

INSPIRATION IN EDUCATION.

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THE constant temptation of the teacher is to substitute the means for the end. The arithmetic, the science or the language is taught for its own sake, and the success or failure of both teacher and pupil is measured by the actual knowledge of the subject which the pupil has acquired. Even if the purpose of education is correctly apprehended, it is often ignored. The teacher forgets that the branches taught are but instrumental and subsidiary. The real question is not how much history or German does the pupil know, but what influence has the acquisition had upon his habits of thought, his tastes, his ruling purposes.

The English psychologist, Dr. F. W. H. Myers, has told us many wonderful things about the "sub-linnial consciousness," — the inner-self, — which is so important a factor in our daily life. It is in this deeper self that our habits and preferences and settled opinions lie embedded. It is these which constitute our individuality, our identity, and which like underlying strata cause the elevations and depressions of an outward life. All true education affects this sub-conscious self. That which can be measured by pages in a text-book, or tested by examination papers, is but a very superficial thing. At the best it stands related to real education as the blossom is related to the fruit. It is prized for its potency or promise, but it is by no means sure to yield strong, well-ripened character. Its value depends upon the influence its acquisition and assimilation have upon the underlying self. The wise teacher seeks constantly to measure his work by this higher test.

Education should develop enthusiasm and the appreciation of worthy motives. The test of work is its result. Good teaching will enkindle in the learner a desire for broader culture. Knowledge produces the love of knowledge. But it often happens that the spirit or the methods of a teacher arouse in a pupil quite the opposite feeling. The discouragements or exactions of school life are more deeply impressed upon his mind than the facts which he learns; he comes to dread study and school is associated in his thought with restraint, or a wearisome routine. He readily yields to the temptation to leave school. If home influence protects him from making this mistake, he remains under conditions which are unfavorable to mental growth. His faculties require for their normal activity, hearty and spontaneous interest. Their best work cannot be enforced. It must spring unsought. The subject itself or its mode of presentation must attract the pupil and arouse his willing and vigorous thought. It must be related to his previous knowledge or to his natural impulses. As Professor James aptly says, we might as well ask the student to give the Choctaw equivalent of some English word as to perform an action—*e. g.*, to learn a lesson—concerning which he has no notion. Practice makes perfect when the aim is clearly seen and the effort vigorously made—otherwise it simply produces stupidity. In the artificial atmosphere of some class-rooms neither of these conditions is supplied. An unreal goal is set up, or too often no motive to effort is afforded. An ideal education will so utilize the