

NOTES AND QUERIES.

I.

A mother, writing about her little girl of nine years old, asks for help as to ungovernable fits of temper which occur from time to time and which, though less frequent than formerly, are still a grave matter.

With such children Miss Mason's teaching about "changing the thoughts" is very valuable. A child of nine begins to know the signs of approaching storm as well as do her parents and if both co-operate the crisis can be avoided by a definite act of will; but it is between the fits of temper that a person may be helped; once the fit is on nothing can be done. If a child is shown how to use her will in turning away her thoughts from dangerous places, and if she daily endeavours to do so, a way of escape is ready when the day of difficulty comes and a storm of temper is imminent.

In *Some Studies in the Formation of Character* there is a chapter with the title "The Philosopher at Home," and "Guy" is trained to help himself as to self-control. In *Home Education* (pp. 325–329) Miss Mason explains this adjunct of the will—"thought diversion." We quote one paragraph:—

"The Way of the Will should be taught to Children. It is something to know what to do with ourselves when we are beset, and the knowledge of this way of the will is so far the secret of a happy life that it is well worth imparting to the children. Are you cross? Change your thoughts. Are you tired of trying? Change your thoughts. Are you craving for things you ought not to have? Change your thoughts; there is a power within you, your own will, which will enable you to turn your attention from thoughts that make you unhappy and wrong, to thoughts that make you happy and right. And this is the exceedingly simple way in which the will acts; this is the sole secret of the power over himself which the strong man wields—he can compel himself to think of what he chooses, and will not allow himself in thoughts that breed mischief."

The subject is also taken up in *Ourselves*, for persons of any age, under *The Way of the Will*. This adjunct of the will—diversion, is of a different nature to suggestion. "Suggestion" works by a verbal re-iteration of the conduct desired, or by a

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negation of the difficulty encountered; in this case the will yields to constant pressure and is apt to become stultified. In the case of "diversion," "we are eased for a time from will effort that we may "will" again with added power."

II.

What are "Ambleside" map questions?

The *Ambleside Geography Books* contain, at the end of the various chapters, a number of questions on the maps of those countries which have to be studied. These questions are simple ones, intended to help the scholars to a thorough knowledge of each map. Teachers taking the Ambleside Books may supplement the questions if necessary, or, sometimes, the children may be asked to study their maps and question each other. Where the Ambleside books are not taken, teachers should make sure that this important part of geographical knowledge is not neglected. We quote the following from Miss Mason's *Ambleside Geography, Book IV. (Preface):*—

"The principle the writer has worked on in the Ambleside books is to treat 'fully of those matters which the traveller and the general reader seek to be instructed upon . . .' A framework of dry bones must be provided however; for the learner cannot follow a description of the aspect of a country with any intelligence until he knows the relative

situations and the names of mountain range and river, province and sea port; but these are facts which should be learnt from the map, and not from the text-book.

“The situation of the several parts of the earth is better learned by one day’s conversing with a *map* than by merely reading the description of their situation a hundred times over in books of geography.”¹

“Therefore it is earnestly recommended that teachers should cause their classes to answer the questions which accompany each map before *reading* the corresponding lessons. By this means the learners will work out for themselves a capital outline of the geography of each country; and nothing could be better as a preparation for examinations, seeing that three-fourths of the questions set by examiners are only to be answered from *map knowledge*.

“These map exercises make very good silent class work. The questions should be answered in writing from the accompanying map; then *vivâ você*, from memory; and again after the lessons upon a country have been read, the class might be required to answer the map-questions on paper, filling in the outline with the facts learned from the text—a valuable exercise in composition.”

[*To be continued.*]

¹Dr. Watts, *On the Improvement of the Mind*.