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THOUGHTS FOR THE TEACHER.

AN ADDRESS BEFORE AN INSTITUTE.

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THE following thoughts, which we copy from the *Pennsylvania School Journal*, are rich in fruitful suggestions for the mind of every earnest and thoughtful teacher:

All acknowledge the necessity of educating the young; but this necessity may be grounded upon merely relative ends, and thus great injury may be done at the very start. The necessity for education is found in the nature of the child. There are involved in his person, great possibilities; and forces also of vast significance from behind his individual will are entering into the web and woof of his being, which are to be taken up and finally made to be elements of his character. These possibilities are to be actualized and, so far as lies in our power, the possibilities of evil must be repressed, and those of the good be encouraged. Education must be based upon the need of a fully-developed personality. The furniture of the life already at hand, or the talents already given, must not be hidden in a napkin or buried in the earth.

The danger now is, that, in the pressure upon our attention of the thousand interests of our social order, calling for instruction in the arts and sciences, now almost innumerable, we may so dissipate our elementary training as to make the minds of the children fragmentary—forgetting the solemn interest of a fully-developed personality, without which no one is prepared to accomplish the mission of life.

Teaching is often spoken of as a *moulding process*, and so it is. But mind is not moulded like clay or iron, externally. The moulding power must come from within. The child is not a thing, but a personality—a thought of Jehovah—with possibilities which baffle all finite measurement. You cannot treat the child as a thing—for the plastic elements which are to form his character are to operate from within his own being, and the teacher must come to apprehend at the very outset of his or her work what that being involves. From behind the child's individual life, yet entering therein with conditioning powers, are the broad forces of race and nationality and sex and family life. These form elements of study and serious thought upon the part of the teacher, for they reach beyond the body into the interior psychic structure of the child, and constitute a vast natural force which the child has to take up and carry upward from their base in the natural into ethical freedom, into the spiritual structure of character.

What organic differences, for example, confront us in sex, challenging us to pay regard thereto! The two sexes cannot be treated alike, and it was never intended they should be. The differences show themselves at once. The boy, under the power of a determining phantasy, begins to ride his stick for a horse, while the girl dresses her doll; and as they grow older, although brother and sister, they remove farther from

each other in temperament and forms of feeling and thought.

Passing from what thus enters into the individual life from behind all self-conscious activity, let us look at the being of the child as made up of body and soul. The body becomes important as the investiture of the soul, as the earthly image which it bears, as the ultimate in which it meets the surrounding physical world. Every teacher should have sufficient information in reference to bodily life, to guide the young in dietetics and gymnastics, and in all that pertains to the prophylactic side of medical knowledge; and beyond this there are peculiar temperaments that inhere in the bodily structure which must be understood.

If all this and much more is true relating to the body, how much greater must be the need of knowing the powers of the soul! There are temperaments, so to speak, there also. You may find a pupil in whom the will-side preponderates, with the imminent danger of stubborn wilfulness, calling for you to open the way for it to organize itself into a great administrative power for good. Again, you may have one in whom the intellect-side preponderates, reaching out into the pride of rationalism, needing your most careful restraints and encouragements. Here again is one in whom the emotional in the form of imagination has the ascendancy, in imminent danger of falling into mere sentimentalism, calling for you to open the way for it to reach out into the realm of the beautiful in the way of æsthetic culture. These inner soul tendencies, these beginning impulses of the soul, under the power of influences which flow down from the world of ideas, require your steady and most careful attention. You cannot master the knowledge required here by examination of specific or technical journals. What is required is the broad, full, liberal culture of your own personality.

What are commonly called *faculties* of the mind, we prefer to call recipient forms. The *will* never creates the *good*, but only opens the way for the good to have place in our personal life. The intellect does not make the *true*, but opens the way for it to authenticate itself. Such also is the situation between the *imagination* and the beautiful; and hence, in the culture of these so-called faculties, that for which they are creatively given must be the end toward which they should be directed; and this is no relative end, as is at once apparent when we recognize that the Good and the True and the Beautiful have their source in God, and flow down from Him to apprehend and to be apprehended, that we may live to a purpose infinitely elevating.

Now it is impossible for the mind to evolve itself except in the presence of an already awakened intelligence. Without this, though surrounded by all the facts of the universe, there can be no culture, no movement, much beyond that of the lower nature. Teaching therefore, is not a science, nor an art—it is a *virtue*, an *ethical movement*, a relation of mind to mind, of will to will, of soul to soul. There may be, and is, a science of it but *it itself* is not a science. From this we can see the absolute need of our own *personal culture* as teachers.

For example, Grammar is an abstract

science; but to teach it you must refer back to its concrete base in language. Your preparation must pass beyond the technical analysis of grammar text-books. You must so far as possible, master your mother-tongue, by reading the literature in which it is speaking and hath spoken. Chaucer, Shakespeare, Johnson, Marlow, Webster, etc., etc., should be read until you know *English*. Of course, the children must use the scaffolding while they need it; but *you* should have removed it long ago, to gaze directly upon the fair proportions and glory of the structure itself. How often do we have classes in literature, each member of which can give us dates of birth and death, and headings and titles, etc., etc.—a fine test of memory indeed, but only the skeleton, with no flesh and no blood coursing through arteries and veins! Such will tell you all about Chaucer, so far as regards his space-and-time habitat, who have read a few lines only of his writings, and call this "literature." So also with other departments of study. The mind of the teacher may dwell so long upon methods of teaching, very important in themselves, as to forget the truth that the real method of a science is in the science itself, if grasped in the mind.

In regard to the multiplicity of studies demanded by the age, allow a passing remark. We are constantly asked whether this and that and the other, ought not to be introduced into the schools; and some may have already commenced to introduce, and may keep on introducing, until we have, as the inevitable result, a piebald hodge-podge of an elementary course for our schools. Let us introduce all these if we can *in the teachers*, or, in other words, let the effort be to secure such a teacher as will be prepared to point the pupils, as occasion may demand, to interesting and useful lines of study in his daily intercourse with them.

You teachers are held to stand, each one *in loco parentis*. Of course, you can only approximate such relation. But it is well that you consider the average family life, as this is found in our Commonwealth, and see what elements of culture are involved therein, that the contrast between the school and school-room, and the home-life of the pupils may not be so great as to render an approximation even impossible. If the pupil on the way to school has soiled his face, disarranged his garments, or is wet and covered with mud, as is often the case with the frolicsome youth, take care of him as a loving parent would, or ought. Consider his manners and habits, his needs of moral and religious culture. You cannot introduce the various confessions of our churches. If you could, it would not be wise for you to do so. But, remembering the parents' solicitude, you can point the soul of your pupil heavenward, you can remind him of the bond between his spirit and the Eternal Spirit. A religious atmosphere can be made to fill your school-room and a reverent religious life, so important and necessary, can by your presence and character be made to pervade your whole work.

But it may be said, "All this is idle talk. Children can with difficulty grasp the known, how then shall they think of the