

'H'm! military discipline all day long. Too much of it.' Then he turned to the teacher and faced the difficulty of criticising without wounding a faithful worker.

He knew that in the next room the teacher would have but a few words upon which she could safely promise ninety percent of success in an exercise such as this. Besides those few, the children would be able to write many more in dictated sentences, some knowing familiarly words whose orthography others would ask for before attempting to write them. Indefinite are such results as this, and he had always felt dissatisfied with them because it was impossible to fit them justly to the examination blank in which he semi-annually framed the status of each teacher. He was an old education man, with a secret approval for that sort of teaching which would measure up in neat squares, and thus enable him to keep his records in ship-shape for ready reference.

But this morning, he was stricken with sympathy for the children. The sensation, as excited by excellent scholastic achievement, was a new one, and he hardly knew what to make of it. This teacher had taken his cue, but had followed it to an extreme in which he dimly felt lay a lesson that might lead to a reversal of his theory of teaching. Feeling that the blame was chiefly his own, he said to the brightly confident little woman waiting before him for expected praise, 'I'll talk this over with you when there's more time. Just now, I will only say that I fear you are giving too much thought to the formal side of your work. You have done superlatively well in what you have attempted, but the aim is narrow and narrow-ing.'

The children saw the teacher's face fall as the examiner left the room, and knew that he had not admired her work as fully as she had expected he would. They saw it grow thoughtful, too, and to their surprise she sat down at her desk, dropped her hands in her lap, and looked at them silently, as if revolving some problem. She had never wasted so many moments in all their knowledge of her. They almost held their breath in anticipation of the next wonder.

Through the stillness there came to that energetic little woman a sense she had never given herself time to feel before—a sense of the great dependence of those little ones upon her leadership, and of her own responsibility toward them. 'Have I worked for them or for myself?' she asked, and her conscience smote her in the answer. To score a high mark as their teacher had been her aim. No teaching ideal of her own had she cherished. The superintendent's theory she had tried to serve, working as his subordinate. Neither conscience nor intellect had stirred in question of his infallibility until now that she had failed to please him. Self-accused and humbled, she sat before the children, whose souls, she believed, would some day call hers to account for whatever wrong she might have done them. What harm was she doing them?

With a sudden sense of the children's sympathy, she sat forward in an attitude of consultation. Who could tell her 'what harm,' if not the little ones themselves? She would get the clue to educational reform from them.

'Children,' she began, 'Mr. Jennings thinks you spell wonderfully well. I am wondering if we could have done anything that would have pleased him better. He is a kind-hearted man and loves children. If you were to meet him out of school, you would have real good times with him. What would you tell him if he were to visit your parents in their homes—if he were your uncle, say? Come! let us imagine that Mr.

Jennings is our uncle. What shall we do to please him most? Spell words for him?' 'I'd tell him a story,' said one child timidly.

The teacher turned her thoughtful eyes upon Julie and smiled encouragingly as she asked, 'What story would you tell him, dear?'

'Unaccustomed to such 'drawing out' as this, and feeling herself the incarnation for the moment of the general scare that pervaded the ranks in consciousness of the precious school minutes that were flying by 'unimproved,' Julie answered rather gaspingly, trying to say as much in as little time as possible, 'The story of the Ugly Duckling. It wasn't ugly when it was a swan.'

The teacher's gaze remained fixed upon Julie, and became absent as the effort to define the lesson of the moment abstracted her thought. Story telling! The children would revel in it, but how would that prosper their 'studies'? She had heard of myth study and biographical incident as a foundation for history, but had never given much attention to these fanciful theories. Her class must learn to spell.

'Children, we are going to take a few minutes to talk this over—perhaps half an hour, perhaps until lunch time. Do not let us feel hurried. We'll talk slowly for once. I want you to tell me just what is in your minds. Why do you think Mr. Jennings was not so pleased with us as we wanted him to be?'

A look of relief settled upon the class as they relaxed to the feeling that they might give their thoughts time to 'come out right end first,' as an older pupil of Miss Lamb's had once said.

'I think he didn't like it because some of us missed our words,' said one child after a pause.

'I don't,' rejoined another promptly. 'I think he was mad because I took up Leonard's word so quick.'

'We raced too much,' ventured a third, evidently in echo of his predecessor's thought. The pondering eyes were turned upon the last speaker.

'Perhaps we did, Bertie. But do you not think we ought to be praised for doing our work quickly?'

Emboldened by the air of receptivity which had suddenly transformed his teacher, Bertie answered: 'My mamma says I hurry too much in school, and then I come home and eat too fast at lunch time.'

'I'm afraid you do, Bertie,' said Miss Lamb slowly, 'I do myself, sometimes, and it is not good for either of us. But you and I must both learn that we must do some things quickly and some things slowly.' As she spoke, Miss Lamb wrote at the top of a pad that happened to lie before her, 'Learning together.' It was borne in upon her that there were lessons for her to learn in association with these children—lessons of whose necessity she had been quite unconscious.

'But I forget,' said Bertie.

'Yes, you forget,' repeated the teacher musingly. 'You reach the table in a nervous tremor from overpush during the morning at school, and are not wise enough to know that you must relax before you can digest your meal. I 'forget' myself. I need to practice relaxation and I must teach you the same art. Children, I am going to write something over here in this corner of the black board that is very important. I want all of you who can tell time to watch the clock toward the close of every morning session from now until promotion, and when it says a quarter of twelve to point to this writing. That will remind me that I must spend the last few minutes of the morning in getting you rested up for luncheon and

in talking with you about how to take care of your bodies.'

1. Work rapidly.
2. Rest before eating.
3. Eat slowly.

'But now about the spelling. How can we learn so many words unless we give every spare minute to it, as we have done?'

'My cousin Nellie doesn't learn so many words, but she can write little letters,' suggested a pupil.

'How can she write letters without knowing how to spell a great many words?'

'If she doesn't know a word she asks her teacher.'

'But if I should help you by telling you the words, as Nellie's teacher does, you would not remember them as you do after hard study.'

'My big brother looks in the dictionary when he don't know a word,' ventured one upon whom it was dawning that somehow or other big people got along without carrying everything in their heads.

'Yes,' admitted Miss Lamb, 'that is an advantage that grown folks have. And you want me to be your dictionary until that time comes for you.'

The little brains were grasping the question sufficiently to feel that this would be a great relief from drudgery and not altogether wrong. A few faces showed distinct assent to the proposition.

'I've a good mind to try it,' thought the teacher. 'What an amount of labor it would save—and time, too, for something that is perhaps better worth while than the everlasting spelling drill. To be able to write little letters—how delighted the mid-gets would be!'

'But, children,' she continued, 'it is surely a fine thing to know things yourself, and not to have to ask other people. Suppose you wanted to write a letter out of school—you would be glad to know how to spell the names of the days and months.'

'That's what I said to Nellie, but she says, 'What's the use of knowing how to write November when it's only May?''

'Timeliness! Teach for present use.' Where had Miss Lamb heard those words? It did not matter. She would try to what extent she could apply them in her next term's work. Meantime she would ask Mr. Jennings if he thought the hint they contained at all practical. Perhaps he could help her in interpreting them. Or had he lessons to learn himself? She strongly suspected that she would find him a little vague as to what he wanted her to do next term. Some change would be encouraged—of that she felt convinced, and perhaps she (and the children) could help him to know what direction he would best like the change to take.

True Worth.

True worth is in being, not seeming—

In doing each day that goes by
Some little good—not in the dreaming
Of great things to do by-and-by.
For whatever men say in blindness,
And in spite of the fancies of youth,
There's nothing so kingly as kindness,
And nothing so royal as truth.

We get back our mete as we measure—
We cannot do wrong and feel right,
Nor can we give pain and gain pleasure—
For justice avenges each slight.
The air for the wing of the sparrow,
The bush for the robin and wren,
But always the path that is narrow
—And straight for the children of men,
—Alice Cary.