

THESIS.

Subject, The Poet as an Educator.

Name, Adaline Altman

Next to religious teachers, the poet might be considered the greatest teacher of mankind. Even the poet may be a religious teacher, because the highest part of his nature is portrayed in his poems.

At the present time, poets are generally looked upon as educators of the intellectual life rather than the religious life.

An individual worn out from reading a book of dry facts, with joy will lay it aside and take up the works of his favorite poet, say Tennyson or Longfellow, and will peruse it and digest it for hours. It may be likened to an old friend who calmly drops in to converse with you occasionally, and when he has gone, you feel like another

person, richer and nobler in mind
That kind of a visitor should always
be acceptable.

Leth Low regards Lowell as a great
educator. He says "whenever he spoke
and whenever he wrote, whether in
his captivating prose or his stirring
verse, the charm and the power were
but the man giving expression to
himself." "So one who did not know
Lowell might picture him to him-
self from his published works."

When we learn to love and honor
such noble poets as Longfellow and
Tennyson, our education is becom-
ing broader and deeper, because we
are learning to value what these
noble noble men value.

It is for the child that the poet
does the most. If the child when

very young is taught to love the
 more simple poems of these poets,
 we shall expect to see many years
 after the fruit of these teachings
 in a person of lofty ideals; pure
 and noble in character. Some one
 might say that the poems of the
 best poets are too difficult for the
 ordinary child to read. It is true
 that many of them are too difficult
 in their original form, but the
 teacher could read it to the child
 and explain it very plainly, so
 that the child could understand
 it clearly, while at the same time
 would be interested and absorbed
 in it.

Such long poems as Homer's
 Iliad and Odyssey are now given
 to children in the story form. Of

4.
course the beauty of the real poem
is lost, but it gives the child the
liberty of reading Homer where he
would not be able to do if compelled
to read the poem. Thus the child
is obtaining a knowledge of the
great poet himself and also a
knowledge of the Greeks, that he
could obtain from no other way.
He would gain not only the know-
ledge of the Grecian mode of carry-
ing on war-fare, but a knowledge
of the life of the Greek in regard
to their physical training, and
the fine bodies of the Greeks.

Surely Homer can be classed
under our list as an educator.
The poem loved by the child is
also loved by the older person. Take
for example that beautiful yet

simple poem of Longfellow, "The Flowers." This poem is perhaps liked by the young because it likens the flowers to stars in the heavens and because he makes the flowers talk to us. The old love it, not only for the reason the child loves it, but because they love the noble and true spirit of the man who wrote it. Here, Longfellow has taught us to love the beautiful flowers that God has given us. Another poem of Longfellow's that is especially instructive is Evangeline.

For the first grades, the teacher could very nicely tell the story to the children, but for the 5th and 6th grades, the pupils should certainly read it for themselves.

From this story, they could obtain

the idea of the early persecutions, the love that these people had for each other and the great love they had for their Saviour.

For another of our great educators we might look to David, who wrote the beautiful Psalms, and who has helped both the young and old with his praises of thanksgiving to God. The prophet of Isaiah, who has given us such beautiful verses, could also be placed under our list of the greatest educators of mankind.

Eugene Field has left us some very beautiful poems for children. There are hundreds of poets whom we cannot name in this list who have ~~us~~ given to us very instructive ^{poems}. We should not forget these poets who have helped us

so much, and who have helped the children to see many things that were revelations to them.

Bibliography

- 1) Longfellow's Poems
- 2) Life and works of H. W. Longfellow
by Samuel Longfellow.
- 3) Story of the Iliad by Ed. Brooks.
- 4) Psalms - David.
- 5) Book of Isaiah - Isaiah.
- 6) "Educational Review."
December, 1891.
"Lowell as an Educator,"
by Seth Low.