

Simonides, "because the more I consider the question the more obscure it seems." *Quia quanto diutius considero, tanto mihi res videtur obscurior.* The Christian historian from whom we have the story truly says: "The answer was wise, if it proceeded from the high idea which he conceived of the Divine Majesty, which no understanding can comprehend, nor any tongue express."

From this altitude of meditation the schoolmaster will descend to all relations and all duties; and he will, in particular, have need to consider the influence indirect as well as direct; unconscious as well as intentional, which he daily exerts upon his pupils. The teaching power of example is great both in establishing the learner in the right and in confirming him in the wrong. When he considers the power of education in general,—its formative power on individuals and societies,—he will recall to mind particular cases of both men and nations,—men who have first found out their self-possessed powers of thought and action under the influence of kind teachers, and afterward wielded them mightily for their own and their country's benefit. Horace Greeley, taught at his mother's knee, Daniel Webster, instructed in the country schoolhouse, and Henry Wilson, introduced into the most useful career in the same way, are but few among many. The lives of these and of many others should be particular evidences of the power back of education. The schoolmaster must, with Kant, believe that "behind education lies hid the great secret of the perfection of human nature." And at the same time he must ponder the weakness and the strength of human nature, and the corresponding weakness and strength of educational influences. The often baleful principle of heredity, the force

of habit and social environment, the love of sin, the indulgence of a natural sloth of mind or disposition, all fight against education. To fight oppositions, to remove obstacles, we must comprehend them. The schoolmaster, therefore, meditates upon these evils and hindrances, how he may best counteract and obviate them. In his earnest and varied appeals to the attention of his students, he must remember the great principle of psychology, that the power of the will is limited to *selection*. We cannot be good simply by *willing* to be good. The avenue through which the principle of virtue enters the mind,—the one condition of improvement,—is the *volitional direction of the attention* to high things. For him who enters upon this road with the ardent desire for his own mental and moral improvement, deliberately choosing to attend to good thoughts rather than the "motions of sin," nature and grace provide a beneficent principle which psychologists call the principle of automatic mental action. By choosing repeatedly to fix our attention on certain objects we, by and by, find ourselves *automatically* prompted to think, feel and act in the line to which we have directed our attention. The schoolmaster earnestly ponders how he may apply these principles, how he may contrive to get his hearers to *attend* on learning, that learning may bless them; to *attend* on wisdom and goodness, that wisdom and goodness may become the habit, the automatic habit of the soul,—this is the burden of his thought. To make the conditions for goodness as favourable as possible, to make the whole environment conducive to the development of the Christian graces,—this is his task.—*Journal of Education.*