

LECTURES on the art of teaching, with general assertions which no one will dispute, and advice which can rarely be of any practical help, are of very little value. The 'Lectures on Teaching,' delivered by J. G. Fitch, M.A., at Cambridge, England, are, however, really and notably helpful, as well as interesting. The lecturer does not content himself with cultivating flowers of rhetoric, but goes to the root of the matter with suggestions that every teacher will find it useful to read and follow. An admirable chapter is that on the training of the memory, with the clearest possible explanation of what should be learned by heart and what should not. Shall I learn the definitions of the parts of speech given by grammarians? No. 'An article is a word placed before a noun to show the extent of its meaning.' If I did not know what an article is without the help of this definition, I should never tell it by means of it. Shall I learn by heart a list of the prepositions which govern a dative, and of the prepositions that govern the ablative, in Latin? Yes; for these are idiomatic laws which are essential to me in Latin composition as well as in translation: they are largely arbitrary, and I could not recall them easily by any effort of reflection. Shall I learn an extract from Scott's *Marmion*? Well, I think not. For it is not likely to have any unity of its own. It is a fragment of a longer narrative, and is unintelligible without the rest. Shall I learn part of Goldsmith's 'Traveller,' or Gray's 'Elegy,' or Wordsworth's *Ode on Immortality*? Yes; for every couplet or stanza here is a picture or thought in itself. Shall I learn the dates of the English kings, the latitude of London, the approximate size of Great Britain, and the population of its five or six largest towns? Yes; because England is my home. Shall I learn the dates of the Popes, a list of the departments of France, the length of the Mississippi in exact figures, or the latitude and longitude of Timbuctoo? No; I think I would rather not know these things, though I should like to know where the book is where I can find

* *Lectures on Teaching*, By J. G. Fitch, M.A. \$1. New York: Macmillan & Co

them on the rare occasions on which I may want them. What Mr. Latham calls the index memory is all I want here—the knowledge of where to look for what I want, and how to look for it. Shall I learn by heart the historical compendium of the ingenious Mangnall? Not if I can help it. For every answer consists of about one-third of a statement, of which all the rest lies in the question. And the question is not learned by heart. Thus, for example: 'QUES.—What Roman emperor projected an invasion of Britain, gathered only shells upon the coast, and then returned to Rome in triumph? ANS.—Caligula, in the year 40.'

Nothing could be more admirable, more practical, more suggestively novel, than such directions as these. They remind one of the little son of a Cambridge professor, who, when a lady asked if he would remember to tell his mamma that she had called, answered deliberately: 'Well, there are so many things I want to remember and can't, that I don't think it worth while to try and remember such a silly thing as that.' Another excellent chapter is that on examinations and good and bad answers; or perhaps even more on good and bad questions. After a lesson on the pressure of the atmosphere, do not ask the class so complex a question as 'Why is boiling water not so hot on the top of a mountain as in a valley?' but proceed by easy stages. 'What happens when water begins to boil? What does the bubbling mean? What would have prevented the bubbling from beginning so soon? What would have caused the bubbling to begin earlier? Can the water receive more heat after it begins to bubble? What is the state of the air up a mountain as compared with that below?' etc. The lecturer likes the Kindergarten system for children, but only to a limited extent. It is valuable for cultivating the powers of observation, but it is never to be forgotten that in the long run the faculty of observation is a less valuable factor in the intellectual life than the habit of reflection. The Kindergarten does little or nothing to encourage reflection. The children learn to look, to see, to hear, to act in concert; but all the thinking, and nearly all the talking, is done by the teacher for them. This is not a fault in the system, but it is one of the limits to its usefulness. Altogether, these 'Lectures' are the most valuable book of the kind that we know.