

## THE SCHOOL AT YÄSNAYA POLYANA

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by Leo Tolstoy

Translated from the Original Russian and edited by Leo Wiener  
Assittant Professor of Slavic Languages at Harvard University

### GENERAL SKETCH OF THE CHARACTER OF THE SCHOOL

We have do beginners. The lowest class reads, writes, solves problems in the first three arithmetical operations, and reads sacred history, so that the subjects are divided in the programme in the following manner :

(1) Mechanical and graded reading, (2) writing, (3) penmanship, (4) grammar, (5) sacred history, (6) Russian history, (7) drawing, (8) mechanical drawing, (9) singing, (10) mathematics, (11) talks on the natural sciences, (12) religion.

Before saying anything about the instruction, I must give a short sketch of what the Yasnaya Polyana school is and of what stage of its growth it is in.

Like all living beings, the school not only becomes modified with every year, day, and hour, but also is subject to temporary crises, hardships, ailments, and evil moods. The Yasnaya Polyana school passed through such a crisis during this last summer. There were many causes for it : in the first place, as is always the case, all our best pupils left us, and we met them only occasion-

ally at work in the field, or in the pastures; secondly, new teachers had come to the school, and new influences began to be brought to bear upon it ; thirdly, every day of the summer brought new visiting teachers, who were taking advantage of the summer vacation. Nothing is more detrimental to the regular progress of the school than visitors. In one way or another the teacher adapts himself to the visitors.

We have four teachers. Two old ones, who have been teaching in the school for two years, and have become accustomed to the pupils, their work, the freedom and the external disorder of the school. The two new teachers – both themselves fresh from school – are lovers of external precision, programmes, bells, and so forth, and have not yet adapted themselves to the school so well as the first. What for the first seems reasonable, necessary, unavoidable, like the features of a beloved though homely child, that has grown up under one's eyes, to the new teachers sometime appears as a corrigible fault.

The school is held in a two-story stone building. Two rooms are given up to the school, one is a physical cabinet, and two are

occupied by the teachers. Under the roof of the porch hangs a bell, with a rope attached to the clapper; in the vestibule down-stairs stand parallel and horizontal bars, while in the vestibule up-stairs there is a joiner's bench. The staircase and the floor of the vestibule are covered with snow or mud ; here also hangs the programme.

The order of instruction is as follows : At about eight o'clock, the teacher living in the school, a lover of external order and the administrator of the school, sends one of the boys who nearly always stay overnight with him to ring the bell.

In the village, people rise with the fires. From the school the fires have long been observed in the windows, and half an hour after the ringing of the bell there appear, in the mist, in the rain, or in the oblique rays of the autumnal sun, dark figures, by twos, by threes, or singly, on the mounds (the village is separated from the school by a ravine). The herding feeling has long disappeared in the pupils. A pupil no longer has the need of waiting and shouting : " 0 boys, let's to school ! She has begun." He knows by this time that " school " is neuter, and he knows a few other things, and, strange to say, for that very reason has no longer any need of a crowd. When the time comes to go, he goes. It seems to me that the personalities are becoming more independent, their characters more sharply defined, with every day. I have never noticed the pupils playing on their way, unless it be a very young child, or a new pupil, who had begun his instruction in some other school. The children bring nothing with them, - neither books, nor copy-books. No lessons are given for home.

Not only do they carry nothing in their hands, but they have nothing to carry even in their heads. They are not obliged to remember any lesson, - nothing that they were doing the day before. They are not vexed by the thought of the impending lesson. They bring with them nothing but their impressionable natures and their convictions that to-day it will be as jolly in school as it was yesterday. They do not think of their classes until they have begun.

No one is ever rebuked for tardiness, and they never are tardy, except some of the older ones whose fathers now and then keep them back to do some work. In such cases they come running to school at full speed, and all out of breath.

So long as the teacher has not arrived, they gather near the porch, pushing each other off the steps, or skating on the frozen crust of the smooth road, while some go to the schoolrooms. If it is cold, they read, write, or play, waiting for the teacher.

The girls do not mingle with the boys. When the boys have anything to do with the girls, they never address any one in particular, but always all collectively : " 0 girls, why don't you skate ? " or, " I guess the girls are frozen," or, " Now, girls, all of you against me ! " There is only one girl, from the manor, with enormous, all-around ability, about ten years of age, who is beginning to stand

out from the herd of girls. This girl alone the boys treat as their equal, as a boy, except for a delicate shade of politeness, condescension, and reserve.

Let us suppose, for example, that according to the programme there is in the first, the lowest, class, mechanical reading, in the second, graded reading, in the third, mathematics.

The teacher comes to the room, where on the floor lie screaming children, shouting, "The heap is not large enough!" or, "You are choking me, boys!" or, "That will do! Don't pull my hair!" and so forth.

"Peter Mikhaylovich!" a voice at the bottom of the heap calls out to the teacher as he enters, "tell them to stop!"

"Good morning, Peter Mikhaylovich!" shout the others, continuing their game.

The teacher takes the books and gives them to those who have gone with him up to the bookcase; those who are lying on top of the heap, without getting up, also ask for books. The heap becomes smaller by degrees. The moment the majority have books, the rest run to the bookcase and cry: "Me too, me too. Give me yesterday's book; and me the Koltsovian book," and so forth. If there are two left who, excited from the struggle, still keep rolling on the floor, those who have the books cry out to them:

"Don't bother us! We can't hear a word! Stop now!" The excited boys submit and, out of breath, take hold of their books, and only at first, while sitting at their books, keep swinging their legs from unallayed excitement. The martial spirit takes flight, and the reading spirit reigns in the room.

With the same enthusiasm with which he was pulling Mitka's hair, he is now reading the Koltsovian book (so they call Koltsov's works with us), almost clenching his teeth, his eyes aflame, and seeing nothing about him but his book. It will take as much effort to tear him away from the book as it took before to get him away from fighting.

They sit down wherever they please: on the benches, the tables, the window-sill, the floor, and in the armchair. The girls always sit down near each other. Friends, of the same village, especially the younger ones (they have greater comradeship), always sit together. The moment one such has decided to sit down in the corner, all his friends, pushing one another and diving under the benches, make for the same place, sit down near him, and, looking about them, express as much happiness and contentment in their faces as though their having taken up those seats would make them happy for the rest of their lives. The large armchair, which somehow found its way into the room, forms the object of envy for the more independent individuals, - for the manorial girl and for others. The moment one of them makes up his mind to sit down in the chair, another guesses

his intentions from his looks, and there ensues a struggle. One boy pushes out another, and the victor spreads himself in it, with his head way below the back, and goes on reading like the rest, all absorbed in his work.

I have never noticed any one whispering, or pinching his neighbour, or giggling, or snorting into his hand, or complaining against another. When a pupil who has been studying with a sexton or in a county school comes to us with such a complaint, we say to him : " Why don't you pinch back ? "

The two lower classes meet in one room, while the advanced class goes to the next. The teacher comes, and, in the lowest class, all surround him at the board, or on the benches, or sit or lie on the table about the teacher or one of the reading boys. If it is a writing lesson, they seat themselves in a more orderly way, but they keep getting up, in order to look at the copy-books of the others, and to show theirs to the teacher.

According to the programme, there are to be four lessons before noon, but there sometimes are only three or two, and sometimes there are entirely different subjects. The teacher may begin with arithmetic and pass over to geometry, or he may start on sacred history, and end up with grammar. At times the teacher and pupils are so carried away, that, instead of one hour, the class lasts three hours. Sometimes the pupils themselves cry: "More, more!" and scold those who are tired of the subject. " If you are tired, go to the babies," they will call out contemptuously.

All the pupils meet together for the class of religion, which is the only regular class we have, because the teacher lives two versts away and comes only twice a week ; they also meet together for the drawing class. Before these classes there is animation, fighting, shouting, and the most pronounced external disorder: some drag the benches from one room into another ; some fight ; some of the children of the manorial servants run home for some bread, which they roast in the stove ; one is taking something away from a boy ; another is doing some gymnastics, and, just as in the disorder of the morning, it is much easier to allow them to quiet themselves and resume their natural order than forcibly to settle them. With the present spirit of the school it would be physically impossible to stop them. The louder the teacher calls, – this has actually happened, – the louder they shout: his loud voice only excites them. If you stop them, or, if you can do that, if you carry them away into another direction, this small sea begins to billow less and less until it finally grows calm. In the majority of cases there is no need to say anything. The drawing class, everybody's favourite class, is at noon when, after three hours' work, the children are beginning to be hungry, and the benches and tables have to be taken from one room to another, and there is a terrible hubbub ; and yet, in spite of it, the moment the teacher is ready, the pupils are, too, and if one of them should keep them back from starting, he gets his punishment meted out to him by the children themselves.

I must explain myself. In presenting a description of the Yásnaya Polyana school, I do not mean to offer a model of what is needed and is good for a school, but simply to furnish an actual description of the school I presume that such descriptions may have their use. If I shall succeed in the following numbers in presenting a clear account of the evolution of the school, it will become intelligible to the reader what it is that has led to the formation of the present character of the school, why I regard such an order as good, and why it would be absolutely impossible for me to change it, even if I wanted.

The school has evolved freely from the principles introduced into it by teacher and pupils. In spite of the preponderating influence of the teacher, the pupil has always had the right not to come to school, or, having come, not to listen to the teacher. The teacher has had the right not to admit a pupil, and has had the possibility of bringing to bear all the force of his influence on the majority of pupils, on the society, always composed of the school children.

The farther the pupils proceed, the more the instruction branches out and the more necessary does order become. For this reason, in the normal non-compulsory development of the school, the more the pupils become educated, the fitter they become for order, and the more strongly they themselves feel the need of order, and the greater is the teacher's influence in this respect. In the Yásnaya Polyana school this rule has always been observed, from the day of its foundation. At first it was impossible to subdivide into classes, or subjects, or recess, or lessons ; everything naturally blended into one, and all the attempts at separation remained futile. Now we have pupils in the first class, who themselves demand that the programme be adhered to, who are dissatisfied when they are disturbed in their lessons, and who constantly drive out the little children who run in to them.

In my opinion, this external disorder is useful and not to be replaced by anything else, however strange and inconvenient it may seem for the teacher. I shall often have occasion to speak of the advantages of this system, and now I will say only this much about the reputed inconveniences: First, this disorder, or free order, is terrible to us only because we are accustomed to something quite different, in which we have been educated. Secondly, in this case, as in many similar cases, force is used only through haste and through insufficient respect for human nature. We think that the disorder is growing greater and greater, and that there are no limits to it, – we think that there is no other means of stopping it but by the use of force, – whereas we only need to wait a little, and the disorder (or animation) calms down naturally by itself, growing into a much better and more permanent order than what we have created.

School children, small men though they be, have the same needs as we, and they reason in the same manner; they all want to learn, coming to school for this only, and so they will naturally arrive at the conclusion that they must submit to certain conditions in order

to acquire knowledge.

They are more than merely men, they are a company of men, united by one idea. And where three are gathered in My name, there will I be with them ! When they submit only to natural laws, such as arise from their natures, they do not feel provoked and do not murmur ; but when they submit to your predetermined interference, they do not believe in the legality of your bells, programmes, and regulations.

How often have I seen children fighting, when the teacher would rush up to take them apart, which would only make the separated enemies look awry at each other, and would not keep them, even in the presence of a stern teacher, from rushing later against each other in order to inflict a more painful kick ! How often do I see every day some Kiryushka, with set teeth, fly at Taraska, pull his hair, knock him down, and, if it costs him his life, try to maim his enemy, – and not a minute passes before Taraska laughs underneath Kiryushka, – it is so much easier personally to square up accounts ; in less than five minutes both become friends and sit down near each other.

The other day, between classes, two boys got into a hand-to-hand fight in the corner ; one of them is a remarkable mathematician, about nine years of age, of the second class ; the other, a close-cropped manorial servant's son, an intelligent, but revengeful, tiny, black-eyed boy, nicknamed Pussy. Pussy had grabbed the mathematician by his hair and jammed his head against the wall ; the mathematician in vain tried to get hold of Pussy's cropped bristles. Pussy's black little eyes were triumphant. The mathematician with difficulty restrained his tears and kept saying : " Well, well ! What ? What ? " He was evidently badly off, though he tried to brace himself.

This lasted quite awhile, and I was in a quandary what to do. " They are fighting, they are fighting ! " cried the boys, crowding in the corner. The little boys laughed, while the big ones, without taking them apart, exchanged serious looks, which, together with the silence, did not escape Pussy. He saw that he was doing something bad, and began to smile criminally and to let go of the mathematician's hair by degrees.

The mathematician got away from Pussy, pushed him so that he fell with the back of his head against the wall, and walked away satisfied. Pussy burst out weeping, made for his enemy, and struck him with all his might, though not painfully, on his fur coat. The mathematician wanted to pay him back, but just then several disapproving voices were heard.

" I declare, he is fighting a little fellow ! " cried the spectators. " Pun, Pussy ! "

This was the end of the matter, and it was as though it had never happened, except, I suppose, that the dim consciousness of both fighting is not a pleasant matter, because it causes both pain.

It seems to me I observed here the sentiment of justice, which guides a crowd. How often such matters are settled no one knows on the basis of what law, and yet satisfactorily to both sides. How arbitrary and unjust in comparison with it are all educational methods employed in such cases !

"You are both guilty, get down on your knees!" says the educator, and the educator is wrong, because only one of them is guilty, and that guilty one is now triumphant, as he is kneeling and ruminating his unspent rage, while the innocent boy is doubly punished.

Or, " You are guilty of having done this or that, and you will be punished," says the educator, and the punished boy hates his enemy so much the more, because the despotic power, the legality of which he does not acknowledge, is on Ins enemy's side.

Or, " Forgive him, as God orders you to, and be better than he," says the educator. You tell him to be better than he, and he only wants to be stronger, and does not, and cannot, understand anything better.

Or, " Both of you are wrong : ask each other's forgiveness and kiss each other, children ! " That is worst of all, on account of the He and the flimsiness of that kiss, and because the feeling which was being allayed only flames out anew.

Leave them alone, if you are not a father, or mother, and simply sorry for your child, and, therefore, always right when you pull away by the hair the one that has given your son a beating, - leave them alone and see how simply and naturally the whole matter will settle itself, and at the same time in what a complicated and varied manner, like all unconscious vital relations.

It may be that teachers who have had no experience in such disorder, or free order, will think that without the teacher's interference such a disorder may have physically injurious results, and so forth. In the Yâsnaya Polyana school there have been only two cases of injuries since last spring. One boy was pushed down the porch and he skinned his leg to the bone (the wound healed up in two weeks), and they scorched another boy's cheek with burned rubber, from which he had a mark left for about two weeks. It happens not oftener than once a week that somebody cries, and then not from pain, but from anger or shame. With the exception of these two cases, we cannot recall any bruises or bumps for the whole summer among thirty to forty pupils left entirely to themselves.

I am convinced that the school ought not to interfere in that part of the education which belongs to the family ; that the school has no right and ought not to reward and punish ; that the best police and administration of a school consist in giving full liberty to the pupils to study and settle their disputes as they know best. I am convinced of it, and yet, in spite of it, the old habits of the educational schools are so strong in us that we frequently depart

from that rule in the Yasnaya Polyana school. Last semester, namely in November, there happened two such cases of punishment.

During the class in drawing, the newly arrived teacher noticed a boy who kept shouting, without paying any attention to the teacher, and madly striking his neighbours without any cause. Finding it impossible to assuage him with words, the teacher led him out from his seat and took his slate away from him ; that was his punishment. During the rest of the lesson the boy was bathed in tears. It was the very boy whom I had not received at the opening of the Yasnaya Polyana school, as I regarded him as a hopeless idiot. The main characteristics of the boy are dulness and meekness. His comrades never let him play with them, laugh at him, and ridicule him, and in surprise say of him : " What a funny boy Pétka is ! If you strike him, – even the little fellows strike him, – he just picks himself up and goes away."

" He has not any heart at all," a boy said to me about him.

If such a boy was wrought up to such an extent that the teacher punished him, the punished boy was certainly not the one who was at fault.

Another case. In the summer, while the building was being repaired, a Leyden jar had disappeared from the physical cabinet ; later, when there were no longer any carpenters or calciminers in the house, there disappeared on various occasions pencils and books. We asked the boys : the best pupils, those who had been with us the longest, our old friends, blushed, and looked so timid that any prosecuting magistrate would have taken their embarrassment for the surest proof of their guilt. But I knew them, and could answer for them as for myself. I understood that the mere thought of a suspicion offended them deeply and painfully : a boy whom I will call Fédor, a talented and tender nature, was all pale, and he trembled and wept. They promised to tell me if they found it out ; but they refused to make a search.

A few days later the thief was found : he was a manorial boy from a distant village. He had influenced a peasant boy who came with him from the same village, and both together had hidden the stolen objects in a small chest. This discovery produced a strange effect on his schoolmates : something like relief, and even joy, and at the same time contempt and compassion for the thief.

We proposed to them to mete out a punishment to the thief: some demanded that he be flogged, but that they themselves should do the flogging ; others said that a label with the inscription " thief " ought to be sewn on his coat. This punishment, to our shame be it said, had been used by us before, and the very boy who the year before had worn such a label, with the inscription " Far," was the most persistent in demanding that label for the thief. We agreed on the label, and while a girl was sewing it on, all the pupils, with malicious joy, looked at the punished boys, and made fun of them. They demanded that the punishment be increased : " Take them through

the village ! Let them keep on the labels until the holidays," said they.

The punished boys wept. The peasant child, who had been influenced by the manorial boy, a talented storyteller and joker, a white-skinned, plump little fellow, was crying his heart away at the top of his boyish voice. The other, the chief criminal, a hump-nosed boy, with fine features and an intelligent face, was pale ; his lips quivered ; his eyes looked wildly and angrily at the triumphant boys, and now and then his face twitched unnaturally as though getting ready to cry. His cap, with tom visor, was poised on the back of his head, his hair was dishevelled, and his clothes soiled with chalk.

All that struck me and everybody else forcibly, as though we saw it all for the first time. The hostile attention of all was directed upon him. And this he was painfully conscious of. 'When he, without looking around and with bent head, and with a peculiar criminal gait, as I thought, walked home, and the children, running after him in a crowd, teased him in a peculiarly unnatural and strangely cruel manner, as though an evil spirit were guiding them against their will, something told me that it was not good. But the matter stood as it was, and the thief went with the label for a whole day. From that time on I thought he was studying with less zeal, and he no longer took part in the games and conversations of the boys outside the school.

Once I came to the classroom, when all the pupils with a certain terror informed me that the boy had again stolen. He had taken away twenty kopeks in copper from the teacher's room, and he had been caught hiding the money under the staircase. We again attached the label to him, – and the old monstrous scene was repeated. I began to admonish him, just as all educators admonish ; a grown up boy, a good talker, who was present, began to admonish him, too, repeating the words which he, no doubt, had heard from his father, an innkeeper.

" You steal once, and you steal a second time," he spoke, solemnly declaiming his words, " and it becomes a habit, and leads to no good."

I began to feel vexed. I was almost enraged against the thief. I looked at the face of the punished boy, which now was even paler, more suffering, and more cruel than before ; I for some reason thought of prisoners in jail, and I suddenly felt so ashamed and felt such loathing for myself that I tore off the stupid label, told him to go wherever he pleased, and suddenly convinced myself, not through reasoning, but with my whole being, that I had no right to torment the unfortunate boy, and that I could not make of him what I and the innkeeper's son would like to make of him. I convinced myself that there were secrets of the soul, hidden from us, upon which only life can act, and not moral precepts and punishments.

What nonsense ! The boy has stolen a book. By a whole, complicated

road of feelings, thoughts, faulty ratiocinations, he was led to take a book belonging to somebody else, which he for some reason locked up in a chest,— and I paste on him a piece of paper with the word " thief," which means something entirely different! What for? To punish him by shaming him, I shall be told. To punish him by shaming him ? What for ? What is shame ? How do we know that shame destroys the inclination toward thieving ? Maybe it only encourages it. Maybe that which was expressed in his face was not at all shame. Indeed, I know for sure that it was not shame, but something quite different, which might have slept for ever in his soul, and which it was not good to evoke. Maybe there, in the world, which is called real, in the world of the Palmerstons, Cayenne, — in the world where not that is reasonable which is reasonable, but that which is real, — let people, who themselves have been punished, invent rights and duties to punish. Our world of children — of simple, independent men — must remain pure from self-deception and the criminal faith in the legality of punishment, free from that self-deception and belief that the feeling of revenge becomes just the moment you call it punishment.

We will proceed with the description of the daily order of instruction. At about two o'clock the hungry children run home. In spite of their hunger, they lag behind a few minutes to find out their grades. The grades at the present time amuse them very much, though they give them no privileges.

" I have five plus, and Olgushka has caught a whopper of a cipher ! — And I got four ! " they cry.

The grades serve to them as a measure of their work, and dissatisfaction with grades is expressed only when they are not just. There is trouble when a pupil has tried hard, and the teacher by oversight gives him less than he deserves. He will not give the teacher any rest and will weep bitter tears, if he cannot get him to change it. Bad marks, if they are deserved, remain without protest. However, marks are left with us from the old order and are beginning to fall into disuse.

At the first lesson after the dinner recess, the pupils gather just as in the morning, and wait for the teacher in the same manner. It is generally a lesson in sacred or Russian history, for which all the classes meet together. This lesson generally begins at close of day. The teacher stands or sits down in the middle of the room, and the crowd gathers around him in amphitheatrical order, on benches, on tables, on window-sills.

All the evening lessons, especially the first, have a peculiar character of calm, dreaminess, and poetry, differing in this from the morning classes. You come to the school at fall of day : no lights are seen in the windows ; it is almost quiet, and only tracks of snow on the staircase, freshly carried in, a weak din and rustling beyond the door, and some urchin clattering on the staircase, by taking two steps at a time and holding on to the balustrade, prove that the pupils are at school.

Walk into the room ! It is almost dark behind the frozen windows ; the best pupils are jammed toward the teacher by the rest of the children, and, turning up their little heads, are looking straight into the teacher's mouth. The independent manorial girl is always sitting with a careworn face on the high table, and, it seems, is swallowing every word ; the poorer pupils, the small fry, sit farther away: they listen attentively, even austerely; they behave just like the big boys, but, in spite of their attention, we know that they will not tell a thing, even though they may remember some.

Some press down on other people's shoulders, and others stand up on the table. Occasionally one pushes his way into the crowd, where he busies himself with drawing some figures with his nail on somebody's back. It is not often that one will look back at you. When a new story is being told, all listen in dead silence ; when there is a repetition, ambitious voices are heard now and then, being unable to keep from helping the teacher out. Still, if there is an old story which they like, they ask the teacher to repeat it in his own words, and then they do not allow any one to interrupt him.

" What is the matter with you ? Can't you hold in ? Keep quiet ! " they will call out to a forward boy.

It pains them to hear the character and the artistic quality of the teacher's story interrupted. Of late it has been the story of Christ's life. They every time asked to have it all told to them. If the whole story is not told to them, they themselves supply their favourite ending, – the history of Peter's denying Christ, and of the Saviour's passion.

You would think all are dead : there is no stir, – can they be asleep ? You walk up to them in the semi-darkness and look into the face of some little fellow, – he is sitting, his eyes staring at the teacher, frowning from close attention, and for the tenth time brushing away the arm of his companion, which is pressing down on his shoulder. You tickle his neck, – he does not even smile ; he only bends his head, as though to drive away a fly, and again abandons himself to the mysterious and poetical story, how the veil of the church was rent and it grew dark upon earth, – and he has a mingled sensation of dread and joy.

Now the teacher is through with his story, and all rise from their seats, and, crowding around their teacher, try to outcry each other in their attempt to tell what they have retained. There is a terrible hubbub, – the teacher barely can follow them all. Those who are forbidden to tell anything, the teacher being sure that they know it all, are not satisfied: they approach the other teacher; and if he is not there, they importune a companion, a stranger, even the keeper of the fires, or walk from corner to corner by twos and by threes, begging everybody to listen to them. It is rare for one to tell at a time. They themselves divide up in groups, those of equal strength keeping together, and begin to tell, encouraging and correcting each other, and waiting for their turns. " Come, let us

take it together," says one to another, but the one who is addressed knows that he can't keep up with him, and so he sends him to another. As soon as they have had their say and have quieted down, lights are brought, and a different mood comes over the boys.

In the evenings in general, and at the next lessons in particular, the hubbub is not so great, and the docility and the confidence in the teacher are greater. The pupils seem to evince an abhorrence for mathematics and analysis, and a liking for singing, reading, and especially for stories.

"What's the use in having mathematics all the time, and writing? Better tell us something, about the earth, or even history, and we will listen," say all.

At about eight o'clock the eyes begin to get heavy; they begin to yawn; the candles burn more dimly, — they are not trimmed so often; the elder children hold themselves up, but the younger, the poorer students, fall asleep, leaning on the table, under the pleasant sounds of the teacher's voice.

At times, when the classes are uninteresting, and there have been many of them (we often have seven long hours a day), and the children are tired, or before the holidays, when the ovens at home are prepared for a hot bath, two or three boys will suddenly rush into the room during the second or third afternoon class-hour, and will hurriedly pick out their caps.

"What's up?"

"Going home."

«And studies? There is to be singing yet!"

"The boys say they are going home," says one, slipping away with his cap.

"Who says so?"

"The boys are gone!"

"How is that?" asks the perplexed teacher who has prepared his lesson. "Stay!"

But another boy runs into the room, with an excited and perplexed face.

"What are you staying here for?" he angrily attacks the one held back, who, in indecision, pushes the cotton batting back into his cap. "The boys are way down there, — I guess as far as the smithy."

"Have they gone?"

"They have."

And both run away, calling from behind the door: " Good-bye, Ivan Ivänovich ! "

Who are the boys that decided to go homeland how did they decide it? God knows. You will never find out who decided it. They did not take counsel, did not conspire, but simply, some boys wanted to go home, " The boys are going ! " – and their feet rattle down-stairs, and one rolls down the steps in catlike form, and, leaping and tumbling in the snow, running a race with each other along the narrow path, the children bolt for home.

Such occurrences take place once or twice a week. It is aggravating and disagreeable for the teacher, – who will not admit that? But who will not admit, at the same time, that, on account of one such an occurrence, the five, six, and even seven lessons a day for each class, which are, of their own accord and with pleasure, attended by the pupils, receive a so much greater significance ? Only by the recurrence of such cases could one gain the certainty that the instruction, though insufficient and onesided, was not entirely bad and not detrimental.

If the question were put like this : Which would be better, that not one such occurrence should take place during the whole year, or that this should happen for more than half the lessons, – we should choose the latter. At least, I was always glad to see these things happen several times a month in the Yasnaya Polyana school. In spite of the frequently repeated statements to the boys that they may leave any time they wish, the influence of the teacher is so strong that, of late, I have been afraid that the discipline of the classes, programmes, and grades might, imperceptibly to them, so restrict their liberty that they would submit to the cunning of the nets of order set by us and that they would lose the possibility of choice and protest. Their continued willingness to come to school, in spite of the liberty granted them, does not, I think, by any means prove the especial qualities of the Yasnaya Polyana school, – I believe that the same would be repeated in the majority of schools, and that the desire to study is so strong in children that, in order to satisfy their desire, they will submit to many hard conditions and will forgive many defects. The possibility of such escapades is useful and necessary only as a means of securing the teacher against the most detrimental and coarsest errors and abuses.

In the evening we have singing, graded reading, talks, physical experiments, and writing of compositions. Of these, their favourite subjects are reading and experiments. During the reading the older children lie down on the large table in star-shaped form, – their heads together, their feet radiating out, and one reads, and all tell the contents to each other. The younger children locate themselves with their books by twos, and if the book is intelligible to them, they read it as we do, by getting close to the light and making themselves comfortable, and apparently they derive pleasure from it. Some, trying to unite two kinds of enjoyment, seat themselves opposite the burning stove, and warm themselves and read.

Not all are admitted to the class in experiments, only the oldest and best, and the more intelligent ones of the second class. This class has assumed, with us, a vespertine, most fantastic character, precisely fitting the mood produced by the reading of fairy-tales. Here the fairylike element is materialized, – everything is personified by them : the pith-ball which is repelled by the sealing-wax, the deflecting magnetic needle, the iron filings scurrying over the sheet of paper underneath which the magnet is guided, present themselves to them as living objects. The most intelligent boys, who understand the cause of these phenomena, become excited and talk to the needle, the ball, the filings : " Come now ! Hold on ! Where are you going ? Stop there ! Ho there ! Let her go ! " and so forth.

Generally the classes end at between eight to nine o'clock, if the carpentry work does not keep the boys longer, and then the whole mass of them run shouting into the yard, from where they begin to scatter in groups in all the directions of the village, calling to each other from a distance. Sometimes they scheme to coast downhill into the village on a large sleigh standing outside the gate, by tying up the shafts : they crawl in and disappear with screaming in the snow-dust, leaving, here and there along the road, black spots of children tumbled out. Outside the school, in the open air, there establish themselves, despite all the liberty granted there, new relations between pupils and teachers, of greater liberty, greater simplicity, and greater confidence, – those very relations, winch, to us, appear as the ideal of what the school is to strive after.

The other day we read Gdgol's " The Elf-king " with the first class. The last scenes powerfully affected them and excited their imagination : some tried to look like witches and kept mentioning the last night.

It was not cold outside, – a moonless winter night with clouds in the sky. We stopped at the cross-road ; the older, third-year pupils stopped near me, asking me to accompany them farther ; the younger ones looked awhile at me and then coasted down-hill. The younger ones had begun to study with a new teacher and there is no longer that confidence between them and me, as between the older boys and me.

" Come, let us go to the preserve " (a small forest within two hundred steps of the house), said one of them. Fedka, a small boy of ten, of a tender, impressionable, poetical, and dashing nature, was the most persistent in his demands. Danger seems to form his chief condition for enjoyment. In the summer it always made me shudder to see him, with two other boys, swim out into the very middle of the pond, which was something like three hundred and fifty feet wide, and now and then disappear in the hot reflections of the summer sun, and then swim over the depth, while turning on his back, spurting up the water, and calling out in a thin voice to his companions on the shore, that they might see what a dashing fellow he was.

He knew that there were wolves in the forest now, and so he wanted to go to the preserve. All chimed in, and so we went, four of us, into the wood. Another boy, I shall call him Sémka, a physically and morally sound lad of about twelve, nicknamed Vavflo, walked ahead and kept exchanging calls with somebody in his ringing voice. Prdnka, a sickly, meek, and uncommonly talented boy, the son of a poor family, – sickly, I think, mainly on account of insufficient food, – was walking by my side.

Fédka was walking between me and Sémka, talking all the time in his extremely soft voice, telling us how he had herded horses here in the summer, or saying that he was not afraid of anything, or asking, " Suppose one should jump out ! " and insisting on my answering him. We did not go into the forest itself, – that would have been too terrible, – but even near the forest it was getting darker : we could hardly see the path, and the fires of the village were hidden from view.

Sémka stopped and began to listen.

" Stop, boys ! What is that ? " he suddenly said.

We grew silent, but we could hear nothing; still it added terror to our fear.

" Well, what should we do, if one should jump out and make straight for us ? " Fédka asked.

We began to talk about robbers in the Caucasus. They recalled a story of the Caucasus I had told them long ago, and I told them again about abréks, about Cossacks, about Khadzhi-Murät. Sémka was strutting ahead of us, stepping broadly in his big boots, and evenly swaying his strong back. Prdnka tried to walk by my side, but Fédka pushed him off the path, and Prdnka, who apparently always submitted to such treatment on account of his poverty, rushed up to my side only during the most interesting passages, though sinking knee-deep in the snow.

Everybody who knows anything about peasant children has noticed that they are not accustomed to any kind of caresses, – tender words, kisses, being touched with a hand, and so forth, – and that they cannot bear these caresses. I have observed ladies in peasant schools, who, wishing to show their favours to a boy, say, " Come, my darling, I will kiss you ! " and actually kiss him, whereat the boy so kissed is embarrassed and feels offended and wonders why that was done to him. A boy of five years of age stands above these caresses, – he is a lad. It was for this reason that I was startled when Fédka, who was walking by my side, in the most terrible part of the story suddenly touched me at first lightly with his sleeve and then clasped two of my fingers with his whole hand, and did not let them out of his grasp.

The moment I grew silent, Fédka demanded that I

should proceed, and he did that in such an imploring and agitated voice that I could not refuse his request.

" Don't get in my way ! " he once angrily called out to Pronka, who had run ahead ; he was carried away to the point of cruelty, – he had such a mingled feeling of terror and joy, as he was holding on to my finger, and no one should dare to interrupt his pleasure.

" More, more ! That's fine ! "

We passed the forest and were approaching the village from the other end.

" Let us go there again," all cried, when the lights became visible.  
" Let us take another walk ! "

We walked in silence, now and then sinking in the loose, untrodden path ; the white darkness seemed to be swaying before our eyes ; the clouds hung low, as though piling upon us, – there was no end to that whiteness over which we alone crunched through the snow ; the wind rustled through the bare tops of the aspens, but we were protected from the wind behind the forest.

I finished my story by telling them that, the abrék being surrounded, he began to sing songs, and then threw himself on his dagger. All were silent.

" Why did he sing a song when he was surrounded ? " asked Sémka.

" Didn't you hear ? He was getting ready to die ! " Fédka replied, sorrowfully.

" I think he sang a prayer," added Pronka.

All agreed. Fédka suddenly stopped.

" How was it when they cut the throat of your aunt ? " he asked, – he had not had enough terrors. " Tell us ! Tell us ! "

I told them once more that terrible story of the murder of Countess Tolstoy, and they stood silently about me, gazing at my face.

" The fellow got caught ! " said Sémka.

" It did frighten him to walk through the night, while she

o o o J

" No, that is mechanical drawing," said Fédka, " but why do you draw figures ? "

Sémka's healthy nature was not at a loss :

" What is a stick for ? What is a linden for ? " he said, still

striking the linden.

" Yes, what is the linden for ? " I asked.

" To make rafters with," replied Sémka.

" "What is it for in summer, when it has not yet been cut down ? "

" For nothing."

"Really," Fédka kept stubbornly at it, "why does a linden grow ? "

And we began to speak of there not being only a usefulness of things, but also a beauty, and that art was beauty, and we understood each other, and Fédka comprehended well why a linden grew and what singing was for.

Fronka agreed with us, but he had mostly in mind moral beauty, – goodness.

Sémka understood it rightly with his big brain, but he did not recognize beauty without usefulness. He doubted, as people of great intelligence doubt, feeling that art is a force, but feeling in their souls no need of that force ; he wanted, like them, to reach out for that art by means of reason, and tried to start that fire in himself.

" Let us sing ' He who ' to-morrow, – I remember my voice."

He has a correct ear, but no taste, no artistic quality in singing.

Fédka comprehended completely that the linden was nice with its leafage and that it was nice to look at it in summer, – and nothing else was needed.

Fronka understood that it was a pity to cut it down, because it, too, had life : " When we drink the sap of the linden, it is just the same as though we were drinking blood."

Sémka did not say much, but it was evident that he did not think there was much use in a linden when it was rotten.

It feels strange to me to repeat what we spoke on that evening, but I remember we said everything, I think, that there was to be said on utility and on plastic and moral beauty.

We went to the village. Fédka still clung to my hand, – this time, I thought, from gratitude. We were all so near to each other on that night, as we had not been for a long time. Fronka walked by our side over the broad village street.

" I declare, there is light still in Mazanov's house ! " he said.  
" As I was going this morning to school, Gavryukha was coming from the tavern," he added, " drunk, oh, so drunk ! The horse was all in

a lather, and he kept warming him up – I always feel sorry for such things. Really I do ! What does he strike him for ? ”

“ The other day father gave his horse the reins, coming from Tula,” said Sémka, “ and the horse took him into a snowdrift, but he was drunk and asleep.”

“ Gavryukha kept switching him over the eyes – and I felt so sorry for him,” Frduka repeated once more. “What did he strike him for? He got down and just switched him.”

Sémka suddenly stopped.

« They are asleep,” he said, looking through the windows of his black, crooked hut. “Won’t you walk a little more ? ”

« No.”

“ Goo-ood-bye, Lev Nikolaevich,” he suddenly shouted, and, as though tearing himself away from us, darted for his house, raised the latch and disappeared.

“ So you will take ,us home ? First one, and then another ? ” asked Fédka.

We walked ahead. In Pronka’s house there was a light. We looked through the window : his mother, a tall, handsome, but emaciated woman, with black eyebrows and eyes, was sitting at the table and cleaning potatoes ; in the middle of the room hung a cradle ; Pronka’s other brother, the mathematician of the second class, was standing at the table and eating potatoes with salt. It was a tiny, dirty, black house.

“ What is the matter with you ? ” the mother cried to Pronka. “ Where have you been ? ”

Pronka smiled a meek, sickly smile, looking at the window. His mother guessed that he was not alone, and immediately assumed an insincere, feigned expression.

There was now Fédka left.

“ The tailors are at our house, so there is a light there,” he said in the mollified voice of that evening. “ Goodbye, Lev Nikolaevich!” he added, softly and tenderly, and began to knock the closed door with the ring.

“ Let me in ! ” his thin voice rang out through the winter stillness of the village.

Quite a time passed before he was admitted. I looked through the window : it was a large room ; on the oven and on the benches feet could be seen ; his father was playing cards with the tailors, – a few copper coins were lying on the table. A woman, the boy’s

stepmother, was sitting near the torch-holder, eagerly looking at the money. One tailor, an arrant knave, still a young peasant, was holding his cards on the table, bending them like bark, and triumphantly looking at his partner. Fédka's father, the collar of his shirt being all unbuttoned, scowling from mental strain and annoyance, was fumbling his cards in indecision, waving his heavy peasant hand over them.

" Let me in ! "

The woman got up and went to open the door.

"Good-bye!" Fédka repeated. "Let us walk often that way ! "

I see honest, good, liberal men, members of charitable societies, who are ready to give and who do give one-hundredth part of their possessions to the poor, who have established schools, and who, reading this, will say, " It is not good ! " and will shake their heads.

" Why develop them forcibly ? Why give them sentiments and conceptions which will make them hostile to their surroundings ? Why take them out of their existence ? " they will say.

Of course, it is even worse with those who regard themselves as leaders, and who will say : " A fine state it will be, where all want to be thinkers and artists, and where nobody will be working ! "

These say without ambiguity that they do not like to work, and that, therefore, there have to be people who are not merely unfit for any other activity, but simply slaves, who must work for others.

Is it good, is it bad, is it necessary to take them out of their surroundings, and so forth ? Who knows ? And who can take them out of their surroundings ? That is not done by a mere mechanical contrivance. Is it good or bad to add sugar to flour, or pepper to beer ?

Fédka is not vexed by his tattered caftan, but moral questions and doubts torment him, and you want to give him three roubles, a catechism, and a tract about the usefulness of labour, and about meekness which you yourselves cannot bear. He does not need three roubles : he will find and take them when he needs them, and he will learn to work without your aid, just as he has learned to breathe ; he needs that to which life has brought you, your own life and that of ten generations not crushed by work. You have had leisure to seek, think, suffer, – so give him that which you have gained by suffering, – that is what he wants ; but you, like an Egyptian priest, veil yourselves from him in a mysterious mantle and bury in the ground the talent given you by history. Fear not: nothing human is injurious to man. Are you in doubt ? Abandon yourselves to your feelings, and they will not deceive you. Have faith in his nature, and you will convince yourselves that he will take only as much as

history has enjoined you to give to him, as much as has been worked in you by means of suffering.

The school is free, and the first pupils to enter were those from the village of Ydsnaya Polyana. Many of these pupils have left the school because their parents did not regard the instruction as good ; many, having learned to read and write, stopped coming and hired themselves out at the railroad, – the chief occupation at our village. At first they brought the children from the near-by poorer villages, but because of the inconvenience of the distance or of boarding them out (in our village the cheapest board is two roubles in silver a month), they were soon taken out of school. From the distant villages the well-to-do peasants, pleased to hear that the school was free and that, as it was rumoured among the people, they taught well at the Yasnaya Polydna school, began to send their children, but this winter, when schools were opened in the villages, they took them out again and put them into the village pay schools. There were then left in the Yasnaya Polyana school the children of the Ydsnaya Polyana peasants, who attend school in the winter, but in the summer, from April to the middle of October, work in the fields, and the children of innkeepers, clerks, soldiers, manorial servants, dramshop-keepers, sextons, and rich peasants, who are brought there from a distance of thirty and even fifty versts.

There are in all about forty pupils, but rarely more than thirty at a time. The girls form ten or only six per cent, of the whole, being from three to five in number. Boys from the age of seven to thirteen are the normal age with us. In addition to these we have every year three or four grown people who come to us for a month, and sometimes the whole winter, and then leave us.

For the grown people, who come to school singly, the order of the school is very inconvenient: on account of their age and their feeling of dignity they cannot take part in the animation of the school, nor can they free themselves from their contempt for the youngsters, and so they remain entirely alone. The animation of the school is only an obstacle to them. They generally come to finish the instruction begun before, having some little knowledge, and with the conviction that instruction consists in making them learn the book, of which they have heard before, or in which they have had experience. In order to come to the school, they had to overcome their own fear and embarrassment and to endure a domestic storm and the ridicule of their companions. " Look at the stallion that is going to study ! " Besides, they constantly feel that every day lost at school is a day lost at labour, which forms their only capital, and so all the time that they are at school they are in an irritable state of hurry and zeal, which more than anything else is detrimental to study.

During the time which I am describing now we had three such grown people, one of whom is studying even now. A grown pupil acts as at a fire : no sooner has he finished writing than he grabs a book with one hand, while he puts down the pen held in the other, and begins to read standing ; take the book away from him, and he takes hold of

the slate; take that away from him, and he is completely at a loss.

There was one labourer this fall, who studied with us and at the same time made the fires in the school. He learned to read and write in two weeks, but that was not learning, but a disease, something like a protracted spree. Passing with an armful of wood through the classroom, he would stop, with the wood still in his arms, and, bending over a boy's head, would spell s, k, a – ska, and then go to his place. If he did not succeed in doing so, he looked with envy, almost with malice, at the children ; when he was at liberty, we could not do anything with him : he gazed steadfastly at his book, repeating b, a – ba, r, i – ri, and so forth, and while in this state he lost all ability to understand anything else.

When the grown men had to sing or draw, or to listen to a history recitation, or to look at experiments, it became apparent that they submitted to cruel necessity, and, like hungry people who are torn away from their food, they waited only for the moment when they could again bury themselves in their spelling-books. Remaining true to the rule, I have not compelled boys to study the ABC when they do not want to do so, and so I do not insist on a grown person's learning mechanics or drawing, when he wants the ABC. Everybody takes what he wants.

In general, the grown persons, who started their instruction elsewhere, have not yet found a place for themselves in the Yasnaya Polydna school, and their instruction proceeds poorly : there is something unnatural and morbid in their relation to the school. The Sunday schools which I have seen present the same phenomenon in regard to grown persons, and so any information in respect to a successful free education of grown-up people would be a very precious acquisition for us.

The view of the masses as regards our school has much changed from the beginning of its existence. Of the former view we shall have to speak in the history of the Yasnaya Polydna school ; but now the people say that in the Yasnaya Polydna school " they teach everything and all the sciences, and there are some awfully smart teachers there, – they say they can make thunder and lightning ! And the boys comprehend well, – they have begun to read and write."

Some of them – the rich innkeepers – send their children to school out of vanity, " to promote them into the full science, so that they may know division " (division is the highest conception they have of scholastic wisdom) ; other fathers assume that science is very profitable ; but the most send their children to school unconsciously, submitting to the spirit of the time.

Out of these boys, who form the majority, the most encouraging to us are those who were just sent to school and who have become so fond of study that their parents now submit to the desire of the children, and themselves feel unconsciously that something good is being done to their children and have not the heart to take the children out of school.

One father told me that he once used up a whole candle, holding it over his boy's book, and praised both his son and the book. It was the Gospel.

" My father," another pupil told me, " now and then listens to a fairy-tale, and laughs, and goes away ; and if it is something divine, he sits and listens until midnight, holding the candle for me."

I called with the new teacher at the house of a pupil, and, in order to show him off, had the boy solve an algebraic equation for the teacher. The mother was busy at the oven, and we forgot all about her ; while listening to her son, as he briskly and earnestly transformed the equation, saying, "  $2ab - c - d$ , divided by 3," and so forth, she all the time kept her face covered with her hand, with difficulty restraining herself, and finally burst out into laughter and was unable to explain to us what it was she was laughing about.

Another father, a soldier, once came after his son ; he found him in the drawing class, and when he saw his son's art, he began to say " you " instead of " thou " to him and did not have the heart to give him the water chestnuts which he had brought him as a present.

The common opinion is, I think, as follows: They teach everything there (just as to gentlemen's children), many useless things, but they also teach them to read and write in a short time, - and so it is all right to send the children there.

There are also ill-wishing rumours current among people, but they now have little weight. Two fine boys lately left school for the alleged reason that we did not teach writing at school. Another, a soldier, wanted to send his boy, but, upon examining one of our pupils and finding that he read the psalter with hesitation, he decided that our instruction was bad, and that only the fame of the school was good.

A few of the Yasnaya Polyana peasants have not stopped fearing lest the old rumours should prove true ; they imagine that there is some ulterior purpose in teaching the children and that at an unforeseen hour somebody will slip a cart under their boys and haul them off to Moscow.

The dissatisfaction with the absence of corporal punishment and order at school has now almost entirely disappeared. I have often had occasion to observe the perplexity of a father, when, coming to the school for his boy, he saw the pupils running about, making a hubbub, and tussling with each other. He is convinced that naughtiness is detrimental, and yet he believes that we teach well, and he is at a loss to combine the two.

Gymnastics now and then cause them to reassert their conviction that it somehow is hard on the stomach, and that " it does not go through." Soon after fasting, or in the fall, when the vegetables

get ripe, gymnastics do the most harm, and the old women cover up the pots and explain that the cause of it all is the naughtiness and the twisting.

For some, though only a small number, even the spirit of equality in the school serves as a subject of dissatisfaction. In November we had two girls, the daughters of a rich innkeeper, in cloaks and caps, who at first kept themselves aloof, but later got used to the rest and forgot their tea and the cleaning of their teeth with tobacco, and began to study well. Their father, dressed in a Crimean sheepskin fur coat, all unbuttoned, entered the school and found them standing in a crowd of dirty bast shoe boys, who, leaning with their hands on the head-gear of the girls, were listening to what the teacher was saying ; the father was offended and took his girls out of the school, though he did not confess the cause of his dissatisfaction.

Finally, there are some children who leave school because their parents, who have sent their children to school in order to gain somebody's favour by it, take them out again, when the need of gaining somebody's favour has passed.

And thus, there are twelve subjects, three classes, forty pupils in all, four teachers, and from five to seven recitations a day. The teachers keep diaries of their occupations, which they communicate to each other on Sundays, and in conformity with which they arrange their plans for the following week. These plans are not carried out each week, but are modified in conformity with the needs of the pupils.

#### MECHANICAL READING

Beading forms part of language instruction. The problem of language instruction consists, in our opinion, in guiding people to understand the contents of books written in the literary language. The knowledge of the literary language is necessary because the good books are all in that language.

At first, soon after the foundation of the school, there was no subdivision of reading into mechanical and graded, for the pupils read only that which they could understand, – their own compositions, words and sentences written on the blackboard with chalk, and then Khudya-kov's and Afanasev's fairy-tales. I then supposed that for the children to learn to read, they had to like reading, and in order to like reading it was necessary that the reading matter be intelligible and interesting. That seemed so rational and clear, and yet the idea was false.

In the first place, in order to pass from the reading on the walls to the reading in books, it became necessary to devote special attention to mechanical reading with each pupil according to any book whatsoever. As long as the number of pupils was inconsiderable and subjects were not subdivided, that was possible, and I could, without much labour, transfer the children from reading on the wall

to reading in a book ; but with the arrival of new pupils that became impossible. The younger pupils were not able to read a fairy-tale and understand it : the labour of putting together the words and at the same time of understanding their meaning was too much for them.

Another inconvenience was that the graded reading came to an end with the fairy-tales, and whatever book we took, – whether " The Popular Reading," " The Soldier's Reading," Pushkin, Gdgol, Karamzin, – it turned out that the older pupils experienced the same difficulty in reading Pushkin as the younger ones experienced in the reading of the fables: they could not combine the labour of reading and comprehending what they read, though they understood a little when we read to them.

We first thought that the difficulty was in the imperfect mechanism of the pupils' reading, and we invented mechanical reading, reading for the process of reading, – the teacher read alternately with the pupils, – but matters did not improve, and the same perplexity arose in reading " Robinson Crusoe."

In the summer, during the transitional stage of our schools, we hoped to be able to vanquish this difficulty in the simplest and most approved manner possible. Why not confess it, – we succumbed to false shame before our visitors. (Our pupils read much worse than those who had studied the same length of time with a sexton.) The new teacher proposed to introduce reading aloud from the same books, and we agreed to it. Having once become possessed of the false idea that the pupils must by all means read fluently during this very year, we put down on the programme mechanical and graded reading, and we made them read about two hours a day out of the same books, and that was very convenient for us.

But this one departure from the rule of the pupils' freedom led to lies and to one blunder after another. We bought some booklets, – the fairy-tales by Pushkin and by Ershov, – we placed the boys on benches, and one had to read aloud while the others followed his reading. To find out whether they were really following, the teacher asked now one, now another, a question.

At first we thought that everything was well. You come to the school, – all sit in orderly fashion on benches ; one reads, the rest follow. The one who reads says : " Mercy, my Queen Fish ! " and the others, or the teacher, correct him : " Mercy, my Queen Fish ! " Ivdnov hunts for the place and goes on reading. All are busy ; you may hear the teacher ; every word is correctly pronounced, and they read quite fluently.

You would think all is well ; but examine it closely, – the one who is reading is reading the same thing for the thirtieth or fortieth time. (A printed sheet will not last longer than a week, and it is terribly expensive to buy new books all the time, while there are only two comprehensible books for peasant children, – the fairy-tales by Khudyakdv and by Afanäsev. Besides, a book which has once

been read by a class and is known by heart by some is not only familiar to all the pupils, but even the home people are tired of it.) The reader becomes timid, listening to his lonely voice amid the silence of the room; all his effort is directed toward observing all the punctuation marks and the accents, and he acquires the habit of reading without understanding the meaning, for he is burdened with other demands. The hearers do the same, and, hoping always to strike the right place when they are asked, evenly guide their fingers along the lines and are distracted by other things. The meaning of what is read involuntarily lodges in their heads at times, or it does not stay there at all, being a secondary consideration.

The chief harm lies in that eternal battle of cunning and of tricks between the pupils and the teacher, which is developed with such an order, and which had not existed in our school heretofore ; whereas the only advantage of this method of reading, consisting in the correct pronunciation of words, had no meaning whatsoever for our pupils. Our pupils had been learning to read the sentences written and pronounced by them on the board, and all knew that you write kogo and pronounce it kavo ; but I consider it useless to teach stops and changes of voice from the punctuation marks, because every five-year-old boy makes correct use of the punctuation marks in his voice, if he understands what he is saying. Therefore it is easier to teach him to understand that which he speaks from the book (which he must attain sooner or later) than to teach him to sing, as though from music, the punctuation marks. And yet, how convenient that is for the teacher '

The teacher always involuntarily strives after selecting that method of instruction which is most convenient for himself. The more convenient the method is for the teacher, the more it is inconvenient for the pupils. Only that manner of instruction is correct with which the pupils are satisfied.

These three laws of instruction were most palpably reflected by the mechanical reading in the school at Yasnaya Polydna.

Thanks to the vitality of the spirit of the school, especially when the old pupils returned to it from their field

labours, this reading of itself fell into disuse : the pupils grew tired, and began to play and became slack in their work. Above all, the reading with stories, which was to verify the success of the mechanical reading, proved that there was no such progress, that in five weeks we had not advanced one step in reading, while many had fallen behind. The best mathematician of the first class, Pt-----, who mentally extracted square roots, had for

gotten how to read to such an extent that we had to read with him by syllables.

•We abandoned the reading from the booklets, and racked our brains to discover a means of mechanical reading. The simple idea that the

time had not yet come for good mechanical reading, that there was no urgent need for it at the present time, and that the pupils themselves would find the best method, when that need should arise, burst upon us only within a short time. During that search the following processes established themselves of their own accord :

During the reading lessons, now divided in name only into graded and mechanical, the worst readers come in twos and take some book (sometimes fairy-tales, or the Gospel, and at times a song collection or a number of the Popular Reading) and read by twos for the process of reading only, and when that book is an intelligible fairytale, they read it with comprehension, after which they demand of the teacher that he should ask them questions, although the class is called mechanical. At times the pupils, generally the poorest, take the same book several times in succession, open it at the same page, read one and the same tale, and memorize it, not only without the teacher's order, but even in spite of his explicit prohibition ; sometimes these poor pupils come to the teacher, or to an older boy, and ask him to read with them. Those who can read better, pupils of the second class, are not so fond of reading in company, less often read for the process of reading, and if they memorize anything, it is some poem, but not a prose tale.

With the oldest boys the same phenomenon is repeated, with this one difference which has struck me during the last month. In their class of graded reading they get some one book, which they read in turn, and then all together tell its contents. They were joined this fall by a very talented boy, Ch-----, who had studied for

two years with a sexton and who therefore is ahead of them all in reading, - he reads as well as we do, and so the pupils understand the graded reading, at least a little of it, only when Ch-----reads, and yet each of

them wants to read himself. But the moment a bad reader begins to read, all express their dissatisfaction, - especially when the story is interesting, - they laugh and are angry, and the poor reader is ashamed, and there begin endless disputes. Last month one of these declared that, cost what it might, he would read as well as Ch-----

within a week ; others made the same declaration, and suddenly mechanical reading became the favourite subject. They would sit an hour or an hour and a half at a time, without tearing themselves away from the book, which they did not understand ; they began to take their books home, and really made in three weeks such progress as could hardly have been expected.

There happened to them the direct opposite of what generally takes place with those who learn the rudiments. Generally a man learns to read, but there is nothing for him to read or understand ; here it turned out that the pupils convinced themselves that there was something to read and understand, but that they did not read well enough, and so they tried to become more proficient in reading.

We have now abandoned mechanical reading entirely, and matters are carried on as described above ; each pupil is permitted to use whatever method is most convenient for him, and, strange to say, they have made use of all the methods I am acquainted with : (1) Reading with the teacher, (2) reading for the process of reading, (3) reading with memorizing, (4) reading in general, and (5) reading with the comprehension of what is being read.

The first, in use by the mothers of the whole world, is not a scholastic, but a domestic method. It consists in the pupil's coming and asking to read with the teacher, whereupon the teacher reads, guiding his every syllable and the combination of syllables, – the very first rational and immutable method, which the pupil is the first to demand, and upon which the teacher involuntarily hits. In spite of all means which are supposed to mechanize instruction and presumably facilitate the work of the teacher with a large number of pupils, this method will always remain the best and the only one for teaching people to read, and to read fluently.

The second method of teaching to read, also a favourite one, through which ever)' one has passed who has learned to read fluently, consists in giving the pupil a book and leaving it entirely to him to spell and understand as well as he can. The pupil, who has learned to read by syllables so fluently that he does not feel the need of asking the sexton to read with him, but depends upon himself, always acquires that passion for the process of reading which is so ridiculed in Gogol's " Petrushka," and on account of that passion advances. God knows in what manner that kind of reading assumes any definite shape in his mind, but he thus gets used to the forms of the letters, to the process of syllable combinations, to the pronunciation of words, and even to understanding what he reads, and I have had occasion to convince myself by actual experience that our insistence that the pupil should understand what he reads only retards the result. There are many autodidacts who have learned to read well in this way, although the defects of this system must be apparent to everybody.

The third method of teaching reading consists in learning by heart prayers, poems, in general anything printed, and in pronouncing that which has so been memorized, looking at the book all the time.

The fourth method consists in that which has proved so detrimental in the Yasnaya Polyana school, – in the reading from a few books only. It arose unpremeditatedly in our school. At first we did not have enough books, and two pupils had to read together; later, they themselves became fond of this, and when the order is given to read, pupils of precisely the same ability pair off, or sometimes assemble three at a time, around one book, and one reads, while the others watch and correct him. You will only disturb them if you rearrange them, for they are quite sure who their matches are, and Taraska will certainly ask for Dunka.

" You come here to read, and you go to your partner ! "

Some of them do not like such collective reading, because they do not need it. The advantage of such reading in common lies in the greater precision of pronunciation and in the greater freedom of comprehension left to him who is not reading, but watching ; but the whole advantage, thus produced, becomes harmful the moment this method, or, for that, any other method, is extended to the whole school.

In fine, another favourite method of ours, the fifth, is the graded reading, that is, the reading of books with ever growing interest and comprehension.

All these methods, as mentioned above, quite naturally came into use in our school, and in one month we made considerable progress.

The business of the teacher is to afford a choice of all known and unknown methods that may make the matter of learning easier for the pupil. It is true, with a certain method, – say with reading out of one book, – the instruction becomes easy and convenient for the teacher, and has the aspect of seriousness and regularity ; but with our order it seems not only difficult, but to many appears even impossible. How, they say, is one to guess what is needed for each pupil, and how is one to decide whether the demand of each is justified ? How can one help being lost in this heterogeneous crowd which is subject to no rule ?

To this I will reply that we cannot get rid of our old view of the school as a disciplined company of soldiers, commanded to-day by one lieutenant, and to-morrow by another. For the teacher who has adapted himself to the liberty of the school, each pupil represents a separate character, putting forth separate demands, which only the freedom of choice can satisfy.

If it had not been for the freedom and for the external disorder, which seems so strange and impossible to some, we not only should never have struck these five methods of reading, but should never have been able to employ and apportion them according to the exigencies of the pupils, and therefore should never have attained those brilliant results which we have of late attained in reading.

How often have we had occasion to observe the perplexity of the visitors to our school, who in two hours' time wanted to study the method of instruction, which we do not have, and in the course of the same two hours told us all about their own method ! How frequently we listened to the advice of these same visitors to introduce the very method which, unknown to them, was being used in their presence in the school, only that it was not generalized as a despotic rule !

#### GRADED READING

Although, as we said, the mechanical and graded readings in reality blended into one, – these two subjects are still subdivided for us according to their aims. It seems to us that the aim of the first is

the art of fluently forming words out of certain signs, while the aim of the second is the knowledge of the literary language.

For the study of the literary language we, naturally, thought of a means which seemed exceedingly simple, but which, in reality, was most difficult. It seemed to us that after the pupils had learned to read sentences –written on the board by pupils themselves, we ought to give them Khudyakdv's and Afanäsev's fairy-tales, then something more difficult and more complicated as regards language, then something more difficult still, and so on, up to the language of Karamzin, Pushkin, and the Code of Laws ; but this supposition, like the majority of our, and in general of any, suppositions, was not realized.

From the language which they themselves employed in their writing on the boards, I succeeded in transferring them to the language of the fairy-tales, but in order to take them from the language of the fairy-tales to a higher level, we did not find that transitional " something " in our literature. We tried " Robinson Crusoe," – the thing did not work: some of the boys wept from vexation, because they could not understand and tell it; I began to tell it to them in my own words, and they began to believe in the possibility of grasping that wisdom, made out the meaning of it, and in a month finished " Robinson Crusoe," but with tedium and, in the end, almost in disgust.

The labour was too great for them. They got at things mostly through memory, and they remembered parts of it, if they told them each evening soon after the reading ; but not one of them could make the whole his own. They remembered, unfortunately, only certain incomprehensible words, and began to use them without rhyme or reason, as is generally the case with half-educated people.

I saw that something was wrong, but did not know how to help the matter. To justify myself and clear my conscience, I began to give them to read all kinds of popular imitations, such as "Uncle Naum" and "Aunt Natalya," though I knew in advance that they would not like them, – and my supposition came true. These books were the most tiresome for the pupils, if they were expected to tell their contents.

After " Robinson Crusoe " I tried Pushkin, namely, his " The Gravedigger ; " but without my aid they were still less able to tell it than " Robinson Crusoe," and " The Gravedigger " seemed much duller to them. The author's apostrophes to the reader, his frivolous relation to his persons, his jocular characterizations, his incompleteness of detail, – all that is so incompatible with their needs, that I definitely gave up Pushkin, whose stories I had assumed to be most regularly constructed, simple, and, therefore, intelligible to the masses.

I then tried Gdgol's "The Night Before Christmas." With my reading, it at first pleased them, especially the grown pupils, but the moment I left them alone, they could not comprehend anything and

felt ennui. Even with my reading they did not ask to have it repeated. The wealth of colours, the fantasticalness and capriciousness of the structure are contrary to their needs.

Then again I tried to read Gnyédich's translation of the Iliad to them, and the reading produced only a strange perplexity in them ; they supposed that it was written in French, and did not understand a thing so long as I did not tell the contents to them in my own words, but even then the plot of the poem made no impression on their minds. Sceptic Sémka, a sound, logical nature, was struck by the picture of Phoebus, with the clanking arrows at his back, flying down from Olympus, but he apparently did not know where to lodge the image.

" But why did he not smash to pieces as he flew down from the mountain ? " he kept asking me.

" According to their idea he was a god," I answered him.

" A god ? But were there not many of them ? Then he was not the real God. It is no joke to fly down from such a mountain : he must have been smashed all to pieces," he tried to prove to me, swaying his arms.

I tried George Sand's " Gribouille," " Popular Reading," and " Soldier's Reading," – all in vain. We try everything we can find and everything they send to us, but we now try everything almost without any hope.

I am sitting at school and break the seal of a package containing a book purporting to be popular, fresh from the post-office.

"Uncle, let me read it, me!" cry several children, stretching out their hands, " so I can understand it."

I open the book and read :

" The life of the great Saint Alexis presents to us an example of the flaming faith of piety, untiring activity, and warm love of his country, for which this holy man did such important service ; " or, " Three hundred years have passed since Bohemia became dependent on Germany ; " or, " The village of Karacharovo, spreading out at the foot of a mountain, lies in one of the most fertile Governments of Russia;" or, "Broadly lay and stretched the road, the path ; " or a popular exposition of some natural science on one sheet, half of which is filled with the author's address to the peasant and his taking him into his confidence.

If I give such a book to one of the boys, – his eyes grow dim, and he begins to yawn.

"No, I can't understand it, Lev Nikolaevich," he will say, returning the book.

It is a mystery to us for whom and by whom these popular books are written. Out of all the books of this kind, read by us, nothing was left but "The Grandfather," by the story-teller Zolotdv, which had a great success both in the school and at home.

Some of these are simply poor compositions, written in a bad literary language and finding no readers with the public at large, and so dedicated to the masses; others, worse still, written not in Russian, but in some newly invented language which is supposed to be the people's lanjmajje, something like the language in Krylbu's fables; others again are remodellings of foreign books intended for the people, but not popular. The only books that are comprehensible to the people and according to their taste are not such as are written for the people, but such as have their origin in the people, namely, fairy-tales, proverbs, collections of songs, legends, of verses, of riddles, and of late the collection made by Vodovôzov, and so on.

One who has not had the experience could hardly believe with what ever new pleasure all similar books, not excepting any, are read, – even the sayings of the Russian people, the bylinas, and the song-books, Snegirev's proverbs, the chronicles, and all the monuments of ancient literature without exception. I have observed that children have a greater liking for the reading of such books than grown persons have; they read them several times over, memorize them, joyfully take them home, and in their games and talks give each other names taken from the ancient bylinas and songs. Grown-up persons, either because they are not so natural, or because they have grown to make a show of their knowledge of the book language, or because they unconsciously feel the necessity of the knowledge of the book language, are less addicted to the reading of such books, and prefer those in which the words, images, and thoughts are half-unintelligible to them.

And yet, no matter how books of this kind are liked by the pupils, the aim, which we probably erroneously put to ourselves, is not attained by them: there still remains the same abyss between these books and the literary language. So far we have found no means of coming out of this false circle, although we are all the time making new experiments and new suppositions, trying to discover our error. We beg all those who have this matter at heart to communicate to us their propositions, experiments, and solutions of the question. The insoluble question for us consists in the following: For the education of the people the possibility and the desire to read good books are peremptory, but the good books are written in a language which the masses do not comprehend. In order to learn to understand, one must read a great deal; in order to read with pleasure, one must comprehend. Where is here the error, and how can we escape this situation?

Maybe there is a transitional literature, which we do not recognize for lack of knowledge; maybe the study of the books current among the people, and the people's view of these books, will reveal to us those paths by which the men of the people obtain the comprehension

of the literary language.

We devote a special department in the periodical to the study of this question, and we ask all who understand the importance of this matter to send us their articles upon this subject.

Maybe the cause of it lies in our aloofness from the masses, in the forced education of the upper classes, and matters will be mended only by time, which creates not a chrestomathy, but a whole transitional literature, composed of all books now appearing and organically arranging itself into a course of graded reading. Maybe, too, the masses do not understand and do not wish to understand our literary language because there is nothing for them to understand, because our whole literature is not good for them, and they are themselves evolving a literature for themselves.

Finally, the last proposition, which seems to us the most likely, is that the seeming defect does not lie in the essence of the case, but in our prepossession with the thought that the aim of language instruction is to raise the pupils to the level of the knowledge of the literary language and, above all, in the rapid acquisition of that knowledge. It is very likely that the graded reading, the subject of our dreams, will appear of itself, and that the knowledge of the literary language will of its own accord come to each pupil, just as we constantly see in the case of people who, without understanding, read indiscriminately the psalter, novels, judicial documents, and in that way acquire the knowledge of the literary language.

Supposing this to be so, it is incomprehensible to us why all the books published are so bad and not to the people's taste, and we wonder what the schools must do while waiting for that time to come; for there is one proposition which we cannot admit, and that is, that, having convinced ourselves in our mind that the knowledge of the literary language is useful, we should allow ourselves by forced explanations, memorizing, and repetitions to teach the masses the literary language against their will, as one teaches French. We must confess that we have more than once tried to do so within the last two months, when we invariably ran up against an insuperable loathing in the pupils, proving the falseness of the measures accepted by us. During these experiments I convinced myself that explanations of the meaning of words and of speech in general are quite impossible even for a talented teacher, not to mention even such favourite explanations, employed by incapable teachers, as that "assembly is a certain small synedrion," and so forth. When explaining any one word, for example, the word "impression," you either substitute another unintelligible word in place of the one in question, or you give a whole series of words, the connection of which is as unintelligible as the word itself.

Nearly always it is not the word which is unintelligible, but the pupil lacks the very conception expressed by the word. The world is nearly always ready when the idea is present. Besides, the relation of the word to the idea and the formation of new ideas are such a

complicated, mysterious, and tender process of the soul that every interference appears as a rude, clumsy force which retards the process of the development.

It is easy enough to say that the pupil must understand, but cannot everybody see what a number of different things may be understood while reading one and the same book ? Though missing two or three words in the sentence, the pupil may grasp a fine shade of thought, or its relation to what precedes. You, the teacher, insist on one side of the comprehension, but the pupil does not at all need that which you want to explain to him. At times he may understand you, without being able to prove to you that he has comprehended, all the while dimly guessing and imbibing something quite different, and something very useful and important for him. You exact an explanation from him, and as he is to explain to you in words what impression the words have made upon him, he is silent, or begins to speak nonsense, or lies and deceives; he tries to discover that which you want of him and to adapt himself to your wishes, and so he invents an unexisting difficulty and labours over it ; but the general impression produced by the book, the poetical feeling, which has helped him to divine the meaning, is intimidated, and beats a retreat.

We read Gogol's " The Elf-king," repeating each period in our own words. Everything went well to the third page, where the following period is to be found : " All those learned people, both of the seminary and of the ' bursa/ who fostered a certain traditional hatred against each other, were exceedingly poor as regards their means of subsistence and, at the same time, uncommonly voracious, so that it would have been an absolutely impossible matter to ascertain what number of flour and suet dumplings each of them got away with in the course of a supper, and therefore the voluntary contributions of the well-to-do proprietors could not be sufficient."

Teacher. Well, what have you read ? (Nearly all the children are very well developed.)

Best pupil. In the bursa the people were all big eaters, poor, and at supper got away with a lot of dumplings.

Teacher. What else ?

Pupil (a rogue, and having a good memory, says anything that occurs to him). An impossible matter, the voluntary contributions.

Teacher (angrily). You must think. It is not that. What is an impossible matter ?

Silence.

Teacher. Read it once more.

They read it. Another boy, with a good memory, added a few more words which he happened to recall : " The seminary, the feeding of

the well-to-do proprietors could not be sufficient." Not one had understood anything. They began to talk the merest nonsense. The teacher became insistent.

Teacher. What is an impossible matter ?

He wanted them to say : " It was impossible to ascertain."

A pupil. The bursa is an impossible thing.

Another pupil. Very poor impossible.

They read it once more. They hunted for the word which the teacher needed, as for a needle, and they struck every word but the word " ascertain," and they became utterly discouraged. I – that same teacher I am speaking of – did not give in and had them take the whole period to pieces, but now they understood much less than when the first pupil told me the contents. After all there was not much to understand. The carelessly connected and drawn out period gave nothing to the reader ; its essence was simple enough: the poor and voracious people got away with dumplings, – that and nothing more the author had intended to convey. I made all the fuss about the form, which was faulty, and by endeavouring to get at it, I only spoiled the whole class for the rest of the afternoon, and had crushed and ruined a mass of budding flowers of a many-sided comprehension.

Upon another occasion I in the same sinful and monstrous manner wasted my time on explaining the meaning of the word " instrument," and with the same disastrous result. On that same day, in the class of drawing, pupil Ch----protested against his teacher, who demanded that

the drawing-books should have " Romashka's drawings " written upon them. He said that they had themselves drawn in the books, and that Romashka had only invented the figure and that, therefore, they ought to write " Romashka's composition," and not " Romashka's drawing." In what way the distinction of these ideas had found its way into his head – just as now and then, though rarely, participles and introductory clauses appear in their compositions – will remain a mystery to me, into which it will be best not to penetrate.

The pupil must be given an opportunity to acquire new ideas and words from the general context. When he hears or reads an unintelligible word in an intelligible sentence, and then meets it in another sentence, he dimly begins to grasp a new idea, and he finally will come to feel the need of using the word by accident ; once used, the word and the idea become his property. And there are a thousand other ways. But consciously to give the pupil new ideas and forms of a word is, in my opinion, as impossible and fruitless as to teach a child to walk by the law of equilibrium.

Every such attempt does not advance the pupil, but only removes him from the aim toward which he is to tend, like the rude hand of a

man, which, wishing to help the flower to open, crushes everything all around and violently opens the flower by its petals.

#### WRITING, GRAMMAR, AND PENMANSHIP

Writing was taught in the following manner : The pupils were taught simultaneously to recognize and draw the letters, to spell and write the words, and to understand what they had read, and to write it down. They stood at the wall, marking off spaces for themselves with chalk on the board ; one of them dictated whatever occurred to him, and the others wrote. If there were many of them, they were divided into several groups. Then the others, in succession, dictated, and all read each other's writing.

They wrote printed letters, and at first corrected the mistakes of the incorrectly formed syllables and the separation of the words, then the mistakes o – a, and then ye– e,<sup>1</sup> and so forth. This class formed itself quite naturally. Every pupil who has learned to make the letters is possessed by the passion of writing, and, at first, the doors, the outer walls of the schoolhouse and of the huts, where the pupils live, are covered with letters and words, and it affords them the greatest pleasure to be able to write out whole sentences, such as " Marfutka has had a fight with Olgushka to-day."

In order to organize this class, the teacher had only to show the children how to carry on the affair by themselves, just as a grown-up person teaches children any kind of a game. Indeed, this class has been conducted without change for two years, and every time as merrily and as interestingly as a good game. Here we have reading, and pronunciation, and writing, and grammar. With such writing we obtain in a natural manner the most diffi-

1 The chief difficulties of Russian orthography. cult thing for the initial study of language, – the faith in the stability of the form of the word, not only the printed word, but also the oral, – one's own word. I think that every teacher who has taught language, in addition to the use of Vostokov's grammar, has come across this difficulty.

Suppose you want to direct the pupil's attention to some word, say " me." You catch his sentence : " Miki-shka pushed me down the porch," he said.

" Whom did he push down ? " you say, asking him to repeat the sentence, and hoping to get " me."

" Us," he replies.

" No, how did you say it ? " you ask him.

" We fell down the porch on account of Mikishka," or " When he pushed us, Praskutka flew down, and I after her," he replies.

Try to find the accusative singular and its ending in that. But he

does not see any difference in the words which he employed. And if you take a book or if you repeat his words, he will be analyzing, not the living word, but something quite different. When he dictates, every word of his is caught on the wing by the other pupils and is written down.

" What did you say ? How ? " and he will not be permitted to change a single letter. Then there are the endless debates about one having written so and another so, and soon the dictating pupil begins to reflect about what he is to say, and he begins to understand that there are two things in speech, – form and contents. He says a certain sentence, thinking only of its meaning, and it escapes his lips like one word. They begin to question him, « How ? What ? " and he, repeating it several times to himself, becomes sure of the form and of the component parts, and fixes them by means of words.

Thus they write in the third, that is, the lowest, class, some writing in script, and others in printed letters. We not only do not insist on writing in script, but if there were anything which we should permit ourselves to prohibit the pupils, it would be their writing in script, which ruins their handwriting and is illegible. They get used to script in a natural manner : one learns one or two letters from an older boy ; others learn from them, and frequently write like this : wncZe ; and before a week has passed, they all write in script.

With penmanship there happened this summer the same that had happened with the mechanical reading. The pupils wrote very wretchedly, and the new teacher introduced writing from copy (again a comfortable and easy method for the teacher). The pupils lost interest, and we were compelled to abandon penmanship and were unable to discover a means for improving the handwriting. The oldest class found that means by itself. Having finished the writing of sacred history, the pupils began to ask to be allowed to take their copy-books home. These copy-books were soiled, torn, and horribly scribbled over. The precise mathematician R----asked for some scraps of paper, and

began to rewrite his history. They all took a liking for that. " Let me have paper ! Let me have the copybook ! " and there was started the fashion of penmanship which has continued up to the present in the higher class.

They took their copy-books, placed before them the model alphabet, copied each letter, and contended with each other. In two weeks they made great progress.

Nearly all of us were as children made to eat bread with our other food, though we did not like it, and yet now we do not eat otherwise than with bread. Nearly all of us were compelled to hold the pen with outstretched fingers, but we held it with bent fingers because they were short, – and now we stretch our fingers. The question then is : Why did they torment us so when what is necessary comes later quite naturally ? Will not the desire and the necessity of knowledge

of anything else come in the same way ?

In the second class compositions are written on slates from oral stories taken from sacred history, and these are later copied on paper. In the lowest, the third class, they write anything they can think of. In addition to that, the youngest in the evening write single sentences, composed by all together. One writes and the others whisper among themselves, noticing his mistakes, and wait only for the end, when they may catch him on a wrong ye instead of an e, or in an incorrectly placed preposition, and sometimes, in order to make some blunders themselves. It affords them great pleasure to write correctly and to correct the mistakes of others. The older ones get hold of any letter they can find, exercise themselves in the correction of mistakes, and use their utmost endeavour to write well ; but they cannot endure grammar and the analysis of the language, and, in spite of our former bias for analysis, admit it only in very small proportions, and fall asleep or evade the classes.

We have made all kinds of experiments in the instruction of grammar, and we must confess that not one of them has attained ' its end, - to make this instruction interesting. In the second and the first classes the new teacher made this summer an attempt at explaining the parts of the sentence, and a few of the children at first took interest in them as in charades and riddles. After lessons they frequently hit upon the idea of proposing riddles to each other, and they amused themselves in propounding each other such questions as " Where is the predicate ?" on a par with " What sits on the bed hanging down its feet ? " Of applications to correct writing there were none, and if there were, they were more faulty than correct.

Just the same happens with the letter o, when used for a. You tell a pupil that it is pronounced a but written o, - and he writes robota, molina (instead of rabota, malina) ; you tell him that two predicates are separated by a comma, and he writes I want, to say, and so forth. It is impossible to demand of him that he should each time give himself an account of what in each sentence is a modifier, and what a predicate. And if he does render himself an account, he, during the process of the search, loses all feeling which he needs in order to write correctly the rest, not to mention the fact that during the syntactic analysis the teacher is constantly compelled to use cunning before his pupils and to deceive them, which they are well aware of. For example: we came across the sentence, "There were no mountains upon earth."<sup>1</sup> One said that the subject was "earth," another said that the subject was " mountains," while we declared that it was an impersonal sentence. We saw that the pupils acquiesced only out of politeness, but that they knew full well that our answer was more stupid than theirs, which we inwardly admitted to be so.

Having convinced ourselves of the inconvenience of syntactical analysis, we tried the etymological analysis, - parts of speech, declensions, and conjugations, and we also propounded to each other riddles about the dative, about the infinitive, and about adverbs,

and that resulted in the same tedium, the same abuse of the influence gained by us, and the same inapplicability. In the upper class they always write correctly *ye* in the dative and prepositional cases, but when they correct that mistake in the younger pupils, they are never able to give any reason why they do so, and they must be reminded of the cases, in order to remember the rule : " *Ye* in the dative." The youngest, who have not yet heard anything about the parts of speech, frequently call out *sebye ye*, not knowing them-

1 The difficulty in the Russian sentence is that the subject is put in the genitive case after a negative copula, hence the sentence becomes impersonal.

selves why they do so, and apparently happy to have guessed right.

I tried of late an exercise of my own invention with the second class; it was one I, like all inventors, was carried away with, and it appeared unusually convenient and rational to me until I convinced myself of its inconsistencies through practice. Without naming the parts of the sentence, I made them write anything, frequently giving them the theme, that is, the subject, and making them through questions expand the sentence, by adding modifiers, new predicates, subjects, and modifying clauses.

" The wolves are running." When ? Where ? How ? What wolves are running ? Who else is running ? They are running, and what else are they doing? I thought that by getting used to questions demanding this or that part, they would acquire the distinction of the parts of the sentence and of the parts of speech. So they did, but they grew tired of this, and they inwardly asked themselves what it was for, so that I myself was compelled to ask myself the same question without finding any answer to it. Neither man nor child likes, without a struggle, to give up the living word to be mechanically dismembered and disfigured. There is a certain feeling of self-preservation in the living word. If it is to develop, it tends to develop independently and only in conformity with all vital conditions. The moment you want to catch that word, to tighten it in the vise, to plane it off, and to give it such adornments as this word ought to get, according to your ideas, this word and the live thought and meaning connected with it becomes compressed and conceals itself, and in your hands is left nothing but the shell, on which you may expend all your cunning without harming or helping that word which you wanted to form.

The syntactical and grammatical analyses, the exercises in the expansion of the sentences, have been carried on in the second class until now, but they proceed indolently and, I suppose, will soon entirely disappear of their own accord. In addition to these, we use the following as an exercise in language, although it is not at all of a grammatical character :

(1) We propose to form periods out of certain given words : Nikolay, wood, learn, and they write, " If Nikolay had not been chopping wood, he would have come to learn," or, " Nikolay is a good wood

chopper, – we must learn from him,” and so forth.

(2) We compose verses on a given measure, which exercise amuses particularly the oldest pupils. The verses turn out something like this :

At the window sits a man

In a torn coat ;

In the street a peasant leads By a rope a goat.

(3) An exercise which is very successful in the lowest class : a certain word is given, at first a noun, then an adjective, an adverb, a preposition. One of the pupils goes outside, and of those who remain each must form a sentence, in which the word is to be contained. The one who went out must guess it.

All these exercises – the writing of sentences from given words, the versification, and the guessing of words – have one common aim : to convince the pupil that the word is one having its own immutable laws, changes, endings, and correlations between these endings, – a conviction which is late in entering their minds, and which is needed before grammar. All these exercises give them pleasure ; all the grammatical exercises breed tedium. The strangest and most significant thing is that grammar is dull, although there is nothing easier.

The moment you do not teach grammar from a book, beginning with definitions, a six-year-old child in half an hour begins to decline, conjugate, distinguish genders, numbers, tenses, subjects, and predicates, and you feel that he knows it all as well as you do. (In our locality, there is no neuter gender : gun, hay, butter, window, everything is she, and grammar is of no avail here. The oldest pupils have known grammar for three years, and yet they make blunders in gender, and they avoid them only to the extent of corrections made and in so far as reading helps them.) Why do I teach them all that, when it appears that they know it as well as I do ? Whether I ask him what the genitive plural feminine gender of “great” is, or where the predicate, and where the modifiers are, or what the origin of such and such a word is, – he is in doubt only about the nomenclature, otherwise he will always use an adjective correctly in any case and number you please. Consequently he knows declension. He will never use a sentence without a predicate, and he

does not mix it up with its complement. He naturally feels the radical relation of words, and he is more conscious than you of the laws by which words are formed, because no one more frequently invents new words than children. Why, then, this nomenclature, and the demand of philosophical definitions, which are above his strength ?

The only explanation for the necessity of grammar, outside of the demand made at examinations, may be found in its application to the regular exposition of ideas. In my own experience I have not found this application, and I do not find it in the examples of the lives of people who do not know grammar and yet write correctly, and of candidates of philology, who write incorrectly, and I hardly find a hint of the fact that the knowledge of grammar is applied to anything whatever by the pupils of the Yds nay a Polydna school. It seems to me that grammar goes by itself as a useless mental gymnastic exercise, and that the language, – the ability to write, read, and understand, goes by itself. Geometry and mathematics in general also appear at first as nothing more than mental gymnastics, but with this difference, that every proposition in geometry, every mathematical definition, brings with it further endless deductions and applications; while in grammar, even if we should agree with those who see in it an application of logic to language, there is a very narrow limit to these deductions and applications. The moment a pupil in one way or other masters a language, all applications from grammar tear away and drop off as something dead and lifeless.

We personally are not yet able completely to renounce the tradition that grammar, in the sense of the laws of language, is necessary for the regular exposition of ideas ; it even seems to us that the pupils have a need of grammar, and that in them unconsciously lie the laws of grammar; but we are convinced that the grammar, such as we know it, is not at all the one which the pupils need, and that in tiffs habit of teaching grammar lies some great historical misunderstanding. The child learns that ye is to be written in the word sebye (self), not because it is in the dative, however frequently he may have been told so, and not merely because he blindly imitates that which he has seen written down a number of times, – he generalizes these examples, only not in the form of the dative, but in some other manner.

We have a pupil from another school, who knows grammar excellently and who is not able to distinguish the third person from the infinitive reflexive, and another pupil, Fédka, who has no conception of the infinitive, and who, nevertheless, makes no mistake, for he explains the difficulty to himself and to others by adding the word " will." 1

In the Ydsnaya Polydna school we regard all known methods for the study of language as legitimate, as in the

\* The third person present and the infinitive differ only by a soft sign. Of necessity, a passage had to be omitted here, as being one comprehensible only to a Russian student. case of the study of the

rudiments, and we employ them to just such an extent as they are cheerfully accepted by the pupils and in accordance with our knowledge ; at the same time we consider none of these methods exceptional, and we continually try to find new methods. We are as little in accord with Mr. Perevlyésski's method, which did not stand a two days' experiment at the Yásnaya Polyana school, as with the very prevalent opinion that the only method to learn language is through writing, although writing forms at the Yasnaya Polyana school the chief method of language instruction. We seek and we hope to find.

## COMPOSITIONS

In the first and second class the choice of compositions is left to the students themselves. A favourite subject for compositions for the first and the second class is the history of the Old Testament, which they write two months after the teacher has told it to them. The first class lately began to write the New Testament, but not approximately as well as the Old ; they even made more orthographical mistakes, – they did not understand it so well.

In the first class we tried compositions on given themes. The first themes that most naturally occurred to us were the descriptions of simple objects, such as grain, the house, the wood, and so forth ; but, to our great surprise, these demands upon our pupils almost made them weep, and, in spite of the aid afforded them by the teacher, who divided the description of the grain into a description of its growth, its change into bread, its use, – they emphatically refused to write upon such themes, or, if they did write, they – made the most incomprehensible and senseless mistakes in orthography, in the language and in the meaning.

We tried to give them the description of certain events, and all were as happy as if a present had been given to them. That which forms the favourite description of the schools – the so-called simple objects, – pigs, pots, a table – turned out to be incomparably more difficult than whole stories taken from their memories. The same mistake was repeated here as in all the other subjects of instruction, – to the teacher the simplest and most general appears as the easiest, whereas for a pupil only the complicated and living appears easy.

All the text-books of the natural sciences begin with general laws, the text-books of language with definitions, history with the division into periods, and even geometry with the definition of the concept of space and the mathematical point. Nearly every teacher, being guided by the same manner of thinking, gives as a first composition the definition of a table or bench, without taking the trouble to consider that in order to define a table or bench one has to stand on a high level of a philosophicol-dialectic development, and that the same pupil who weeps over the composition on a bench will excellently describe the feeling of love or anger, the meeting of Joseph with his brothers, or a fight with his companion. The subjects of the compositions were naturally chosen from among

descriptions of incidents, relations to persons, and the repetition of stories told.

The writing of compositions is a favourite occupation. The moment the oldest pupils get hold of a pencil and paper outside of school, they do not write " Dear Sir," but some fairy-tale of their own composition. At first I was vexed by the clumsiness and disproportionateness of the structure of the compositions ; I thought I had properly inspired them with what was necessary, but they misunderstood me, and everything went badly : they did not seem to recognize any other necessity than that of writing without mistakes. But now the time has come in the natural course of events, and frequently we hear an ex-pression of dissatisfaction when the composition is unnecessarily drawn out, or when there are frequent repetitions and jumps from one subject to another. It is hard to define wherein their demands consist, but these demands are lawful. " It is clumsy ! " some of them cry, listening to the composition of a companion ; some of them will not read their own after they have found that the composition of a comrade, as read to them, is good ; some tear their copy-books out of the hands of the teacher, dissatisfied to hear it sound differently from what they wanted, and read it themselves. The individual characters are beginning to express themselves so definitely that we have experimented on making the pupils guess whose composition we have been reading, and the first class they guess without a mistake.

Exigencies of space make us delay the description of the instruction in language and in other subjects, and the extracts from the diaries of the teachers ; here we shall only quote specimens from the writings of two students of the first class without change of orthography and punctuation marks, as given by them.

Composition by B---- (an exceedingly poor pupil, but

an original and lively boy) about Tula and about study. The composition about study was quite successful with the boys. B----- is eleven years old; this is his third

winter at the Ydsnaya Polydna school, but he has studied before.

" About Tula :

" On the following Sunday I again went to Tula. When we arrived, Vladimir Aleksandrovich says to us and Vdska Zhddnov go to the Sunday school. We went, and went, and went, and barely found it, we come and we see that all the teachers set. And there I saw the teacher the one that taught us botany. So I say good morning gentlemen ! They say good morning. Then I ascended into the class, stood near the table, and I felt so lonely, that I took and went about Tula. I went and went and I see a woman selling white-bread. I began to take my money out of my pocket, when I took it out I began to buy white-breads, I bought them and went away. And I saw also a man walking on a tower and looking where it is burning. I am through with Tula."

" Composition of how I have been studying :

" When I was eight years old, I was sent to the cattleyard at Cru my. There I studied well. And then I felt lonely, I began to weep. And the old woman took a stick and began to beat me. And I cried worse than ever. And a few days later I went home and told everything. And they took me away from there and gave me to Dunka's mother. I studied well there and they never beat me there, and I learned the whole ABC there. Then they sent me to F6ka Demidovich. He beat me dreadfully. Once I run away from him, and he told them to catch me. When they catched me they took me to him. He took me, stretched me out on a bench and took into his hands a bundle of rawds and began to strike me. And I cried with all my might, and when he had beat me he made me read. And he himself listens and says : ' What ? You son of a b----, just see how

badly you read ! Ah, what a swine ! ' "

Now here are two specimens of F6dka's compositions : one on the presented theme ; the other, chosen by himself, on his travel to Tula. (F6dka is studying the third winter. He is ten years old.)

" About grain :

"Grain grows from the ground. At first it is green grain. When it grows up a little, there sprout from it ears and the women reap it. There is also grain like grass, that the cattle eat very well."

That was the end of it. He felt that it was not good, and was aggrieved. About Tula he wrote the following without corrections.

" About Tula :

" When I was small I was five years old ; then I heard the people went to some kind of Tula and I myself did not know what kind of a Tula it was. So I asked father. Dad ! to what kind of Tula do you travel, oh it must be fine ? Father says : it is. So I say, Dad ! take me ■with you, I will see Tula, Father says well all right, let the Sunday come I will take you. I was happy began to run and jump over the bench. After those days came Sunday. I just got up in the morning and father was already hitching the horses in the yard, I began to dress myself quickly. The moment I was dressed and went out into the yard, father had already hitched the horses. I sat down in the sleigh and I started. We travelled, and travelled, and made fourteen versts. I saw a tall church and I cried : father ! see what a tall church. Father says : there is a smaller church but more butiful, I began, to ask him, father let us go there, I will pray to God. Father went. When we came, they suddenly rang the bell, I was frightened and asked father what it was, whether they were beating drums. Father says : no, mass is beginning. Then we went to church to pray to God. When we were through praying, we went to the market. And so I walk, and walk and stumble all the time, I kept looking around me. So we came to the market, I saw they were selling wliite-

bread and wanted to take without money. And father says to me, do not take, or they will take your cap away. I say why will they take it, and father says, do not take without money, I say well give me ten kopeks, I will buy me a small white-bread. Father gave me, I bought three white-breads and ate them up and I say : Father, what fine white-breads. When we bought everything, we went to the horses and gave them to drink, gave them hay, when they had eaten, we hitched up the horses and went home, went into the hut and undressed myself and began to tell everybody how I was in Tula, and how father and I were in church, and prayed to God. Then I fell asleep and I see in my dream as though father was again going to Tula. I immediately awoke, and I saw all were asleep, I took and went to sleep."

### SACKED HISTORY

From the foundation of the school even up to the present time the instruction in sacred and Russian history has been carried on in this manner : The children gather about the teacher, and the teacher, being only guided by the Bible, and for Russian history by Pogodin's " Norman Period," and Vodovozov's collection, tells the story, and then asks questions, and all begin to speak at the same time. When there are too many voices speaking at the same time, the teacher stops them, making them speak one at a time ; the moment one hesitates, he asks others. When the teacher notices that some have not understood anything, he makes one of the best pupils repeat it for the benefit of those who have not understood. This was not premeditated, but grew up naturally, and it has been found equally successful with five and with thirty pupils if the teacher follows all, does not allow them to cry and repeat what has once been said, and does not permit the shouts to become maddening, but regulates that stream of merry animation and rivalry to the extent to which he needs it.

In the summer, during the frequent visits and changes of teachers, this order was changed, and the teaching of history was much less successful. The general noise was incomprehensible to the new teacher; it seemed to him that those who were telling the story through the noise would not be able to tell it singly ; it seemed to him that, they holloed only to make a noise, and, above all, he felt uncomfortably warm in the mass of those closely pressing on his back and to the very mouths of the boys. (In order to comprehend better, the children have to be close to the man who is speaking, to see every change of his facial expressions, every motion of his. I have observed more than once that those passages are best understood where the speaker makes a correct gesture or a correct intonation.)

The new teacher introduced the sitting on benches and single answers. The one called out was silent and embarrassed, and the teacher, looking aside, with a sweet expression of submission to fate, or with a meek smile, said, " Well, and then ? Well, ver)' well ! " and so forth, - in that teacher's manner which we all know so well.

Moreover, I have convinced myself in practice that there is nothing more injurious to the development of the child than that kind of single questioning and the authoritative relation of teacher to pupils, arising from it, and for me there is nothing more provoking than such a spectacle.

A big man torments a little fellow, having no right to do so. The teacher knows that the pupil is tormented, as he stands blushing and perspiring before him ; he himself feels uncomfortable and tired, but he has a rule by which a pupil may be taught to speak alone.

Why one should be taught to speak singly, nobody knows. Perhaps in order to make the child read a fable in the presence of his or her Excellency. I shall probably be told that without it it is impossible to determine the degree of his knowledge. To which I shall answer that it is indeed impossible for an outsider to determine the knowledge of a pupil in an hour, while the teacher always feels the measure of that knowledge without the pupil's answer and without examinations. It seems to me that the method of this single asking is the reminiscence of an old superstition. Anciently the teacher, who made his pupil learn by heart everything, could not, in any other way, determine the knowledge of his pupil except by making him repeat everything word for word. Then it was found that the repetition of words learned by heart was not knowledge, and the pupils were made to repeat in their own words ; but the method of calling out singly and the demand of answering at the teacher's request was not changed. They left out of consideration that one may expect at any time and under all conditions that the pupil will repeat the words of the psalter or of a fable, but that, in order to be able to catch the contents of speech and to render it in his own words, the pupil must be in a certain favourable mood for it.

Not only in the lower schools and in the gymnasia, but even in the universities, I do not understand examinations according to given questions otherwise than under a system of memorizing word for word, or sentence for sentence. In my day (I left the university in the year 1845), I studied before the examinations, not word for word, but sentence for sentence, and I received five only from those professors whose notes I had learned by heart.

The visitors, who were so detrimental to the instruction in the Yasnaya Polyana school, in one way were very useful to me. They completely convinced me that the recitation of lessons and the examinations were a remnant of the superstitions of the mediæval school, and that with the present order of things they were positively impossible and only injurious. Frequently I was carried away by a childish vanity, wishing in an hour's time to show to an honoured visitor the knowledge of the pupils, and it turned out either that the visitor convinced himself that the pupils knew that which they did not know (I entertained him by some hocus-pocus) or that the visitor supposed that they did not know that which they knew very well. Such a tangle of misunderstandings took place between me and the visitor – a clever, talented man and a specialist

in his business – during a perfect freedom of relations! What, then, must take place during the inspections of directors, and so forth, – even if we leave out of consideration that disturbance in the progress of teaching and the indefiniteness of ideas produced in the pupils by such examinations ?

At the present time I am convinced of this : to make a résumé of all the pupil's knowledge is as impossible for the teacher as it is for an outsider, just as it is impossible to make a résumé of my own knowledge and yours in respect to any science whatsoever. If a forty-year-old man were to be taken to an examination in geography, it would be as stupid and strange as when a ten-year-old child is led to the examination. Both of them have to answer by rote, and in an hour of time it is impossible to find out their actual knowledge. In order to find out the knowledge of either, it is necessary to live for months with them.

Where examinations are introduced (by examination I understand every demand for an answer to a question), there only arises a new subject, demanding special labour, special ability : that subject is called " preparation for examinations or lessons." A pupil in the gymnasium studies history, mathematics, and, the main subject, the art of answering questions at the examinations. I do not regard this art as a useful subject of instruction. I, the teacher, judge of the degree of my pupils' knowledge as correctly as I judge of the degree of my own knowledge, although neither the pupils nor I myself recite any lessons. If an outsider wants to judge of the degree of that knowledge, let him live awhile with us and let him study the results of our knowledge and their applications to life. There is no other means, and all attempts at examination are only a deception, a he, and an obstacle to instruction. In matters of instruction there is but one independent judge, the teacher, and only the pupils can control him.

During the history lessons the pupils answer all at once, not in order that any one might verify their knowledge, but because they feel the need of strengthening by means of words the impression which they have received. In the summer neither the new teacher nor I understood that ; we saw in that only a verification of their knowledge, and so we found it more convenient to verify it singly. I did not then as yet reflect on the reason for its being tedious and bad, but my faith in the rule of the pupils' freedom saved me. The majority began to feel dull ; three of the boldest boys always answered alone ; three of the most timid were constantly silent and wept and received zeros.

During the summer I neglected the classes of sacred history, and the teacher, a lover of order, had full liberty to seat the pupils on the benches, to torment them singly, and to murmur about the stubbornness of the children. I several times advised him to allow the children in the history class to leave the benches, but my advice was taken by the teacher as a sweet and pardonable originality (just as I know in advance that my advice will be regarded as such by the majority of readers), and the former order

prevailed so long as the old teacher did not return, and it was only in the diary of that teacher that such entries were made : " I cannot get anything out of Savin ; Grishin did not tell a thing ; Pétka's stubbornness is a surprise to me, – he has not spoken a word ; Savin is even worse than before," and so forth.

Savin is a ruddy, chubby boy, with gleaming eyes and long lashes, the son of an innkeeper or a merchant, in a tanned fur coat, in small boots that fit him well, as they are not his father's, and in a red cotton shirt and trousers. The sympathetic and handsome personality of that boy struck me more especially because in the class of arithmetic he was the first, on account of the force of his imagination and merry animation. He also reads and writes not at all badly. But the moment he is asked a question he presses his pretty curly head sidewise, tears appear on his long lashes, and he looks as though he wanted to hide somewhere from everybody, and it is evident that he is suffering beyond endurance. If he is made to learn by heart, he will recite a piece, but he is not able, or has not the courage, to express anything in his own words. It is either some fear inspired by his former teacher (he had studied before with a teacher of the clerical profession), or lack of confidence in himself, or his awkward position among boys who, in his opinion, stand below him, or aristocratism or annoyance that in this alone he is behind the rest and because he once showed himself in a bad light, or his little soul was offended by some careless word escaped from the teacher, or all these causes acting together, – God knows which, – but his bashfulness, though not a good feature in itself, is certainly inseparably connected with everything that is best in his childish soul. It is possible to knock all that out with a physical or moral stick, but the danger is that all the precious qualities, without which the teacher would find it hard to lead him on, might be knocked out at the same time.

The new teacher listened to my advice, dismissed the pupils from the benches, permitted them to crawl whenever they pleased, even on his back, and that same day all began to recite incomparably better, so that the entry was made in the teacher's diary, " Stubborn Savin said a few words."

There is in the school something indefinite, which almost does not submit to the guidance of the teacher, and that is the spirit of the school. This spirit is subject to certain laws and to the negative influence of the teacher, that is, the teacher must avoid certain things in order not to break up that spirit. The spirit of the school is, for example, always in inverse relation to the compulsion and order of the school, in inverse relation to the interference of the teacher in the pupils' manner of thinking, in direct relation to the number of pupils, in inverse relation to the duration of a lesson, and so on. This spirit of the school is something that is rapidly communicated from pupil to pupil, and even to the teacher, something that is palpably expressed in the sound of the voice, in the eyes, the movements, the tension of the rivalry, – something very tangible, necessary, and extremely precious, and therefore something that ought to be the aim of every teacher. Just as the

saliva in the mouth is necessary for the digestion, but is disagreeable and superfluous without food, even so this spirit of strained animation, though tedious and disagreeable outside the class, is a necessary condition for the assimilation of mental food. It is impossible to invent and artificially to prepare this mood, nor is it necessary to do so because it always makes its appearance of its own accord.

In the beginning of the school I made mistakes. The moment a boy began to comprehend badly and unwillingly, when the so habitual dulness of the school came over him, I used to say, " Jump awhile ! " The boy began to jump ; others, and he with them, laughed ; and after the jumping the pupil was a different boy. But, after having repeated tins jumping several times, it turned out that when I told the boy to jump he was overcome by a greater tedium, and he began to weep. He saw that he was not in the mood in which he ought to be, and yet he was not able to control his own soul, and did not wish to allow anybody else to control it. A child and a man are receptive only when in an excited state, therefore it is a great blunder to look upon the happy spirit of a school as upon an enemy, an obstacle, though we are often inclined to regard it as such.

But when the animation in a large class is so strong that it interferes with a teacher in his attempt to guide the class, then one feels tempted to cry out against the children and to subdue that spirit. If that animation has the lesson for an object, then nothing better is to be desired. But if the animation has passed over to another object, the fault is with the teacher who did not manage that animation properly. The problem of a teacher, which nearly every one carries out unconsciously, consists in constantly giving food to this animation and giving it the reins. You ask one pupil, and another wants to answer: he knows it, – he is bending over to you and gazing at you with both his eyes ; he is scarcely able to keep his words back ; he eagerly follows the storyteller and will not forgive him a single mistake ; ask him; and he will tell you impassionately, and that which he will tell you will for ever impress itself upon his mind. But keep him in this tension, without allowing him to talk for half an hour, and he will pass his time in pinching his neighbour.

Another example : Walk out of a class of the county school, or from a German school, where it has been quiet, leaving the order that they are to proceed with their work, and half an hour later listen at the door ; the class is animated, but the subject of the animation is different, it is the so-called mischievousness. We have often made this experiment in our classes. Leaving the class in the middle, when the shouting was at the loudest, we would return to the door to listen, and we would find that the boys continued to tell their stories, correcting and verifying each other, and frequently they would entirely quiet down, instead of being naughty without us.

Just as with the order of seating the pupils on the benches and asking them questions singly, even so with this order there are simple rules which one must know and without which the first

experiment may be a failure. One must watch the criers who repeat the last words said, only to increase the noise. It is necessary to see to it that the charm of the noise should not become their main purpose and problem. It is necessary to test some pupils, as to whether they are able to tell everything by themselves, and whether they have grasped the whole meaning. If there are too many pupils, they ought to be divided into a number of divisions, and the pupils ought to tell the respective story to each other by divisions.

There is no need of fearing because a newly arrived pupil does not open his mouth for a month. All that is necessary is to watch whether he is busy with the story or with something else. Generally a newly arrived pupil grasps only the material side of the matter, and is all rapt in observing how the pupils sit and lie, how the teacher's lips are moving, how they all cry out at once ; if he is a quiet boy, he will sit down just as the others do ; if he is bold, he will cry like the rest, without getting the meaning of what is said, and only repeating the words of his neighbour. The teacher and his companions stop him, and he understands that something else is meant. A little time will pass, and he will begin to tell a story. It is difficult to find out how and when the flower of comprehension will open up in him.

Lately I had occasion to watch such an opening of the bud of comprehension in a very timid girl who had kept silent for a month. Mr. U---- was telling something,

and I was an outside spectator and made my observations. When all began to tell the story, I noticed that Marfutka climbed down from the bench with the gesture with which story-tellers change the position of hearer to that of narrator, and came nearer. When all began to shout, I looked at her: she barely moved her lips, and her eyes were full of thought and animation. Upon meeting my glance, she lowered hers. A minute later I again looked around, and she was again whispering something to herself. I asked her to tell the story, and she was completely lost. Two days later she told a whole story beautifully.

The best proof that the pupils of our school remember what is told them is found in the stories which they themselves write down from memory, given here with the correction of the orthographical mistakes only.

Extract from the note-book of ten-year-old M----:

" God commanded Abraham to bring his son Isaac as an offering. Abraham took two servants with him. Isaac carried the wood and the fire, and Abraham carried the knife. When they came to Mount Moriah, Abraham left his two servants there and himself went with Isaac up the mountain. Says Isaac : ' Father, we have everything, where, then, is the victim ? '

" Says Abraham : ' God has commanded me to sacrifice thee.'

" So Abraham made a fire and put his son down.

"Says Isaac: 'Father, bind me, or else I will jump up and kill thee.'

" Abraham took and tied him. He just swung his arm, and an angel flew down from the heavens and held back his arm and said :  
' Abraham, do not place thine hand on thy young son, God sees thy faith.'

" Then the angel says to him : 'Go into the bush, a wether is caught there, bring him in place of thy son,' and Abraham brought a sacrifice to God.

" Then came the time for Abraham to marry off his son. They had a servant Eliezer. Abraham called up the servant and says he : ' Swear to me that thou wilt not take a bride from our town, but that thou wilt go where I send thee.'

" Abraham sent him to Nahor in the land of Mesopotamia. Eliezer took the camels and went away. When he came to a well he began to speak :  
\* Lord, give me such a bride, as will come first, and will give to drink to me and also to my camels, – she shall be the bride of my master Isaac.'

" Eliezer had barely said these words, when a maiden came. Eliezer began to ask her to give him to drink.

She gave him to drink, and says she : ' Maybe thy camels want to drink.'

" Says Eliezer : ' All right, give them to drink.'

" She gave the camels to drink, then Eliezer gave her a necklace, and says he : ' May I not stay overnight in your house ? '

" Says she : ' Thou mayest.'

" When they came to the house, her relatives were eating supper, and they put Eliezer down to eat supper.

" Says Eliezer : ' I will not eat until I have said a word.'

" Eliezer told it to them.

" Said they : ' We are willing, how is she ? '

"They asked her, – she was willing. Then her father and mother blessed Rebecca, Eliezer sat down with her, and they rode away, and Isaac was walking over the field. Rebecca saw Isaac and she covered herself with a towel. Isaac went up to her, took her hand, and led her to his house, and they were married."

From the note-book of the boy I---- F----, about

Jacob :

" Rebecca had been sterile for nineteen years, then she bore twins, – Esau and Jacob. Esau was a hunter, and Jacob helped his mother. One day Esau went to kill beasts and he killed none and came home angry ; and Jacob was eating a mess of pottage. Esau came and says he : ' Let me have of that mess.'

"Says Jacob: 'Give me thy birthright.'

" Says Esau : ' Take it.'

" ' Swear.'

" Esau swore. Then Jacob gave Esau of the mess of pottage.

" When Isaac grew blind, he said : ' Esau, go and kill me some venison ! '

" Esau went, Rebecca heard it, and says she to Jacob : ' Go and kill two goslings.'

" Jacob went and killed two goslings and brought them to his mother. She roasted them and wrapped Jacob in a skin, and Jacob brought the food to his father, and says he : 'I have brought thee thy favourite dish.'

" Says Isaac : ' Come up nearer to me.'

"Jacob came nearer. Isaac began to touch his body, and says he : ' It is Jacob's voice and Esau's body.'

" Then he blessed Jacob. Jacob just came out of the door, and Esau came in through the door, and says he: ' Here, father, is thy favourite dish.'

" Says Isaac : ' Esau was here before?

"'No, father, Jacob has deceived thee,' and he himself went through the door, and wept, and says he : ' Let father die, and then I will get even with thee.'

" Rebecca says to Jacob : ' Go and ask thy father's benediction and then go to thine uncle Laban?

" Isaac blessed Jacob, and he went to his uncle Laban. Here night overtook him. He stayed overnight in the field; he found a rock, put it under his head, and fell asleep. Suddenly he saw something in his dream, as though a ladder were standing from earth to heaven, and the angels were going up and down it, and on the top the Lord himself was standing, and says he :

"'Jacob, the land on which thou liest I give to thee and to thy

descendants?

“ Jacob arose, and says he : ‘ How terrible it is here, evidently this is God’s house, I will come back from there, and will build a church here? Then he lighted a lamp, and he went on,—he saw shepherds herding some cattle. Jacob began to ask of them where his uncle Laban was living.

“ The shepherds said : ‘ There is his daughter, she is driving the sheep to water?

“ Jacob went up to her, she could not push away the stone from the well. Jacob pushed the stone away and he watered the sheep, and says he : ‘ Whose daughter art thou ? ’

“ She replied : ‘ Laban’s?

“‘I am thy cousin?

“ They kissed each other and went home. Uncle Laban received him, and says he : ‘ Jacob, stay with me, I will pay thee?

“ Says Jacob : ‘ I will not live with thee for pay, but give me thy younger daughter Rachel?

“ Says Laban : ‘ Live seven years with me, then will I give thee my younger daughter Rachel, for we have no right to give a younger daughter away sooner?

“ Jacob lived for seven years with his uncle, then Laban gave him Rachel.”

From the note-book of eight-year-old T---- F----,

about Joseph:

“ Jacob had twelve sons. He loved Joseph best of all, and had made for him a many-coloured dress. Then Joseph saw two dreams, and he told them to his brothers : ‘ It was as though we were reaping rye in the field and we reaped twelve sheaves. My sheaf was standing straight, and the eleven sheaves were bowing before my sheaf?

“ Say the brothers : ‘ Is it really so that we shall bow to thee ? ’

“ And he had another dream : ‘ It was as though there were eleven stars in heaven, and the sun and moon were bowing to my star?

“ Say father and mother : ‘ Is it possible we shall bow before thee ? ’

“His brothers went a long distance away to herd cattle, then the father sent Joseph to take some food to his brothers. His brothers saw him, and say they : « There comes our reader of dreams. Let us put him down in a bottomless well?

" Reuben was thinking to himself : ' The moment they turn away, I will pull him out? And there merchants came by. Says Reuben : ' Let us sell him to the Egyptian merchants?

" They sold Joseph, and the merchants sold him to Potiphar the courtier. Potiphar loved him, and his wife loved him. Potiphar was absent somewhere, and his wife says to Joseph:

« ' Joseph, let us kill my husband, and I will marry thee.'

" Says Joseph : ' If thou say est that a second time, I will tell thy husband.'

« She took him by his garment and cried out loud. The servants heard her and came rushing in. Then Potiphar arrived. His wife told him that Joseph had intended to kill him, and then to marry her. Potiphar ordered him to be put in jail. As Joseph was a good man, he deserved well there, and he was made to look after the prison. Once upon a time Joseph went through the jail and saw two men sitting in sorrow. Joseph went up to them, and says he :

" ' Why are ye so saddened ? ' "

« Say they : ' We have had two dreams in one night, and there is nobody to explain them to us.'

" Says Joseph : ' What is it ? ' "

" The cupbearer began to tell him : ' I dreamt that I had picked three berries, squeezed the juice, and given it to the king.'

"Says Joseph: 'Thou wilt be in thy place in three days.'

" Then the steward began to tell : ' I dreamt that I carried twelve loaves in a basket, and the bird Hew about and picked at the bread.'

" Joseph said : ' Thou wilt be hanged in three days, and the birds will fly about and will pick thy body.'

" And so it happened. Once Pharaoh had two visions in one night and he called together all his wise men, and they could not explain his dreams to him. The cupbearer remembered and said :

" ' I have a certain man in mind.\* "

"The king sent his carriage for him. When he was brought, the king began to say: 'I dreamt that I stood on the bank of a river and there came out seven fat kine, and seven lean ones ; the lean ones threw themselves on the fat ones and ate them up and did not get fat.'

" And he had another vision : ' I dreamt that there were growing seven full ears on one stalk, and seven empty ones ; the empty ones

threw themselves on the full ones, ate them up, and did not grow full.'

" Joseph said : ' This means that there will be seven fruitful years and seven hungry years.'

" The king gave Joseph a gold chain over his shoulder and the ring from his right hand, and told him to build granaries."

All that has been said refers to the teaching of sacred and Russian and natural history, of geography, partly of physics, chemistry, zoology, in general of all subjects except singing, mathematics, and drawing. About the instruction in sacred history in particular at that time I must say as follows :

First, why the Old Testament is chosen before anything else. Not only was the knowledge of sacred history demanded by the pupils and their parents, but I also discovered that of all oral information, which I had tried in the period of three years, nothing so fitted the comprehension of the boys' minds as the Bible. The same thing was repeated in all the other schools which I had had occasion to examine in the beginning. I tried the New Testament, Russian history, and geography; I tried the favourite subject of our day, – the explanations of the phenomena of Nature, – but all that was easily forgotten and was not readily listened to. On the other hand, the Old Testament was remembered and gladly repeated, with enthusiasm, both at school and at home, and it left such an impression upon the children that, two mouths after it had been told to them, they wrote down sacred history from memory in their note-books, with but few omissions.

It seems to me that the book of the childhood of the race will always be the best book of the childhood of each man. It seems to me impossible to put another book in its place. It seems to me injurious to change and shorten the Bible, as is done in Sonntag's text-books, and so forth. Everything, every word in it, is true, as revelation and as art. Bead about the creation of the world in the Bible and in the short Sacred History, and the transformation of the Bible in the Sacred History will appear quite unintelligible to you ; from the Sacred History you cannot learn otherwise than by memorizing, while in the Bible there is presented to the child a majestic and living picture, which he will never forget. The omissions in the Sacred History are quite unintelligible and only impair the character and beauty of Holy Scripture. Why, for example, do all the sacred histories omit that when there was nothing, the Spirit of God was borne over the abyss, that God, having created, surveyed His creation and saw that all was well, and that then it was morning and evening of such and such a day ? Why do they leave out that God breathed the soul through the nostrils, that, having taken out a rib from Adam, he filled up the place with flesh, and so forth ? Let uncorrupted children read the Bible, and then you will understand to what extent that is necessary and true. It may be that spoiled young ladies must not get the Bible into their hands, but when I read to peasant children, I did not leave out a single word.

And nobody giggled behind somebody's back, and all listened with trepidation and natural awe. The story of Lot and his daughters, the story of Judas, provoke horror, not laughter.

How comprehensible and clear, particularly for a child, everything is, and, at the same time, how stem and serious ! I can't understand what kind of an education would be possible if it were not for that book. And yet it seems if we learn these stories only in childhood and then partly forget them, – what good are they to us? And would it not be the same if we did not know them at all ?

This seems so only so long as you do not teach others, when you have a chance to watch all the elements of your own development in other children. It seems that it is possible to teach the children to write and read, to give them a conception of history, geography, and the phenomena of Nature, without the Bible and before the Bible ; and yet that is not done anywhere, – everywhere the child first learns the Bible, stories and extracts from it. The first relation of the teacher to the pupil is based upon that book. Such a universal phenomenon is not accidental. My absolutely free relation to the pupils in the beginning of the Yâsnaya Polyana school helped me to find an explanation for this phenomenon.

A child, or man, entering school (I make no distinction between one of ten, thirty, or seventy years of age), brings with him his familiar and favourite view of things, as taken away by him from life. In order that a man of any age whatsoever should begin to learn, it is necessary that he should like learning. In order that he should like learning, he must recognize the falseness and insufficiency of his view of things and he must divine the new world conception, which the instruction is to open to him. Not one man or child would be able to learn, if the future of his learning presented itself to him only as an art of reading, writing, and counting; not one teacher would be able to teach, if he did not have in his power a higher world conception than what the pupils have. In order that the pupil may entirely surrender himself to the teacher, there must be lifted for him one side of the shroud which has been concealing from him all the charm of that world of thought, knowledge, and poetry, to which instruction was to introduce him. Only by being under the spell of that brilliant world ahead of him is the pupil able to work over himself in the manner in which we want him to.

What means have we, then, to lift that edge of the curtain for the pupil ? As I have said, I thought, just as many think, that, being myself in that world to which I am to introduce the pupils, I could easily do so, and I taught the rudiments, I explained the phenomena of Nature, I told them, as it says in the AB C's, that the fruits of learning are sweet, but the pupils did not believe me and kept aloof. I tried to read the Bible to them, and I completely took possession of them. The edge of the curtain was lifted, and they surrendered themselves to me unconditionally. They fell in love with the book, with the study, and with me. All I had now to do was to guide them on.

After the Old Testament I told them the New, and they loved studying and me more and more. Then I told them universal, Russian, and natural history, when we were through with the Bible ; they listened to everything, believed everything, begged to go on and on, and ever new perspectives of thought, knowledge, and poetry were opened up to them.

It may be this was an accident. It may be that in some other school the same results were obtained by beginning in an entirely different manner. Maybe. But this accidentalness was repeated too invariably in all schools and in all families, and the explanation of this phenomenon is too apparent to me to permit of any assumption that it is accidental.

There is no book like the Bible to open up a new world to the pupil and to make him without knowledge love knowledge. I speak even of those who do not look upon the Bible as a revelation. At least, there is no production that I know of, which unites all the sides of human thought in such a compressed poetical form as is to be found in the Bible. All the questions from the phenomena of Nature are explained by this book ; all the primitive relations of men with each other, of the family, of the state, of religion, are for the first time consciously recognized in this book. The generalizations of ideas, wisdom, in a childishly simple form, for the first time spell the pupil's mind. The lyricism of David's psalms acts not only upon the minds of grown pupils, but everybody for the first time learns from this book the whole charm of the epos in its inimitable simplicity and strength.

Who has not wept over the story of Joseph and his meeting with his brothers ? Who has not narrated with a sinking heart the story of Samson bound and deprived of his hair, as he, taking vengeance on his enemies, himself perishes under the ruins of the fallen palace, and a hundred other impressions, on which we have been brought up as on our mothers' milk ?

Let those who deny the educational value of the Bible, who say that the Bible has outlived its usefulness, invent such a book, such stories, which explain the phenomena of Nature, or the phenomena from universal history, or from their imagination, which will be as readily received as the Biblical accounts, and then we shall admit that the Bible has outlived its usefulness.

Pedagogy serves as a verification of very many vital phenomena, and of social and abstract questions.

Materialism will then only have the right to announce itself a victor when the Bible of materialism shall be written, and the children are educated by that Bible. Owen's attempt cannot be regarded as a proof of such a possibility, just as the growth of a lemon-tree in a Moscow hothouse is not a proof that trees can grow without the open sky and the sun.

I repeat my conviction, which, perhaps, is deduced from a one-sided experience. Without the Bible the development of a child or a man is unthinkable in our society, just as it was unthinkable in Greek society without Homer. The Bible is the only book for the first reading of children. The Bible, both as to its contents and to its form, ought to serve as a model of all manuals and readers for children, and an idiomatic translation of the Bible would be the best popular book. The appearance of such a translation in our time would be an epoch in the history of the Russian nation.

Now as to the instruction in sacred history. All the short sacred histories in the Russian language I consider a double crime : against its holiness, and against poetry. All these refacimientos, having in view the facility of the study of sacred history, only make it more difficult. The Bible is read as a pleasure, at home, leaning the head on the arm ; the abbreviated stories are learned by heart with the aid of a pointer. Not only are these short stories dull and incomprehensible, they also spoil the ability to understand the poetry of the Bible. I have observed more than once that bad, unintelligible language impairs the receptiveness of the inner meaning of the Bible. Unintelligible words, however, such as occur in the Bible, are remembered together with the incidents; they arrest the attention of the pupils by their novelty, and, as it were, serve as guide-posts in their stories.

Very frequently a pupil speaks only in order to make use of a pretty phrase for which he has taken a liking, and then the simplicity of imbibing the contents only is gone. I have also observed that pupils from other schools always feel much less or not at all the charm of the Biblical stories, which is destroyed by the necessity of memorizing and by the rude methods of the teacher connected with it. These pupils have even spoiled the younger pupils and their brothers, in the manner of whose narration there were reflected certain trite methods of the abbreviated sacred histories. Such trite stories have, by means of these injurious books, found their way among the masses, and frequently the pupils bring with them from home peculiar legends of the creation of the world, of Adam, and of Joseph the Beautiful. These pupils do not experience that which the fresh pupils feel when they listen to the Bible and with trepidation catch each word and think that now, at last, all the wisdom of the world will be revealed to them.

I have always taught sacred history from the Bible, and I regard any other instruction as injurious.

The New Testament is similarly told according to the Gospel and is later written down in note-books. The New Testament is not comprehended so well, and therefore demands more frequent repetitions.

Here are a few specimens from the stories of the New Testament.

From the copy-book of the boy I---- M----, about

the Lord's supper:

" Once upon a time Jesus Christ sent His disciples to the city of Jerusalem and said to them : ' If you come across a man with water, follow him and ask him : Master, show us a room where we can prepare the pass-over. He will show you, and you prepare it there.'

" They went and saw what He had told them, and they prepared it. In the evening Jesus Himself went there with His disciples. During the supper Jesus Christ took off His garment and girded Himself with a towel. Then he took the laver and filled it with water and went to each disciple and washed his feet. When He went up to Peter and wanted to wash his feet, Peter said :

" < Lord ! Thou wilt never wash my feet.'

" And Jesus Christ said to him : \* If I am not going to wash thy feet, thou wilt not be with Me in the Kingdom of Heaven.'

" Then Peter was frightened and says he : ' Lord ! Not only my feet, but even my head and my whole body.'

« And Jesus said to him : ' Only the pure one has to get his feet washed.'

« Then Jesus Christ dressed Himself and sat down at the table, took the bread, blessed it and broke it and began to give it to His disciples, and He said : ' Take it and eat it, – it is My body.'

" They took it and ate it. Then Jesus took a bowl of wine, blessed it, and began to carry it around to the disciples, and He said: 'Take it and drink it, – it is My blood of the New Testament.'

" They took it and drank it. Then Jesus Christ said : 'One of you will betray Me.'

" And the disciples began to say : ' Lord, is it I ? '

"And says Jesus Christ: 'No.'

" Then Judas says : ' Lord, is it I ! '

" And Jesus Christ said half-aloud : ' Yes.'

" After that Jesus Christ said to His disciples : ' He to whom I shall give a piece of bread will betray Me.'

" Then Jesus Christ gave Judas a piece of bread. Then Satan took his abode in him, so that he was abashed and went out of the room."

From the copy-book of the boy R----B----:

" Then Jesus Christ went with His disciples into the garden of Gethsemane to pray to God, and He said to His disciples : ' Wait for

Me and do not sleep.'

"When Jesus came and saw that His disciples were asleep, He wakened them and said : ' You could not wait one hour for Me.'

" Then He went again to pray to God. He prayed to God and said : ' Lord, cannot this cup pass by ? ' and He prayed so long to God that He began to sweat blood. An angel flew down from heaven and began to fortify Jesus. Then Jesus returned to His disciples and said to them : ' Why are ye sleeping ? The hour is coming when the Son of man will give Himself up into the hands of His enemies.'

" And Judas said to the high priest : ' Whom I shall kiss, that one take.'

" Then the disciples went after Jesus and they saw a crowd of people. Judas went up to Jesus and wanted to kiss Him. So Jesus says :

" ' Art thou betraying Me by a kiss ? ' and to the people He says : ' Whom are ye seeking ? '

"They said to Him: 'Jesus of Nazareth.'

" Jesus said : ' I am He.'

" With that word all fell."

## HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY

Having finished the Old Testament, I naturally thought of teaching history and geography, both because these subjects are taught in all children's schools, just as I had learned them, and because the history of the Jews of the Old Testament seemed naturally to lead the children to the questions where, when, and under what conditions certain incidents had taken place, what Egypt was, and Pharaoh, and the Assyrian king, and so forth.

I began history, as is always done, with antiquity. But neither Mommsen, nor Duncker, nor all my efforts, were able to make it interesting. They felt no interest in Sesostris, in the Egyptian pyramids, and in the Phoenicians. I had hoped that questions, such as who the nations were that had anything to do with the Jews and where the Jews lived and wandered, would interest them ; but the pupils were in no need of this information. The Pharaohs and Egypt and Palestine, which have existed sometime and somewhere, do not in the least satisfy them. The Jews are their heroes, all the others are unnecessary, superfluous persons. I did not succeed in making heroes out of the Egyptians and Phoenicians for lack of material. No matter how much in detail we may know how pyramids were built, in what condition and relation to each other the castes were, - what good is all that to us? - to us, that is, the children ? In those histories there is no Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Samson. There were a few things which they remembered and liked in ancient

history, such as Semiramis, and so forth, but that was retained only incidentally, not because it explained anything, but because it was artistic and fairylike. But such passages were rare; the rest was dull, aimless, and I was compelled to abandon the study of universal history.

I was confronted with the same failure in geography as in history. I sometimes tell them anything that occurs to me from Greek, English, Swiss history, without any connection, and only as an instructive and artistic fable.

After universal history I had to experiment on our native Russian history, and I began that cheerless Russian history, which we know so well as neither artistic nor instructive, in the many remodellings from Ishimova to Vodovozov. I began it twice: the first time before having finished the whole Bible, and the second time after it. Before the Bible had been read, the pupils absolutely refused to remember the existence of the Igors and Olégs. The same thing is repeated now with the younger pupils. Those who have not yet learned to enter into the meaning of what is told them from the Bible, and to render it in their own words, will listen to it for five times and will remember nothing about Rurik and Yaroslav.

The oldest pupils now remember Russian history and make notes of it, but nowhere near so well as they did with the stories from the Bible, and they ask for frequent repetitions. We tell them the stories from Vodovozov and from Pogddin's "Norman Period." One of the teachers was somehow carried away in his zeal, and, paying no attention to my advice, did not leave out the feudal period, and landed in the hopeless tangle and nonsense of the Mstislavs, Bryachislfov, and BoleslKvs. I entered the class just as they were to recite. It is hard to describe what really happened. All were silent for a long time. Finally, those who were called out by the teacher began to speak, some of them more boldly and with a better display of memory. All their mental powers were directed toward recalling the "funny" names, but what each of them had done was a matter of secondary importance.

"So he, - what is it? - Barikav, is it?" began one, "went to, what do you call it?"

"Muslav, Lev Nikolaevich?" a girl helps him out.

"Mstislav," I say.

"And put him to rout," proudly says one.

"Hold on, there was a river there."

"And his son collected an army and smashed it to rout, what do you call him?"

"I can't make it out," says a girl who has a memory like a blind person.

" It is such a funny thing," says Sémka.

" What is it, anyway, – Mislav, Chislav ? The devil can't make out what it is good for! "

" Don't bother me if you do not know any better ! "

" You know much ! You are awfully clever."

" Don't push me ! "

Those who have the best memories tried it once more and managed to say something if they were helped out. But all that was so monstrous, and it was such a pity to see these children (they were like hens to whom grain had been thrown out before and now sand is given, when they suddenly become perplexed, begin to cackle, are all in a flutter, and ready to pick each other's feathers), that the teacher and I decided never again to make such mistakes. We passed beyond the feudal period in continuing Russian history, and here is what comes of it in the copybooks of the older pupils.

From the copy-book of pupil V----R----:

" Our ancestors were called Slavs. They had neither tsars, nor princes. They were divided into families, attacked each other, and went to war. Once the Normans fell upon the Slavs, and they conquered them, and levied a tribute. Then they say : ' Why are we living thus ? Let us choose a prince, that he may rule over us.' They chose Burik, with his two brothers Sineus and Truvor. Burik settled in Ladoga, Sineus in Izborsk with the Kriviches, Truvor at the Byelozero. When those brothers died, Burik took their places.

" Then two of them went to Greece, – Askold and Dir, – and they stopped in Kiev and said : ' Who is ruling here ?'

" The Kievans said : ' There were three here : Ki, Shchek, and Khorfv. Now they are dead.'

" Askold and Dir said : ' All right, we shall rule over you.'

« The people agreed to it and began to pay tribute.

" Then Burik ordered cities and fortresses to be built, and he sent out the boyars to collect the tribute and bring it to him. Then Burik made up his mind to go to war against Constantinople with two hundred boats. When he rode up to that city, the emperor was not there. The Greeks sent for him. The people prayed to God all the time. Then the archpriest brought out the garment of the Holy Virgin and dipped it in the water, and there rose a terrible storm, and all the boats of Burik were scattered. Very few of them were saved. Then Burik went home and there died. There was left one son, Igor.

" When he was small 016g, took his place. He wanted to conquer

Kiev ; he took Igor with him and travelled straight down the Dnieper. On his way he conquered the cities of Lyubich and Smolensk. When they reached Kiev, 016g sent his messengers to Askdld and Dir to say that merchants had come to see them, and himself hid half of the men in boats, and half he left behind. When Askdld and Dir came out with a small retinue, 016g's army jumped out from underneath the boats and rushed against them. Then 016g lifted up Igor and said :

" ' You are no princes and not of a princely race, but here is the prince.'

" Then 016g ordered them to be killed and conquered Kiev. 016g remained there, made that city a capital, and called it the mother of all Bussian cities. Then he ordered cities and fortresses to be built, and sent the boyars to collect tribute, and they brought it to him. Then he went to wage war with the neighbouring tribes, and he conquered very many of them. He did not want to wage war with peaceful men, but with brave men. Then he got ready to go against Greece, and we went down the Dnieper. When he had travelled down the Dnieper, he went over the Black Sea. When he reached Greece, his army leaped upon the shore and began to burn and pillage everything. Says 016g to the Greeks : ' Pay us a tribute, – a grivna for each boat.' They were glad and began to pay them the tribute. Here 016g collected three hundred puds and went home again."

From the copy-book of pupil V----M----:

"When 016g died, Igor, the son of Burik, took his place. Igor wanted to get married. Once he went out to disport himself with his retinue, – he had to swim across the Dnieper. Suddenly he saw : a girl was swimming in a boat. When she reached the shore, Igor said : ' Put me in.' She put him in. Then Igor married her. Igor wanted to distinguish himself. So he collected an army and went to war, straight down the Dnieper, – not to the right, but to the left, from the Dnieper into the Black Sea, from the Black Sea to the Caspian Sea. Igor sent messengers to the kagan to let him pass through the field ; when he should return from the war, he would give him half his booty. The kagan let him through. When they came near to the city, Igor ordered the people to come out on the shore, to bum and cut everything and to take prisoners. When they were through with their work, they began to rest. When they were through resting, they went home in great joy. They came up to the city of the kagan, – Igor sent to the kagan what he had promised. The people heard that Igor was coming from the war, so they began to ask the kagan to allow them to avenge themselves on Igor, because Igor had spilled the blood of their relatives. The kagan told them not to, but the people did not obey him and began to wage war,– there was a mighty battle. The Russians were worsted, and everything was taken away from them which they had conquered."

There is no vital interest in this, as the reader may see from the extracts quoted. Russian history goes better than universal history, only because they were accustomed to assimilate and write down what had been told them, and also because the question, " What is this

for ? " is less applicable here. The Russian people is their hero just as the Jewish nation has been. The Jewish, because it was God's favourite nation, and because its history is artistic. The Russian, although it has no artistic right to be their hero, because the national feeling speaks for it. But this instruction is dry, cold, and tedious. Unfortunately, the history itself very seldom gives occasion for the national sentiment to triumph.

Yesterday I went out from my class to the class of history in order to find out the cause of the animation which I could hear from the other room. It was the battle at Kulikovo. All were agitated.

" Now that is history ! It is great ! – Listen, Lev Nikoläevich, how he scared away the Tartars !– Let me tell it to you ! "

"No, I ! " cried several children. " How the blood flowed in a stream! "

Nearly all were able to tell it, and all were enthusiastic. But if only the national feeling is to be satisfied, what will there be left of the whole history? The years 1612, 1812, and that is all. You cannot go through the whole of history by responding to the national feeling. I understand that it is possible to employ the historical tradition in order always to satisfy the artistic interest inherent in children, but that will not be history. For the instruction of history we need the preliminary development of the historical sentiment in children. How is that to be done ?

I have frequently had occasion to hear that the teaching of history ought to be begun, not from the beginning, but from the end, that is, not with ancient, but with modern history. This idea is essentially true. How can a child be told and made interested in the beginning of the Russian realm, when he does not know what the Russian realm, or realm in general, is ? He who has had anything to do with children ought to know that every Russian child is firmly convinced that the whole world is just like Russia, in which he is living; the same is true of a French or a German child. Why are children, and even grown-up, childish naïve men, always surprised to hear that German children speak German ?

The historical interest generally makes its appearance after the artistic interest. It is interesting for us to know the history of the foundation of Rome because we know what Rome was in her flourishing time, just as the childhood of a man whom we recognize as great is interesting. The antithesis of her might with an insignificant crowd of fugitives is for us the essence of history. We watch the evolution of Rome, having before our imagination the picture of that which she finally reached. We are interested in the foundation of the Moscow tsardom, because we know what the Russian Empire is. According to my observation and experience, the first germ of the historic

interest makes its appearance as the result of the knowledge of contemporaneous history, and frequently as the result of a

participation in it, through political interest, political opinions, debates, reading of newspapers, and therefore the idea of beginning history with the present must naturally present itself to every thinking teacher.

I made these experiments in the summer ; I then wrote them down, and shall adduce one of them here.

The first lesson of history.

I had the intention of explaining at the first lesson in what way Russia differed from other countries, what its borders were, the characteristic of the governmental structure, of telling them who was reigning now, and how and when the emperor ascended the throne.

Teacher. Where do we live, in what country ?

A pupil. In Yasnaya Polyana.

Another pupil. In the field.

Teacher. No, in what country is Yasnaya Polyana, and the Government of Tula ?

Pupil. The Government of Tula is seventeen versts from us. Where is it ? The Government is a Government and that is all there is to it.

Teacher. No. That is the capital of the Government, but a Government is something different. Well, what land is it ?

Pupil (who had heard geography 'before'). The earth is round like a ball.

By means of questions as to what country a German, whom they knew, had lived in before, and where they would get if they were to travel all the time in one direction, the pupils were led up to answer that they lived in Russia. Some, however, replied to the question where we should get if we travelled all the time in one direction, that we should get nowhere. Others said that we should get to the end of the world.

Teacher (repeating the pupil's answer). You said that we should come to some other countries ; where will Russia end and other countries begin ?

Pupil. Where the Germans begin.

Teacher. So, if you meet Gustav Ivanovich and Karl Fédorovich in Tula, you will say that the Germans have begun and that there is a new country ?

Pupil. No, when the Germans begin thick.

Teacher. No, there are places in Russia where the Germans are thick.

Ivan Fdrnich is from one of them, and yet that is still Russia. Why is it so ?

Silence.

Teacher. Because they obey the same laws with the Russians.

Pupil. One law ? How so ? The Germans don't come to our church and they eat meat on fast-days.

Teacher. Not that law, but they obey one tsar.

Pupil (skeptical Scmka). That is funny ! Why have they a different law, and yet obey the Tsar ?

The teacher feels the need of explaining what a law is, and so he asks what is meant by " obeying a law, being under one law."

Girl (independent manorial girl, hurriedly and timidly). To accept the law means " to get married."

The pupils look interrogatively at the teacher. The teacher begins to explain that the law consists in putting a man in jail and in punishing him for stealing or killing.

Skeptic Scmka. And have not the Germans such a law ?

Teacher. There are also laws with us about the gentry, the peasants, the merchants, the clergy (the word " clergy " perplexes them).

Skeptic Scmka. And the Germans have them not ?

Teacher. In some countries there are such laws, and in others there are not. We have a Russian Tsar, and in the German countries there is a German Tsar.

This answer satisfies all the pupils and even skeptical Sémka.

Seeing the necessity of passing over to the explanation of the classes, the teacher asks them what classes of society they know. The pupils begin to count them out : the gentry, the peasants, the popes, the soldiers. " Any • more ? " asks the teacher. " The manorial servants, the burghers, the samovar-makers." The teacher asks them to distinguish these classes.

Pupils. The peasants plough, the manorial servants serve their masters, the merchants trade, the soldiers serve, the samovar-makers get the samovars ready, the popes serve mass, the gentry do notling.

The teacher explains the real distinction of the classes, but in vain tries to make clear the need of soldiers when there is no war on, – only as a protection of the state against attacks, – and the occupations of the gentry in government service. The teacher

endeavours to explain to them in what way Russia differs geographically from the other countries by saying that the whole earth is divided into different states. The Russians, the French, the Germans, divided up the whole earth and said to themselves : " So far is mine, and so far is thine," so that Russia, like the other countries, has its borders.

Teacher. Do you understand what boundaries are ? Let anybody explain them to me.

Pupil (bright boy). Beyond Turkin Height there is a boundary (this boundary is a stone post standing on the road to Tula from Yasnaya Polyana and indicating the beginning of Tula County).

All the pupils are satisfied with this definition.

The teacher sees the need of pointing out the boundaries in a familiar locality. He draws the plan of two rooms and shows the boundary which separates them ; he brings a plan of the village, and the pupils themselves recognize certain boundaries. The teacher explains, that is, he thinks that he explains, that as the land of Yasnaya Polydna has its boundaries, even so Russia has borders. He flatters himself with the hope that all have understood him, but when he asks them how to find out how far it is from our locality to the boundaries of Russia, the pupils answer, without the least hesitation, that that is . easy, that all that is necessary is to measure the distance with a yardstick.

Teacher. In what direction ?

Pupil. Just take it from here to the boundary and write down how much it is.

We again pass over to the drawings, plans, and maps. It is found that they need an idea of the scale, which is entirely absent from them. The teacher proposes to draw a plan of the village laid out along the street. We begin drawing on the board, but the village does not get on it because the scale is too large. We rub it out and begin anew on a small scale on a slate. The idea of scale, plan, boundary, is getting clearer. The teacher repeats all that has been said and asks what Russia is and where its ends are.

Pupil. The country in which we live and in which Germans and Tartars live.

Another Pupil. The country winch is under the Russian Tsar.

Teacher. But where are its ends ?

Girl. There where the infidel Germans begin.

Teacher. The Germans are not infidels. The Germans, too, believe in Christ. (Explanation of religions and creeds.)

Pupil (zealously, apparently happy to have recalled something). In Russia there are laws that he who kills is put in jail, and there are all kinds of people, clergy people, soldiers, gentry.

Scmka. Who feeds the soldiers ?

Teacher. The Tsar. That's why money is taken from everybody, for they serve for all.

The teacher explains what the Crown is, and manages to make them repeat some way or other what boundaries are.

The lesson lasts about two hours. The teacher is convinced that the pupils have retained a great deal of what has been said, and continues his following lessons in the same strain, and convinces himself only much later that his method was wrong and that all that which he has been doing was the merest nonsense.

I involuntarily fell into the habitual error of the Socratic method, which in the German Anschauungsunterricht has reached the highest degree of monstrosity. I did not give the pupils any new ideas in these lessons, thinking all the time that I was giving them, and it was only due to my moral influence that I made the children answer as I pleased. Russia, Russian, remained the same unconscious tokens of something hazy and indefinite belonging to them, to us. Law remained the same unintelligible word. I made these experiments about six months ago and at first I was exceedingly well satisfied and proud of them. Those to whom I read them said that it was uncommonly good and interesting ; but after three weeks, during which time I was not able to work in the school, I tried to continue what I had begun, and I convinced myself that what I had done before was nonsense and selfdeception. Not one pupil was able to tell me what a boundary was, what Russia, what a law was, and what were the boundaries of Krapfvensk County. Everything they had learned they had now forgotten, and yet they knew it all in their own fashion. I was convinced of my mistake ; but what is not determined by me is whether the mistake consisted in the wrong method of instruction or in the very thought ; maybe there is no possibility, up to a certain period of a general development and without the aid of newspapers and travel, of awakening in the child a historical and geographical interest ; maybe that method will be found (I am still endeavouring to find it) by means of which it will be possible to do it. I know this much, that the method will in no way consist in what is called history and geography, that is, in studying out of books, which kills and does not rouse these inter- , ests.

I have also made other experiments in teaching modern history, and they have been very successful. I told them the history of the Crimean campaign, and the reign of Emperor Nicholas, and the year 1812. All this I told almost in a fairy-tale tone, as a rule, historically incorrect, and grouping the events about some one person. The greatest success was obtained, as was to have been expected, by the story of the war with Napoleon.

This class has remained a memorable event in our life. I shall never forget it. The children had long been promised that I should tell them history from its end, while another teacher would begin from the beginning, so that we should finally meet. My evening scholars had left me, and I came to the class of Russian history. They were talking about Svyatoslav. They felt dull. On a tall bench sat, in a row, as always, three peasant girls, their heads tied with kerchiefs. One was asleep. Mishka pushed me : " Look there, our cuckoos are sitting there, – one is asleep." And they were like cuckoos !

" You had better tell us from the end," said some one, and all arose.

I sat down and began to talk. As always, the hubbub, the groans, the tussling, lasted about two minutes. Some were climbing under the table, some on the table, some under the benches, and on their neighbours' shoulders and knees, and all was silent. I began with Alexander L, told them of the French Revolution, of Napoleon's successes, of his seizing the government, and of the war which ended in the peace of Tilsit. The moment we reached Russia there were heard sounds and words of lively interest on all sides.

" Well, is he going to conquer us too ? "

"Never mind, Alexander will give it to him!" said some one who knew about Alexander, but I had to disappoint them, – the time had not yet come for that, – and they felt bad when they heard that the Tsar's sister was spoken of as a bride for Napoleon, and that Alexander spoke with him on the bridge, as with an equal.

" Just wait ! " exclaimed Pétka, with a threatening gesture.

" Go on and tell us ! "

When Alexander did not submit to him, that is, when Alexander declared war against him, all expressed their approbation. When Napoleon came against us with twelve nations, and stirred up the Germans and Poland, their hearts sank from agitation.

A German, a friend of mine, was standing in the room.

"Ah, you were against us, too," said Pétka (the best story-teller).

" Keep quiet ! " cried the others.

The retreat of our army tormented the hearers, and on all sides were asked questions why ? and curses were heaped on Kutuzov and Barclay.

" Your Kutuzov is no good ! "

" Just wait," said another.

" Well, did he surrender ? " asked a third.

When we reached the battle at Borodino, and when in the end I was obliged to say that we did not gain a victory, I was sorry for them, – it was evident that I gave them all a terrible blow.

“ Though our side did not win, theirs did not either ! ”

When Napoleon came to Moscow and was waiting for the keys and for obeisances, there was a clatter from a consciousness of being in conquerable. The conflagration of Moscow was, naturally, approved by all. Then came the victory, – the retreat.

“ When he came out of Moscow Kutuzov rusliea anei him and went to fight him,” I said.

“ He made him rear up ! ” Fédka corrected me.

Fédka, red in his face, was sitting opposite me, and from excitement was bending his thin, tawny fingers. That is his habit. The moment he said that, the whole room groaned from a feeling of proud ecstasy. A little fellow in the back row was being crushed, but nobody paid any attention to it.

« That’s better ! There, take the keys now ! ” and so forth.

Then I continued about our pursuit of the French. It pained the children to hear that some one was too late at the Berézina and that we let them pass ; Pétka even groaned with pain.

“ I should have shot him to death for being late.”

Then we even pitied a little the frozen Frenchmen. Then, when we crossed the border, and the Germans, who had been against us, joined us, some one recalled the German who was standing in the room.

« How is that ? At first you are against us, and when the power is losing, you are with us ! ” and suddenly all arose and shouted against the German so that the noise could be heard in the street. When they quieted down, I continued telling them about our following up Napoleon as far as Paris, placing the real king on the throne, celebrating our victory, and feasting. But the recollection of the Crimean War spoiled our whole business.

“ Just wait,” said Pétka, shaking his fist, “ let me grow up and I will show them ! ”

If we had now had a chance at the Shevardino redoubt and at Mount Malakhév, we should certainly have taken it back.

It was late when I finished. As a rule the children are asleep at that time. No one was sleeping, and the eyes of the little cuckoos were burning. Just as I got up,

Taräska crawled out from underneath my chair, to my great

astonishment, and looked lively and at the same time seriously at me.

" How did you get down there ? "

" He has been there from the start," some one said.

There was no need asking him whether he had understood, – that could be seen from his face.

" Well, are you going to tell it ? " I asked.

" I ? " He thought awhile. " I will tell the whole thing."

" I will tell it at home."

" I too."

" And I."

" Is that all ? "

« Yes."

All flew down under the staircase, some promising to give it to the Frenchmen, others rebuking the German, and others repeating how Kutuzov had made him rear up.

" Sic haben ganz llussisch erzählt," the German who had been hooted said to me in the evening. " You ought to hear how they tell the story in our country ! You have said nothing about the German struggles for freedom."

I fully agreed with him that my narrative was not history, but a fanciful tale rousing the national sentiment.

Consequently, as a study of history, this attempt was even less successful than the first.

In teaching geography I did the same. I first began with physical geography. I remember the first lesson. I began it, and immediately lost my way. It turned out, what I should never have suspected, that I did not know that which I wanted ten-year-old peasant boys to know. I could explain night and day to them, but was completely at a loss to explain summer and winter. Feeling ashamed of my ignorance, I studied up the matter ; later I asked many of my acquaintances, educated people, and nobody, except such as had lately left school or as were teachers, was able to explain it to me well without a globe. I ask all my readers to verify this statement. I aver that out of one hundred people only one knows it, although all the children learn it. Having studied it up well, I again began to explain it and, as I imagined, had, with the help of a candle and a globe, given them an excellent idea of it. I was listened to with great attention and interest. (It gave them especial pleasure to

know that which their fathers did not believe, and to be able to make a display of their wisdom.)

At the end of my explanation, skeptic Sémka, the most intelligent of all, stopped me with the question : " How is it the earth is moving and our house is all the time standing in the same spot ? It ought to get off its old place."

I saw that I had in my explanations gone a thousand versts ahead of the most intelligent pupil ; what kind of an idea must those have formed who were least intelligent ?

I went back, – talked, drew, and adduced all the proofs of the sphericity of the earth : voyages around the earth, the appearance of the mast of a ship before the deck is seen, and so forth, and, consoling myself with the thought that now they must have understood, I made them write out the lesson. All wrote : " The earth is like a ball, – first proof – second proof ; " the third proof they had forgotten and asked me to tell them. It was quite apparent that the main thing for them was to remember the " proofs." Not only once, or ten times, but a hundred times I returned to these explanations, and always without success. At an examination all pupils would answer the questions satisfactorily ; but I felt that they did not understand, and, considering that I myself did not get a good idea of the matter before the age of thirty, I gladly excused them for their lack of comprehension. As I had taken it on faith in my childhood, so they now took my word that the earth was round, and so forth, though they did not comprehend a tiling.

It is even now easier for me to understand – as my nurse had impressed it upon me in my first childhood – that earth and sky meet at the end of the world, and that there, at the end of the earth, the women are washing their linen, putting their beetles away upon the sky. Our pupils had long ago been confirmed, and they still persist in conceptions that are the very opposite to what I am trying to instil in them. It will be necessary for a long time to break down the explanations which they have, and all that world conception, which has not yet been impaired by anything, before they will be able to comprehend. The laws of physics and mechanics will be the first completely to shatter their old conceptions. But they, like me, like all the rest, began physical geography before they had had physics.

In the teaching of geography, as in all other subj

In the teaching of geography, as in all other subjects, the commonest, most serious and detrimental error is haste. We act as though we were so happy to have found out that the earth is round and moves around the sun that we hurry to inform the pupil of the fact. But what is really worth knowing is not that the earth is

round, but the manner in which that information was obtained. Very frequently children are told that the sun is so many billions of versts distant from the earth, but that is not at all a matter of surprise or interest to the child. What he wants to know is how that was found out. If any one wants to talk about that let him tell about parallaxes. That is quite possible. The only reason why I dwelt so long on the roundness of the earth is because what is said about it refers to the whole of geography. Out of a thousand educated people, outside of teachers and pupils, one knows well why there is summer and winter, and where Guadeloupe is ; out of a thousand children not one understands in his childhood the explanations of the sphericity of the earth and not one believes in the reality of Guadeloupe, and yet all are persistently taught both from early childhood.

After physical geography I began the parts of the world with their characterizations, and of that whole matter nothing was left but their vying in the ability to cry : " Asia, Africa, Australia ; " and if I asked them : " In what part of the world is France?" (having told them but a minute before that England and France were in Europe) somebody called out that France was in Africa. I could see the question " Why ? " in each dim vision, in every sound of their voices, whenever I began geography with them, – and there was no answer to that sad question " Why ? "

Just as in history the simple thought was to begin with the end, so in geography the thought naturally occurred to begin with the schoolroom, with our native village. I had seen these experiments in Germany, and I myself, discouraged by the failure of the usual geography, took up the description of the room, the house, the village. As drawings of plans, such exercises are not devoid of usefulness, but it is not interesting for them to know what land lies beyond our village, because they all know that there is the village of Telydtinki. And it is not interesting to know what lies beyond Telydtinki, because there, no doubt, is just such a village as Telydtinki, and Telydtinki with its fields is absolutely uninteresting.

I tried to put up for them geographical guide-posts, such as Moscow, Kiev, but all that arranged itself so disconnectedly in their minds that they learned it by heart. I tried to draw maps, and that interested them and really aided their memories ; but again the question arose why their memories should be aided. I also tried to tell them about the polar and equatorial regions, – they listened with pleasure and recited well, but they memorized only that which was not of a geographical nature in these stories. The main trouble was that the drawing of the plans of the village was drawing of plans, and not geography ; the drawing of maps was drawing of maps, and not geography ; the stories about animals, forests, icebergs, and cities were fairy-tales, and not geography. The geography was only a learning of something by heart. Of all the books, – Grube, Biernädski, – not one was interesting.

One little book, forgotten by all, which resembles a geography, was

read with greater enjoyment than all the rest, and in my opinion is the best specimen of what ought to be done in order to prepare children for the study of geography and stir up the geographical interest in them. That book is "Parley," a Prussian translation of the year 1837. That book is read, but mainly serves as a guiding string for the teacher, who in accordance with it tells what he knows of each country and city. The children recite, but rarely retain a name or a place on the map, which refers to the event described, – there are mainly the events alone that are left. However, this class belongs more properly to the category of conversations, of which we shall speak in their proper place. In spite of all the art with which the study of unnecessary names is masked in this book, in spite of all the care which we took with it, the children lately scented our purpose to inveigle them by pretty stories, and have acquired a positive distaste for this class.

I finally came to the conclusion that, in respect to history, there is not only no need of knowing the dull Russian history, but that Cyrus, Alexander the Great, Cæsar, and Luther are not necessary for the development • of any child. All these arsons and events are interesting for the student, not to the extent of their importance in history, but to the extent of the artistic composition of their activities, to the extent of the artistic treatment of them by the historian, and even more so – not by the historian, but by the popular tradition.

The story of Romulus and Remus is interesting, not because these brothers were the founders of the mightiest empire in the world, but because it is entertaining, funny, and nice to hear about their having been nurtured by the she-wolf, and so forth. The story of the Gracchi is interesting because it is as artistic as the history of Gregory VII. and the humiliated emperor, and it is possible to get the pupils' attention by it ; but the story of the migration of the nations will be dull and aimless, because its contents are not artistic, just as the story of the art of printing is not interesting, no matter how much we may try to impress the pupils with the idea that it forms an epoch in history, and that Gutenberg was a great man. Tell them well how matches were invented, and they will never agree with you that the inventor of matches was a lesser man than Gutenberg ; in short, for the child, for the student in general, who has not yet begun to live, there does not exist the historical interest, let alone the interest of universal humanity. There is only the artistic interest. It is said that when all the material has been worked out, it will be possible to give an artistic exposition of all the periods of history, – I do not see it. Macaulay and Thiers may no more be given into their hands than Tacitus and Xenophon.

In order to make history popular, the artistic exterior is not sufficient; the historical phenomena have to be personified, just as tradition, sometimes life itself, sometimes great thinkers and historians, personify them. Children like history only when its contents are artistic. There is no historical interest for them, nor ever can be, consequently there can be no such a thing as history

for • children. History sometimes serves only as material for an artistic development, and so long as the historical interest is not developed, there can be no history. Bertet, Kaydanov, after all, remain the only manuals. There is an old anecdote that the history of the Medans is dark and fabulous. Nothing else can be made out of history for children, who do not understand the historical interest. The contrary attempts to make history and geography artistic and interesting, Grube's biographical sketches, Biernadski, satisfy neither the artistic nor the historical demands, nor do they satisfy consistency and the historical interest, and at the same time with their details they expand to impossible dimensions.

The same is true of geography. When Mitrofanushka<sup>1</sup> was being persuaded to study geography, his mother said : " What is the use of teaching him all kinds of countries ? His coachman will know how to get him there, when there is any need." There has never been brought forward a stronger argument against geography, and all the learned men of the world are unable to make any reply to this imperturbable argument. I am quite serious. What use was there in my studying about the river and city of Barcelona if, having lived thirty-three years, I have not once needed that information ? But for the development of my mental powers, the most picturesque description of Barcelona and its inhabitants could do nothing, so far as I can see. What use is there in Sémka's and Fédka's knowing anything about the Maninsk canal and the waterways if, as is to be supposed, they will never get there ; but if Sémka should have an occasion to go there, it will make no difference whether he has studied it or not, for he will find out in practice, and he will find out well, all about this waterway. I am quite unable to see how, for the development of his mental powers, he will be helped by the knowledge that hemp goes down the Vdlga, and tar comes up that river, that there is a harbour by the name of Dubdvka, and that a certain subterranean

r In Fou-Vfzin's comedy, "The Minor." layer goes to a certain place, and that the Samoyéds travel on reindeer, and so forth.

I have a whole world of mathematical and natural science information, of language and poetry, which time is too short to transmit ; there is an endless number of questions from the phenomena of life surrounding me, to which the pupil demands an answer, and which I must answer before drawing for him pictures of the polar ice, of the tropical countries, of the mountains of Australia, and of the rivers of America.

In history and geography, experience tells us one and the same thing, and everywhere confirms our thoughts. Everywhere the teaching of history and of geography proceeds badly. In view of the examinations, the pupils memorize the names of mountains, cities and rivers, kings and emperors. The only possible text-books are, then, those by Arsénev and Obodovski, Kayddnov, Sinaragdov, and Bertet, and everywhere one hears complaints about the instruction in these subjects, and all are seeking for something new which they do not find.

It is curious to hear men recognize the incompatibility of the demands of geography with the spirit of the students throughout the world, and in consequence of this invent a thousand ingenious means (such as Sidov's method) in order to make the children remember words ; but the simplest thought that the whole geography is unnecessary, that there is no need of knowing these words, never enters anybody's mind. All attempts at combining geography with geology, zoology, botany, ethnography, and I do not know with what else, and history with biography, remain empty dreams which result in such worthless books as that by Grube, which are of no use for the children, nor for youths, nor for teachers, nor for the public at large. Indeed, if the compilers of these seemingly new textbooks of geography and history only thought what it is they want, and if they themselves were to apply their books to instruction, they would soon convince themselves of the impossibility of their undertaking.

In the first place, geography in connection with the natural sciences and ethnography would form such an extensive science that a whole life would not be sufficient for its study, and it would be even less a child study and much drier than geography. In the second, it is not likely that in another thousand years there will be enough material on hand for the writing of such a manual. Teaching the geography of Krapfvensk County, I shall be compelled to give the pupils detailed information about the flora and the fauna and the geological structure of the earth at the north pole, and details about the inhabitants and the commerce of the kingdom of Baden, because I shall be in possession of this information ; and I shall hardly be able to say anything about the Byélev and Efrémov Counties, because I shall have no material in respect to them. But the children and common sense demand of me a certain harmoniousness and regularity of instruction. There is left, then, nothing else but to teach geography from Obo-dovski's text-book, or not to teach it at all.

Just as the historical interest must first be roused for history, so the geographical interest must be evoked for the study of geography. But the geographical interest, from my observations and experiments, is roused either by the study of the natural sciences, or by travel, more particularly, in ninety-nine out of a hundred cases, by travel. As the reading of newspapers, and especially of biographies, and the sympathy with the political life of the nation generally serve as the first step in the study of history, just so travels serve as the first step in the study of geography. Both are now exceedingly accessible to every one and are easy in our day, - therefore we ought to be the less afraid of renouncing the old superstition about teaching history and geography. Our life is in our day so instructive in this respect that, if geographical and historical knowledge is really as necessary for our general development as it seems to be, life will always supply that defect.

Indeed, if we can renounce that old superstition, it will not appear so terrible to us that men may grow up without having learned in their childhood that there was such a man as Yaroslav, or Otho, and that there is such a place as Estremadura, and so forth. Have we not

stopped teaching astrology, and dialectics, and poetics ? And are they not giving up the study of Latin, without the human race growing any more stupid ? New sciences are born, and in our time the natural sciences are being made popular ; the old sciences have to drop off when they have outlived their utility, – not the sciences, but those sides of the sciences which with the birth of new sciences have become obsolete.

To rouse the interest and to know how the human race has lived and formed itself and developed in various countries ; to rouse interest for the discovery of those laws by which humanity eternally moves ; on the other hand, to rouse interest in the comprehension of the laws of the phenomena of Nature on the whole globe and of the distribution of the human race over it, – that is a different matter. Maybe the rousing of such interest is useful, but in order to attain this aim neither Ségur, nor Thiers, nor Obodovski, nor Grube will add anything. I know two elements for that, – the artistic feeling of poetry and patriotism. But, in order to develop both, there have not yet been written text-books, and so long as there are none, we must seek, or waste our time and strength in vain, and torment the younger generation, making it learn history and geography simply because we have learned them. Up to the university I not only see no need of the study of history and geography, but even a great injury in it. What is beyond that I do not know.

#### THE ARTS

In the report for the months of November and December of the Yasnaya Polyana school there now stand before me two subjects which have an entirely different character, and those are drawing and singing, – the arts.

If I did not start with the opinion that I do not know what is to be taught, and why this or that is to be taught, I should have to ask myself : Will it be useful for peasant children, who are placed under the necessity of passing all their lives in care about their daily bread, to study art, and what good is it to them ? Ninety-nine out of every hundred will answer in the negative. Nor can one answer otherwise. The moment such a question is put, common sense demands the following answer : He is not to be an artist, – he will have to plough the ground. If he is to have any artistic needs, it will be above his strength to carry that persistent, untiring work which he must carry, and without carrying which the existence of the state would be unthinkable. When I say "he," I mean the child of the masses. Of course, it is insipid, but I rejoice at this insipidity, do not stop before it, but try to discover its causes. There is another great insipidity. This same child of the masses, every child of the masses, has just such a right, – what do I say? – a greater right to enjoy art than we have, the children of a happy class, who are not placed under the necessity of that untiring work, who are surrounded by all the comforts of life.

To deprive him of the right of enjoying art, to deprive me, the

teacher, of the right of introducing him into that region of the better enjoyments, toward which his being strives with all the powers of his soul, is that greater insipidity. How are these two insipidities to be harmonized ? This is not lyricism, of which I was reproached in the description of the walk which I gave in the first number, – this is logic. Every harmonization is impossible and is only a self-deception.

I shall be told, and I have been, if drawing is needed in a popular school, it can be admitted only as drawing from Nature, technical drawing, to be applied to life ; the drawing of a plough, a machine, a building; free-hand drawing as a mere auxiliary for mechanical drawing. This common view of drawing is also held by the teacher of the Yasnaya.l'olyàna school, whose report we offer. But it was the very experiment with teaching drawing in this manner which convinced us of the falseness and injustice of this technical programme. The majority of the pupils, after four months of careful, exclusively technical drawing, from which was excluded all drawing of men, animals, and landscapes, ended by cooling off considerably in respect to the drawing of technical objects and by developing to such an extent the feeling and need of drawing as an art that they provided themselves with their secret copy-books, in which they drew men, and horses with all four legs coming out of one spot. The same was true of music.

The customary programme of the popular schools does not admit singing beyond the singing of church choirs. The same thing takes place here : either it is a very dull and painful memorizing for the children, where certain sounds are produced by them, as though they were regarded merely as so many throats taking the place of the organ pipes, or there will be developed in them the feeling for the artistic, which finds its satisfaction in the balaläyka and the accordion and frequently in a homely song, which the pedagogue does not recognize, and in which he does not think it necessary to guide his pupils. Either one or the other : either art in general is injurious and unnecessary, which is not at all so, strange as it may appear at a first glance, or everybody, without distinction of classes and occupations, has a right to it and a right to devote himself to it, on the ground that art does not brook mediocrity.

The insipidity is not in that, but in the very putting of such a question as a question : Have the children of the masses a right to art ? Asking this is like asking whether the children of the masses have a right to eat beef, that is, have they the right to satisfy their human needs ? Now the question ought not to be in that, but whether the beef is good, which we offer the masses, or which we keep from them.

Even thus, when I offer the masses certain knowledge which is in our power, and when I notice the evil influence produced by it upon them, I do not conclude that the masses are bad, because they do not receive this knowledge, nor that the masses have not yet developed sufficiently to receive this knowledge and make use of it as we are making use of it, but that this knowledge is not good, not normal,

and that we must with the aid of the masses work out a new knowledge, which will be more in accord with us, and with society, and with the masses. I conclude only that tins knowledge and the arts live among us and do not seem injurious, but cannot live among the masses, and seem injurious to them only because tins knowledge and the arts are not those which are needed in general, and that we live among them only because we are spoiled, because only those who harmlessly sit for five hours in the vitiated air of a factory or a tavern do not suffer from the air which would kill a newcomer.

I shall be told : " Who said that the knowledge and the arts of our cultivated society are false ? How can you conclude from the fact that the masses do not receive them that they are false ? " All such questions are solved very simply : Because there are thousands of us, and there are millions of them.

I continue the comparison with the well-known physiological fact. A man comes from the fresh air into a smoke-filled room, the air of which has been exhausted by breathing; his vital functions are still vigorous, for his organism has through breathing been fed by a large quantity of oxygen, which he has taken from the pure air. With the same habit of his organism he begins to breathe in the vitiated air of the room; the injurious gases are communicated to the blood in a large quantity, – his organism is weakened (frequently fainting and sometimes death ensue) ; at the same time hundreds of people continue to breathe and live in the foul air because their functions have become less vigorous, because, to express myself differently, they are weaker and live less.

If I am to be told that both classes of people live, and that it would be hard to decide whose life is more normal and better ; that when a man comes out from a vitiated atmosphere into the fresh air he frequently faints, and vice versa, – the answer will be easy : not a physiologist, but a simple man with common sense, will ask himself where most people live, whether in the fresh air or in pestilential prisons, – and will follow the majority ; and the physiologist will make observations on the sum total of the functions of both and he will say that the functions are more vigorous and the alimentation fuller with him who lives in the fresh air.

The same relation exists between the arts of the so-called cultured society and between the demands of the people's art : I am speaking of painting, and sculpture, and music, and poetry. Ivanov's painting will rouse in the people nothing but admiration for his technical mastery, but will not evoke any poetical, nor religious sensation, while this very poetical sentiment is evoked by a chap-book picture of John of Novgorod and the devil in the pitchers.<sup>1</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> We beg the reader to direct his attention to this monstrous picture, which is remarkable on account of the strength of the religio-poetic feeling expressed in it, and which bears the same relation to Venus de Milo will rouse only a legitimate loathing for the nakedness and shamelessness of the woman. Beethoven's quartette

of the latest epoch will appear only as a disagreeable sound, interesting perhaps because one plays on a big fiddle and the other on a small fiddle. The best production of our poetry, a lyrical composition by Pushkin, will seem only a collection of words, and its meaning the veriest nonsense.

Introduce a child from the people into this world ; you can do that and are doing that all the time by means of the hierarchy of the educational institutions, academies, and art classes : he will feel, and will sincerely feel, the beauty of Ivdnov's painting, and of the Venus de Milo, and of the quartette by Beethoven, and of Pushkin's lyrical poem. But, upon entering into this world, he will no longer be breathing with full lungs, – the fresh air, whenever he has to go into it, will affect him painfully and inimically.

As in the matter of breathing common sense and physiolog)' will make the same reply, even thus in the matter of the arts the same common sense and pedagogy (not the pedagogy that writes programmes, but the one that endeavours to study the universal paths of education and its laws) will reply that he who is not living in the artsphere of our educated classes lives better and fuller ; that the demands made upon art, and the satisfaction which it gives, are fuller and more lawful with the masses than with us. Common sense will say that, because it sees a happy majority, mighty not merely in numbers, living outside that milieu ; the pedagogian will observe the mental functions of the men who are living in our circles, and outside of them he will observe what happens when people are introduced into the vitiated air, that

modern Russian painting that the painting of Fra Beato Angelico has to the painting of the disciples of the school of Michelangelo. – Author's Note.

is, during the transmission of our arts to the younger generations, and on the basis of those syncopes and of that loathing which fresh natures manifest upon being introduced into an artificial atmosphere, and on the basis of the limitation of their mental functions, he will conclude that the demands that the people make upon art are more legitimate than the demands of a spoiled minority of the so-called cultured class.

I have made these observations in respect to the two branches of our arts, with which I am the more intimately acquainted and which I formerly loved very passionately, – music and poetry. Strange to say, I came to the conclusion that everything that we had been doing in those branches had been done along a false, exceptional path, which had no meaning and no future, and which was insignificant in comparison with those demands and even with those productions of the same arts, samples of which we find among the people. I convinced myself that a lyrical poem, for example, " I remember the charming moment," the musical productions, such as Beethoven's last symphony, were not as unconditionally and universally fine as the song of " Steward Vanka," and the tune of " Down the Mother Vdlga;" that Pushkin and Beethoven please us, not because there is any absolute

beauty in them, but because we are as much spoilt as Pushkin and Beethoven were, because Pushkin and Beethoven alike flatter our freaky irritability and our weakness. How common it is to hear the trite paradox that for the comprehension of what is beautiful there is needed a certain preparation! Who said that? How has that been proved? It is only an excuse, a way out from a hopeless situation, into which we have been brought by the falseness of the direction, by our art's belonging exclusively to one class. Why are the beauty of the sun, the beauty of the human face, the beauty of the sounds of a popular song, the beauty of an act of love and self-renunciation accessible to all, and why do they demand no preparation?

I know that for the majority everything I have said here will appear as the merest prattle, as the privilege of a boneless tongue, but pedagogy – free pedagogy – explains many questions by means of experiment, and by means of an endless repetition of one and the same phenomenon transfers the questions from the field of dreams and reflections into the territory of propositions based on facts. I have for years vainly endeavoured to transmit to the pupils the poetical beauties of Pushkin and of our whole literature; the same is being done by an endless number of teachers, – not in Piusssia alone, – and if these teachers watch the results of their efforts, and if they want to be frank, they will all confess that the chief effect of developing the poetical feeling has been to kill it, that the highly poetical natures have shown the greatest loathing for such explanations. I had struggled for years, I say, without being able to obtain any results, – and it was enough for me accidentally to open Rybnikov's collection, and the poetical demand of the pupils found its full satisfaction, a satisfaction which, by calmly and without prejudice comparing any poem whatever with the best production of Pushkin, I could not help finding legitimate. The same happened to me in respect to music, of which I shall have to speak now.

I shall try and make a résumé of all said above. When the question is put whether the fine arts are necessary for the masses, the pedagogues generally become timid and confused (Plato was the only one who boldly decided the question in the negative). They say that they are necessary, but with certain limitations; that it is dangerous for the social structure to give all a chance to become artists. They say that certain arts and a certain degree of them may exist only in a certain class of society; they say that the arts must have their own especial servants who are devoted to but one matter. They say that the highly gifted natures must have the chance to get away from the mass of the people and to devote themselves exclusively to the service of art. This is the greatest concession which pedagogy makes to the right of each individual to make of himself what he pleases. All the cares of the pedagogues in respect to the arts are directed toward attaining this one aim.

I regard all this as unjust. I assume that the necessity of enjoying art and serving art are inherent in each human personality, no matter to what race or milieu he may belong, and that this necessity

has its rights and ought to be satisfied. Taking this assumption as an axiom, I say that if inconveniences and inconsistencies arise for each person in the enjoyment of art and its reproduction, the cause of these inconveniences lies not in the manner of the transmission, not in the dissemination or concentration of art among many or among a few, but in the character and direction of the art, upon which we must look with doubt, in order not to foist anything false upon the younger generation, and also in order to give that younger generation a chance to work out some-tiring new, both as to form and contents.

I now present the teacher's report in drawing for the months of November and December. This method of instruction, it seems to me, may be considered convenient for the manner in which the technical difficulties have been pleasantly and imperceptibly obviated for the pupils. The question of the art itself has not been touched upon, because the teacher, when beginning the instruction, had prejudged the question by deciding that it was useless for the children of peasants to become artists.

#### DRAWING

When I nine months ago took up teaching drawing, I had no definite plan, neither as to how to distribute the matter of instruction, nor how to guide the pupils. I had neither drawings, nor models, except a few illustrated albums, which, however, I did not make use of during my course of instruction, limiting myself to simple aids, such as one may find in any village school. A painted wooden board, chalk, slates, and little square sticks of various lengths, which were used for object illustrations in teaching mathematics, – those were all the means we had during our instruction, which did not prevent us from copying everything that fell into our hands. Not one of the pupils had studied drawing before ; they had brought to me only their ability to pass judgments, and they were granted full liberty to express themselves whenever and however they wished, hoping thus to discover what their needs were and then to form a definite plan of occupations. For the first lesson I formed a square out of four sticks and I tried to see whether the boys would be able without any previous instruction to draw that square. Only a few of the boys drew some very irregular squares, by expressing the solid sticks forming the square by means of straight lines. I was quite satisfied with that. For the weaker pupils I drew with chalk a square on the blackboard. Then we composed a cross in the same manner, and we drew it.

An unconscious, inborn feeling made the children generally discover a fairly correct correlation of the lines, although they drew the lines quite poorly. I did not deem it necessary to try to obtain a regularity in the straight lines in every figure, in order not to torment them in vain, and demanded only that the figure be copied. I intended, at first, to give the boys a conception of the relation of lines from their length and direction, rather than to trouble myself about their ability to make the lines themselves as regular as possible.

A child will learn to comprehend the relation between a long and a short line, the difference between a right angle and parallels, sooner than be able passably to draw a straight line.

By degrees we began, at the following lessons, to draw the corners of these square little sticks, and then we composed various figures out of them.

The pupils paid no attention whatever to the slight thickness of these sticks, – the third dimension, – and we drew all the time only the front view of the objects composed.

The difficulty of clearly presenting, with our insufficient material, the position and correlation of the figures compelled me, now and then, to draw figures on the board. I frequently united the drawing from Nature with the drawing of models, giving them some certain objects ; if the boys were unable to draw a given object, I drew it myself on the board.

The drawing of figures from the board took place in the following manner: I first drew a horizontal or vertical line, divided it by points into different parts, and the pupils copied that line. Then I drew another or several other lines, perpendicular or slanting to the first, standing in a certain relation to the first, and divided into units of the same size. Then we connected the points of division of these lines by straight lines or arcs, and thus formed a certain symmetrical figure, which, step by step as it grew up, was copied by the boys. I thought that that would be advantageous, in the first place, because the boy learned objectively the whole process of the formation of the figure, and, in the second, because through this drawing on the board there was developed in him the conception of the correlation of lines much better than through the copying of drawings and originals. With such a process there was destroyed the possibility of copying directly, but the figure itself, as an object from Nature, had to be copied on a diminished scale.

It is nearly always useless to hang out before the pupils a large complete picture or figure, because the beginners will be positively confused before it, just as though they were before an object from Nature. But the very evolution of the figure before their eyes has a great significance. The pupils, in this case, see the skeleton of the drawing, upon which the whole body is later formed. The pupils were constantly called upon to criticize the lines and their relations, as I had drawn them. I frequently drew the lines wrong on purpose, in order to get an idea how much judgment they had formed about the correlation and regularity of the lines. Then again I asked the children, when I drew some figure, where some line ought to be added in their opinion, and I even made now one boy, now another, suggest some figure.

In this manner I not only roused a greater interest in the boys, but also a free participation in the formation and development of the

figure ; in this way the children's question, " Why ? " which every child naturally asks himself in copying from an original, was obviated.

Their greater or lesser comprehension and their greater or lesser interest had the chief influence on the progress and the method of instruction, and I frequently abandoned that which I had purposely prepared for the lesson, only because it was foreign or dull to the boys.

So far, I had given them symmetrical figures to draw because their formation is easiest and most apparent. Then I, for experiment's sake, asked the best pupils themselves to compose and draw figures on the board. Although nearly all drew only after one given manner, it was, nevertheless, interesting to watch the growing rivalry, the judgment which they passed on the others, and the peculiar structure of their figures. Many of these drawings were peculiarly in harmony with the characters of the boys.

In each child there is a tendency to be independent, which it is injurious to destroy in any instruction, and which especially finds its expression in the dissatisfaction with the copying of models. By the above mentioned method, this independence was not only not killed, but even developed and strengthened.

If a pupil does not learn to create himself, he will always imitate and copy in life, because there are few who, having learned to copy, are able to make an independent application of such knowledge.

By always keeping to natural forms in drawing, and by frequently changing the objects, as, for example, leaves of a characteristic form, flowers, dishes and objects frequently used in life, and instruments, I tried to keep out routine and mannerism from our drawing.

With the greatest caution I approached the explanation of shades and shadows, because the beginner easily destroys the sharpness and regularity of figures by shading them too much, and thus gets used to a disorderly and infinite daubing.

In this manner I soon got more than thirty boys in a few months to learn quite thoroughly the correlation of lines in various figures and objects, and to render these figures in even, sharp lines. The mechanical art of linedrawing was soon evolved as if of its own accord. The greatest difficulty I had was to teach the children to keep their drawing-books and the drawings themselves clean. The convenience in rubbing out what has been drawn on a slate greatly enhances my difficulty in this respect. By giving the best, most talented boys copy-books, I obtained a greater cleanliness in the drawings themselves ; for the greater difficulty in rubbing out compels them to be more careful and tidy with the material on which they are drawing. In a short time the best pupils reached such a clear and correct handling of the pencil that they could cleanly and regularly draw, not only straight-lined figures, but also the most

fantastic compositions of curved lines.

I made some of the pupils control the figures of the others, when they were through with their own, – and this teacher's activity greatly encouraged the pupils, for they were at once able to apply that which they had just learned.

Of late I have been working with the oldest boys trying to get them to draw objects in different positions in their perspective, without clinging exclusively to the well-known method of Dupuis.

## SINGING

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Last summer we returned from swimming. We were all in a happy mood. A peasant boy, the same that had been enticed by the manorial boy to steal books, a thickset boy with protruding cheek-bones, all covered with freckles, with bandy legs turned inward, having all the aspect of a grown-up sturdy peasant, but an intelligent, strong, and talented nature, ran ahead and seated himself in the cart that was driving in front of us. He took the lines, poised his cap jauntily, spit out sidewise, and started a drawn-out peasant song, and he sang with such feeling, such sobbing sounds, such lamentings ! The boys laughed.

" Sémka, Sémka ! What a fine singer he is ! "

Sémka was quite serious.

" Don't interrupt my song," he said, in a peculiar, feignedly hoarse voice, during an interval, and just as seriously and evenly proceeded to sing. Two of the more musical boys sat down in the cart with him, and fell in with him and carried the refrain. One of them seconded now at an octave or sixth, another at a third, and it was all charming. Then other boys joined them, and they began to sing " As under such an apple-tree," and they made a noise, but there was not much music.

With that evening the singing began. Now, after eight months, we sing " The angel lamented " and two cherubical songs, numbers four and seven, the whole common mass, and small chorus songs. The best pupils (only two) take down in writing the tunes of the songs which they know, and almost read music. But up to the present what they sing is not anywhere near so good as the song which they sang when returning from the swimming. I say this with no ulterior purpose, not in order to prove anything, – I simply state a fact. Now I am going to tell how the instruction proceeded, with which I am comparatively satisfied.

At the first lesson I divided all up into three voices and we sang the following chords :

We succeeded in this very soon. Each sang what he pleased. One would try soprano, and then would pass over to tenor, and from tenor to alto, so that the best pupils learned the whole chord do-mi-sol, some of them even all three chords. They pronounced the notes as in French. One sang mi-fa-fa-mi, another do-do-re-do, and so forth.

" I declare that is fine, Lev Nikolaevich ! " they said, « it even makes something shake in the ear. Let us have some more ! "

We sang these chords at school, and in the yard, and in the garden, and on the way home, until late into the night, and could not tear ourselves away from this occupation or have enough of our success.

On the following day we tried the gamut, and the more talented went through it all, while the poorer ones could hardly get as far as the third. I wrote the notes on a staff in the alto-clef, the most symmetrical of clefs, and gave them the French names. The next five or six lessons proceeded just as merrily ; we also succeeded in getting new minor keys and the passes to the majors, – " Kyrie eleison," " Glory be to the Father and Son," and a song for three voices with piano accompaniment. One-half of the lesson was occupied with that, the other half with the singing of the gamut and the exercises, which the pupils themselves invented, "do-mi-re-fa-mi-sol," or "do-re-re-mi-mi-fa," or " do-mi-re-do-re-fa-mi-re," and so forth.

I soon noticed that the notes on the staff were not clear to them, and I found it necessary to use figures instead. Besides, for the explanation of intervals and the variation of the tonic scale, the figures present greater conveniences. After six lessons some of them took the intervals by order, such as I asked them for, getting up to them by some imaginary gamut. They were particularly fond of exercises in fourths, – do-fa-re-sol, and so forth, up and down. Fa (the lower dominant) struck them more especially by its force.

" What a whopper of a fa ! " said Sémka. " It just cuts clean."

The unmusical boys soon fell away, while with the musical boys the class lasted as much as three or four hours. I tried to give them an idea of time by the accepted method, but the matter proved so difficult that I was compelled to separate time from tune and, writing down the sounds without the measure, to analyze them, and then, having written down the time, that is, the measure without the sounds, to analyze one beat by tapping the finger, and only then to combine the two processes together.

After a few lessons, when I tried to render myself an account of what I had been doing, I came to the conclusion that my method of instruction is almost the same as Chevet's method, which I had seen in practice at Paris, – a method which I had not adopted at once simply because it was a method. All those who are teaching singing

cannot be urged too much to read that work, on the outer cover of which it says in large letters " Repoussé à l'unanimité " and which now is sold in tens of thousands of copies throughout Europe. I saw in Paris striking examples of success with that method when taught by Chevet himself: an audience of from five to six hundred men and women, sometimes of between forty and fifty years of age, were singing in absolute harmony and à livre ouvert, whatever the teacher gave them to sing.

In Chevet's method there are many rules, exercises, prescribed courses, which have no significance whatever, and the like of which every intelligent teacher will invent by the hundred on the battlefield, that is, during the class ; there is there a very comical, though it may be a very convenient, method of keeping time without the sounds, for example, at four fourths the pupil says ta-fa-te-fe, at three fourths the pupil says ta-te-ti, at eight eighths ta-fa-te-fe-te-re-li-ri. All that is interesting, as one of the means by which music may be taught, interesting as the history of a certain musical school, but these rules are not absolute and cannot form a method. But in Chevet there are thoughts remarkable on account of their simplicity, three of which form the essence of his method :

(1) An old idea of expressing the musical signs by means of figures, first introduced by Jean Jacques Rousseau in his "Dictionnaire de musique." Whatever the

opponents of this method of writing may say, any teacher of singing may make this experiment, and he will always convince himself of the immense advantage of figures over the staff, both for reading and writing. I taught with the staff about ten lessons, and only once pointed out the figures, telling them that it was the same, and the pupils always ask me to write the figures for them, and always themselves write the figures. (2) A remarkable idea, exclusively belonging to Chevet, which consists in teaching the sounds independently of time, and vice versa. Having but once applied this method to instruction, everybody will see that that which had appeared as an insuperable difficulty will now appear so easy that he will only marvel how it is such a simple thought had not occurred to any one before. How many torments the unfortunate children would be saved, who sing in the archiepiscopal and other choirs, if the conductors only tried this simple thing, - to make the student, without singing, strike with a little stick or with his finger that phrase which he is to sing : four times a whole note, once a quarter note or two eighths, and so forth, then sing, without counting time, the same phrase, then again sing a measure, and then all together.

For example, it is written :

The pupil will first sing, without counting time, do-re-mi-fa-sol-mi-re-do ; then he, without singing, but only striking the note of the first measure, says, one, two, three, four ; then, on the first note of the third measure he strikes twice and says, one, two, and the second note of the third measure, saying, three, four, and so forth ; then he sings beating time, while the other pupils read aloud.

That is my method which, like Chevet's, cannot be prescribed ; it is convenient, but there may be discovered more convenient methods still. The main thing is to separate the study of time from sound, though there may be an endless number of ways to accomplish this.

Finally, Chevet's third great idea consists in making music and its study popular. His method of instruction fully realizes this aim. And that is not only Chevet's wish and my assumption, but an actual fact. I saw in Paris hundreds of labourers with horny hands, sitting on benches, underneath which lay the tools with which they were returning from their shops, singing from music, comprehending and enjoying the laws of music. As I looked at these labourers, I could easily imagine Russian peasants in their place, if Chevet but spoke Russian : they would sing in just the same fashion, would just as easily understand everything he was saying about the common rules and laws of music. We hope to have an occasion to say something more about Chevet, and more especially about the importance of popularized music, especially singing, as a means for uplifting the decaying art.

I now pass over to the description of the progress of instruction in our school. After six lessons the goslings were separated from the sheep; there were left only the musical natures, the amateurs, and we passed over to the minor scales, and to the explanation of intervals. The only difficulty was to find and distinguish the small second from the large. Fa was called a "whopper" by the pupils, do was just such a "crier," and so I did not have to teach them, - they themselves felt the note into which the small second resolved itself, and so they felt the second itself. We easily found that the major scale consisted of a sequence of two large, one small, three large, and one small seconds. Then we sang "Glory be to God" in the minor scale, and by ear got up to the scale which turned out to be minor ; then we found in that scale one large, one small, two large, one small, one very lame, and one small second. Then I showed them that it was possible to sing and write a scale beginning with any sound, that when it does not come to large or small second, when necessary, we may place a sharp or flat. For convenience' sake I wrote out for them a chromatic scale of the following kind :

Along this staircase I made them write all kinds of major and minor scales, beginning with any note whatever. These exercises amused them very much, and the progress was so striking that two of them frequently passed their time between classes in writing out the tunes of the songs which they knew. These pupils are continually

humming the motives of some songs which they cannot name, and they hum them sweetly and tenderly, and, above all, they now second much better and cannot bear to hear all the children sing inharmoniously together.

We had hardly more than twelve lessons during the winter. Our instruction was spoiled by ambition. The parents, we, the teachers, and the pupils themselves, wanted to surprise the whole village, – to sing in the church ; we began to prepare the mass and the cherubical songs of Bortnyànski. It seemed to be more amusing for the children, but it turned out quite differently. Although the desire to be in the choir sustained them, and they loved music, and we, the teachers, put forth our special effort in this subject and made it more compulsory than the rest, I often felt sorry, looking at some tiny Kiryxishka in torn leg-rags, as he rolled off his part, " Secretly fo-o-o-o-orming," and was requested to repeat it ten times, which finally vexed him so much that he beat the music with his fingers, insisting that he was singing right.

We once travelled down to the church and had a success; the enthusiasm was enormous, but the singing suffered from it : the lessons were growing tedious to them, and they fell out by degrees, and it was only at Easter that it was possible after great effort to get together a choir. Our singers began to resemble archiépiscopeal singers, who frequently sing well, but with whom, on account of that skill, all desire for singing is killed, and who absolutely know nothing of notes, though they think they do know. I have frequently seen those who come out of such a school undertake to study themselves without knowing anything about notes, but they are quite helpless the moment they try to sing that which has not been shouted into their ears.

From the small experience which I have had in the instruction of music, I have convinced myself :

(1) That the method of writing the sounds down in figures is the most convenient.

(2) That teaching time independently of sound is the most convenient method.

(3) That, in order that the musical instruction should leave traces and should be cheerfully received, it is

necessary from the very start to teach the art, and not the skill of singing and playing. Young ladies may be made to play Burgmiiner's

exercises, but the children of the people it is better not to teach at all than to teach mechanically.

(4) That the aim of the musical instruction for the pupils must consist in transmitting to them that knowledge of the common laws of music which we possess, but by no means in the transmission of that false taste which is developed in us.

(5) That the aim of teaching the masses music must consist in transmitting to them such knowledge of the common laws of music as we possess, but by no means in transmitting to them that false taste which is (level-oped in us.