



# THE EDUCATOR.

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## THE EDUCATOR

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## Original and Selected.

### THE TEACHER IS THE BOOK.

That the Teacher is the School, we have found to be true in more than one sense; of course not in the full sense of the word, there being, besides the teacher, some more constituents necessary for the full reality of a

school—as, for instance, the pupils, the building, the school system and its administration. But that the teacher ought to be the text-book, is true in the proper sense of the word. The best school is that which makes the least use of text books, the teacher filling their place.

The term text-book does not here apply to reading-books of whatever kind; no school can do away with these. But it applies to all other kinds of books which are commonly used in schools. Of these we hold that they ought to be replaced by live teachers; that learning by heart ought to be replaced by oral teaching and recitations by oral repetitions. It is no new theory which we here proclaim; it is the Pestalozzian system, as spread all over Germany and Switzerland, and tried and proved in half a century's practice of the reformed schools there.

On the other hand, the Anglo-Saxon system of teaching, as practiced in Great Britain and the United States, is book-teaching. Whenever any of the sciences is to be taught in school, the teacher singles out a chapter of the text-book introduced for learning by heart. The better class of teachers will, on this occasion, explain the contents of the chapter, or they will do the same thing after recitation—which is worse yet. The pupil has to recite his task, and a new chapter is committed to memory; and so on till the book is gone through. If there are practical examples given in the book, as for instance in all books of arithmetic, the pupil has to solve them, as well as he can, with, or without, the aid of the teacher—in a few cases in school, but on the whole at home. It strikes us that the teacher plays here a very subordinate part, and a machine might be invented to supplant him, in most cases; for hearing a recitation, and pronouncing a judgment on its perfection or imperfections, might generally be just as well performed by the better pupils of the class. The text-book here is

almost everything, the teacher almost nothing or nobody. The pupil is passive and merely receptive; he is not guided to reproducing the matter to be mastered out of himself to becoming active and independent. The matter is not developed in his mind, nor his mind developed through and with the matter. It is only the best talent, a very small percentage of boys and girls, who will in this way become tolerably proficient in the science to be acquired; because only a very few have the mental capacity which is self-instructive, which digests mental food in whatsoever sauce served up. The balance of the pupils will, after the lapse of a few months, have forgotten every particle of the truths thus received, but not assimilated. At least this is our experience.

In that system which makes a text book of the teacher, the latter is, of course, required to be master of the science to be taught, to have it at his fingers' ends, thoroughly understood, and ready for communication. When he begins his instruction, he must be well prepared, and all he says on the subject must be calculated to inspire the learners with love for the science to be mastered, and its objects. Wherever it is possible to illustrate the subject, by presenting it to ocular inspection, he will do it; each of his lessons is more or less an object lesson. Whatever he can forego teaching himself, by eliciting it from the class through adroit questions, and by rendering thus the pupils self active, he will extract from them. He will make them see, and, in general, examine with their own senses, what is to be seen or examined in the objects presented, and lead them to express their observations, when correct and complete, in proper language. The less he speaks himself, making his pupils speak instead, the better. If he succeeds in this way, in making them discover for themselves the principles and laws underlying the phenomena, he may depend on their never forget-