

effects of change we see all about us. Old Ontario once rippled its waters upon another shore; that tree was once a tiny shoot, a seed, a lump of clay; this body dust—to dust it shall return. Powers are moving all nature, influences are at work, changes are going on. In the human mind, as well as in the rest of God's creation, a change is continually being effected. It changes with every rational moment of life. Not one of us shall leave this room the same in mind as when we entered it. Influences have been about us and we are changed. As we pass along the street, every face we see leaves us a different creature. A pleasant face calls forth pleasant thoughts, while the sight of a degraded face touches a nerve which jars upon our sensibilities. Every impression which our senses convey to our minds effects a change. Every sight we see, every sound we hear has its influence, and that influence grows with the mind. If it be good, the mind will become more and more beautiful; if evil, the mind will become more and more debased. Two leaves grow side by side upon the same branch. As they spring from the stalk an accident occurs which causes a slight rent in one of the yet unfolded leaves, while the other remains untouched. The more one grows, the larger the deformity becomes; the more the other grows, the more beauty is developed; until at last, one is a beautiful leaf, perfect in form and texture, while the other is marred and unsightly. The bloom upon an apple's cheek grows and deepens under favorable circumstances; the tiny speck of mildew spreads until the fruit is ruined, when circumstances are unfavorable. How important, then, it is, that we should, as far as possible, surround ourselves and others with good influences. A mind cannot become debased if all the influences acting upon it are pure. A mind cannot remain ignorant if all the influences acting upon it are intellectual. Through all the faculties of mind influences must develop their powers. From what source are these influences derived? From all we have heard and seen and felt, from all that our instinct and senses have made known to us. Every stick and stone we have seen has had its influence; every tree and flower has added to our knowledge. But the most important influences are those of the thought and feeling of our fellow-man. Mind reaches mind, feeling touches feeling, thought arouses thought. If we are thus influenced by others, we too must impart influence. As we pass through life, every mind we meet is a tuned instrument, whose strings we touch either for harmony or discord. There is not too much music in this world. Let us see to it that our part shall help to swell the grand harmony which rings up through nature to nature's God.

Besides this *general influence* which we unconsciously give and receive there are *particular influences* which act upon every life with greater or less power. The Government influences the nation, friend influences friend, the parent his children, the teacher his pupil. With this last class it is the business of this hour for us to deal.

From what we have said, we understand that a teacher must willingly or unwillingly exert an influence for good or evil by every word he speaks, by every act he performs, in the presence of his pupils. He is standing day after day before a certain number of his fellow-creatures at the most impressionable time of their life, whose thoughts and feelings are being, silently but lastingly, influenced by his every act. But a teacher exerts more than a general influence. He has a particular influence of the strongest nature. Do we all realize that a mighty power is given us—a talent of which we must give a strict account? In the course of a few years we have a large number of minds brought under our charge, and do we all constantly remember that for every influence we have exerted upon each one of our pupils we are directly responsible?

The young child is influenced by the teacher instinctively, the older ones from the force of association. From what he hears about school, lessons, and teacher, the young child gets the impression that the teacher must be a very wise person. He thus comes to school with his mind open to influences, and how closely he watches every movement. After a time, as he learns to observe and think for himself, that of awe of the teacher's wisdom will wear away, but enough of the first

impression will remain to give the teacher a strong hold upon the pupil. Have you not wondered at times how trustfully your pupils accept everything you say? In base-ball and croquet, as well as in geography and grammar, the teacher is an unquestioned authority. Besides, children are imitative. Their life for a few years seems to be a succession of imitations, and as a great part of their time is spent in the presence of their teacher, is it not natural that they should imitate him? The lady-teachers know how the older girls imitate them in matters of the toilet, and how the little girls notice every change they make in that direction. I have often been led to wonder to what extent children imitate when watching them playing school, and, by the way, if you want to study your pupils, do it during their play hours. Allow me to tell you of the time when my attention was first called to this. One winter day, as it was too cold for the girls to play out doors at the noon hour, I proposed that they should play school in-doors. To this they gladly assented, so, providing them with chalk, maps, and pointer, I took a book and went to a distant corner of the room, more to watch the proceedings than to read. What I saw was a revelation to me. There were reflected certain manœuvres and expressions which I could not fail to recognize as my own. Just the way I held the book, pointed to the map, and folded my hands as the class was being dismissed. Some of them even stepped from the platform in a certain careful manner, to which I had been obliged to resort for a week or two previous, owing to a slight lameness. If children imitate us in one thing they will in another. Let us be careful that our actions are worthy of imitation. Our influence does not end with the children. It affects all whom they affect. Tennyson tells us—

“Our echoes roll from soul to soul
And grow forever and forever.”

A great deal is said about home-training, as though some would lay there all the responsibility of unruly children. Good home-training we cannot too highly value, nor evil home training, fully counteract, but where it is good we can help it, and where it is bad we can greatly lessen its evil effects. We have the children with us nearly one-third of their waking hours. We have them under conditions which leave their minds free to take in impressions. If we have lived before them in a way to command their love and respect, we have a strong power to direct their thoughts and elevate their sentiments. Under these circumstances can we not greatly counteract the effects of evil home-training? What a sacred trust parents lay upon us—the development of the immortal part of their children! We are dealing not with time only but with eternity.

Let us now consider some of the ways in which a teacher may exert a good influence. First we will consider the intellectual side of the question—the mere imparting of knowledge. If the teacher wishes to have the power of imparting knowledge, at least two things are necessary. First, he must have a thorough knowledge of the powers of each pupil; second, he must make what is taught appear easy to learn. For the first, he must make a particular study of each pupil under all available circumstances; for the second he must have a thorough and clear knowledge of the subject to be taught, arranged in such a way that it may be readily grasped by the pupil. When you have done this, be *thorough*. Do not leave one part of a subject until it is thoroughly mastered by all. Review often. Guard against copying. Do these things faithfully, and success is sure, provided you can keep your pupils at school. But here is the difficulty. In country schools, especially, irregularity of attendance is the greatest difficulty teachers have to contend with. My experience leads me to believe that the fault of irregularity lies more with the pupils than with their parents. If children are really anxious to go to school few parents will keep them at home unnecessarily. If you treat them kindly, have a good hearty laugh with them once in a while, sympathize with them in their games as well as in their studies, keep the school-room bright and well ventilated, make their lessons interesting, and excite a wholesome spirit of competition among them by some good system of credit marks, most children will love to come to school.

We will now look at the *moral* side of the question. It is of the utmost importance that a teacher should exert a moral influence upon his pupils. To teach good morals he must himself be moral, his character must be pure, his integrity unquestioned. Every care should be taken to inculcate right principles in the minds of young children. There is a germ of good in every heart which may be developed. The first lesson to be taught in order to do this, is the lesson of *obedience*. In all cases exact strict obedience. This is the lesson which we all must learn if we wish to live well. Happy are we if we learned it in our youth. Next teach them *unselfishness*. Never overlook a selfish act. See that no tyranny is carried on in the playground. Show them how unkind it is to slight and annoy the poorly-dressed child whose life is already so sad. Show special deference to such an one. Keep them happy while at school, perhaps they find happiness no place else. Tell them, and show them, that it is a privilege to be able to speak a kind word or do a kind act to one whose life is full of sorrow. Teach your pupils *truthfulness*. Be truthful yourself. Do not lead them to think that promises are made to be broken. If they persist in any error, after you have kindly advised and warned them, do not hesitate to punish. Punishment is the legitimate result of wrong-doing, and if children learn this while they are children it may save them many a wrong step in after life. Teach them to *control their temper*. Always control your own. You cannot get angry without causing angry feelings to rise in the pupil's breast, and thus a dark blot is dropped upon the pages of two lives.

Now we will notice how we may develop the *artistic side* of the child-nature. Teach them to love the beautiful. Have plants in the windows and flowers on your table. Have pictures on the walls. Cut them from magazines, if it is not convenient to get better. Tack them on the walls, and arrange bits of cedar, bright leaves, berries, or pretty feathers about them. These serve as excellent subjects for composition as well as for ornament. Many plans may be devised to decorate the schoolroom. Interest the children in the work; show them the beauty of the effect. Some of them see so little beauty in their homes. Interest them in birds and flowers. When you read that beautiful little poem, “Jack-in-the-Pulpit,” take them to the woods at noon, if you teach in the country, and look for all the plants mentioned in that lesson. It will give them a taste of nature which is always elevating. Get them to try how many kinds of birds they can see, and how much they can learn of their habits. All these things have a refining influence, and cannot fail to do good. Our readers afford an opportunity to teach a love of good literature, which object we should have before us in every reading class.

Neatness is another important lesson they should learn. We can teach this by always being neat in our personal appearance, and insisting on perfect neatness throughout the schoolroom and school-work. *Politeness* we must also teach. Teach the boys to be polite to the girls and the girls to the boys. Treat the children as politely as you would grown-up ladies and gentlemen.

Above all, by your influence show them that they have a work to do in this world, and that all their education, mental and moral, is to prepare them for that. Show them that their duty is to love God, and that they can do so by loving man, and doing all in their power to make this world brighter and better. Teach them to impart sunshine, to do all the good they can, and get all the good they can.

Now we shall fail in our endeavors to exert right influences, if we have failed to do the one thing needful. Win their love, and they are as clay in the potter's hands, ready to be formed into vessels of honor. If you wish them to love you, you must love them, and this is not hard to do. Study their natures, watch their habits, visit their homes, learn all about them, and you will see enough to love in every child.

In closing, let me ask you to use the great privilege of being a teacher in such a way as to merit the approbation of Him who said, “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of one of these My little ones, ye have done it unto Me.”