

for good lies in the training of the public schools in the direction of obedience. And here I wish to testify to the great gain that has been made. The discipline of the schools is far better than it was at a time within the recollection of many now living. Teachers have greater power and higher skill in governing. There is far less of antagonism and harsh discipline, and far more of gentleness and refinement. The pupils are more tractable and obedient. The restraining and uplifting influence of the schools is very great. Many a young anarchist is taught lessons in the schools that will last him for a lifetime.

If it be said that law-breaking, recklessness and crime abound, let it be remembered that many powerful agencies for evil are at work, and were it not for the counteracting influence of the schools and churches, the outlook would be gloomy indeed. Our land seems to be more than ever the dumping-ground for the refuse of the old world's population, and these herd in our great commercial centres, making each a danger centre. Out of the children of this mixed multitude the schools must make American citizens; and never before in the world's history were schools so well fitted for so great a work as are the American free schools of to-day. Let teachers be encouraged to renewed zeal and higher endeavour.

4. *To beget a sense of individual responsibility.* Daniel Webster was once asked what he considered the greatest thought that had ever occupied his mind. He replied, "The thought of my own individual accountability." And it is a thought that tends to impress every right-minded person most profoundly. It is a serious thing to live the life of a man or a woman in the world, knowing that every one of us must

render a strict account,—that even "every idle word that men shall speak they shall give account thereof." There is not much strength or stability of character without a considerable measure of this sense of oughtness; and its strong development in any one is almost a guarantee of safety in the voyage of life. Its development in pupils is a matter of growth and cultivation. Teachers are apt to feel that little can be done in this direction, and so put forth little effort. Perhaps it is *caught* rather than *taught*. Certain it is that the teacher who acts from a deep sense of his own accountability, and whose first question is always, What is the right thing to do? will steadily gain ground. In all dealings with pupils in matters of conduct, it is well to appeal to their sense of duty even though it be known to be weak. There is no better or surer way of quickening this sense. Did you do right? Is your record clean? Is your conscience clear? are questions which, coming from the lips of a faithful and earnest teacher, can scarcely fail of an effect. The discovery of the want of moral sense in pupils should stimulate rather than discourage effort.

Of course the years before school life begins is the important period. The moral sense and moral standards of children are largely the product of the influences which surround them during this early period. In this there is a strong reason for public kindergartens in the cities, for the large class of children whose infant lives are spent in an atmosphere of vice and crime, and whose early moral training would be otherwise entirely neglected. It would be true economy as well as true philanthropy to provide free kindergartens for these children, with compulsory attendance from the age of three or four to six or seven.