

Graduating Thesis
The Cultivation of Skill.

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All educational inquiries assume that man is capable of individual improvement, and therefore he is collectively progressive. He is slowly but surely civilized through the various experiences of life, and through experience there is a growth of knowledge.

Mental discipline is the true object of a higher culture and for this the study of mathematics is especially beneficial.

In older times there was a great deal of superstition about the number seven. "It was supposed to be a key to the order of the universe. There were seven cardinal virtues, seven deadly sins, seven sacraments, seven days in the week, seven metals, seven planets, seven apertures

to a man's head." Those believing this thought a person should study seven arts in seven years. In this day of specialities one art well learned is better than a great many partially learned.

Mathematics is suited to form habits of continuous attention by dealing with trains of proof, and helps imagination to grasp abstract relations.

By mental discipline in education is meant "that systematic and protracted exercise of the mental powers which is suited to raise them to their highest degree of healthful capability, and impart a permanent direction to their activity."

The first organ to be cultivated is the brain—the seat of our know-

ledge. We begin cultivating our minds from infancy, and if we are progressive we never cease learning until we are taken hence to the land Celestial.

The school boy when playing marbles thinks only of the good time he is having. The game of marbles does more than this - it trains the eye. In order that his marble will hit that of his opponent's his eye must be skilled in the right direction. Baseball - the game that is dear to every boy's heart is also good training for his mind and eye as well as an exercise giving him strong muscles. In catching a ball his eyes see it first - then thought tells him about where it is likely to fall - then he changes

his position to be in readiness for the "catch" thereby bringing into play every muscle of his body.

Muscular work is blended with brain work. In performing experiments the hand is the companion of the brain. If the hand were skilled and the brain were slow and unresponsive experiments could not be performed. It takes a well balanced brain to accomplish anything in the way of skill. The efficiency of one will not cover up the deficiencies of the other.

Some work does not require great strength, but this strength or muscular action stands in need of delicacy of touch and movement which can only be attained by training.

The skillful painter needs more

than an exquisite perfection of form and color, he needs also the delicate touch. If he fails to have this nicety of touch he has failed in his work, for he cannot transform the images or ideas of his mind to canvass.

"Painting" says Hoyt "is the art of representing objects on any surface by means of colors". The earliest remains of art are Egyptian.

There have been in the history of painting five grand styles or methods of using colors. They are Distemper, Encaustic, Fresco, Oil, and water-color. The Distemper is the earliest known style. It is interesting to know the formula used in making this. The colors are mixed with egg, fig, juice, glue, etc. which causes it to stick to surfaces to

which it is applied.

The early Greeks and Romans used the true encaustic painting. In this the colors are mixed with wax. In Fresco painting the colors are mixed with water and lime, and are then applied to wet or dry plaster. Many of the grandest paintings of the world today have been done in this style.

The countries which have produced the greatest painters are Egypt, Italy, France, Spain, Flemish, Holland, Germany, Great Britain, and America. Michael Angelo is one of the best known of the early Italian painters. He was capable of hard toil and never spared himself. His whole life was one long labor. This is a splendid example to show that skill is attained only by hard work.

The strength of his will overcame any difficulties. Hoyt says "from the cradle to the grave he struggled to attain his high ideals, and this innate strength of the man is impressed upon all that he ever accomplished."

In Ben Johnson's work entitled "Rasselas" the Prince remarks "All skill ought to be exerted for universal good." Michael Angelo's paintings have done a great deal of good to many who have seen them.

Rosa Bonheur as a painter of animals stands high in the opinion of critics. She inherited her artistic temperament from her father who was a poor, struggling artist. From early childhood Rosa was fond of spending most of her time in her father's studio. Here she

would draw pictures on the board or make grotesque models of clay. Her father aided her much by giving her drawing lessons. Rosa, being very fond of animals, it is no wonder she chose them for her subjects. She became so skilled that many of her paintings are very lifelike. Rosa Bonheur cultivated this side of her nature until she had gained skill which made her world renowned.

Culture stands as a synonym for the best there is in life. The material evidences of it, while unobtrusive, are always noticeable.

The homes you may enter cannot be disguised as to its influence. The books, habits, apparel, the demeanor, - all combine in revealing the presence

or lack of culture in a home or in society.

The face is said to be the mirror of the mind, and above all it is the face which reveals ones culture. In the presence of true culture the bold, coarse, or rude are ill at ease. Culture is one element that cannot be counterfeited. Its ring is so genuine that an imitation only makes the genuine more pronounced. In art the touch which is given to the cultured few is the touch that lasts. The picture which outlives the painter has had thought back of it. It was done by a hand steadied by ambition, guided by hope and ambition and inspired by high, noble ideals.

Discipline, ambition, and ideal

are the three important points of culture.

Music has an important place in culture. It is very frequently taken up and studied in a manner and spirit sadly wanting as to its true worth. An eminent vocalist says this is especially true among singers. He says that it is so easily our nature to sing that we do it without a thought to our obligations to it. "It is the tendency to commonness, this easy familiarity with an art which probes nature most deeply, which bleeds when touched with a rude hand, and that we deplore". To sing well we should be healthy, hearty, and happy.

If a singer, musician, laborer, professional man, etc. has not

ambition all other virtues and gifts are in vain. Ambition takes a person over the rough places and puts him safely on the highest pinnacle.

The ideal is said to be the crowning point of culture. One's ideals are not the result of accident but of purpose. A person's ideals always keep a short distance ahead thereby leaving room for higher climbing.

A poet has given us a beautiful thought in these words.

"Why rest content in the valley while hills and mountains are at hand which will be ours for the climbing." The child who is to become the skillful pianist begins quite early in life to learn the rudiments of music.

He begins by learning the notes on the staff - then how delighted

he is with his first exercise! He soon grows tired of it all and would rather play games. But if his parents are wise (and, providing he has musical abilities) he is made to practice a certain length of time each day. The child may rebel against such treatment when he is young, but he will live to see the day when he will sincerely thank his parents for their strictness over him. Practicing is often very annoying to those who are compelled to listen to it continually. It takes patient practice to become a musician. "Practice makes perfect" is a common expression and a true one.

He reaches perfection only after years of hard practice and study and is not sorry for the expenditure

of time, patience and work.

The persons who have become skillful in any line of work have been climbing all these years until finally after discouragements, trials, sorrows, and hard labor they have reached the summit of the mountain.