

Our Contributors.

Moral Training in School.

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An Address Delivered Before the Provincial Association of Teachers in the University of Toronto.

It is certainly a privilege to have the chance of addressing the teachers of Ontario by one like myself, whose life's work has been for the most part in the neighboring provinces, though his alma mater is amongst you. There is in the air a premonition of an approaching union of all educational interests in the Dominion; at least it may be said that when we meet as teachers or educationists even now, provincial bias seldom steps in to interfere with our deliberations. I may therefore safely accept you all as fellow-teachers, bringing greeting to you in the common trend of my words.

A great change has come over the face of our school work, even within the last few years. We are beginning to recognize that there is more than theory in our investigations of child nature,—more than the mere talk, with the old philosophic drawl, about the threefold character of the child's being. The age is a practical one, restless in its eagerness to find the pleasurable in the exercise of every activity; and we teachers are now no longer content listlessly to hold up as a mere professional article of faith, that there are three elements in a child's life and growth, but are ever working out our little and big problems in the school-room,—our problems in class work, in discipline, in physical, mental and moral nature-science, along this as a momentous line of pedagogic common sense. The time was when such a thing as even the simplest physical drill in school was flouted as a waste of time, and even yet an odd editor or two will break loose now and again on our more modern methods, by declaring that the pupils have physical exercise enough in the playground to need it inside the schoolroom, not knowing the difference between the two. Then the training of the mind not so long ago was a mere memory impressment in which the other mental faculties took their chance of having their share of training, alas, in anything but a happy go lucky way; and even now when the principle of having a child definitely trained to speak in the right way in order that he may be brought along the line of the pleasurable to think in the right way, as a daily disideratum of school work. I have heard a member of Parliament whose speech was ever bewraying his mental aberrations and vice versa, denounce with some degree of violence the latter inclinations to make deliberate speakers of our young people, in case they should afterwards inflict themselves, as a kind of garrulous nuisance, on the rest of mankind when they grew up.

And now when we think of our ways as the makers of mankind, and feel convinced that there is a necessity lying at our door of treating the third element of child-nature in a directly practical way, we are beset on every hand with all manner of difficulties, from the denominational religionist down to the scoffer whose only

weapon is the preliminary laugh. In this latter campaign in favor of the full rounding out of the methods in behalf of the child, there is, however, no more chance of a halt being called too soon, than has been called in the case of an improved physical drill and a more sensible mental training as elements of the school programme. The teacher, with his eyes opened by the newer phases and pleadings of pedagogy, sees in the bounteous resources of child energy, a something that is not to be repressed as it used to be, but a something to be made the most of in his striving to find the pleasurable in school work. Mankind, young and old, has ever been after the pleasurable. There is an epicurism even in the most rigid asceticism, and the teacher who has not found the pleasurable for himself in the schoolroom had better get out of it, since he is never likely to go in search for the pleasurable for his pupils, in his methods of imparting instruction.

The new pedagogic seeks to identify its methods in terms of the pleasurable; and has found little or no difficulty in doing so, as far as a physical drill and an improved mental drill is concerned. There is an exuberance in the physical and mental activities of the young, which, when properly harnessed by the skillful pedagogos within the school areas, makes for the pleasurable that is its own incentive beyond the limits of mere school work. And since nature works along law-lines that are similar, there is no reason to believe that the moral energies of the child are one whit less exuberant than the physical and mental energies. All the talk about the wilfulness of children is but another way of speaking of the exuberance of the moral activities of the child; and in the proper harnessing of this exuberance lies hidden a new method, an element of the practical pedagogy of the present time, that no teacher should fail to go out in search of. I myself have, modestly, let me hope, gone out in search of such a method,—something positive with no halting at a mere negation in which there is only a sound of weeping and wailing over the degeneracy of the times in which we live, but a prying into what is likely to lead us all to find the pleasurable in the moral, for the ordinary young person who occupies a desk in the public school. There is no make believe about the search I have entered upon, nor is there any finality about the method I have endeavored to formulate. And hence I plead with every teacher to give a helping hand in the maturing of such a method or series of methods, by means of which the moral nature will no more be neglected by the new pedagogy than are the physical and the mental. To place before you the minute details of the method that has suggested itself to me would place me in the position of a canvasser rather than an advocate. Suffice it to say that moral training is no preadventure, and any one who seeks to find its fundamentals beyond the law of God will certainly find themselves eventually in the plight of the poor little girl I once found in a large school in a neighboring country where no pupil

could tell me who it was that had said "Thou shalt not steal." Coming to the rescue of her fellow pupils, with her hand up, she innocently told me that it was the policeman who had said so. No, the method I am seeking to mature through the co-operation of every teacher in the land, has its foundation in the law which is perfect,—and its developments by Him Who has given His name to the very highest morality civilization knows of,—the development of a pedagogy that knows no equal to it among educationists ancient or modern. Any teacher who would care to look into the matter after this simple and direct enunciation of the subject, may have a fuller elucidation of my suggestion by entering into a correspondence with me, not as a mere declaimer against past or present neglect, not as one who would willingly give a helping hand towards maturing all suggestions that may tend to having in our schools a less diffusive method of moral training than the purposeless memorization of Scripture texts or the admonition that palls, having so little stability from example.

A Vision of Glory.

A young Scotch girl, who was taken ill in this country, knowing that she must die, begged to be taken back to her native land. On the homeward voyage she kept repeating over and over the sentence, "Oh, for a glimpse o' the hills o' Scotland!" Before the voyage was half over it was evident to those who were caring for her that she could not live to see her native land. One evening, just at the sunset, they brought her on deck. The west was all aglow with glory, and for a few minutes she seemed to enjoy the scene. Some one said to her, "Is it not beautiful?" She answered, "Yes, but I'd rather see the hills o' Scotland." For a little while she closed her eyes, and then opening them again, and with a look of unspeakable gladness on her face, she exclaimed, "I see them noo, and aye they're bonnie." Then, with a surprised look, she added, "I never kenned before that it was the hills o' Scotland where the Prophet saw the horsemen and the chariots, but I see them all, and we are almost there." Then, closing her eyes, she was soon within the veil. Those beside her knew that it was not the hills of Scotland, but the hills of glory that she saw. Perhaps there are some fair hills toward which you are now looking, and for which you are now longing, and you may be thinking that life will be incomplete unless you reach them. What will it matter if, while you are eagerly looking, there shall burst upon your vision the King's country, and the King himself comes forth to meet you, and take you into that life where forever you shall walk with Him in white because you are found worthy.—Watchman.

We have our Gethsemanes as well as our Transfigurations, and Golgotha at last may overtop them both. But if we could look beyond and know the glory that is to follow, like our suffering Saviour, we would see the travel of our souls and be satisfied.

The world has no word of cheer, no helping hand, no lotion for the broken heart, no soothing for the one who in a moment's weakness has fallen from its ideals; but to the troubled penitent the sympathetic Saviour says: "Thy sins are forgiven," "I will give thee rest."