

ties. The most perfect machine that can ever be made of inert matter can only serve as a medium through which power may be transmitted from one point to another, and applied in one given way in performing work. How infinitely superior to this is the human body! It not only transmits and applies, but it acquires and conserves power, just at the very points where work is to be done. But this is not all. An unlimited possibility of acquiring and conserving power, with a limited possibility of transmitting and applying it in performing work, would be of comparatively little value. Man is not thus constituted. When rightly understood it will be found that the possibilities in his body and mind of applying power are in every way co-extensive with the possibilities of acquiring and conserving it. But let us note these possibilities carefully in their relations to each other, that we may discover still further the nature of the teacher's work.

The medium through which power, whether physical or mental, is properly utilized in the performance of work is habit. The truth of this statement may be readily shown by reference to any sort of mechanical skill. Take, for example, the hand; it is endowed naturally with the power of producing an almost infinite variety of motions. It is also subject in a certain sense to the direction of the mind. Does this fit it to handle successfully tools of any sort? All will answer emphatically, No. Practice is needed in order to do this. But what is meant by this practice? Simply this, that a persistent and continuous repetition, through an effort of the intelligence and will, of the motions of the hand, necessary to do a given kind of work by the use of certain tools, induces a state of the organism concerned in producing these motions which we call habit. Just here it is very important, in order

to locate rightly the teacher's work, that we note with some care the nature and use of these induced states or habits.

In the above example the motions of the hand in using the tools are at first produced, very imperfectly and slowly, by the exercise of a strong effort of intelligence and will. By persisting, however, in the practice, dexterity is gradually acquired, and the necessary effort of the intelligence and will gradually diminishes, until finally the work is performed with rapidity and ease, without almost any conscious effort. The formation of all habits, whether of body or mind, follows substantially the law here illustrated. It will therefore be observed, that as rapidly as habits are perfectly formed, conserved physical and mental power can be applied, almost, if not altogether, unconsciously, in the performance of work. In this case, the exercise of the intelligence and will ceases to be necessary to direct and control the muscular and nerve energy or mental energy by which the work is performed.

When this point is reached workmanship of a high order becomes possible. But why is this? The answer is plain. The mental energy, that was before required to handle and direct the tools, is now used in studying and perfecting the ideal as the work progresses; hence the improved results. Universal experience verifies this position. A first-class mechanic is, in every instance, a man who has converted the use of each tool that he handles into a perfect habit, and hence who is able, while doing a piece of work, to give his whole attention to shaping everything with reference to the finish and perfection of the work itself.

But what is true of mechanical effort holds equally true of all departments of art. Finger and foot movements, for example, in piano and