

That there in a vast amount of listlessness within our school-rooms, all teachers know, and all good teachers lament. There are many pupils upon whom the purpose of the school has never taken hold. If they do their work at all, they do it in lifeless routine, and with minds unquickened. Such pupils are not merely a dead weight upon the intellectual progress of the school; they are a corrupting element in its morals. Idleness and mischief are natural companions. An unawakened mind delights in low things rather than in high. A listless school feels nothing of the purifying power of a good ambition, and is open to all debasing influences. Hence an intense, wakeful, earnest life is essential to the moral improvement of a school. Such a life is not to be awakened in a day, I know; for the difficulties are very great, and there is indispensable need of high purpose and abundant energy in the teacher. It is to the teacher, mainly, that we must look for improvement in this great matter. To elevate the moral tone of the schools, train up teachers who can hold the schools above all listlessness, and inspire the pupils with the enthusiasm of education.

Of the second need I wish to say more, because it is less generally recognized. I believe that the course of study in our public schools ought to include *direct moral instruction*. There ought to be text-books and teaching on practical morality. By moral instruction I mean instruction as to doing right, in the relations of man with man; instruction respecting the common duties of life, what they are and how to do them. In these matters I claim that all the pupils in the public schools ought to receive instruction.

The purpose of public education is, as we know, to prepare the young for the life they are to live. Society

cannot allow each new generation to come up to maturity ignorant, unawakened, unfitted for useful and successful life; and therefore it takes the young into its schools and teaches them. Is it not plain that it ought to teach them whatever they will most need to know? Must it not prepare them most directly and efficiently for life as they will find it? And what is so important in life as they will find it, as practical duty, right doing between man and man? If they do not learn this, how will they be fitted for life, and of what use will they be to society? And who can be trusted to teach this to the rising generation if the schools do not? Some of them will learn the lessons of duty from wise and godly parents; but how innumerable are those who have no such parents to teach them! It is easy to assume that some one will attend to it,—parents, or Churches, or Sunday schools, or somebody. We do not assume that knowledge of arithmetic can be left to chance for its development, but it is often taken for granted that safe ideas of right living may be trusted to come somehow of themselves. Yet correct ideas of arithmetic are quite as likely to be developed in the work of life without instruction as sound ideas of duty. If society or the State requires that the young shall know how to live aright, it must teach them; and the best place for teaching them is in the public schools.

Two facts that are unquestionable tend to confirm this conclusion. One is that the public school system has constantly tended more and more to become an intellectualizing machine. This is the tendency and danger of the system. It omits moral instruction, for the most part, and devotes itself to the intellect; and the consequence is that the thinking powers are developed at the expense of the