

This point should be where the particular aptitudes and capacities of the child become manifest."

"Study ought to be made a pleasure to children, not a task. If made compulsory it is ineffectual and evanescent."

If proper force and effect were given to these three principles of education as laid down by Plato, our school system would approach as near perfection as under existing social conditions we can hope to bring it. And yet for over two thousand years that ideal has been before the eyes of the world.

The next authority I should like to quote is Montaigne, who was a contemporary of Shakespeare. He says:

"The greatest and most important difficulty of human science is the education of children."

"For not having chosen the right course we often take very great pains and consume a good part of our time in training up children to things for which by their natural constitution they are totally unfit."

"Such as, according to our common way of teaching undertake with one and the same lesson, and the same measure of direction, to instruct several boys of differing and unequal capacities, are infinitely mistaken; and 'tis no wonder, if in a whole multitude of scholars, there are not found alone two or three who bring away any good account of their time and discipline. Let the master judge of the profit the pupil has made, not by the testimony of his memory, but by that of his life."

"To know by note is no knowledge, and signifies no more but only to retain what one has intrusted to our memory. A mere bookish learning is a poor, paltry learning; it may serve for ornament, but there is yet no foundation for any superstructure to be built upon it."

"Whoever shall represent to his fancy, as in a picture that great image of our mother nature, in her full majesty and lustre, whoever in her face shall read so general and so constant a variety, whoever shall observe himself in that figure no bigger than the best touch or prick of a pencil in comparison of the whole, that man alone is able to value things according to their true estimate and grandeur. This great world is the mirror wherein we are to behold ourselves. In short I would have this to be the book my young gentleman should study with the most attention."

"As the steps we take in walking to and fro in a gallery though three times as many, do not tire a man so much as those we employ in a formal journey, so our lesson, as it were accidentally occurring, without any set obligation of time or place, and falling naturally into every action, will insensibly insinuate itself. By this means our very exercises and recreations, running, wrestling, music, dancing, hunting, riding and fencing, will prove to be a good part of our study."

"As to the rest this method of education ought to

be carried on with a **severe sweetness**, quite contrary to the practice of our pedants, who instead of tempting and alluring children to letters by apt and gentle ways, do in truth present nothing before them but rods and ferrules, horror and cruelty. Away with this violence, away with this compulsion! than which, I certainly believe nothing more dulls and degenerates a noble nature."

"How much more decent would it be to see their classes strewn with green leaves and flowers than with the stumps of birch and willow? Were it left to my ordering, I should paint the school with pictures of joy and gladness."

Such are a few of the many maxims on education which one can glean from Montaigne. Are they not true? Are they not re-iterated again and again by modern educators? Have they been embodied in our educational system? They certainly have not.

It is from a consideration of the teachings of such wise and great men which have been the heritage of countless generations, that makes me pause before advancing my own ideas. Of what use for me to speak when Plato and Montaigne are ignored. Perhaps for the very reason that they are ignored. It is not enough that a truth be once stated, however forceful and convincing the statement. It must be re-stated by every new generation, it must be re-iterated, re-emphasized from a thousand different view points. And then when the million tiny wheels have revolved a million times, the great wheel of human progress, with which they are in gear, may move ahead one infinitesimal cog.

For many years, educationists have felt that there is something radically wrong with the system which they have been called upon to work under. Tentative efforts have been made to improve the old system, by adding a subject here, modifying one there, curtailing this, enlarging that; correlating, intensifying, energizing, elaborating. When I was a boy the three R's were a holy trinity, claiming our undivided devotion. A little history, mostly kings, battles, treaties, acts of parliament, and dates,—lots of dates, as many dates as events. A little geography—mostly lists of names. A little grammar,—mostly definitions and rules of syntax with parsing and analysis as a special treat. Drawing once in a blue moon. That was our curriculum. But strange to say many men and women received an education, achieved an education, or had an education thrust upon them, in spite of the curriculum. Two subjects were left severely alone in the public schools,—literature and nature study. When weary of the routine studies we could turn to these for rest and education. What has the modern child left to turn to? Mischievous and the movies.

I honestly believe the public taste in literature was higher and keener when literature was not taught in our public schools. And I believe there was a deeper,