

THE OBJECT OF EARLY SCHOOL TRAINING.

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Ladies and Gentlemen,—

In the first place I wish to thank your Committee for the compliment which I feel they have paid me, in asking me to address the teachers of Ontario, so soon after my first address. I sincerely hope they will not feel they have made a great mistake in so doing.

Your Committee have asked me to address you on the subject of "Early Training." "The Object of Early Training."

I shall take up the discussion of this subject under three heads:—

1st. What does *early training* imply?

2nd. How, and by whom given?

3rd. Application of these principles in General Education?

1st. There is no question in my mind as to the benefit of training the child from the earliest period of its existence.

Let us look at the creature, is it a plant, an animal, or what is it?

It cannot be a plant as it is not fixed in the ground, and most plants are. Yet it is like a plant in many respects.

It is very much more like an animal, inasmuch as it makes a noise or cry in its first entrance into the world, feeds after the manner of most animals, but is more helpless than any in infancy. On further investigation we find it is related to both plants and animals, but it is a higher evolution than either, being a creature endowed with a three-fold nature capable of making or creating its own environment. Now both plants and animals receive certain characteristics from their progenitors; so we may conclude does also the human being. As the plant unfolds and shows these characteristics, according to certain natural laws of its *species* working from within. So also does the animal and the human being. Nothing is put into the plant or the animal, all that can be done is to give them sufficient nourishment to allow them to *grow* to *unfold* their *character*.

When the gardener wishes to develop to the greatest perfection the beauty of his plant does he wait till the plant is well grown before he looks into the influences which are surrounding it. No, he is very careful during the early days, giving just the proper amount of nourishment in the shape of sunshine and water, being careful to ward off all destructive influences, such as weeds, which suck away its life, shoots which destroy its form, frost which blights the budding branches. In