

The Normal School in its highest development, embraces three leading features: first, an academical department where the students have the opportunity of reviewing the elementary studies, as well as of pursuing an advanced course; second, a professional school, where they learn theoretically how to organize, classify, teach, and govern a school; third, the model school, and school of practice, where they see the various operations of a school conducted after the best methods, and begin themselves to teach and govern under the direction of competent instructors. Some institutions give greater prominence to one, and some to another of these departments, but all agree that the co-existence and co-operation of the three are necessary to a Normal School in its highest state of efficiency.

Though I did not find exactly the same methods of instruction prevailing in all the schools, nor even in all the departments of the same school, yet a striking family likeness could be noticed among them all. The teaching is, generally speaking, of a high intellectual order. The system of learning by rote, and reciting to a teacher whose eye is fixed on his text book, is entirely discarded. I never saw a teacher in one of these schools use a text book (other than a spelling or reading book) except for occasional reference. I was present at recitations on history in several schools, and in none did the teacher use a book. Every lesson seemed to be thoroughly mastered, and systematically arranged in the teacher's mind before coming to class; and I have no doubt that many of the teachers spent as much time in preparation as their scholars did.

The "topical" mode of recitation is employed more than the catechetical. The teacher suggests a "topic," and the student proceeds, without interruption, to tell all he knows on the subject. It is then thrown open to the class for criticism; one corrects an error, another supplies an omission, a third suggests an additional illustration, till finally the subject is exhausted, and another student takes hold of the next topic. This custom of mutual criticism is very valuable; it keeps alive the attention of the class, and stimulates the person reciting to use the utmost care to give fulness and accuracy to his answers.

"Teaching exercises" furnish a method of recitation peculiar to Normal Schools. The student who is to recite takes his stand in front of the class, and proceeds to instruct and catechise them as if they were entirely ignorant of the subject. This exercise requires great self-possession on the part of the student personating the teacher, complete mastery of the subject, good powers of comprehension and analysis, and considerable talent for illustration. Yet even this difficult task is, generally, satisfactorily performed.

The cultivation of the power of expression is another of the specialties of the Normal School. Many subjects are taught not so much for the sake of the information gained, as for the purpose of accustoming the student to express fully, clearly, and logically, what he knows. The black-board is here called in to the aid of the tongue; and, as far as possible, the students are expected to present every subject to the eye as well as to the ear. In studying Philosophy, Natural Physiology, Chemistry and Geography, they reproduce on the black-board every diagram and map