

ESSENTIALS OF EFFECTIVE TEACHING.

"IN order to mould correctly the faculties of the child, one must first know something of the laws which regulate the action and growth of the powers."

Despite the frequency with which the changes have been rung upon that theme during the past few years by educators, both in and out of the press, there are a vast number of teachers, who, for one reason or another, make little or no effort to possess themselves of such knowledge, but continue making desperate attempts to keep pace in their work with those who honestly seek to guide their course with the light that alone comes from earnest study of the child mind itself.

To discuss this question in all its bearings would require more space than is at our disposal, but there are a few simple facts pertaining to the topic that are of such vital importance as to bear repetition and consideration at every opportunity, and which are applicable to the work of all engaged in teaching.

In every mind there exists an ideal, and that ideal is the motive which either directly or indirectly shapes the course of each. The unscrupulous man of business sells half cotton for wool goods; an old stock for the latest styles; moth-eaten, second-hand furniture for new and first class; glucose for sugar; poison for baking powder; a horse blind in one eye, spavined, and twelve years old, for a sound horse just coming six. His motive is to get money in his purse. He succeeds.

The politician, claiming the highest, most disinterested ambition for his country, pulls wires, buys votes, lays schemes, giving in exchange for what he gets an influence whose effect is death to honesty, sobriety, and virtue of the manhood which he professes to be so zealous of protecting. Public

position, and the power that goes therewith, is his ideal. He succeeds.

A teacher, surrounded by all the comforts and aids that an ambitious, generous board of education can supply, urged on by a crowded course of study, an exacting superintendent, or a desire to be thought superior, crams, crowds, coaxes, drives, examines, and grades her pupils upon the husks of knowledge, careful for nothing but that they shall be counted well up in their grade. As a collector of high per cents., she may be a great success; but as one who moulds character into good and beautiful form, she is a pronounced failure. Another, who, though in a humble position, amid the discouragements which most of us know so well that they do not need enumerating, seeks to individualise her instruction so perfectly that each pupil may receive just the kind and amount of help best adapted to his case—one whose chief aim is to make self-reliant, thoughtful, sturdy, energetic, trustworthy, unselfish boys and girls, men and women; that teacher can achieve real success, and none other than he whose ideal is true manhood or womanhood can ever secure it.

Success, as we see, is not an absolute term. Its meaning varies with each individual. We are not surprised that people of different attainments, education, taste, ability and environment should be ruled by such varied motives; but it has for a long time been a mystery to us that there should be more than one interpretation of the word, and that its highest and best, among a body of thinking men and women who are "fashioning and strengthening the mind and moral nature" of immortal beings. If success in teaching is to be determined by the degree to which we ennoble