

The Educational Weekly.

TORONTO, APRIL 2, 1885.

WHAT most causes pupils to respect their teachers? Is not this a question that, expressed or not, has arisen in the mind of every one who has entered the teaching profession? And is not the answer to it the key to all authority and influence? It is a profound topic, worthy of prolonged expatiation. We can but touch on its merest outlines here.

At bottom, respect is the foundation of a proper and fruitful relationship between master and pupil. Until this is firmly established no true *edification* is possible—whether moral or intellectual. This need not surprise us. Even if we have not arrived at this truth through experience, on theoretical grounds it is indisputable. The intellectual faculties, Carlyle has insisted, are not in the main separate from or separable from the moral faculties. In fact this word 'faculty,' as meaning a distinct part of our nature, he shows us is misleading. But without going further, it will be granted that in the contact of mind with mind the result is not merely an intellectual change that takes place; the influence of the superior is not exerted on the mind alone, but on the whole nature of the inferior. That the mental powers alone can be affected is an absolute impossibility. It is not the touching one circle with another; it is the superimposition of circle upon circle. If we recognize the fact that we cannot in our conduct employ only one part of our nature, if all the constituent parts—physical, mental, moral, act in co-operation, this truth will be made plain to us. We do not during one part of the day use our physical powers alone, at another our intellectual, and at another our moral. Constantly, from birth to death, they act together, indissoluble. We are apt to lose sight of this. Analyses in these days are carried to so extreme a nicety that we begin to forget that the entity analysed is an entity not a conglomeration.

THESE are not vague speculations. If we were earnestly impressed with their reality, would they not do much in ordering our conduct? The excessive complexity of the influence and the extreme significance of the influence we exercise over others, and of that we derive from them would assuredly create in us a healthy and sincere caution as to how we exercised it, and how we laid ourselves amenable to it.

THIS influence is nowhere brought into greater play than in the school room. The master is placed there specially to influence—intellectually only, many think, but as truly morally. And it is the moral influence and none other that is the source of respect. A blameless character will do more to insure this than the most brilliant intellectual attainments; strictest uprightness is more potent than scholarship. To obtain authority, to be able really to influence, in the more narrow sense of the term (a sense almost altogether moral), to have the power to enforce obedience, and *to command respect*, conduct is of infinitely more value than ability.

POWER, says Ruskin, is the special feature sure to attract attention in any art,—not knowledge, but power. This is altogether a moral quality, and serves more completely to sustain our position. Cleverness will produce admiration. Respect is a far deeper feeling. Admiration may be dispensed with. Respect never. The former is the embellishment; the latter the true substrate in which all other properties inhere. Without power the teacher's teachings and the teacher's commands are as sounding brass or as tinkling cymbals—mere ornament and incitement. Power is the bugle-sound which must be obeyed.

BUT power, ethically considered, must ever be distinguished from arbitrariness. Arbitrariness is power shorn of justice. It is force mis-applied; authority without clemency, without love. Eliminate justice from power, and this will soon cease to exist, will be no longer power but weakness. Severity may succeed for a time, when no loop-hole appears by which to escape it; but as an influencing, ennobling quality it will become practically of no avail. It may produce a superficial semblance of submission, but this is illusory. At heart the pupil rebels, not obeys.

WE now arrive at a clearer idea of what is the primary and chief source of respect. That which only can evoke this is a moral quality; its essence is authority; it leads to power; and power in its true sense, allied with justice and love. Is this beyond our reach? It is more easily achieved than scholarship, more firmly retained than brilliancy. We cannot all be geniuses; is there anything to prevent our preserving our character?

IF we are firmly convinced of this, we

shall carry this conviction with us into the school room; it will affect our every action, and, what is more, it will in time affect the actions of those under us.

CHARACTER is a light that cannot be hid under a bushel, and, in consequence, cannot fail to be reflected. The darkest substances in nature absorb more light than all others, though externally they appear not to be affected. May not this analogy hold in morals? It is safe to say it does. The blackest character is most acted on by good, and, indeed, is acted on by no other thing.

IF we grant this we cannot attach too much importance to discovering the true clue to commanding respect.

IS not education undergoing a transitional stage? or, if it has not yet reached this, does it not seem as if there were soon to be a transitional stage? Can it continue long at the pace at which it is at present going? We have adverted in another column to "Hurry in Teaching"; if this is a necessity of the present system; and if it is to be decried; that system must sooner or later be amended. It seems as if the object to be attained was specialism, and yet a specialism that involved the minute study of all cognate branches. The child is expected to know everything, and everything well. Unless some change is made in the curriculum, or some change is made to suit the curriculum we cannot but think that the present rush in education will be found to be pernicious, and that some alterations will be mooted.

AT present each master declares that his is the most important subject; and that to it his pupils should devote the most energy. Hearing this on every side the pupils are very apt to become discouraged. The result too often is that all the subjects suffer and none are thoroughly studied; so that the very end in view is defeated.

SOME change will probably soon arrive. What it will be it is difficult to prognosticate. But we would recommend to all teachers the advisability of examining closely the present curricula and the system of teaching them, and thus to help in hastening on what we cannot but think will be a change for the better—either in the form of altered or curtailed subjects, or longer periods of time in which to teach them. At the present moment there may not be a very great deal to decry; it is the tendency which we think is likely to necessitate some innovation.