

REPLACE TEXT BOOKS

Teachers Should Teach Scholars Without Books.

IT IS SCIENTIFIC INSTRUCTION

Germany Has Long Since Adopted the New Method in Her Schools.

Dr. J. M. Rice, in the Forum, condensed for Public Opinion.

In my opinion the greatest fault in the schools of our country lies in the professional weakness of our teachers. In order to be an ideal teacher, more is required than the ability to conduct a recitation scientifically, yet the ability to teach is fundamental. Before our ideal individual is worthy the name of "teacher," she must add to her moral traits a knowledge of pedagogical principles, and skill in their practical application. The fundamental purposes in elementary teaching are two: first, to develop power—the power to observe, to reason, to do; second, to aid the child in storing in his mind a fund of useful knowledge. Of the old school of teaching it may be said that the end and aim is the acquisition of knowledge; it appeals almost exclusively to the memory, and does but little toward the development of power. On the other hand, our most radical performers are inclined to look lightly on the acquisition of knowledge, and to recognize as important only the development of power. Of course, on sober thought, we cannot fail to realize that both sides must receive due attention.

If it be the teacher's aim to lead the child to think, it is necessary for her to apply the principle that the child must be told nothing that he is able to find out for himself. To compel the child to study the lesson from the text book in advance of the recitation, is to violate this principle in toto, because by this means he is directly told by the text book every point that he is able to find out for himself. In order properly to apply the principle, it is necessary to bring the new matter before the pupil for the first time during the recitation period. The aim of progressive teachers is to aid the pupil in building, so to say, a solid and permanent mental structure, consisting of fundamental ideas, based upon concrete facts, which themselves shall ever remain fresh and active, forming a fund of ready knowledge. To construct a mental fabric to this nature, it is necessary to bring the idea to the notice of the pupil in a psychological order. It is only when we progress slowly and systematically, from the known to the unknown, and from the concrete to the abstract, that the facts may be properly welded together and fused into a logical one. In the text book the facts are presented in too rapid succession.

True instruction will not be obtained until the teacher is substituted for the text book, as it is then only that the principles of teaching can be properly applied. The early attempts to teach without a text book are necessarily exceedingly feeble. To reach any degree of proficiency in scientific teaching is difficult, and involves years of study and practice. If we, as Americans, should feel unequal to the task it would be better to retain the text book. But if we believe that we are able to do what our German colleagues have long since accomplished, then there is nothing to be gained by waiting. It is in the subjects involved, in building up the thought-content of the mind that the teacher finds the golden opportunity to carry her ideals into practice. It is from the ideas presented in them that the child acquires that fund of knowledge which will exert a strong influence in determining his ideals and interests in life. The most prominent among these studies are geography, history, and the natural sciences. While, in the old school, the time devoted to these branches is small as compared with that given to the formal ones, in the growing school the tendency is to bring the thought-studies more and more to the foreground.

In spite of their bar to scientific teaching, there has been strong opposition to the removal of the text books, and particularly for two reasons: it is claimed that, if the text book should be abolished, the child would not acquire the ability to use books; and that the removal of the text book would cause the teacher to do the work for the pupil, so that the child's mind would be no longer properly disciplined. Both objections are, in my opinion, entirely unfounded. First, the fundamental purpose of education does not lie in teaching the child how to use books; this is simply an important incident, which it is well for the teacher to bear in mind. Again, to study a lesson from the text book does not teach the child how to use books; it simply leads him to perform a task, either to please the teacher or to avoid punishment. To know how to use books is to understand how to look up sources of information, and this ability cannot be acquired by committing to memory the words of the text book. By directing the pupils to write compositions, and by frequently calling for debates, in each instance suggesting lists of works to be used for reference, more can be done in a few exercises than can be accomplished by years of lesson study. Second, when the teacher takes the place of the text book, the child is by no means relieved of a task; on the contrary, in a recitation conducted on scientific principles, the child is obliged to perform intellectual labor more severe in character, though less dull and mechanical, than when he commits the contents of the text book to memory. When he studies the text book, he acquires his information simply by exercising his memory; in a scientific recitation, on the other hand, he is obliged to bring many of his faculties into play in order to accomplish his task.

STATE NEWS.

Interstate Items Culled from Oregon's Leading Newspapers.

The Statesman says: "Governor Lord is in receipt of a letter from Governor Thornton of New Mexico requesting the appointment of five delegates to the Fourth National Irrigation congress to be held at Albuquerque on September 15 to 19 inclusive, to represent the state of Oregon. The governor states that he will appoint any citizen interested in the subject who desires to attend the con-

gress. Several other states have already appointed these delegates. Governor Thornton says in his letter to Governor Lord on the subject: "I beg leave to call your attention again to this congress and ask you to appoint delegates to represent your state. This will be one of the most important irrigation conventions ever held and I ask your co-operation and extend to you a cordial invitation to be present." Now, if there are any citizens of the state who think they can derive benefits for themselves or the state commensurate with the expense of the trip, here is their opportunity to be honored by a state appointment. The movement is the result of the proposition by the national government to give to the several states one million acres of land each for the reclaiming of the same by irrigation. There are numbers of parties in Eastern Oregon interested in the matter of reclaiming such lands, and possibly some may wish to learn more of the project. If so, the meeting in New Mexico will be a good opportunity for them." The Astorian would suggest the advisability of the governor shutting off Mr. Kincaid's little two dollar perquisites on these "commissions."

Grasshoppers are said to be more numerous in certain portions of the Rogue River Valley this season, than for many years, and in some places have been more or less destructive. Recently at the former Roper place, on east side of Bear creek, now tenanted by Harry Green, the hoppers threatened to ruin a young peach orchard, attacking the foliage viciously. Mr. Green undertook a plan to kill the hoppers that is said to have worked most successfully. Taking a quantity of bran, molasses and arsenic, he mixed these ingredients up into a tempting potion, and scattered it in small piles on the ground over the orchard. The hoppers gathered around the medicine in myriads and partook with the result that they were soon heaped up over the ground three or four deep, but fortunately dead. Enough of the grasshoppers were not left to do further damage. The cost for covering the 2-acre orchard was about \$10. This remedy is worthy the attention of those who are bothered with grasshoppers.

Frank C. Baker, who is a well known admirer of fine horseflesh, is now the owner of one of the handsomest and fastest little animals in the upper coast. He has purchased from J. E. Kirkland, who bred her, the dark brown mare, Little Maid, 218, by Rockwood, dam by Hambletonian Mambrino, and has taken her from the track to make a road mare of her. She was foaled in 1889 and is given in the yearly horse book with a record of 2:23, which was her best performance up to the last compilation. Since then she has made 2:18 at Portland, this year. She is as pretty as a picture and bears the intelligence and life. Mr. Baker had her photographed yesterday and will take her to Portland this morning, where he will drive her on the White House road among the flyers of the metropolitan Statesman.

Silverton people now grope around in the darkness. The electric light company at that place will not submit to a reduction of rates, and as the city will not pay the price it has been paying, the lights are out.

No trace whatever can be found of Albert E. Weber, the Portland poultry man, and it is now thought he was drowned while going from Portland to Ross Island by capturing his skiff.

A very fatal disease prevails among hogs in the neighborhood of Wapinitia, W. and several valuable animals have died. It resembles nothing that has been known in that vicinity before.

The latest estimate gives 7,000,000 pounds as showing the amount of wool which has passed through the warehouses in The Dalles this summer.

Two men were overcome by heat in a harvest field in Umatilla county last Friday and died in a short time.

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