

noble claims of humanity, making each man feel himself a brother in the mighty fraternity, girding him to labor and suffer for his kind as the only worthy calling of his scholarly life, have there pressed their way into the heart of hearts, through a clause of that Bible that speaks to the rich and the poor, or a supplication for sage and slave alike, for bond and free, for the heathen and the helpless. Eminent servants of the best causes, disinterested patriots, preachers of Christ, missionaries to the ends of the earth, have taken there the first impulse that bore them on to their places of heroic action or martyr-like endurance,—faithful unto death, awaiting crowns of life.

Whatever appearances of neglect may attend the familiar repetition of these holy occasions, therefore, there can be no apology for discouragement. As in all coöperation with the vast, slow achievements of the Providence that predestines a spiritual harvest from every seed sown in faith, there must be an unhesitating continuance in well doing, and a patient waiting, for results, on Him who is so unspeakably patient with us. Only let the prayers be real prayers; such asking as humbly refers each entreaty to the Supreme, Unerring Will, yet with the fearless trust that He who hears in love will answer in wisdom; let the things prayed for be such things as those then and there assembled most heartily desire, rather than such things as precedent or old tradition have decided it is merely proper to implore; let Christian care and painstaking be applied to the arrangements of the company and the parts of the service; let the intercessions of thousands of sympathizing and anxious homes throughout the land arise in unison; and then there can be no ground of doubt that God will accept our offerings, sanctify our scholarship, lead more of our young men to bring their gifts and attainments to the Saviour's ministry, uniting a broad culture with high aspirations and a profound faith in the structure of the civilization that is to be. Then many a man who enters college only with a vague purpose to profit or to please himself, while there shall listen to a higher call, and become a cheerful servant of the King of kings. Then right-minded, pure-hearted youths will not find their collegiate course a perversion from integrity, nor a snare to principle, nor a ruin of honorable hopes, but a confirmation of every worthy desire, and a progress in all manly living. Then the thoughts of parents will not turn to these institutions with regret, with maledictions, or with shame, but with confidence, gratitude and joy. Then the country will not be disappointed when she looks to the University as "the light of her eyes and the right arm of her strength." Then the most powerful agency that can be conceived will be inaugurated to make our literature healthful, earnest, humane. And then, not only by the motto of a seal, and not only in the pious hopes of its founders, but in the daily spirit of its administration, and in the characters of its graduates, shall each college be dedicated to Christ and the church.—*Abridged from the American Quarterly Journal of Education for September.*

Papers on Practical Education.

PRINCIPLES RELATING TO THE FORMATION OF CHARACTER.

Two things determine character, the ordinary current of thought when the mind is disengaged from special study, and the motives by which ordinary conduct is determined. A knowledge of these facts is a source of power. Observe an individual when off his guard, and note from his remarks and actions what are his ordinary thoughts and motives, and you know how to excite them at any time.

Endeavour to pre-occupy the mind with thoughts and principles that are true, beautiful and good. The Christian teacher can have no sympathy with that false sentimentality, which characterizes the indifference of the day, that would have the mind of youth uninformed—unprejudiced is the term—on great religious and moral truths and duties—An Authority which every one of our readers will acknowledge, has enjoined us "To train up a child in the way it should go." To effect this pre-occupation of the mind, the teachers must not depend on routine work; set lessons have not much power in altering the ordinary current of thought, he must carry his efforts beyond school hours and seek by all the means in his power—such as ingeniously devised home exercises to give a direction to the constant thinkings of his pupils; he must use his utmost efforts to preserve them from associations and companions that would fill the mind with what is base or impure, and he must supply such motives as would lead to right, generous, and noble conduct.

Every mind is marked by some distinguished peculiarity termed the pre-disposition, bent, or bias of the individual. A considerable part of a teacher's duty is to discover this feature. The play ground is the best sphere for its observation. This is the teacher's school of character. Observe that boy who always manages to be the driver of what he calls his horses—he is ambitious of power. You boy who separates himself from his companions, and is found so frequently

musing with a smile now and then playing over his face—is imaginative. That little West who sketches all sorts of things in his book, or on the walls, and among the rest, his baby-brother's face—is the future painter. The knowledge thus obtained is invaluable to the educator, who by means of this ruling power may obtain an influence which nothing else can give.

The tendency to imitation is proverbially strong in children. To it nearly the whole of early education is due, of which we may take as examples, the mastery by a child of its limbs and its attempts at language. The lessons suggested by this fact to the teacher are "Be what your children ought to be" "Mind what companionship they form." "In your teaching refer more particularly to good than to bad examples." "Remember that discipline is constantly promoted or injured by its operation."

The law of association is one of the most powerful in the formation of character. It is this which helps to give permanence to what would otherwise be evanescent, in conduct or teaching. By its aid, things become so connected in the intellectual and moral nature that on the occurrence of one the other may be expected. This is one of those things which invest the teacher's office with much of its responsibility. A single example may suffice to show the operation of this law;—Years after school life is over, the example of the teacher may come up as a palliation of some wrong, or as an incentive to some good.

The law of habit requires the careful study of the educator.

Repetition, one of its chief instruments, is an element in the production of every result in physical, intellectual, and moral development. No power is required, no facility obtained, no organ strengthened, but by repetition. It is to its aid we owe the power to form words and to utter them at will, without attention to the process while doing so. The infant's use of its limbs, and its power to hold itself erect are due to repeated efforts. The ability to repeat such a thing as the multiplication table, or to play a piece of music, while the mind is otherwise occupied is owing to previous practice.

In all subjects requiring mechanical skill, or intellectual exertion, the teacher must provide for a frequent repetition of the process. If he would have good writing his children must write frequently; if fluent and impressive reading is sought, a large amount of individual practice must be afforded. Physical laws require that the opportunities of exercising a given faculty until facility is obtained should be frequent rather than prolonged. In learning anything new, the stress of the attention very soon fatigues the brain; while the organs unhabituated to an operation are less able to sustain it. The practice of the drill-sergeant is founded on right principles and is worthy of imitation by the educator. Three times a day, to allow of intervals of rest, the recruits are put through their evolutions, each time lasting long enough to give a set to the organs employed, without being so long as to fatigue. Acting on this principle, our first lesson on a subject should be short and frequent; and generally lessons to an infant shorter than to the first class.

The influence of repetition on the emotions, and its relation to morals, are parts of the subject demanding the teacher's most serious attention. The tendency of repetition is to weaken the force of emotion. A man who has formed a habit of benevolent action *feels* less, at the sight of misery than one unaccustomed to it, but he will more readily step to its relief. Where appeals to the feelings or to the conscience are frequent, with no corresponding practice, both heart and conscience at length become indurated, and objects which ought to excite regard, and appeals which ought to have force, come at length to awaken no notice or to be regarded with indifference. Thus it is well known that readers of fiction, from having emotions excited to which there is no corresponding practice, become at length so callous to real distress, as to be utterly unaffected by it, and as to its relief—that never presents itself to their imagination as a possible duty. In like manner religious teaching, whether of the pulpit or the school, and especially the endless repetition of religious formularies or the memoritor getting up of Scripture truth, where not accompanied by right practice is injurious to the moral nature, an impediment to spiritual growth, or an obstacle to the individual's salvation. Every such repetition lessens the susceptibility of impression, until at length its much to be pitied subject is past feeling. Hence the religious teaching of schools should be of a practical character, bearing on the daily life of the child, and especially on such points as come immediately under the teacher's direct notice and influence.

Another principle belonging to the law of habit is that termed *periodicity*. This is a tendency to resume the same mode of action at stated times. If we repeat any kind of mental effort every day at the same hour, we at last find ourselves entering upon it without premeditation, when the time approaches. Thus, if school studies are arranged according to this law, and each taken up regularly in the same order, a natural aptitude is soon produced which renders application more easy than by conducting the school as caprice may direct.—*Papers for the Schoolmaster.*