the Socratic ? Who are the leaders of thought, who the great educators of the world to-day ? Are they not the imitators of the great masters of old ; are they not the men who originate new ideas, strike out new lines of thought, and devise new methods for themselves ? Who originate inventions in machinery, or make discoveries in science ? Are they the men who stupidly bind down their minds and eyes to perpetual gazing on rags remodelled and covered with printed letters, things called text-books ? To put such questions is to answer them. In a strain somewhat similar to this, do the advocates of *oral instruction*, pure and simple, put forth their claims for recognition ?

Their theory is not a new one, nor is it wholly impracticable ; on the contrary, it has been long in use, and with the best results : and, although some of the arguments now used in favor of it are visionary—such as the burning of the text-books—yet others of great weight can be adduced in its support.

Oral instruction, or instruction by conversation, was so peculiarly the method of Socrates that it is known by his name. Many eminent teachers, among them, Pestalozzi and Fallenberg made it their chief instrument of imparting in-