

the interest of the children, and if this were supplied, there is no branch of study that would so much contribute to mould aright, the intellectual and moral habits of children, as history. We have occasionally met with pupils in the Schools, whose answers showed that they had read more, and better books of history than their text book, and they were generally among the most intelligent and meritorious. Could a School history be found which converted the dry outlines of events into such lifelike pictures as are presented in the pages of Herodotus, or as are drawn in the Cyropædia of Xenophon, or in the delightful narrative of Livy, the effect on our Schools would be very soon perceptible; and history, instead of being what it now appears to be a very imperfectly studied and ill relished task, would become one of the most delightful recreations, as well as one of the most improving studies that could be adopted for their improvement.

The classes generally appeared better instructed in geography than in history, probably because the study is made more interesting. In some of the Schools, the knowledge of geography was absolutely wonderful. In one School, we recollect, that the master gave the names of twenty places in different parts of the earth, without any regard to order or classification, and directed the pupil to give the course and direction from one to the other, until the whole list was completed, and all this was done without hesitation, and without any aid to the memory from map or memorandum.

In another, advantage had been taken of the pictures in the text book, illustrative of the character and production of the various countries, to impress the minds of the pupils with a discriminating knowledge of the different regions of the earth, and the time so spent, we cannot doubt, was profitably employed. The secret

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opinions on such subjects are entitled to the highest consideration.

In History we do not think that the attainments of the pupils are such as could be wished. Nor is the mode of teaching in this study a good one. The fault, however, is not to be attributed either to the pupils or their instructors. The classes generally have shown a very fair knowledge of all that could be learned from the sources of learning at their command. The text book of history now in use in our Schools is not a good one. It is very brief, not very accurate, and very uninteresting. It appears to be nothing more than a very dry detail of the leading facts of history, related in no connection, except that of chronological order, and utterly destitute of any thing to awaken and interest the attention. We will give an illustration of its character. In the part devoted to Grecian history the names of Miltiades, Themistocles, Aristides, and Leonidas are not introduced in the narration of the Persian invasions, and the name of not a single inhabitant of Greece who lived between the time of Solon and that of Epaminondas is mentioned in the course of this part of the history. Yet this period of nearly two hundred years was prolific of great men, and is probably the most important era in the history of civilization. It embraces the time of the Persian invasions. It was the age of Pericles, of Alcibiades, of Plato, of Xenophon, of Herodotus, of the great dramatic poets—in short of nearly all the most eminent intellects of ancient Greece. It is but justice, however, to the author to say, that the principal defects of this book are inseparable from the plan on which it is compiled. A history of the world in a duodecimo volume of 300 pages, cannot be otherwise than meagre in its information, and a book of larger size would be too expensive.

History might be made the most interesting and one

of the most profitable studies to which the attention of children could be directed. It so abounds with the materials of reflection, there is so much in it to impress the imagination, to elevate the moral sentiments, to touch the heart and enlarge the mind, that it is much to be desired, that its capabilities as the means of moral as well as intellectual culture should be duly improved. But this cannot be done while pupils have no other books than those which are confined to the detail of facts, the mere husks and dross of history, without comment or improvement. A child may learn that the Athenians defeated the Persians at Marathon and Salamis. That they were in turn repelled with disaster from Syracuse, that Alexander overran Asia, that the Romans expelled their kings and conquered the known world, without having awakened in them one glow of feeling or being made aware of the materials for reflection and for a higher instruction than the mere knowledge of facts, which these and such other great events in the world's story might present to their view. And such is all the advance that can be expected from the book now in use. In the course of our examinations it was not much used, and such attempts were made as the limited time permitted to draw out what knowledge the children had and to awaken their interest in this study, but it was generally found that while they could tell very readily what was in their text book, the information derived from it had not been conveyed to their minds in such a manner as to induce a desire for greater research. In short, we do not think from what appeared at the examinations, that history is a favorite study, or that the quality of the knowledge of it which can at present be obtained, is of a very valuable or durable kind. A book is wanted which while it narrates facts, should also contain such reflections as would awaken