Training of the Will.

There are two contradictory opinions regarding the will; one that the will is capable of being trained, the other that it is absolute. The former opinion seems the most plausible, and this will here be treated.

"The will," says Harris, "is the power of a person in the light of reason and with susceptibility to the influence of rational motives, to determine the ends or objects to which he will direct his energy, and the direction of this energy with reference to the determined end or object." From this definition it would seem that the will is capable of being trained, and when the two divisions, choice and volition, are given, it seems even more possible. By choice we mean decides what object is best, or what course of action he will follow, and by volition he carries into effect the choice, or refuses to do so. Choice is absolute, is necessary, while volition follows from choice, though not necessarily, and in some cases not at all. As choice is the first important of the two, it must receive the most attention.

Take, for instance, a child who seems always to choose the wrong course of action, even though...
he knows he is wrong; I believe that he can
will can be trained to choose the right thing.
If he is made to understand what is the right,
and taught to choose it always, it cannot
fail to have in a great measure the desired
effect. And if after the choice has been made,
careful attention is paid to the right course
of action, the moral part of the will will be
benefited. For in many cases the young child
that associates with (or sees-sided persons who
lead low and mean, and degraded lives, has
his choice of the low and mean developed to
a greater degree than that of the right, the
purer, and the true; this is the time to induce
him with the true ideal of right. It is true,
one may always choose what he thinks is right,
but he may not always be able to carry this
into effect; as in the case of a drunkard, he
may choose never to drink, but when the tempta-
tion comes he cannot resist yielding to his strong
appetite.

The teacher has much of the will training of
children in his hands; he can make them hub:
right and wrong, see things quickly and clearly,
if they may readily choose. If the parents be
jects that are new and interesting, the child will
at once be all attention; willing to learn what the object is, of what use it is, and whether it is good or bad. But it is only with the new child, interesting, that she may do this, for if it is something old, or is something the child has disliked, he will listen to no explanation or reasoning about it. And never good may be accomplished if the child does not realize what your aim is in talking of these things. By presenting a number of objects, good and bad side by side, and having the child choose, correcting him if necessary, she can be trained to choose between the two, and in this way to see quickly and clearly the difference. In the same way useful and useless objects may be studied.

Teachers might be divided into two classes, one who control the school by their own will, the other who teach the child to control through his will. The teacher controlling by her will insists that she has a quiet school; but if you step into her school-room, you find that she finds her pupils are quiet through fright, more than discipline. The one who has the children control themselves never has a very quiet room, but the children are having their wills trained, and that is more important by far than all still rooms and
A weak will may be gradually strengthened by reliance on right and judgment, for a person with a weak will almost inevitably gives up to one with a stronger; this allayed again and again cannot strengthen, but if possible will weaken. Burke says—"Strength of will is the power to resist, persist, to indulge, to attack, to conquer obstacles, to snatch success from the jaws of death and despair." The person who strives to resist all that is wrong in action or thought, and endeavors persistently to follow the right, even though he is made to endure many seemingly difficult things, is strengthening his will by the very enduring he strengthens. The student who finds it hard to adapt his lessons, strengthens his will, when he is determined to succeed, and when he allows no obstacle to impede his progress; and often it is this firm resolve and the holding to it, rather than great intellectual power, that makes many good students. "Discipline, no less than concentration, is a cure for a weak will."

The strong will too, may be trained; this is important because with many, the strong will are so often ruined by passion and prejudice.
Such a person yields to me not, and feels that he and his views must always be preserved. The will must be retrained, or it makes despite and tyranny of its owners, and men with such strong wills tend to destroy themselves and those around them.

We have examples of the uneducated and the educated still in General Jackson and Abraham Lincoln. Jackson, which in thought and action, never considering the end, while Lincoln was calm and slow, but always sure. In the words of another: "Jackson's mind was like that of a wild storm, violent and destructive though sublime, while that of Lincoln was as the shining auroral light of a new morning, which shines more and more unto the perfect day."

Since it has been seen who has the greater part of the will training of children, and how they study train them, how the weak will may be strengthened, the strong restrained, can any one doubt that the will can be successfully trained? It would seem not; for if the will is weak it must be taught self reliance; if it is wilful, it must have restraint; if it is violent it must acquire self control; if it is without any true aim, it must be educated to self direction."

Pina Louise Leben.