

it. Lucky indeed if he be not taxed, or asked to contribute in more ways than one, for his inestimable privilege of super-employment. The day seems to be not far off when, like some poli-

ticians, the candidate for the school-master's office shall be expected to pay for the permission to hold his appointments. This is a thought enough to "give us pause."

THE ORIGIN OF CHARACTER.

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THE history of the word "character" is interesting; and casts some light upon our inquiry. The first meaning of the Greek verb *χαράσσω* is to *make sharp* or *pointed*, to *sharpen*; the second meaning, to *cut into furrows*, to *furrow*. Hence *χαράσσω* means, thirdly, to engrave, since engraving is done by successive strokes of a tool on metal, wood, or stone. The Greek noun *χαρακτήρ* means, first, an instrument for engraving; but secondly, and commonly, it means what is engraved, or the result of a process. The first meaning of the English word "character" is a distinctive mark, a letter, a figure, a sign, as the letter "a," the figure "4," the sign "+." The passage from character in the engraver's sense to character in the mental sense, is by the way of an analogy. As the artist traces the figure in the plate by stroke after stroke of the graver, so the intellect, sensibility, and will work out the lines of character by repeated acts of knowledge, feeling, and choice.

I have said that the second stroke or discharge of mental energy is easier than the first. This is the tendency within given limits. But there is another law that must not be overlooked—energy, or force, whether mental, muscular, or nervous, tends to exhaustion. Hence the teacher must not call for too many strokes of the same kind at one time. The mind must have time to recover its tone. Nor must the strokes come at too rare intervals. The rule is this—

the best results come from constant repetition up to the point where weariness begins. A child should not be kept at the writing desk all day, nor should his music lessons be given at the rate of two a year. The one-study school is unphilosophical; and so are the courses of study that dribble out education in infrequent lessons. There never lived more accomplished school masters than the Jesuits; and one of their fundamental principles was, "Repetition is the mother of studies." The reason of the maxim is commonly found in the mind; but it can, no doubt, be traced up to the nervous structure. After saying that the rapid and unbroken transitions from one study to another, in the early life of John Stuart Mill, must have been unfavourable to a due impression on the memory, Professor Alexander Bain says, "We know well enough that the nervous currents when strongly aroused in any direction tend to persist for some time in the act of learning, the persistence will count in stamping the impression; while part of the effect of a lesson must be lost in hurrying without a moment's break to something new, even although the change of subject is of the nature of relief." What would Professor Bain say of those courses of study in the public schools, and of those programmes of daily work, that break the hours up into mere crumbs of time?

Two principles, apparently opposite and irreconcilable, must blend in