

The Teacher and His School.

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It is in the common school that the foundation of our education is laid. Some one has well said, "the establishment and liberal support of common schools should be objects of special interest to every citizen of our Union. On them depend the general diffusion and perpetuity of those great national blessings and privileges which tend to the true exaltation of a people. Free schools are the nurseries of the public mind. They are the best safeguards against all the ills of ignorance and vice. The character of those who graduate from them, must determine what the general condition of our country shall be. So long as more than nine tenths of our whole population never gain access to the advantages of our colleges, how important is it that the common school be properly cared for! How important is it that they be so sustained that they will send forth those healthful influences which shall be for the healing and preservation of the Nation!" The common schools should be raised to a higher plane of knowledge and liberty. How shall this be done? Will not this plane be reached by giving to the rising generation that thorough instruction and training in all of the elementary branches - thus laying a firm foundation upon which to build a strong

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character and setting for them a high standard of excellence which by diligent striving they can attain? Does it not become the duty then, of the teacher to set this standard and of the parents to lend their ablest assistance in helping to carry it out? Then will they be prepared to honorably and successfully fulfil every duty which falls upon them after entering the broad world of experience.

It has been said, "The hand that rocks the cradle

Guides the footsteps of the nation."

This is also true of the teacher. He must weave the threads of character, which at first are as filmy threads, but will soon be as iron bands. Two thirds of the child's time is spent with the teacher. The common school is the bulwark of the nation. Show me the nation whose schools are progressing, and I will show you a highly intellectual nation. In a republic this is very important, for should not the voter be one who has his head, as well as his body trained for his country's service whether in war or in peace, at home or abroad? The work of the teacher then becomes one of the utmost consequence, as both present and future well-being of those over whom he exercises a control and influence is dependent in great measure upon him. Therefore, if his duties are not performed to the best of his ability, if the

pupils are not given a clear understanding of each lesson, instead of complete mastery of the subject, there will be a deficiency - and just in the exact proportion of the degree either of mastery or deficiency will the powers of those pupils be weakened or strengthened. The influence and importance of the office and instruction of youth cannot be easily overestimated, and he who attempts to fill it should well consider the great responsibilities which rest upon him. To instruct the young to a fit state to take their part in the community, and in whatever portion of the business of life may be intrusted to them, is one of the most important and difficult tasks which any one can undertake.

True fitness for teaching so far as it be gained from instruction, consists first of all in a liberal scholarship, then in a knowledge of the best methods of doing the work of the school, and of the principles that underlie these methods. Some have a natural ability to this kind of labor while others have not. This may be easily noticed in two teachers having the same professional education in kind and amount, and yet find their actual teaching power very unequal. "The true spirit of the teacher is a spirit that seeks the desire to be in the highest degree useful to those who

are to be taught; a spirit that elevates above every thing else the nature of capabilities of human soul, and that trembles under the responsibility of attempting to be its educator; a spirit that looks upon gold as the contemptible dross of earth, when compared with that imperishable gem which is to be polished and brought out into heaven's light to shine forever; a spirit that scorns all the rewards of earth, and seeks that highest of all rewards, an approving conscience and an approving God; a spirit that earnestly inquires what is right, and that dreads to do what is wrong; a spirit that can recognize and reverence the handiwork of God in every child, and that burns with the desire to be instrumental in training it to the highest attainment of which it is capable, — such a spirit is the first thing to be sought by the teacher, and without it the highest talent cannot make him excellent in his profession. The teacher, parents, and pupils, are the joint-partners in the work; and, while something may be done by each party individually, nothing, short of the harmonious and cheerful cooperation of all, can secure the richest and fullest blessings which the object under consideration is calculated to impart. The teacher must show that he is working for their interest, and ever ready to help them in their wants.

and do all in his power to promote their true happiness. He should make the school room cheerful and attractive and promote a healthy moral tone among his pupils, thereby creating an interest in school duties. By visiting the parents at their homes, and by inviting the parents to visit the school much can be gained to promote the interests in behalf of the teacher's efforts. The teacher must be a man of the world, as well as a man of books. He should be able to read human nature well, that he may know how to deal with the various characters under his control. He should be a scholar of breadth as well as depth and possess integrity, moral rectitude, and purity of character imbued with the spirit of truth and wisdom. The teacher constitutes a pattern. He therefore should make his character so pure and correct that it may be worthy of the closest imitation. In order to gain and preserve the confidence and respect of his pupils, the teacher must be able, on every occasion, to furnish the clearest evidence that he possesses a full, distinct and discriminating knowledge of every subject on which it may be desirable to impart instructions. He must not only acquire knowledge of every subject, but he must have the power to impart this knowledge.

to his pupils in a clear and intelligent manner. Sometimes the teacher finds his patience taxed almost beyond endurance, but let him not despair. Let him faithfully scatter the seed, remembering that "he who goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall, doubtless, come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."

The teacher's whole appearance and actions should be characterized by neatness and order. As children are great imitators and easily influenced by the appearance and movements under those they must pass so great a portion of their time, it is very necessary that the teacher be careful in relation to his dress, his personal appearance and habits, be prudent in his movements and chase and dignified in his deportment and conversation. It is well for the teacher to remember that he teaches by example no less than by precept.

School discipline depends much upon making the pupils feel that rules and regulations are intended for their own good, and not that they are made by the teacher for his own pleasure in exercising them. The first thing in school management is to make your school pleasant. Many a child has formed a dislike and even a dread of school

and every thing pertaining to it simply from the unpleasantness, inconvenience and dreariness, which combine to form its first impressions. The school house should be placed on a pleasant and attractive spot. It should be comely in its appearance, neat in its finish and commodious and pleasant in all its arrangements. Every thing about it should be so fitted as to make the child happy and comfortable. It should have ample provision for supplying the children with plenty of fresh air. If the school house and grounds be made comfortable, and attractive then - going to school - would be considered a pleasure instead of a disagreeable task as is too often the case. The teacher should be kind and cheerful. When a little fellow enters the school-room in the morning, his face lit up with pleasure and his eyes sparkling with animation, it is the teachers duty to meet him with an approving smile, and then the child will be happy for the day. But on the contrary, if the teacher repay him with a frown, the little heart will be chilled and frozen. Ah, how easily do the pupils learn to read in their teacher's countenance what the day has in store for them. The teacher should improve every fit occasion for inculcating the laws of kindness.

and enforcing the importance of doing good to all, as opportunity may offer. He should act the part of a devoted friend. How true is the saying "like begets like" for a kind, pleasant, obliging instructor usually finds a kind, pleasant and obliging pupils; while a stern, morose and scolding teacher finds impatient, fretful and troublesome pupils. As a teacher, the writer has always gained the love of her pupils through kindness, neatness, and the interest taken in their welfare. What was more encouraging than to have the little ones as well as the larger girls throw their arms about her neck, and say, "O how sweet you look this morning;" and then before leaving her drop a kiss upon her forehead; or to watch the busy bees studying with all their might in order to make good recitations. "Kind words do not cost much; they never blister the tongue nor lips, and we never hear of any mental trouble arising from this quarter. Though they do not cost much, they help our good nature. Soft words soften our own souls. Angry words are fuel to the flame of wrath, and make it burn fiercely. Kind words make other people good natured. Cold words freeze people, hot words scorch them, bitter words make them bitter and wrathful words make them

wrathful. Kind words quiet the hearer. They shame him out of his sour, morose, unkind feeling."

Then, teacher,

"Speak gently to the little child,
So guileless and so free,
Who with a truthful, loving heart,
Puts confidence in thee.

Speak not the cold and careless thoughts,
Which time has taught thee well,
Nor breathe one word whose bitter tone
Distrust might seem to tell."

"If on that brow there rests a cloud,
However light it be,
Speak loving words, and let him feel
He has a friend in thee;
And do not send him from thy side,
Till on his face shall rest
The joyous look and beaming smile
That mark a happy breast.

If the teacher wishes to have a happy and pleasant school, he must be cheerful, ready to smile at any time himself, and not unwilling to provoke laughter in his pupils. The less he threatens, finds fault, and scolds, the more friends he finds among his pupils. He should beware of

sarcasm and ridicule as a cutting remark is never forgotten and seldom forgiven. He should impart his knowledge in such a way that his pupils may be able to pursue them to an irresistible desire to know. He should make use of the stimulus of praise, but use it sparingly that it may have the desired effect when bestowed. As a rule the teacher should stand when conducting a class. He should use his eyes. Look his pupils in the eyes when asking them questions and have them look him in the eye on answering. Have the answer in full sentences and in good English. It is very necessary for the teacher to keep his voice down to the conversational key as a quiet voice is music in the school room. Do not allow whispering in class, but hold the attention of every member. He must light up the class with a pleasant countenance. A teacher who can not join in a hearty laugh with his pupils lacks one element of power. Have something interesting to say to the pupils at every recitation. Let the pupils do a good share of the talking in class. Encourage asking questions and before answering yourself give the class an opportunity. The black-board should be used freely by both pupils

and teacher. Pupils should not be made to stay after school to study imperfectly recited lessons, as it is a physical impossibility for a tired, fretting, obstinate, hungry child to do good thinking. Review pupils often and always on essentials. Do not have a routine system of conducting a class, stick to some general purpose and plan, but secure the greatest possible variety of ways and means. Combine oral recitation and written work. Have pupils understand that if they fail to do their work, they cheat, not the teacher, but themselves. In leading pupils to study, do not use threat and compulsion but rather show them how to use their text book by explaining their hard lessons and by appealing the higher motives. All pupils should be regarded as truthful until they show themselves otherwise. A truthful child will never forgive his teacher for doubting his word or making an unjust accusation.

Feeling a deep, lively, and abiding interest in his duties the teacher will succeed in awaking a corresponding interest in his pupils and their parents; and when parents, pupils, and teacher all have the spirit of earnestness, energy, and true enthusiasm in school work, progress and improvement must result. The teacher should

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remember that his office is of the greatest importance, as he deals with mind." He is called to educate immortal beings, and is stamping upon their souls impressions that will endure when the sun shall be blotted out, and the moon and stars shall withdraw their shining. Should there be given to each teacher a broad tablet of polished silver, upon which he were required to inscribe some sentiment, to be read by thousands on earth and by angels in heaven, he would tremble in view of the important duty; he would desire that the sentiment might be truthful and wise, and such as would be approved above.

Now, there are placed in the hands of every teacher many tablets, - not, indeed, of silver or gold, but tablets that shall endure when silver and gold shall have perished - the immortal tablets of youthful minds. Upon these teachers are inscribing principles and sentiments, which thousands of their fellow-men will read with grief or joy, which all the angels of light will one day look upon with tears, or behold with exultation of joy.