

THESIS.

Subject: *Cultivation of the Imagination.*

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If we examine some piece of music we shall find that though new as a whole, they are made up of old strains borrowed from different authors; But when Beethoven composed, he produced melodies and harmonies never heard before by human ear." And we ask, how could he do this? By the power of his wonderful creative imagination.

This is the artistic power of the mind which gives us poetry, eloquence, sculpture, and the other arts which lift us from the lower level of

man kind.

Imagination, as the word suggests, is the power by which conceptions originally formed from the perception of natural objects are produced in a fictitious combination which resemble the natural. The faculty, existing as it does, in a greater or less degree in every mind, and entering, to some extent, into almost every mental act, must be placed among the great powers of the mind which demand careful cultivation.

There is no faculty of the

mind which requires more careful attention than that of the imagination. When properly regulated and directed, it may be made to contribute to the development of all that is noble and estimable in our natures.

In a wide sense we exercise our imagination every time we picture a thing which is not perceived at the moment even though we are merely re-picturing what we have actually seen.

By its aid the man of science projects his thoughts

into the unseen universe and determines the existence of conditions which knowledge alone could never detect.

Through the influence of the imagination alone, the records of the past become a guide and warning to the present. By it we combine and build up objects in our minds and also tear them down without respect to limits of reality.

At times we are all given to building air castles in which are pictured bright

future for ourselves with everything about us which tends to make life happy and useful. Were it not for these bright dreams, life would be dark indeed.

It is said that a man deficient in imagination however estimable he may be in his general conduct, is usually unsocial, illiberal, and selfish. The person with wild misguided imagination occupies his mind with idle dreams to the neglect of all pursuits which tend to ennoble

a rational being. But a properly trained imagination gives strength to all the other faculties and adds a charm to existence.

The power to recall a beautiful thought or to describe some object of interest is of great educational value both to the pupil and to the teacher. To the mathematician who invents imagination is not less essential than to the poet who creates. To develop this faculty, we should exercise it on legitimate objects

and this should be done in harmony with the other powers of the mind.

He who would develop the aesthetic imagination must study the masterpieces of art; while he who would cultivate the scientific or mechanical must familiarize himself with the grand creations of this wonderful faculty in these scarcely less fruitful fields.

Almost every branch pursued in the school or college course affords some opportunity for the culture of the

imagination, but special fields for its most active exercise are found in geography and history.

A teacher who can present a subject in such a manner as to carry the mind of the child directly to the scene under consideration has more power than one who has command of all the languages. By thus leading the child on, he will delight in studying a subject which he heretofore disliked. Dry subjects are brightened and vivified by

it, even grammar and mathematics if illustrated by a teacher of active fancy can be freed from the abstract nature which is supposed to be essential to them. "A teacher without this power is like a tree without leaves or a fountain without water."

Some one has said that fancy builds up its creations most easily when there is a basis of actual observation at the moment and this condition is complied with by a use of maps, models,

and pictures.

It is doubtful whether there is any department of prosperity that does not stand somehow indebted to the imagination. Not a mechanic's bench or a farmer's house, but that imagination has touched and blessed.

Stillingfleet calls imagination "a shop of shadows," but it has brightened more shops than it has shaded.

How many burdens exist how much homely drudgery it has lightened! No matter

what our position in life, we all receive inspiration from its influence.

Imagination is the most godlike faculty given to man, for it creates our ideals without which life loses its charm, religion its power and the hope of the future its force of influence. It opens new worlds and, like a bird let loose gives us the whole creation for our dwelling place. It gilds the stern realities of life as the morning reddens the Alps till they glow with resplendent beauty."