

Methods of Teaching History.

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The ways of studying and the manner of teaching history are two of the most important questions that come before the teacher or student. On the way the matter is presented to the pupils depends their knowledge of the subject. Without a knowledge of history so directed and made part of their lives, the pupils will not grow to be the patriotic men or women that they should in order to make our country more secure, to elevate our civilization to a higher standard, to make our government more like our ideal of this government.

Teaching the pupils of our schools the facts of past government and the results which follow from these past events, will lead them toward that which will make our national welfare more nearly what it should be.

The child ought to be early taught the happenings in our history. He should have a sound foundation upon which to build a larger, stronger structure. A noted writer says, "As a nation sows that shall it also reap." Without a knowledge of

the seed sown, the harvest will not be known. Mr. Spencer says, "There cannot be a correct idea of a part without a correct idea of the whole." By learning the separate facts of all the past events, we shall not only know the whole of history, but also have a better knowledge taken separately.

Our history really begins with the founding of the Colonies although the discovery of America by Columbus and the subsequent voyages by other explorers have a fundamental bearing upon our nation's history.

Jamestown, the first permanent settlement, was founded near the center of eastern United States. The climate was favorable to the advancement of the colony. Plymouth, in the northern part of eastern United States, was not climatically so favorably situated. Other settlements were founded between these two, and later farther south.

Along with the place and time of settlement should be given the story of the early days of the colony. This helps the child in remembering the historical facts and dates and does not make

the task so irksome. Jamestown settlement has many little incidents connected with it that not only give color to the story, but bring to the child ideas of the character of the people of the time. The story of John Smith is interesting to the adventurous boy and the sympathetic girl. Plymouth also has much to win the attention of the many dispositions to be found in the school-room, from the farmer boy or girl to the city lad or lassie. What child has not wanted to hear over and over again the story of William Penn and the founding of Philadelphia? Each of the other Colonies have many such incidents connected with their early founding that is attractive to the child.

One reason history is so much dreaded by the average pupil is the uninteresting way in which it is presented to him for study. The teacher should learn each child's disposition, his likes and dislikes, and then adapt the lessons to each.

There are many ways in which to present the facts before a class. The

same method used day after day becomes tiresome and the children lose interest. If the text book is used all the time the child begins to feel that his brain is a kind of store house in which he must pack away so many dates, names, places, and events. He will even tire of the stories and begin to wonder if he will ever know all the book contains. The teacher should so present the lessons that ere he is aware the pupil will find he has gained most of the important facts. This may be done by giving varied exercises. Many think there is but one way to present a history lesson. This is a mistake for there is hardly a study in our common schools which will allow of so varied a method of presentation.

Along with the text and stories may come lessons in drawing. This will not only vary the exercise, but will give the child a more definite idea where the events took place and more firmly fix them in the memory.

The teacher may also send them to other books for original research. One teacher who tried this method said he did not need

to buy any books because the children took such an interest in the work that they kept his desk piled with articles from the several homes. After giving work of this kind the teacher may require essays to be written upon original work and in this way composition lessons may be given along with the history and neither will be thought such a task as they are usually when studied alone.

Every teacher has a certain amount of rhetorical work done and if this was also brought into the history work it would bring another pleasant change that would be of benefit to all. Our literature abounds with writings of this kind. This would introduce our authors to the history student.

Although our country has not long been a nation it has a varied history and many names, dates, and places to learn about, and here again the teacher must use his judgement and not give his school too much ground to cover in too short a time.

In teaching the instructor must have a thorough knowledge of the facts he wishes his pupils to know; he must

be interested in his work; he must have a knowledge of his pupils and of the persons of whom he is teaching; he must present the subjects clearly and as they are.

The knowledge must be presented in such a way that not only the truths may be learned, but that the pupil will be lead on to other things. The mind should be trained, the intellect enlarged, the hand thought guided. The child as it grows to be a man should be taught patriotism. All his training should be so directed that he will be a nobler citizen, society uplifted through his influence, and the nation's welfare made more secure.

Outline

- 1' The study of history.
 - 1² By student
 - 1³ The influence upon him.
- 2' The foundation for students knowledge.
- 3' The beginning of our history taught.
 - 1² Methods of presentation.
 - 1³ Text book
 - 2³ Stories
 - 3³ Drawing of maps
 - 4³ Original work
 - 5³ Essays
 - 6³ Learning of poems and prose
 - 2² Care as to length of lessons.
- 4' Instructor prepared for his work.
- 5' The result of training.

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