

undecided, and will probably be brought again before Parliament.

Whatever may be the results of this new warfare it proves that non-sectarianism as well as sectarianism will have its troubles and its difficulties and gives additional weight to that truism so often lost sight of by popular agitators, and so quaintly illustrated by the great French fabulist: *On ne saurait contenter tout le monde et son père...*

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Conducting Recitations.

Conducting recitations, or class-teaching, is perhaps the most difficult part of school-work. Without the power of exciting an interest in the recitations of his school, no teacher can be long successful. Want of skill in addressing and wakening up a class is a serious want. To make a class go through its work intelligently and profitably, the mind must be set in motion and kept awake, its wanderings must be prevented, teaching made so plain as to be level with the scholar's capacity, and a halo of light and interest thrown around the whole work of recitation. Aptness to teach is not a faculty by nature which all men have in an equal degree. Some may talk long and loud upon a topic, in itself interesting, in the presence of children, without commanding their attention; while there are others, whose command of language and engaging manner, will at once secure attention and make every word interesting. This difference is nowhere so observable as among teachers.—Enter one school, and we observe its scholars dull and listless, though the teacher is laboriously and perhaps learnedly explaining some fact or principle of much importance in instructing them.—Pass to another school. A breathless silence pervades the room: the countenance of the children, upturned towards the teacher, beam with delight. As he kindles into earnestness they kindle into responsive attention. As he explains with the eloquence of simplicity, they catch each expressed thought with beaming eyes—showing how clearly they understand him, and how prepared, from his illustrations, to meet his sifting questions. And as the work proceeds his own fervour gathers life from their enthusiasm.—Such a man has aptness to teach.—It is a gift which, rightly used, carries its possessor in triumph over every difficulty. The ability to tell well and in language level with the capacity of his pupils, is of more consequence and value to the educator than high attainments without the power of successfully using them.—Combine superior attainments with ability to tell in a way, clear, interesting, and full of meaning, and you have the accomplished successful teacher.

To acquire this rare qualification, which is not necessarily a *natural gift*, should be the constant aim and special study of the teacher. To this end he should recall, as far as possible, the operations of his own mind in his early school-days:—what difficulties then presented themselves to his mind; the dark points of his studies; what caused him most labour and discouragement; the points which his teacher failed to explain, and why, &c. Questions, such as these, will frequently suggest the very difficulties which perplex less or more every mind when under training. Again, let him inquire, what, in studying any thing, was the first point that appeared clear to him and how was it made plain? After this, what was the second, the third step, &c., of intelligent advance? Right answers to such questions, cannot but be highly suggestive in the work of education.—But class-training supposes previous intelligent preparation; and to direct the scholar in this, is as much the duty of the teacher, as class instruction. A large proportion of our scholars study merely for the sake of preparing to recite the lesson. They seem to have no idea of any object beyond recitation. The consequence is, they study mechanically. They study phraseology, not principles—books, not subjects—words, not ideas. Let any one enter many of our schools, and attentively watch the scholars engaged in preparing their lessons. Scarcely one will be observed, who is not repeating over and over again the words of the text, as if there was a *charm in the repetition*. Observe the same scholars at recitation, and it is a struggle of the memory to recall the *form of words*. The vacant countenance too often indicates that the struggle is for words without meaning. This difficulty is very much increased, if the teacher is too much confined to the text book during recitation; and particularly if he

has to rely mainly upon the printed questions so often found at the bottom of the page.

The right class-trainer will encourage and direct the scholar how intelligently and profitably to study his subject. The better this is done the more advantageously, and with less labour, will the reciting work be gone through. The young scholar needs, especially in the commencement of his studies, much assistance and encouragement.

In conducting school recitations, we offer the following brief suggestions. To the young and less experienced teacher, they will, perhaps, be of value.

1. Consider well the natural order of presenting a given subject.

The ability to determine this constitutes in a great measure the science of teaching. In every part of education we should proceed from the simple to the complex. The mind grows: like all things that grow, it progresses from the homogenous to the heterogenous, from the empirical to the rational, from the concrete to the abstract.

2. Thoroughly understand it you attempt to teach.

Who does not know that a teacher who is perfectly familiar with what is to be taught has ten times the vivacity of one who is obliged to follow the very letter of the book? His own enthusiasm glows in his countenance, sparkles in his eyes, and leaps from his tongue. He watches the halting of his pupil, perceives his difficulty, illustrates the dark point in some new way, and at the proper moment; renders just the amount of assistance the pupil needs. Not confined to the text, he has the use of his eyes, and when he speaks or explains, he can accompany his remark with a quickening look of intelligence. In this way his class is enlivened. They respect him for his ready attainment, and they are fired with a desire to be his equal.

The very opposite of all this is the case with him who knows nothing of the subject, but what is contained in the text before him, and who knows *that* only as he reads it during the intervals occasioned by the hesitations of the class. The tendency of such teaching is to discourage thought and set a bounty on mechanical study.

3. Neglect not self-preparation.

The preceding remarks suggest this duty. The true teacher's aim and effort is to be, what he wishes his pupil to be—ever growing in intelligence. For he well knows that this is what gives life and freshness to his teaching—authority to his words—and attractive power to his class-addresses. Let a teacher go to his class with a mind full of the subject to be taught, and master of all its parts, how high is his standing and how commanding his position, before his class! He has little difficulty to secure the attention of his pupils, and as little to keep it up. As he speaks, his eye accompanies his words, and as his scholars answer he sees and reads the expression of their countenances, which to him is full of meaning. For it tells better than words can do, the clearness or obscurity of the mind's perception, as truth is presented and unfolded. Very different is the beaming of the eye when the soul apprehends, from the vacuous stare when words without import are used, or a truth presented, which the understanding cannot reach.

4. Study your teaching-language, that you may be able to use it fluently and correctly.

In this, how many are deficient?—In addressing their classes they hesitate and stammer, express their ideas in vague terms, and often in inaccurate and inelegant language. Can a teacher so effectually give instruction in grammar, as by his own fluent and correct use of the language he teaches? Is there any sight so mortifying, so discordant, as that of a teacher labouring to fix in the minds of his class some rule of syntax, and by examples to unfold its principle, when his own language betrays his disregard for the very rule he is expounding?—Inaccuracies in the language of the teacher—daily repeated—are sure to be reproduced in the school, and become habitual. In no place should becoming and correct language be more and more guardedly used than in schools. Our schools should be places *noted for accuracy in every thing*. And in this the teacher himself should be the head model.

5. Endeavour to make your instruction attractive and interesting.

Instruction has these characteristics when it is so presented as to rivet the attention of the pupils, render them willing and even