

THE TEACHER AND THE SCHOOL.*

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I SHALL not, in these pages, endeavour to fix a standard or lay down a code of rules; but shall try simply and unobtrusively to state my ideas concerning the teacher and his mission. Teachers should be uniform. Not necessarily in methods, manners, or modes of thought, but in unbending defence of virtue and unflinching loyalty to right. The struggle between right and wrong which began at the dawn of earth's history, will go on, surely and steadily, as long as suns shall rise and set, moons wax and wane; and parents and teachers should stand side by side in the conflict. I maintain that the true teacher exerts an influence in the cause of good as powerful as that of the minister of the Gospel or the wise parent—though more silent, not less potent. The responsibility of those who undertake the training of the rising generation is tremendous, and eternity alone can measure its magnitude. We are all aware that children are the most skilful imitators the world can produce. From the early dawn of infancy until life's sun sinks behind the western hills, we are the subjects of the mighty sway of influence, whether good or evil, and frail, fallen humanity seeks to copy evil rather than good example. "As the twig is bent, the tree's inclined." How vitally important, therefore, is it that a teacher should be a model of all manly virtues, disdaining to stoop to actions mean or unworthy! His life and conduct should be characterized by purity, uprightness and truth, and his daily intercourse with those entrusted to

his care should be designed to uplift and ennoble them mentally and morally. The late Dean Stanley wrote: "How surely a young man who knows and does what is right will compel others, almost against their will, and almost without his consciousness, to know and to do it also! The persons disappear, but the good tradition remains; their good works do follow them, either their own good works and words which outlive themselves, or those which they have inspired in their successors and survivors. The vision of a noble character, the glimpse of a new kind of virtue, does not perish. It is said that among the Alps at certain seasons the traveller is told to proceed very quietly, for on the steep slopes overhead the snow hangs so evenly balanced that the sound of a voice or the report of a gun may destroy the equilibrium and bring down an immense avalanche that will overwhelm everything in ruin in its downward course. And so about our way, there may be a soul in the very crisis of its mortal history, trembling between life and death, and a mere touch or shadow may determine its destiny." How unconscious, therefore, and how momentous is the teacher's influence!

The atmosphere of the school-room should be, as nearly as possible, like that of a happy home where kind looks and words dispel all unhappiness and gloom, and kind actions weave an indissoluble bond among its members. Doubtlessly all of us have heard exclamations to this effect: "Oh, I never could be a teacher; I'd never have the patience, and I should become unbearably cross!" It is a

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