

The
University Argonaut.

Moscow, Idaho, February 28, 1903.

Literary.

Observation.

In discussing this subject I have taken the word "Observation" in a comprehensive sense, that is, as meaning not only to see, but to know, thus making it synonymous with perception. Before passing to the importance of the cultivation of this faculty, its nature will first be considered.

According to James, perception is defined as "The consciousness of particular material things present to sense." Brooks says, "Perception is that faculty of the mind by which we gain a knowledge of external objects through the senses."

It is then by means of perception that percepts or ideas are gained, and from the definition it is inferred that there are two elements in perception, that is, the thing perceived and the person perceiving, the former being objective, the second subjective.

In perception the mind acts by means of a nervous organism, upon which external objects make impressions or sensations. When this sensation is carried to the mind and becomes knowledge, it is a per-

ception. This nervous organism is made up of the five senses—smell, taste, hearing, touch and sight.

The conditions favorable for perception then are four. There must be an existence of a mind to perceive, the existence of this nervous organism, and the existence of an object. The fourth condition is that the object must make an impression on the nervous organism. Under no other condition can perception take place.

Having thus seen the nature of perception, its importance is self evident. It is the basis of all our knowledge of external objects, and it is a question whether we could obtain any knowledge whatever, were it not for this sense perception. One might be able to imagine a being that could receive ideas of the external objects without these senses, but man is not so constituted.

Both Fraebel and Pestalozzi recognized the importance of observation. Fraebel in speaking of the children in his kindergarten says, "I see that they observe; but their observations are for the most part transitory and indefinite, and often, therefore, comparatively un-

fruitful. I can contrive means for concentrating their attention by exciting curiosity and interest, and educate them in the art of observing. They will thus gain clear and definite perceptions, bright images in the place of blurred ones, will learn to recognize the difference between complete and incomplete knowledge, and gradually advance from the stage of merely knowing to that of knowing that they know."

Pestalozzi based his whole system of elementary education upon the development of the observational powers. He expresses his ideas of securing elementary education thus, "If I look back and ask myself what I have really done towards the improvement of elementary education, I find that in recognizing observation as the absolute basis of all knowledge, I have established the first and most important principle of instruction; and that, setting aside all particular systems, I have endeavored to discover what ought to be the character of instruction itself, and what are the fundamental laws according to which the natural education of the human race must be conducted." Again he says, "Observation is the basis of all knowledge. In other words, all knowledge must proceed from observation, and must admit of being traced to that source."

The perceptive facilities have been more neglected than any other powers of the mind, perhaps, and the result is a multitude of poor observers. The error of this neglect in childhood is only the more firmly established as age advances. Halleck is of the opinion that, although reasoning may be developed after the age of twenty years, ninety-nine out of a hundred never cultivate perception to any great extent after that age. This neglect of observational power is found in almost all classes of people. How many people are there who are accustomed to seeing cows every day that can tell whether a cow's horns are below, behind, above or in front of her ears, or how many could tell the distinguishing features between a beech and an oak. Many persons would be perplexed at the simple question as to whether a cat descends a tree head first or not, and yet they have seen this event many times. Many wise people might become suddenly frustrated if they should be asked unawares if they knew which arm they put in a sleeve first when putting on a coat, or how many buttons they have on a coat that they button every day, or which shoe they are in the habit of putting on first.

The education of today tends to neglect the culture of observation, and students often look for all knowledge in books, thus failing to observe the things about them. People of ancient times, before the

invention of printing, were forced through observation, and in order to observe the objects about them, to gain knowledge our senses must thus making their senses more keen be trained. and accurate

Even today some uneducated people are better observers than many who are educated. Those who have an opportunity for education are generally trained to remember and to think, but not to observe. To emphasize this point Brooks cites an example of some French students in the time of Napoleon who did not wish to join the army, and so they wore spectacles to make themselves near sighted, thus disqualifying them for enlistment. So he regards books as being the spectacles which are making so many persons near sighted in regard to observing nature. Even the Indian at one time could have taught the white man many lessons in the art of seeing things, as he was able to trace his foe for miles through the woods simply by noticing the little pieces of broken twigs.

The fact that it is necessary to cultivate the powers of observation, then, is self evident, but its importance may be still further emphasized. In speaking of connecting the mind within, with the world outside, Adams says in substance that it is the duty of the teacher to shovel the facts of the outside world into the mind, and the shovel he is to use is observation. Thus our knowledge is gained

To see things in the right way, concentrated attention is necessary. The whole is not to be considered so much as the details. Many persons who have difficulty in remembering countenances make the mistake of trying to observe the face as a whole in place of seeking some detail which would perhaps always aid in remembering the face. Our conversations and ordinary knowledge consist of facts which we have obtained through our senses, and those who have the power of observing accurately and in detail have also the power of making vivid descriptions. Were it not for careful observation, our scientific knowledge would indeed be limited. Although thought has much to do with scientific discovery, yet facts found out by means of the senses are the ground work for thought.

Literature shows the use of careful observation. The works of Burns, Wordsworth, Tennyson, Shakespeare and others are teeming with nature, all due to the observation of the authors. Thus the scenery of many countries is perpetuated in writing. This power is also equally as important to the orator as to the poet, if he would be influential.

There is much difference shown in the power of observation in two

individuals. Often two people will look at the same object and each will see something that the other did not see. Again, two persons may be looking for four-leaved clover in the same place one will find several while the other will be able to find none. This is partly due to the difference in the natures of the two persons. One mind acts objectively, while the other acts subjectively. Yet there is a difference in culture also. One has sharpened his observation by use, but the other has not. This difference in the exercise of perception is shown also between boys and girls. A girl can describe an article of dress in detail, while a boy, who perhaps is not able to do this, will describe an engine accurately.

Youth is the time for the cultivation of the senses, for at that time they are most active. This activity of the senses in children is what is commonly called curiosity. Parents and teachers often do not understand this activity and make mistakes in trying to suppress it entirely. That is a child's method of education and teachers should satisfy it.

While the teacher is endeavoring to train the perceptive faculties of the pupils it is all important that he should also be exerting his own by observing his pupil's keenly.

To cultivate the perceptive faculties, they must be exercised. Per-

sons who make a practice of tasting teas or wines become so proficient that often they can tell from what country the article came. Men who handle coins for a time in the mints are soon able to ascertain whether the coin is exactly correct simply by lifting it in the hand.

To train the powers of perception rightly, attention should be given to the subject in hand, and the perceptions will be clear only in so far as this is done. Every object should be analyzed and observed with minuteness.

Object lessons are useful in cultivating the senses. They have a two fold purpose, that of culture, and that of knowledge, but their chief aim is to cultivate the senses. The teaching is done with objects and not with books, so that the child may see and find out for himself.

Drawing is especially helpful in giving the right idea of the appearance of things. Halleck gives an instance of a class of fifteen who were asked as to the position of a cow's horns and only two could tell, these two being the only ones in the class that had ever tried to draw a cow.

Natural History gives opportunity especially for observing plants, animals, minerals, etc., and this minute examination of different specimens aids materially in sharpening the perceptive faculties.

Agassiz had the power to hold his audience spell-bound when talking of nothing but the beauties of a grass hopper, also one of the secrets of his teaching was the giving of a specimen to a student and simply telling him to look at it for a certain length of time and then report what he had seen. The reply of the teacher after the report being that the student should continue to look.

To train the observational powers, then, is not simply to cultivate the senses, but to build up the mind.—So teachers should pay more attention to the culture of the senses, for it is by this means that clear and definite ideas are gained and the student is thus helped to success.—Contributed.

The Training for a Larger Life.

The educational system of the United States is not based upon scientific principles. The application of theories and empirical ideas is merely tentative. A change is constantly taking place. New theories are expounded and new experiments are being introduced. It is quite impossible to apply principles for all time because we are constantly progressing. The educational system of a country is often the determinative means of its intellectual advancement. But it is quite possible to reduce some definite laws to which the interests of

the student and those of the nation may be best subserved. The great educators of our country have understood the principles as promulgated by such men as Pestalozzi, Comenius, Herbart or Spencer and others, and are beginning to understand the manner of their application to modern conditions in the light of psychology. The teaching in the past has not been in accordance with those great principles of the earlier educational reformers and some of it is not at the present time. There are difficulties also to be met, as the nation increases in education, in shaping the mind of a student for contending successfully with the exigencies of life.

Today we are living in a commercial age and conditions are far different from those of fifty years ago. The educational system must be adapted to principles that will meet present conditions. We might ask what sort of training is necessary to equip us for a successful life. Shall we say that a course in science, or literature, or art will give us the proper training? It would be quite difficult to answer the question. Each is possessed with a mind having its own distinctive characteristics. Each has its own power of determining its relation to an environment. What training would be practical for one would be impractical for another. One man has said that Latin is just

as essential for one mind as engineering for another in gaining a livelihood. Our minds are, when in their plastic state and susceptible period, shaped by the training we receive in college. If we study, for instance, science, we shall have different conceptions than if we study philosophy or art. Nature has provided a mind of innate power, certain definite propensities, and it will take that course which best conforms to its inclinations.

We have then had orators, poets, scientists and musicians who have contributed to mankind the product of their genius. They had no special rule for their larger work, but they followed the inclinations of their natures with the idea of giving something to the world by which it could profit. They placed themselves in the environment conducive to the fullest development of their minds.

This is an age of specialists. Each to attain any degree of success must choose a life work in some special field of activity and devote his energies to perfecting himself so that he may be assured of success.

But yet we have, each and every one, the same goal to reach and that is a larger, broader conception of life as well as material success. We in general have the same natures, susceptible to the same influences of life. We are made glad

and made sad by the same things. We have the same hopes; the same anticipations of life; the same desire; we are bound by the same laws.

There have been men who have understood the meaning of life; who have discerned the noble purposes of human existence and have expressed in song what appeals to every human desire.

How it thrills us to read with Homer the wanderings of Ulysses and to walk with him about the ramparts of Troy. We exult with Virgil in the grand achievements of Augustus Caesar and glorification of the Roman Empire. We are made dizzy by climbing to lofty and sublime heights of Milton's imagination. We are astonished at the universality of Shakespeare's mind. We shudder at the awful conceptions of Dante, or marvel at the genius of Goethe. We seem to think we can interpret Nature's ever changeful moods after reading Wordsworth, Scott, Longfellow or Bryant. Indeed, through the infinite range of the world's literature we may find that which may satisfy our widest desire. And what's more, if we are deprived of the enjoyment of the study of other men's thoughts we lack that which nothing else can supply. Not only is there enjoyment, but there also is value in studying them. When after life we have settled in the

practical pursuits of life we come in contact with practical things. If we have no appreciation of the higher things instilled into our natures when we are in college we have not that which can give the highest enjoyment, which can inspire us in our work, which is able to give us a proper conception of true living. Then to the man who intends mingling with the practical affairs of life, the study of literature is very essential, because he is possessed with a quickened imagination, and a keener perception, a more scrutinizing individuality and a more analytical mind as well as a capacity for the greater enjoyment of the things of life. It is the duty of the educators of the country to bring to the student those things which will enable him to grasp a firmer hold on the meaning of a larger life, which will enable him to determine his proper relation to the world that it may have profited for his having lived.

CLARENCE M. HOOPER.

Websterian Society.

The program for last Friday, February 20th, consisted of a speech by retiring President Yotnes on the benefits of society work, after which one of the most enjoyable and interesting debates of this season was held. The question debated was Resolved, that a basketball team should be organized in the

University of Idaho. The debaters were R. T. Jones, Miss Clark and Louis Tweedt on the affirmative, and J. Frazier, Miss Simpson and Frank French. The judges decided in favor of the negative.

Athletic Notes.

Remember the Athletic ball Friday evening, March 6th.

The Athletic entertainment, at the Opera House, March 13th, promises to be a successful affair. The boys will be assisted by town talent—Messrs Mix, Griffith, G. Grice, Siler, Jenkins, McKinley and Reed. The first part will be a minstrel and the second part will include a number of athletic specialties.

Training for the track team is steadily going on. Many new men are showing up well, but as yet it is a little early to predict who will make the team.

It is hoped that the boys will not forget the gymnasium dues, as the dues are one of the most essential parts of our present gymnasium.

The campus is getting in shape so the boys can practice base ball.

L. G. N.—“What is Inatitative Analysis?”

R. C. M.—“Why, y-y I've completed that book.”

The University Argonaut

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House Bill No. 61.

The unwelcome news of the defeat of House Bill No. 61 in the Idaho legislature, is a great disappointment to the friends of our university. This disappointment is not so keenly felt for the intrinsic results on the future usefulness of our graduates, for they are able to take their positions as teachers in the front rank, without this recognition of the legislature. It is a broader ground of disappointment that we experience.

House Bill 61 provided for the granting of teachers' life certificates and diplomas, without examination to holders of A. B. and B. S. di-

plomas, from the University of Idaho. It was killed by "indefinite postponement." A fair and square discussion, pro and con and a regular routine consideration would at least have shown more deference to the intuition which seeks to represent the highest educational ideals in the state. The ignominious death via the "indefinite postponement" route would indicate an animus which is to say the least unwelcome and deplorable.

We regret this action on several accounts. First because the bill was killed upon invalid and mistaken grounds; secondly because the limited discussion that was given it seems to have betrayed either a wilful blindness to the facts or a careless disregard of the true merits of the interests involved; and thirdly and most important of all, we can only see therefrom an abnormal lack of pride in the state University, which should be a common source of pride to all. We say the bill was killed upon invalid grounds because its opponents argued that the University was intended to prepare the youth of the state for "business careers and not for teaching; that our graduates are not fitted for teaching without a normal training, etc. etc.

If the tax payers of Idaho consider that this university is running as a business college, they should close it up as an expensive and use-

less competitor of private enterprise

Our graduates from the first class of 1896 to those of our latest commencement are right now occupying positions in the educational work of the state which challenges the respect of our most thoughtful citizens. This prominence which our diplomas have attained is based upon four years of college training and in all cases this training is founded upon at least three years of preparatory work, equivalent to high school work. All that college training stands for of mental growth, self control, culture, poise, general civility, and leadership are developed and given over to the use of the common school room.

No greater error could be committed than to state that our course does not provide for "special preparation" in the line of pedagogy. One of our most popular lines of work is that of pedagogy and psychology, embraced in our department of education. It is presided over by as thorough a mind as graces any department of this or any other kindred institution. This added to the further advantages of the more liberal college course certainly should exempt us from such an ill advised criticism.

Senator Brigham's expression of chagrin at the treatment of the bill was significant. "I hope" he said "that the senate of Idaho is big

enough to rise above this petty business." The strangling motion is always considered in legislation as an indication of fear of a discussion of true merits.

Be it said to the honor of Senator Crum, of Nez Perce, the home of the Lewiston Normal School, that his breadth of mind and sense of justice led him above the pettiness of the fight, and the students and friends of the university are deeply grateful to him and all others who made a hard fight for what we consider a just right.

Exchanges.

Washington and Lee University requires its professors to wear caps and gowns in class rooms.

Michigan University has 19,000 living graduates. The biggest percentage of these received their degrees in law.

Solid and spherical geometry have been dropped from the list of subjects required for graduation from the College of Literature and Arts of Illinois.

A clash has occurred between the faculty and students of Indiana University over the prevalence of dancing among the students.

In proportion to the student enrollment, Johns Hopkins has one instructor to every four students.

If we are descended from the ape, some people are using round trip tickets.—Ex.

Buckley's Spanish class will hold a debate in Spanish in the near future.

I thought I knew it all,
But now I must confess,
The more I know I know I know
I know I know the less.—Ex.

Prize for Thesis in Mining.

Mr. F. D. Culver of Lewiston, offers \$50.00 annually, to be awarded to a member of the senior class in mining for the best thesis on a mining or metallurgical subject.

The offer came too late to be awarded this year; but the money will be used to buy technical books for the mining library, which will benefit all the mining students.

A number of the juniors have already chosen their subjects, and are doing the work preliminary to the original work which is to be done during the summer-vacation. The mining department requires that creditable original work must be done to entitle any student to compete for this prize.

Locals.

P. L. Orcutt is studying law in the office of U. S. District Attorney Cozier.

The athletic entertainment will be given at the Opera House, the 13th of March.

Lela Layman has entirely recovered from her recent illness and is back in school.

Florence Knepper was ill a few days last week, and consequently away from college.

The Seniors appeared at assembly, Wednesday, in their caps and gowns for the first time.

Rev. Jones, of the Unitarian church, of Spokane, was a visitor at the 'Varsity, on Friday.

Mrs. C. N. Little was entertained last Saturday afternoon by the Alpha Delta Pi's at their society room.

Mr. C. C. Hedum, of Silver City, in company with Mr. Hall, of this city, was a visitor at the 'Varsity, Thursday.

Angel—"I have enough rubber in my reek and wheels in my head to make a bicycle, haven't I Prof.?"

Prof. M.—"Yes, and enough wind with which to blow up the tires too."

The Golden Chest Mining Co. of Murray, Idaho, has forwarded the school of mines a large sample of iron pyrite concentrates with instructions to ascertain the best method of extraction, and to determine whether or not the cyanide process would be applicable. The senior class in metallurgy will take charge of the samples and make the necessary tests. The seniors have just completed extensive laboratory tests along the cyanide process and are prepared to make the necessary determinations.

Prof. French will return from the southern part of the state, to-day, where he has been on Institute work.

All who have not handed in their pictures for the Annual will please hurry, for all must be in immediately.

Owing to the unavoidable absence of some of the participants, the musical scheduled for Wednesday afternoon was postponed.

W S Mitchell, '02, made a flying trip to Kendrick, last week, summoned there to bind together two hearts that beat as one.

Miss May Knepper, of the Senior class, is quarantined at her rooms with scarlet fever. We trust that she will soon be able to be back in college.

Charles Peterson, '02, is studying law in the office of Stillinger & Wolfe, and will take the examination for admittance to the bar, in Lewiston, soon.

At assembly, Wednesday morning, Rev. Williams gave a very helpful address, after which the Men's Glee Club made its first appearance. They lustily sang "We will Come"—and they did come back after a hearty encore.

The Girls' Glee Club has finally "gone up." Little interest has been evinced in it all year, and it was finally decided, that since the mem-

bers were so irregular about coming to rehearsals, that the organization had better be dissolved.

A window in Professor Bonebright's office was broken lately by the carelessness of some boys playing ball on the campus. Aside from this fact, that they constantly run the risk of breaking something about the building, they are spoiling the lawn, and last, but by no means least, it is a long standing rule of the faculty that nobody be allowed to play on the terrace.

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