

PUBLIC SCHOOL DEPARTMENT.

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THOROUGHNESS IN TEACHING.

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THE primary idea in thoroughness in teaching is accuracy or completeness, the secondary is comprehensiveness. Thoroughness is secured by teaching just what should be taught as well as it can be taught. Thus it is a subject really requiring a complete treatise. My much less ambitious purpose, however, shall be to suggest to you a few means which appear to me necessary and prominent for approximating to this thoroughness. The first I would propose is, that every Teacher should have clearly and firmly in his mind an intelligent idea of the aim of the educational process. How is it possible for him to attain his end if he does not know what it is? The teacher is the architect who strengthens and embellishes the human edifice. Can an architect fashion a convenient and symmetrical palace without having a plan? No, that palace must stand complete and perfect in his mind before he attempts its erection.

To get an idea of the Teacher's plan, allow me to direct your attention to the method of solving a geometrical theorem. Let us analyze the process and note the steps necessary, and their order.

We must first familiarize ourselves with the hypothesis and conclusion. Of these the conclusion naturally receives attention first. It we must clearly apprehend. Having done this we turn to the hypothesis to see what basis or data we are permitted to use to establish that conclusion. It is evident we must understand precisely what both of these are. If we are indifferent to the conclusion,

its attempted attainment is folly; if we misapprehend it, our work will be futile. Should we erroneously interpret the hypothesis we are working either with an altogether different theorem, or no theorem at all. Having clearly and accurately fixed these in our own minds, we apply certain principles or truths to the hypothesis, and the conclusion is established.

Now teaching is a theorem. A human being to be educated is the hypothesis, and a human being educated is the conclusion. Do we as Teachers understand what these are? If we do not, let us by all means, set ourselves about understanding them. It is not enough to have in our minds a definition of them in vague language. There must be a vivid conception of noble, well-developed manhood and womanhood. Not to have this is the incipient and fundamental cause of loose teaching. Either from example or careless habit, too many of us have been satisfied to go over some routine, and have not exercised our intelligence and skill in shaping our pupils in the similitude of a noble and inborn model, like as the sculptor chisels from the graceful conception he has formed.

Important as the conclusion in this theorem is, the hypothesis is not less so. The Teacher should make himself clear here. It is to know what youthful humanity is. To the Teacher this must appear as capabilities of development, if I may be allowed the expression—a capability of moral, mental, and physical development. In the mental capability he finds a number of faculties—a faculty of observing, of remembering, of imagining, of reasoning, of feeling, of willing.

The third step of the process is the work-