

right thing at the right time and in the right way, *is* teaching. Very often time is worse than wasted in a futile attempt to question out of a pupil what has never been questioned into him, and what he cannot by any possibility evolve from his "inner consciousness." It is one of the best characteristics of a good teacher that he knows exactly when and what to "tell," as well as when and what to impart or to elicit by questioning. The "telling not teaching" maxim is thoroughly sound as a protest against the method of continuous lecturing. It is easy to lecture; it is difficult to teach; thus many instructors are good lecturers but not good teachers. With clearness of thought and fluency of speech, they seem to expect that lucid exposition on the part of the teacher will prove an effective substitute for attention and self activity on the part of the pupil. The lecturing method, the pouring in process, may have its place in the college lecture room—though even there a little Socratic questioning now and then seems desirable—but the method is nearly worthless in the primary and the secondary school. The object lesson, the exposition, the demonstration, can be interpreted and assimilated only by what is already within the mind. This assimilating process—it cannot be too often repeated—is solely the

learner's act, and can never be dispensed with by even the most logical arrangement and lucid exposition on the part of teacher or text book. But as we have seen, the teacher may aid the learner's effort by presenting the new matter in its proper relations, and may lead him, by questioning, to see the old knowledge in clearer light, and to make for himself the mental connection between the new and the old.

Vague made definite.—It has been said that the first ideas got by a child, no matter by what process of instruction, are necessarily hazy; his mental growth is from the vague to the definite by analysis and synthesis, either conscious or unconscious. And as these mental functions are undeveloped in the young learner, it is the business of the teacher to *guide* the learner's mind into analytic and synthetic working. Thus the vague is made definite, misapprehensions are corrected, and old knowledge is both clarified and enlarged by new growths of material with which it is rationally connected. If a pupil, by an erroneous answer, shows that he has not clearly grasped a thought, we do not forthwith tell him the correct answer. Guided by a few thoughtful questions he is made to discover the error, and to think out the correct answer for himself.

THE TRUE PRINCIPLES OF TEACHING ENGLISH.

BY FIDELIS.

IT is refreshing to turn from the curiously artificial book of Dr. Alexander Bain on the teaching of English Literature, to an admirable brief presentation of the true principles of "The Teaching of English" given by Professor Roberts in the New York *Christian Union*. It would

be well that it were printed in full in all our educational periodicals, so that our young teachers at all events might study it and make its spirit their own. Meantime, a few notes on its leading points may serve at least as an introduction to the article itself.