

THE EDUCATION OF THE FUTURE.

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Concluded from last month.

If those who associate with little children, parents, teachers and friends, would realize the truth of the old adage, "The Way and the Wherefore is the Ladder of Learning," and answer the child's questions with answers suited to his understanding, his conceptions would be increased and corrected, and his reason would be cultivated because his mental activity would be encouraged and stimulated instead of being dulled by the repression of such answers as "Don't bother me now," "Oh, be quiet, you talk too much," etc. The psychological moment for a child's questions to be answered is the one in which his mind is sufficiently interested in the subject to be prompted to ask the question.

I find I have again digressed, but these things weigh so heavily on my heart that I have taken this means of laying a part of the burden upon the hearts of my readers.

Here it may be stated that freedom for the child to use his own powers of mind and body according to his own will or fancy is better than repression, yet this can be carried too far. A judicious guidance, that does not unduly intrude upon the spontaneous development, or stifle the individuality of the child, is the wisest course.

The uplifting of the race is not furthered by striving to make every child's mind conform to any certain model, because any such model, attainable even by the average mind, is too low a standard for the many who are above the average. The object can better be accomplished by so training each individual that his inherent powers shall be developed to the utmost.

The proper development of the bodily senses and the mental faculties will early make evident the particular bent of each individual mind, and then specializing, in the direction indicated, may be begun. In this way the troublesome question of a vocation can be accurately determined.

If the mind be thus assisted to grow and develop freely, who can say to what heights of prophetic imagination it may soar; to what depths of sound reasoning it may delve; over what broad expanses of knowledge it may roam, or to what wonderful discoveries of science its educated observation may lead? Or who knows what undreamed of powers it may develop within itself? The mind of man fashioned like the mind of the Creator is bounded only by omniscience and infinity.

"Build today then strong and sure,
With a firm and ample base,
And ascending and secure
Shall tomorrow find its place."

It is just as important to develop and properly train the functions of the feelings and the will, as it is to train the intellectual powers of the mind. In fact it may be considered more so because these contribute chiefly to the building of the character, the personality, the soul. And yet what place has this training in our present system of education? A very small one indeed.

The egoistic feelings of fear, anger, love of activity, love of power, love of approbation, rivalry, envy, self-esteem and pride must be so trained and guided that they shall become a help and not a hindrance in the making of an ideal character. The social feelings must be fostered and the anti-social feelings must be reduced to a minimum.

The abstract sentiments must receive due share of our attention. The love of knowledge based upon the feelings of wonder and curiosity, is instinctive, as is evidenced by the small child's persistent asking of questions. This should be encouraged for reasons given above.

The aesthetic sentiment can be cultivated largely by educating the senses along lines of beauty, and thus forming a correct aesthetic judgment or a high standard of taste. At this point I cannot refrain from another digression, by way of example. We hear much of the lack of appreciation and production of art on the part of the American people, but what else can be expected when most of the art (?) brought to the attention of the children is the crude and often hideous creation of the so-called comic artists. Some of the work along this line is laudable, but most of it is debasing to the aesthetic sense if not to the moral one.

The ethical or moral sense is in plainest terms, the sense of duty and its proper cultivation develops such a moral judgment as shall be satisfied with nothing short of the highest standard of morality. At present the moral standards of man are almost as numerous as the individuals of the race, and depend upon the peculiar development of each person, but when the members who form the race shall be more naturally and methodically developed the moral standard will be more uniform and higher.

The training of the will is much more complex than that of any other part of the mind, because it is dependent upon the intellect and the feelings and also upon the purely physical state of the