

Fine, high character, and sweet and gracious manners can. And in speaking of the teacher's manners, I of course refer to her manners everywhere—on the street, at home, at church, as well as in the school-room. In the end, the teacher's manners show us all the rest. Manners are the indices of other qualifications, and reveal a teacher's culture and training and all that goes to make up character.

We all know men and women who have been our teachers, high-minded, true characters, who longed to teach us well, to train us to be what they would have us, whose overwrought, eager, earnest, generous anxiety made them so nervous that all their efforts failed; they repelled the pupils whom they wished to attract, and defeated the very object nearest their hearts. I remember a teacher I once had—a very learned teacher, but who could not control her nervous impatience; she would make the little girls speechless from fright when she stood before her arithmetic class and cried "Now!" watch in hand. My father decided that his dear friend was not fit to teach his nervous little daughter, and so I had to have another teacher, one who had a sweeter voice, but who was not nearly so learned.

Surely if there is any place in the commonwealth where all that is fine, gracious, and womanly should be united in effort with all that is strong, noble, and manly it is in our public schools. It always makes me sorry when I hear that parents who are able, send their children to private schools because they receive there better training in manners than they do at the public schools. Most of the little children who come to our public schools have no opportunities to learn gentle, gracious ways at home; they come from homes where there is hard work, and crowding, and very little culture. These little children

ought to have the best possible chance at school. It is said across the water that the American public school is largely responsible for the American voice. When I hear the little voices shouting out their lessons to the anxious-voiced, but loving teacher, then I long to emphasize the power of a sweet, strong voice. We cannot all possess this qualification, because our grandfathers didn't give it to us; but we can all do our best to have our voices clear and sweet, and to bring these gentler, sweeter qualities to the surface.

The more I go about among the schools, the more I am impressed with the fact that there are thousands of boys and girls whose highest ideal is their teacher. Teachers may distinctly influence the manners of our time. The teacher is the living epistle, known and read of all her children. How quickly the children recognize the bashful teacher, who has to "bluff" a little to hide her shyness; and how keenly they are affected by the one who has grown so tired in the service that he forgets how his sharp words sound to little hearts.

Besides this matter of the voice, I want to say that teachers should be generous in speech and behaviour. We shall not lose our power if we are less rigid and cultivate more sweetness. I know a little boy in Cambridge who used to be a very bad little boy, who is now good, because he says his teacher is "such a lady that somehow he can't be bad." Some teachers are too pedagogic in their language—and yet it is not fair to call it pedagogic. We all know teachers in whose presence Shakespeare and Milton would stand aghast; whose pupils must always say "I cannot," instead of "I can't." Let teachers be less finical and critical, and more lenient, even over an occasional slang phrase.