

Special Papers.

INFLUENCE.*

EVERY person exercises an influence for either good or evil. No man can live unto himself. We may forget this secret, silent influence, but we are exerting it by our actions, by our words, and even by our very thoughts—and he is wise with a wisdom more than that of earth, who seeks to put forth the highest power for good wherever he is placed.

We throw a stone into a pond of water; it sinks and that is all. No—it is not all. Look at those concentric rings widening until their influence is felt to the very shores of the pond. That stray word of pride or scorn, carelessly spoken, produced a momentary depression, and that was all. No—it was not all. It awakened feelings of disgust at truth in some person, and it hardened another one's heart against what is pure. It produced an influence, though slight, yet eternal, on the destiny of a human life.

This power of influence is very great; it clings to us, we cannot live without it.

Every person, old or young, has an influence for either good or evil; it cannot be neutral, it must be either on the side of right or on the side of wrong.

Even little children have an influence on those around them. How often do we hear of men, grown old in vice and sin, being touched by a word from a little child. Do we not all feel nearer to what is pure and holy when we are with little ones who are as yet undefiled by the world?

Influence never dies. Longfellow beautifully illustrates this great truth in these lines:—

"I shot an arrow in the air,
It fell to earth—I knew not where.
I breathed a song into the air,
It fell on earth—I knew not where.
Long, long afterwards, in an oak
I found the arrow still unbroke.
And the song, from beginning to end,
I found again in the heart of a friend."

School children possess great influence over their fellows. In every school there are leaders who seem to be admired and looked up to by the others. How important it is to have these trustworthy and on the side of right! But too often we find the school heroes those most opposed to order and authority. We find many boys like Matthew Arnold's Tom Brown, who seem to, as it were, rule the others, but, strange though it may seem, we find timid natures, like that of little Arthur, having a strong influence over even Tom Brown himself.

Young people have great influence over one another. How many are led astray through the influence of evil companions!

The home has an unbounded influence over the future lives of those growing up in it. Our life abroad is but a reflex of what it is at home. The most illustrious statesmen, the most distinguished warriors, the most eloquent ministers and the greatest philanthropists owe their greatness to the influence of home. Our influence is felt not only while we live, but our actions are repeated in the lives of those who live centuries after us.

The teacher has a very great influence in moulding the future lives of the young placed in his charge, and not only their lives, but the lives of those who will live after them. The teacher gives the first tone to the child's desires and furnishes ingredients that will either sweeten or embitter the whole cup of life, for the impressions received in childhood are durable. Bishop Simpson said: "The voices that spoke to me when a child are now speaking through me to the world." The child will imitate his teacher even in outward appearance. If a teacher is neat and tidy about his dress and personal appearance, the children will try to be the same, but if he is careless so are the children. The teacher who always has his books neatly arranged in his desk, will find that his pupils will follow his example. The teacher who goes quietly and carefully about his work will have quiet and careful pupils. If he is careless in the choice of his language, he will find his pupils habitual users of slang.

A teacher by example—not precept—can teach kindness and gentleness. If he shows respect for

the opinions of those around him, his pupils will do likewise. Often we find a backward pupil the object of the taunts and jeers of his fellows, and generally the cause of this is that he receives neither encouragement nor sympathy from his teacher. If the teacher is always ready to help and defend the weak, he will have manly boys and girls.

A teacher should be strictly honest in all things, and when he discovers dishonesty he should always denounce it. If, for instance, a teacher is so anxious to have pupils promoted, that he is not very particular about the mode of examination, his pupils may be expected to grow up dishonest and deceitful.

A teacher who always seems cheerful and happy when working will have cheerful workers. How pleasant it is to see the little faces smiling amid their work! What a contrast to the pupils under the care of the teacher whose aim seems to be to always appear grave, severe and dignified, and who is never seen to enjoy a hearty laugh with the boys and girls. When looking at him one wonders if he were ever a child, as he seems to have no sympathy for child nature. The pupils should have a love for and a confidence in their teacher, but if he is cold and distant, he will be regarded with dread and distrust.

The teacher should be very careful of the ideas he imparts to his pupils, for they adopt these as their own. Are not all our ideas of right and wrong in accordance with what we have been taught? Very few of us hold original opinions; they are all founded on those of others, and if through our influence wrong ideas are adopted by the children, we must hold ourselves responsible.

The teacher who shows a regard and reverence for things pure and holy will have his pupils do the same. We have daily opportunities to imprint on their minds a proper sense of true greatness. Books have a great influence on the minds of the children. We cannot all—like Harriet Beecher Stowe—write books that will enlighten and elevate their minds, but we can direct and superintend their reading. Often it is through the influence of the teacher that young men and women choose a profession. Were it not for the influence of Samuel Bates, a poor country school teacher, James Garfield would have been a sailor, and in all probability not President of the United States. Besides having a direct influence on the pupils, the teacher exerts an influence for good or evil on the whole community; his manner and actions are imitated, and what a blessing it is when he stands boldly on the side of right!

Fellow-teachers, our influence is great; we do not realize it, but may we do our utmost to have it for good; it will be evil unless we work from pure motives. Our influence over our pupils will be greater if we first secure their love, and we must remember that as we act to them so will they act to us.

"We can never be too careful
What the seed our hands shall sow;
Love from love is sure to ripen,
Hate from hate is sure to grow."

How carefully we should guard our words and actions, for these will be repeated by others after we have long passed away. The eternal destiny of some of the little ones may depend on what we are when with them.

Let us go on doing our duty, and then at last, if we have proved faithful, we shall hear the words, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

Educational Meetings.

DURHAM TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION.

(Condensed from the West Durham News.)

THE annual meeting of the teachers of this county was held in Bowmanville school, on the 10th and 11th of October. The President, Mr. Chas. Keith, occupied the chair.

The first subject, "Public School Time Table," was introduced by Mr. F. C. Philp, of Canton Public School. In a carefully prepared and well delivered address, he pointed out the advantages of following a well arranged time-table, but would admit an occasional deviation. Mr. Wood, of the Model School, Port Hope, in continuing the discussion, advised keeping pretty close to the time-table.

Mrs. J. L. Hughes, of Toronto, next addressed the Association on "The Kindergarten." Many friends of education assembled with the teachers to listen to Mrs. Hughes, who gave two addresses of about an hour each. The subject was a new one to a Bowmanville audience, and all were delighted with the pleasing, clear and forcible way in which the subject was treated, as well as with the principles underlying the Kindergarten.

Dr. Purslow, headmaster of Port Hope High School, read an able paper on "How the Difference Between Prose and Verse may be Taught to Fourth Class Pupils." The paper was full of useful hints, and being eminently practical, was much appreciated by the teachers.

The last hour of Thursday's session was given to the Public School trustees as an opening occasion for the new school buildings.

The evening session, Thursday, was held in the Town Hall. Mr. Cringan, of Toronto, gave a very pleasant hour's talk to a large and appreciative audience on "Voice Culture," adding interest to his remarks by exhibiting a number of vocal diagrams.

Mr. D. Boyle, Toronto, followed with his instructive lecture on "Persistency of Savagery in Civilization."

On Friday, the first hour of the afternoon was occupied by Mr. Cringan in teaching the tonic sol-fa system to the Convention. All were delighted with the system and with Mr. Cringan's happy way of teaching it.

Mr. M. M. Fenwick, M.A., headmaster of Bowmanville High School, gave pleasing variety to the exercises by conducting a lesson in Public School literature. The Association was his class, and the "Death of the Flowers" his lesson.

Mr. R. A. Lee, of the Port Hope Public School, followed with a well written paper on "History—A Patriotic Force in Schools," which led to some severe criticisms on our Public School text book on history.

"Junior Arithmetic" was discussed by Dr. Tilley, from the standpoint of his experience as Inspector.

Resolutions were passed: (1) Condemning the Public School history, and asking for its withdrawal as a text book; (2) Favoring the tonic sol-fa system of music, and asking for the authorisation of "The Canadian Music Course;" (3) Condemning the action of the County Council in placing a fee of \$1 upon such candidates for the entrance examination as had failed at a previous examination.

Messrs. Keith and Wood were appointed delegates to the Provincial Association, and the following were elected officers:—President, R. A. Lee; 1st Vice-President, R. D. Davidson; 2nd Vice-President, M. M. Fenwick, M.A.; Secretary, Miss Ada Haliday; Treasurer, Jas. Gilfillan.

The meeting of the Association was a very successful one, both as to the number in attendance and the value of the papers read, and discussions entered into.

EAST BRUCE TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION.

THE regular meeting of this Association was held in the Chesley Public School on Thursday and Friday, Oct. 24th and 25th, the President, Mr. Keith, in the chair.

About forty teachers were present at the morning session on Thursday, and about seventy-five attended the remaining sessions.

The President delivered his opening address, taking for his subject "Our Profession." He showed the nobleness of the teacher's work, (1) because of the material on which he works, (2) because of the effect produced. A good deal of importance was placed on the development of a noble character, the speaker considering these qualities far superior to the acquisition of mere knowledge.

Mr. Clendenning added some thoughts suggested by the President's address, after which he explained necessary changes in the programme.

The Inspector called the attention of the teachers to the revision of the Limit Table which was about to take place, based on the new text books.

On motion, the Inspector and Messrs. Telford and S. G. King were appointed a committee to meet a corresponding committee from West Bruce on this matter.

AFTERNOON SESSION.

"The Teacher in the School" was the subject of a very interesting and instructive paper by Mr.

*Essay read by Miss J. Campbell at the West Bruce Teachers' Association.