

what is believed to be fundamental and guiding principles in teaching. I have tried to subject every well-defined theory of education urged upon teachers to the decisive test of these principles. As a result, I am painfully impressed with the belief that much of the so-called *philosophy* of education now clamouring for the attention of American teachers will never prove a helpful guide in school work; and this is specially true of what may be called the philosophy of psychology. What elementary teachers most need is a clear knowledge of *psychical facts*—the philosophy of these facts being beyond the grasp of mere tyros. The work of many earnest teachers is badly muddled by attempts to apply in their teaching ill-digested theories and speculations, and especially philosophic systems based on some "new psychology."

"Psychology," says Professor Münsterberg, of Harvard University, "has to pick out some of its best fruits for the work of education; but this cannot be done, by the way, by teachers who are dilettantes in psychology. The one part of teachers—the superficial ones—will deceive themselves by empty phrases, or will torture the poor children by useless experiments. The larger part—the earnest and sincere teachers—will feel soon that all those laws of apperception and all those woodcuts of pyramidal ganglion cells do not help them a bit. They will not become better teachers by such knowledge, just as they would not become better pianists by knowing how many vibrations a tone has. They will become disappointed in their psychological studies."

I would not be understood as wishing to discourage pedagogical inquiry or the study of the philosophy of education, or even speculative philosophy. All earnest study is helpful to a teach-

er, even when the knowledge gained cannot be directly used in school work. It results in growth in mental power, and keeps the mind inquisitive, alert, fresh, stimulating. The caution is against attempts to apply imperfectly understood theories in school work, and especially in the subjecting of children to unskilful experiments. It is feared that some of the experimenting upon children in our schools is well-nigh criminal.

It has long been held and often asserted that the only true test of a method or device in teaching is its actual use in the schoolroom. No test has been more misleading. The sorriest stupidities in teaching have been supported by what has seemed a complete success. It is marvelous what little children can be led to do by an enthusiastic and skillful teacher. Who has not witnessed the highest interest, and even enthusiasm, awakened by devices that violate every true principle of child training? Nearly every bad method of teaching that has had its day in American schools has been commended on the ground that "it works well." While many of the old routines thus commended were stupid, not a few of the new devices are positively silly.

It is conceded that every true principle or method of teaching will work well in practice *under right conditions*; but the radical test lies back of practice and should interpret practice. The supreme question in education is not what children *can* do, but *what they ought to do*. One of the important functions of the science of pedagogy is to protect children from the experimenter and device-maker.

The fact is that both psychology and physiology have already picked out not a little of their best fruits as a guide in education. Subjective psychology, the psychology of consciousness, has furnished the basis for a true method of teaching—a basis