

truths to be taught. But we must take the schools as we find them, and not as we wish them to be. Few pupils, comparatively speaking, have books. True, we may utilize the opportunities they have and so exercise and develop their crude tastes; but in this direction, the teacher can do so much more, on account of her greater knowledge of life, her wider range of reading, and her finer literary taste.

Years ago, when my great delight in poetry made me eager to share my pleasure with others, it was my practice to write selections on the black-board for my pupils to copy into their commonplace books as a writing lesson. The same passage did duty as a reading lesson after it had been thoroughly analyzed and disposed of in a grammatical fashion; all the while we were enjoying the beauty of the thought and language and taking in by the way the ethical truth conveyed by it. In this way many passages from Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Tennyson, Mrs. Browning and other authors were memorized by girls of from fourteen to eighteen. These girls came from cultured families in a country town. Their fathers were mostly professional men, the mothers nearly all cultivated women. Some of these afterwards wrote me desiring me to send more selections of the same kind for the commonplace books.

This method of teaching morals incidentally as it were, while ostensibly teaching literature, grammar, reading, etc., proved so successful that I was encouraged to pursue the same plan in another school of an entirely different character. The pupils were not advanced, mainly pursuing the elementary branches; their parents were poor and illiterate, they had no books, they could not have helped the children, they had no literary sense or taste, many of them had no moral sense.

I do not wish to imply that because they were poor and illiterate, their moral sense was not developed. In the face of events too frequently recurring—bank officials and others who have the charge of funds proving unfaithful to their trust, men of culture and standing in society—how can it be said that only the poor and ignorant need to be trained to a keener and finer perception of what is right. It is this very point I wish to emphasize. I think it was Froude that said he had never heard a sermon on lying and stealing. The rich and the poor, the cultured and the uncultured, need more direct teaching of morals in their bearing upon conduct and life, not in the form of abstract essays, but “precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little and there a little,” as occasion may require.

But to my school. I now determined to teach morals for their own sake primarily and let the spelling and writing come in as a secondary matter, for this was to be beside their set and regular spelling and reading, and the little ones thought it a treat to be allowed to copy easy sentences from the board, such as “Be courteous,” “Straight is the line of duty,” and—

Politeness is to do and say
The kindest thing in the kindest way,

and others of like bearing. But they would hear the older ones repeating and join with them in repeating longer passages, and sometimes they would be ambitious to surprise and please me in their successful efforts to write them.

Cheerfulness and acquiescence to the inevitable ills of life would be enforced upon their minds by those lines of Phœbe Cary's:—

Suppose, my little lady,
Your doll should break her head;
Could you make it whole by crying,
etc., etc.