

ed but a mere *word knowledge*. Ideas are nothing. The pupil is fully satisfied when he has the words, whether he has ideas or not. To the teacher the text book is a similar source of mischief. He regards the questions it proposes as all that is required in order fully to unfold the subject under consideration. He assumes that the author knew what was required when the work was prepared, and that if his pupils can answer all that is required under any special head, then they have certainly mastered every reasonable difficulty. We have seen teachers sit upon their chairs with professorial dignity and taking Hodgins' easy lessons in Geography, ask a class of juveniles the questions in regular order as they were laid down, and require from the class *verbatim* answers. We have seen such classes, too apparently do well—at least do well enough to satisfy such a teacher that they were making rapid progress in geography. But on dispensing with the text book and cross examining such a class, as to how much they really understood, the result was most deplorable. Let the questions be varied in the least—let them be asked to explain in their own language any point or any difficulty; there was nothing but the vacant stare, or the limping, ungrammatical and blundering answer. Or even reverse the case. Take the text book away from the teacher. Ask him to *grind* a class on the *noun* or *verb*, and see how suddenly his professional dignity would disappear. All his props are removed, and with scarcely more success than the pupils themselves, he blunders through a disconnected and disjointed review of the prescribed work.

Now, apart altogether from the inefficiency of the work done with text-book in hand, the teacher should, for the mental stimulus it imparts, trust to his own resources. We have never seen—and we venture to say it never will be seen—the same interest kept up by a *bookish* teacher as by the oral teacher. And this is not because his ques-

tions are better, or more clearly put than those in the book, but because all he says is aided by the *living eye* and inspired by the natural activity of his own mind. And thus thinking himself, he stimulates his class to think, and the work done is mutually beneficial.

To a teacher anxious for self development we say, discard your text books during recitations. Fill your minds with the subject when you may, and then before your class pour out of a full treasury those stores of information and illustration which never fail to enrich your pupils in the highest sense of the word.

2. Teachers can secure their self-improvement by pursuing a *systematic course* of reading. We have repeatedly urged this through the columns of the TEACHER. We know of no profession in which the opportunities are so great, or the facilities so abundant, for self-improvement of this kind. The teacher's work is necessarily systematic: His hours of labor are uniform and well defined; and although they are in some respects exhaustive, yet in few instances can it be said, that they disqualify him for even several hours reading. At this season of the year particularly, are his opportunities peculiarly favorable. Our long winter evenings, during which outdoor recreation is impossible, afford ample time for a perusal of the best productions of the age. And he is criminally negligent, who trifles away his time in idle gossip with "the great ocean of truth lying undiscovered before him."

To make a course of reading such as we have referred to profitable, two things are necessary;—first, *system*, and second, *perseverance*. In regard to system we would remark, that a teacher should determine what subjects he would like to read. Having done this, whether geology, or botany, or astronomy, or history, or *belles lettres*, he then selects his authors and follows out a regular course, turning neither to the right