

Moral Culture in Schools

A Paper Read by Miss Baines at the Teachers' Convention held at Flesherton Oct. 26.

It is to be regretted that many teachers regard moral training as a thing separate and by itself. Too often it is dependent on the opening exercises or is made the subject of fixed lessons given at stated times in which case it has no connection with real life and is of little value.

The moral culture of the rising generation can not receive too much attention as the future destiny of our country depends on the children of to-day. We should also remember that into our care have come those little ones seeking the way home, and that if only the mental side of the child is developed and the moral allowed to run waste we can expect a person skilful in perpetrating all kinds of evil and evading punishment.

Moral Culture in schools is training the pupils to distinguish between right and wrong and by different means broadening their views and elevating their natures that right and duty will prevail. If the ethical side of a child's nature is properly cultivated the grown up person of average mental capacity will have little difficulty in determining his duty to his Creator, fellow creatures and himself.

Our personality has more or less influence over everyone with whom we come in contact. The first and greatest necessity and the one which permeates all others is the need of filling the teaching profession as much as possible with men and women of high ideals and noble characters.

Children have very clear ideas of fairness and are very quick to note inconsistencies. If the teacher tells the children to be truthful and tells or lives untruths what result can be expected; also, if they say he honest and show partiality among the pupils in marks, privileges and prizes; it would be much better for such teacher to never mention either truth or honesty.

With increased salaries and a much greater security of position the day is surely nearly past when the teacher considers it necessary to lower him or herself to distribute favors among the children of those (such as the trustees) who have the most influence in the community, and it ought to be considered criminal to award prizes and promotions to pupils who are undeserving.

left on it by receiving that which should have been obtained by some one else at the hands of one whom they should be able to respect and copy.

Good discipline is one of the first requisites of a good school. In discipline be firm without an undue exhibition of authority. An appeal to the pupil's honor and sense of right for discipline and justice to others is often more effective than a threat or a promise of reward. Complete but not slavish obedience should be had from each pupil; that is the pupil should be expected to carry out a command at once unless it has some good reason for not doing so; in that case if the teacher is the friend of the pupil which he ought to be, the pupil will not hesitate or be afraid to give his reason for not doing as commanded. When defence is a willful defiance of authority, in most cases corporal punishment ought to be inflicted publicly or otherwise. We should teach the grandeur of doing right because it is right not merely because punishment for wrong-doing is unavoidable even if it does not come at once.

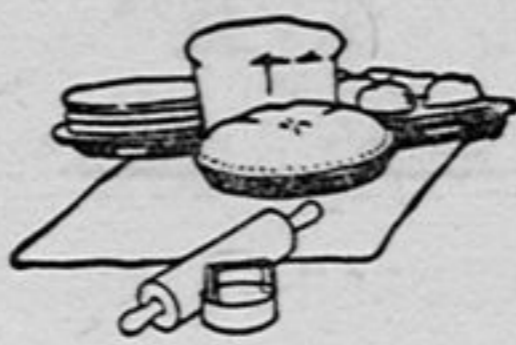
The school in which you find all the pupils in tumult and disorder on the removal of the disciplinarian or almost every pupil on the alert to take advantage of the new teacher is receiving a training which isn't doing much towards character building. What to do with the thoroughly bad boy is a question difficult to answer. It seems impossible to conceive of any child being so bad that it can not be reached in some way. In many cases the seemingly bad child is not understood by either parents or teacher and incorrect methods of treating them is resorted to. The teacher to be a good disciplinarian must study and understand his pupils.

Moral education in school can only supplement never take the place of moral education in the home. How often though is the innocent childish nature demoralized rather than helped by home influences. In almost every community we find children almost destitute of a knowledge of right and wrong. The teacher's work is to use every means to elevate this nature, to present right and duty in the most pleasing light. In the meantime something must be done to prevent the evil influence from reaching the other pupils, but in this little difficulty will be experienced if they have already been receiving the proper training and are not just hovering on the boundary line between vice and virtue. Teachers must be the pupils' friends to really benefit them. They should talk to them, consult them about things they can understand, treat them with respect and let them assist in performing little duties. Nearly every pupil is gifted in some line of work; give them an opportunity to surpass in that work and publicly show your appreciation of their talent.

Human nature is like a match no virtue comes from it until it has been rubbed against some hard place in life. To protect children from all temptation and rough places will not promote a high moral character. It would be equally unwise to place the child in the way of great temptation at first. Some small hardship and temptation, small enough to be overcome by the childish nature, then a little greater and still greater with sufficient encouragement to ensure against failure and at last the child will develop pluck and confidence and become a rational self-governing girl or boy.

It is scarcely reasonable to teach the child that if it always does what is right it will be sure to have a pleasant time and obtain all the benefits to be had. They should see and expect that vicarious suffering is the lot of all, and that the immediate pain caused by wrong-doing often falls most heavily on the innocent. We should endeavor to have more worthy school incentives than prizes, rewards, etc., as these appeal to the lowest motives and are not conducive to self-government or character building.

As no two pupils have the same ability in the same line or are surrounded by the same environments, no comparison can be made on a just basis, and at best a prize can only be an incentive to a few of the most clever pupils as it is clearly beyond the reach of the others. The proper incentive to labor should be a natural interest and desire for knowledge so



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that we may accomplish some worthy purpose in the world. To make this an incentive each subject must be presented in an attractive manner and the pupils asked to discuss and form their own ideas being guided as little as is possible.

All the pupils' games and amusements should come under the notice of the teacher but by no means in the light of an eavesdropper. The teacher should enter into their sports and in so doing ameliorate all deteriorating language and conduct. Rough, boisterous or mean conduct can have no elevating influence. All games which excite rude hardening feeling or lessen the pupils' reverence for what is sacred should be strictly excluded. They should be taught to do naturally the little courtesies expected as a matter of course from any ordinary lady or gentleman. Never let a pupil see you consider it hopeless and expect nothing better from it. Always make them feel you expect their conduct to be high and noble. In many cases it would be a great help to silently make a note of all rude behaviour and improper language and some time during the week without mentioning names, speak of each offence and ask the pupils' opinion of the same. We should teach the value of truthfulness. Let the child see that in every life there comes a time in which it would help them and they would give a great deal to be believed and considered trustworthy. Mention incidents and tell them stories to show and prove how in the end and often at the time truth brings success and advantage. Show how, as we are all more or less dependent on one another, truth is essential in the social and business world. In some schools the tender-hearted or careless teacher thinks it necessary to believe or seem to believe everything that the dear innocent children may wish to tell them. Instead they should exert themselves to discover the truth and in no case allow the child to think it can deceive, delude or impose on them, even if no other punishment than a temporary loss of the teacher's good opinion should ever follow. The child will carry with it a rather good opinion of itself in being clever enough to deceive the teacher and nothing will give it more encouragement to be untruthful. The teacher can drive pupils toward deception and untruth by a lack of sympathy and undue severity. A fault acknowledged with proper regret should require little or no punishment unless it is of such a character as will lower the moral tone of the whole school unless publicly chastised. No school is a good school which educates the children away from work. Work is the very condition of the enjoyment of life but ease and honor are seldom companions. If the child can do some work well it will go a long way toward giving it self-confidence and all the other virtues and it will rarely barter or trade self-respect for ease, or some other such unworthy and lowering element

in life, nor is so apt to degenerate to the swindler or thief. Show the child that a rough diamond is more valuable than a smooth, shining imitation; make a distinction between polish and refinement. Make them understand that poor manners and good principles are better than good manners and poor principles. Do not teach that it is better or more respectable to be a lawyer than a farmer or that a banker is better than a mechanic. It is the manner of working not the occupation which ought to reflect honor. All labor is honorable if well done.

To surround the pupils with the beautiful has a refining ennobling influence, and one of the best ways to bring the pupils to a love of the beautiful is to allow them to care for and be responsible for the preservation of something beautiful. The Japanese are among the greatest lovers of beauty and in parts of that country beautiful costly ornaments may remain on the gate from year to year without being destroyed while in our Canada no property either public or private is entirely safe from the destructive hands or knife of some school boy.

Music helps to inculcate a love for the beautiful and refined. It helps to bring the pupils out of themselves and softens and uplifts them. Our patriotic songs inspire pupils with a greater love for their country; so also does stirring tales of bravery and the sacrifice of great men and women to further the common good.

Manual training is another factor in moral culture. It gives the pupils a knowledge of the difference between accuracy and vagueness and thus confers precision; because in doing a thing by hand it must be definitely right or definitely wrong. It promotes honesty for when you express yourself by making things and not by using words it is impossible to dissimulate or cover ignorance by ambiguity. It also gives the pupil who cannot hold his own in literary work an opportunity to win self-respect as well as the respect of others; because every child can make or do something well.

Only the best not the light, trashy literature is the proper kind for children. The selections read in school should be chosen to stimulate, instruct and ennoble the listeners and to do this they must tell of noble and chivalrous characters, of high aims and motives.

The greater part of moral culture to be of real value must be incidental. Every lesson in mathematics, grammar, science, etc., may be made lessons in correct reasoning. In almost every lesson in literature and history ennobling truths may be casually impressed on the child's mind. The Village Blacksmith may be made a lesson on the dignity of labor.

The duty of the strong to protect the weak or aged may be learned from such lessons as The Loss of the Birkenhead or Somebody's Mother. Pity for the oppression of the poor may be learned from Hood's "Song of the Shirt," and love of the simple life from Goldsmith's "Deserted Village. Punishment for crime is taught in the "Inchcape Rock," "Merchant of Venice," etc. Patriotism in such lessons as "Rule Britannia," courage and unselfishness in "Golden Deeds," submission in Longfellow's "Resignation" and charity in the "Bride of Sighs."

Could direct talking or reproving ever teach pupils the lessons they may learn without effort from Aesop's Fables or bring as vividly to their minds the truths learned from such allegories as Hawthorne's "The Truant" and "Golden Touch" or Addison's "Vision of Mirza." Where could we find more profound thought or common sense than in Burns' "For a' That and a' That," or Bryant's "Waterfall," etc.

In teaching history the pupils may be led to see clearly the success attending nations and empires of good laws and good government and the inevitable (destruction) fall of nations given over to selfishness and vice. Biographical sketches of great women and men such as Florence Nightingale, Shaftsbury will encourage age pupils and prove an incentive to nobility. They may be led to avoid such little faults as Burns' lack of self control. Coleridge's irregular unsettled life and Goldsmith's extravagance by seeing what drawbacks they are to otherwise almost perfect lives. We should remember every good impulse given is an evil one checked. Our permanent and ever increasing influence whether for good or evil should be well impressed. Some act performed which will probably only influence a few now, may in the years to come be influencing thousands.

Were a star quenched on high, For ages would its light, Still travelling downward from the sky, Shines on our mortal night.

So when a great man dies, For years beyond our ken, The light he leaves behind him lies Upon the paths of men.

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LOTS 2 AND 3 OF 15, CON. 1, W. G. R., Bentinck. Building lot on Bruce St., Durham. Brick house on Bruce St., Durham. Apply to Wm. Leggette, Rocky Saugeen, or John Leggette, Durham. Jan. 25, '06 th.

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CONTAINING 100 ACRES, BEING Lot 14, Con. 4, N. D. R., Glenelg. About 85 acres cleared, balance in good hardwood bush. Well watered, well fenced, good frame house, bank barn and implement house. Good bearing orchard, about twenty-five acres ploughed, four acres in fall wheat. Possession may be had after Mar 1st. For further particulars apply to DONALD BEATON, Prop., Jan, 20th, 1906—th. POMONA P. O.

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A good solid brick two storey dwelling, alongside Presbyterian Manse property in Upper Town, Durham, Corner of Durham and Elgin streets. Seven rooms, pantry, closets, cement floored cellar, etc. Good airy location in good locality. Good frame stable, hard and soft water, one acre of land. Snap for quick purchaser. For further particulars apply to JOHN W. MCKECHNIE, Owner, Aug. 1st, 1906—th. Rocky Saugeen P. O.

Farm for Sale.

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After the ceremony the bride returned to the bride's home in tinnick, where about 125 guests awaited them. At six o'clock in the evening a sumptuous repast was served, which they spent the rest of the evening in various kinds of amusements.

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