

THESIS.

Subject, What the Teacher Can do
Toward Character Building

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America is proud of her school system, which to day stands in the van-guard of the world's great force of right. But there are certain lines along which greater and nobler work might be done if the persons to whom the work is entrusted were all fully aware of the great responsibility resting upon them. The teacher is a great factor in education and she should remember she has to deal with life and not books.

The greatest problem that confronts the world to day is that of character building. A pupil without a noble and upright character may be brilliant as to intellectual pursuits while in school, but in after life a detriment to the community in which he lives

Men have spent their time and fortunes studying wherein lies the secret of character building. The latest researches prove to us that it consists in tearing down and building up brain cells, by which habits for good, or evil are formed. Since all growth takes place more rapidly in youth, we see how important it is that the young should have right motives impressed upon their minds.

This theory strengthens the old maxim "As the twig is bent the tree is inclined" But how to bend it remains with the teacher. Often is devolved upon her the task of lifting the clouds that parents in the first six years of life have allowed to hinder the perfect

growth of their child. As the farmer lifts the clod from a tender stalk of corn, so can the teacher in a great degree lift the hinderances from the child's path, and inculcate in it proper motives. If she is a teacher in the true sense of the word she will be to the tender minds under her care what the sun is to the delicate stalk of corn. They will incline toward her and receive inspiration from her. Nevertheless there are outside forces of evil which will outweigh all she can do in the school room, unless she is thoroughly alive to the situation and directs her influence against them.

As the teacher enters a

school room she beholds the faces of children ranging in position from the Lawyer's Palace to the miner's hovel. Here they must necessarily mingle together, come under the same discipline, and instruction. The great problem that confronts the teacher is: in what way can I best influence the mind of each child under my care to lead a noble life. Had I but the children from homes of culture it would not be so difficult: but there I find selfishness and a great many things to be overcome. Each child is a book to his teacher and should be studied well by her so that she may be able to direct his steps to the best advantage. The teacher stands in

the place of parent and should have sufficient knowledge of the human body to direct the child how to take care of his health; because a sound mind in an unsound body is an impossibility, and this imperfection is the cause of many evils. If a child has soiled, or torn his garments take care of him as a loving parent would and by these kind acts you will gain an influence over him which in time will be second to none other. He will decline to do evil because he does not wish to pain his teacher, until that groove is formed and he has no desire to depart from it.

Let the teacher enter into the home life of her pupils and

see what elements of culture are there. In this way she will form such intimate relations with parents as to share with them in their anxieties, hopes, and purposes in reference to their children. You will be assisted by them in your undertakings and your influence for good will be felt throughout the community. In time the school will become the index to the character of the community and a guarantee of its future prosperity.

In the school room the teacher teaches what he is as well as what he knows. His manner, conversation, and acts should be as becomes his station. He should be firm, courteous, and impartial to all. Hold truth up as a golden

crowns and encourage all to wear it. Teach its great merit by stories concerning truthful heroes.

Introduce into your school good literature and it will work out moral laws. Make the school room pleasant and see that the children's hands and faces are kept clean. Praise your pupils work and make them feel you have placed all confidence in them. By these many acts of kindness which will cost you so little the teacher can do more towards influencing the character of the boys and girls of the coming generation than all the reformers combined can do after they have reached manhood and womanhood.

Bibliography

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