

body, but a loose congeries of persons, totally unfit, partially fit, and entirely fit for their work, united by no common organization, presenting no aggregate front. They say there are 60,000 teachers in England. Suppose that there are 20,000 in Scotland and Ireland. Here we have 80,000. And suppose that those men were all intelligent and up to the mark, that they were united in one organization, and connected by a common tie, would not the influence of such a profession be felt at once and powerfully?

This, then, is the main reason. But it presents itself in various aspects. And I now ask you to look at the matter from the points of view suggested by the comparison of professions which I have instituted. How is it that these professions have gained the respect which has been accorded them?

I think there are two special circumstances which have helped them much: the one, that peculiar technical knowledge and practice have been insisted on as requisite for the exercise of them; and the other, that they have been recognised by government. Both these points are of special interest to us.

Medical, legal, and theological students go through a course of special training. This course fits them for their work, and the want of this course incapacitates a man for being a member of the profession. There is thus a strongly marked line of demarcation drawn between those inside and those outside of each profession. This is not the case in the teaching profession. Some time ago, a man who was fit for nothing else could earn a livelihood by teaching; and all kinds of people, young and old, ignorant and learned, have set up as teachers without any special preparation. The question that remains for us to answer is, Is this a right or a wrong state of things? I answer unhesitatingly that it is a wrong state of things, and I shall give my reasons for so thinking.

A great many people imagine that any one can teach who knows the subject he professes to teach. This opinion shews a complete ignorance of the nature of education, and the work of the educator. The teacher has something more to do than simply to make children learn one lesson after another. If he is to do his work thoroughly, every lesson will educe power in the child, and he will be continually conferring impulses in a spiritual direction. The real educator has in his mind the full evolution of the child's powers, and he has to weigh every article of intellectual pabulum according to the amount of force it will have in producing the power which he seeks to educe. He has also his eye on the well balanced evolution of power. To do all this the teacher must be a psychologist. His whole conduct must be directed by the laws of psychology. He has not merely to know his subject, but he has to know what parts of his subject are suitable to the child, what unsuitable. He has to know what method of presenting his subject is in accordance with nature, and what contrary to nature, and therefore injurious to his main object, the evolution of the child's powers. And he must make himself acquainted, not merely with the laws of intellectual evolution, but with the laws of the emotional nature, because he has to deal with the child through the heart as well as the head. I have a strong conviction that this thorough knowledge of psychology, in its application to the nature of children, is absolutely necessary, both from the nature of the case, and from the experiences of teachers. From the nature of the case, because it is plain that, however skilful a teacher may be without this knowledge, he is not proceeding systematically to work, he does not know really what he is aiming at, and whether he is using the means suggested by nature, and he may be nonplussed at once by an unusual occurrence. The teacher who has no such knowledge has likely no idea of how to teach, or he has seen some one teaching before, and he merely imitates. In both cases the results will be unsatisfactory.

My conviction is also based on experience. The most difficult task which was ever set me in the teaching way was teaching a sweet little girl, of between three and four years of age, the alphabet. I was a student at college, and an offer was made me of this piece of teaching. I knew my alphabet well enough; but I tried for two months to teach that sweet little child, and failed most completely. The child was timid. She could not sit with comfort beside a stranger. And she could not for sobs utter the names of the letters. And I did not understand her. I did not know how to overcome her fears, I did not know how to draw her attention away from herself, I did not know how to make capital fun out of the A, B, C, and so I had the mortification of failure. I taught Greek in the Edinburgh University, too, and I taught Latin in the Stirling High School, and during the first three years of this my teaching career I was groping in the dark. I had plenty of impulse, and gave that to my pupils in abundance. But, looking back on these years, I know now that I needlessly put difficulties in the way of my pupils, that I was ignorant of the nature of their minds, and made mistakes in consequence. It was not until I had made a thorough study of psychology, as it can and ought to be applied to the minds of boys, that I saw clearly the right methods to pursue, the amount of work to be prescribed, the endless, varied repetition necessary, and many like things. And I feel this also, that one makes great progress in the art of teaching; that, even after you know the right methods, experience widens, and widens your knowledge, gives you a firmer and surer grasp of the boys' minds, and you proceed with greater certainty in regard to the result. I may point to two other facts, as facts of experience, in regard to this matter. The teachers in the great schools of England are all highly educated men, and yet the Report of the Commissioners states that their teaching, taking it as a whole, has been

a miserable failure. Why? Because most of them do not know how to teach. They employ methods that violate every law of psychology. They persist in practices which psychology pronounces injurious to the human mind. And you will find in the answers of some of them, opinions in regard to teaching, which it is perfectly marvellous that a sane man could entertain. For instance, more than one state that it is better for them not to go into society, but to continue teaching nearly the whole day, because society would turn their minds away from the subject of education, and they would thus get out of the tone requisite for teaching. The men seemed to have no idea of the value of change of exercise and relaxation, both for teacher and pupil. Look from these to the students of our Normal Colleges. These, I am sorry to say, are not always so well educated as they might be. It is certainly not their fault, for if the students had the power, they would make different arrangements. Still, they do study methods of teaching, and learn somewhat of applied psychology. And there is no doubt that they turn out good teachers, that they are well able to use what they have got.

This applied psychology, then, is the teacher's special technical work. I know that some may be inclined to assert, that we have psychology far enough advanced in its investigations to form a basis for a practical training. I deny this out and out. I maintain, on the contrary, that psychological researches have established the laws of the mind far more exactly than physiological investigations have disclosed the laws of vital action. And, in proof of this I can appeal to such works as those of Professor Bain on the Intellect and the Emotions, full of sound generalizations, and to those of Currie and Morrison, as full of just applications of the laws of mind. My opinion in regard to this matter is stronger than most; for I believe that one philosopher of Germany has established psychology on a thoroughly scientific basis, and that his system of psychology at every turn affords irrefragable principles of action and criteria of methods. I mean Beneke. He saw clearly that three great difficulties lay in the way of a true psychology: first, the continual meddling with questions which there is no possibility of settling, and in regard to which all that can be done is to settle the limits of human knowledge by an investigation into the processes of our thought; second, the commingling of physical in the explanation of psychological phenomena, as if the chain of causation in mental phenomena could be disturbed directly by physical agencies, while the physical cannot be disturbed directly by mental; and, thirdly, the failure to observe the immense complication of all mental phenomena. Tearing himself clear from the first tendency, he resolutely adhered to the determination to explain mental phenomena only by mental laws; and watching the human mind with great patience, he analysed and analysed until he got at three or four fundamental processes by which he thought he could explain almost all mental phenomena; and I think he has succeeded wonderfully. I do not say that the science is complete. He himself would have been the last to maintain that. It is a science based on observation and analysis for the most part, and therefore it requires the help of many minds. But I say this much, that it is so far complete, that it can be used by the teacher at every stage of his career, alike for the intellectual, moral, and aesthetic culture. It enables the teacher at once to gauge the value of the methods which he is pursuing; to estimate the educational value of the matter which he is giving; to measure the intellectual force of the pupil; and to put your finger on the special deficiency characteristic of his mind, and to battle in a successful manner against the special diseases of the soul. As Beneke laid great stress on his exposition of the complicated character of mental phenomena, he paid special attention to the processes of thought, as exhibited in children, because they are more simple in these. And, accordingly, he wrote a very important book on education, containing, as I think, the finest, most philosophical estimate of the various branches of study in Education, and a thorough exposition of the natural methods. His work has had a most powerful influence on the teaching of Germany. His psychology has been hailed and cultivated by German teachers; and I have no doubt, when it once becomes properly known in this country, it will exercise a great influence.

There is then a science of Education, a science not merely in its rudiments, but worked out with considerable fulness; and those who have asserted the contrary, seems to me to betray their ignorance of what has been done in this field, and their readiness to pronounce an opinion before they have investigated a subject.

But besides this technical knowledge, the teacher has to communicate impulse. The thirst for knowledge is natural to man; but somehow or other, in the course of life, the thirst for knowledge, especially of the higher kind, soon ceases to exist, and he becomes satisfied with transient and less spiritual pleasures and occupations. Now it is the business of the teacher to stimulate the pupil's desire for knowledge in every direction. And this impulse can be given only in one way. It can be given only from the teacher's own heart and life. In other words, the teacher must keep up and intensify his own desire for knowledge, his own eagerness in the pursuit of truth. He must be a genuine and hearty student. The man who ceases to study is not fit to be a teacher, or, at any rate, is not fully equipped for the work of education. And hence the necessity of giving the teacher as thorough an education as possible at the commencement. Every teacher should be able at least to take his degree of M.A. Indeed, if he does not reach this point, I do not see how he is to make a thorough mastery of the psychology which he has to apply