

the question. I therefore showed them some very bad penmanship of my own, which lay upon the table, addressed to the correspondent of the school, and asked whose words those were; and they gave the answer with terrible precision. I asked whose were the words of the sermon they had heard last Sunday; they replied (I have no doubt with equal accuracy), 'the clergyman's.' I asked whose were the words of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans; and they said, 'St. Paul's.' I now repeated my first question, 'Who spoke the words of the Sermon on the Mount?' No answer still. The visitors grew uncomfortable; the teacher distressed; and the clergyman, assuring me that the children could answer the question if intelligibly proposed to them, accepted, at my request, the responsibility of putting it. 'Now, my dear children,' he proceeded, 'I am going to ask you precisely the same question as the Inspector, which I am sure you can answer. 'Who spoke the words of the Sermon on the Mount.' But before answering it, think for a moment who it was; and as you pronounce his name, make a bow or courtesy of obeisance, for it is written, 'at his name every knee shall bow.' So, now; whose words were they.'

"I need not add that the question was answered by a shout more accurate, triumphant, and unanimous, than reverential; that comfort and good humor were restored, and that I was looked upon as an incompetent and discomfited examiner. But when afterwards alone with the teacher, a frank and candid person, I thought it well to inquire whether it was supposed that the children had been really able to answer the question which I in vain put to them. No, it was readily acknowledged they had not. Had they ever been told whose words those were? No, most likely not; it had been taken for granted that they knew so simple a thing as that. Would the children ever, of their own accord, have inquired whose they were? No, it was not in their way to do so.

"And yet several of these children would have answered questions far more difficult than any that I should have dreamed of putting to them; questions in the books of Deuteronomy, or Daniel, or the Epistle to the Hebrews."—*English S. S. Teachers' Magazine*.

5. TEACHERS' CHARACTERISTICS.

An interesting paper, recently read before the English United Association of Teachers, contains the following important generalizations:—

Teachers of limited capacity, or whose command of language is limited, invariably teach best with text-books, or by the individual system of instruction.

Men of fervid imagination, having great command of language and enthusiasm of character, almost invariably become superior teachers.

Decision of character almost invariably forms and element in the qualifications of a superior teacher.

Men who are deficient in general knowledge and enthusiasm of character, are generally bad teachers, even though they may possess great technical acquirements.

Presence of mind, and that self-confidence which is based on self-knowledge, are essential elements in a good teachers' character.

Success in teaching is more dependent upon the capabilities of the master for teaching than upon his technical acquirements. Teaching power is not always associated with superior talents or acquittance.

6. THE EARLY EDUCATION OF CHILDREN.

[The following article is taken from the last annual Report of Prof. Robert Allyn, late Commissioner of Public Schools in Rhode Island. It treats of a subject worthy of especial consideration, and should not escape the attention of Local Superintendents, as they are frequently urged to grant certificates to teachers sadly deficient in qualification, because "only small children" are to be under their charge.—*Ed.*]

"Allow me to call your particular attention to the early education of children. The general practice is, to neglect the little ones, and provide more carefully for the older and larger. Our school district trustees will very often urge the examiners to give a certificate to a teacher hired at a small salary, and therefore with very deficient qualifications, because their school is composed of small scholars; Whenever this is true, it pleads for a better teacher, and not for an inferior one. The district may not be able to pay for a long school, or for any other school, without drawing largely on the private resources of the inhabitants. But it should never make an excuse that because it has only small children, it can therefore be both penurious and recreant to duty. Because the children are small, and are capable of receiving, in the shortest time, the most enduring impressions, they ought to be placed under the care and guidance of one who knows the most of knowledge, and who understands the best means of communicating it, and the readiest way of forming and establishing excellent human character. Large scholars can, in some good

degree, both govern and instruct themselves, especially if they have been rightly trained early in life. But small ones can do neither. The older children in a school are not hurt and degraded by harsh and inconsiderate words and unkind treatment, neither are their morals debased by careless actions and examples, as are the tender little ones. How much of ill temper in after life; how much of contempt for law and authority; how much of idleness and vice, not to say of crime and ruin, in the latter life of mankind, may be the legitimate result of some cold neglect or bitter reproof, or hard cruelty, offered to the little innocent child, in the first days of his education, either at home or at school, no man can tell with any certainty; but it is entirely safe to infer, inasmuch as these things cannot be without influence on his sensitive nature, that the teachers and parents of one, now a morose and miserable old man, are not always free from blame. The silver coating on the iodized plate, prepared for the daguerreotype, is not more sensitive to light than the young mind is to kindness and cruelty, and it can hardly catch an impression sooner, than will such a heart take and foster to itself the impressions of the power and goodness of those who surround it. During a child's early school days, therefore it is, that he should be specially cared for, and then the law of love and kindness should lead and sway him, just as the great law of gentle, unperceived attraction sways all the heavenly bodies. To say that "it is only a child, and therefore he needs only a poor teacher," is not only to insult a nature nearer the angelic than any other on earth, but is to disregard the great lessons of Divine goodness, and to overlook all the experience and philosophy of man himself. When the child's limbs are weak and his feet are tender, then, more than at any other time, should a gentle hand guide him along a pathway strewn with flowers. Then should he find "the ways of wisdom, pleasantness, and all her paths peace." Then he should be induced to travel in that road with zeal and diligence, not driven by a whip of scorpions, but allured by every delightful will, and every elevating and ennobling aspiration. No illiterate dunce or boorish idler, too ignorant for a clerkship and too lazy to labor, should be hired to teach him, because he proposed to work at a cheap rate; to instruct him since "he is only a child." No stern man of iron, or prim woman of steel,—too unaccommodating and surly for business, and too much wanting in common sense to earn a living in an innocent way,—should be put into the school-house to govern him, because he can keep order and is a good disciplinarian, and the "little one is not very forward in his studies." Surely, if the Great Redeemer of souls, who knew all things, thought it a part of his duty to rebuke this spirit in his early disciples, it cannot be amiss for his children in these later days to study the same great lesson, and to remember how he took the infants in his arms and blessed them, declaring that of such is the kingdom of heaven, not only in innocence, but in capacity for knowledge and goodness. He, therefore, who neglects the child, because he foolishly reckons him to be ignorant, or incapable, or unworthy of the highest attention, sins against childhood, and also against the law of Christ and his own humanity.

By seeking the best teachers for our young children, great gain will accrue in more than one direction. The noblest benefit of a true education is, that the youth and men of the coming generation will be more virtuous, intelligent, refined, and worthy of their great work and destiny as human and immortal beings. Thus to fit men for the labor, the sufferings, and the duties of this life, ought to be the great business of each generation. For this, philosophy should speculate and reason; and practical duty should regard this as its greatest and noblest idea, if not as the particular sphere that includes all the ramifications of its work. Christianity may well reckon on this as the best means of bringing in that day when the desire of all nations shall be accomplished, and when the earth shall be once more the kingdom of God. Not only will the work which truth and love sigh for, be better performed by giving attention to the early education of our children by the best qualified teachers; it will be accomplished much sooner, and therefore, on the whole, at a vast saving of expense. There cannot be a doubt on this point,—that the best instructed and most wisely experienced teachers will educate children with far fewer failures and in far less time; and still smaller will be the doubt that the children thus educated, will be more powerful for good, and be far more energetic in philanthropic deeds than those educated, or rather, not educated, by cheap instructors and incompetent men. Look at this matter of expense in its proper light. If we can teach children earlier in life, without detriment to health,—a point not hard to prove,—then the time thus saved will be used by older, stronger, wiser, and more virtuous laborers in all the departments of life, and is so much direct gain to the community. Suppose it requires a common teacher ten years, that is, the period between the ages of five and fifteen, our school age, to educate forty children. It costs four hundred dollars a year for the teacher, and, including all expenses of board, clothing, books, and the loss of what the child would have earned, say one hundred and twenty-five dollars a year for a each of these children, a large estimate probably. Allowing it to cost six thou-