

THESIS.

Subject, English: Its Value to the Teacher.

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There is no knowledge more essential to a teacher than a knowledge of English; and he who does not possess this knowledge will have little influence as a teacher. It is the medium through which he receives inspiration and instruction from others and it is the medium through which he, in turn, conveys instruction to the pupils under his charge.

Language and thought are so closely allied that the tradition has come down to us that without articulate speech there is, and there can be, no mental activity; at least no thinking. Experiments have shown the untruth of this tradition; but these experiments have, also, shown that the human intelligence

cannot be far developed without language. The study and development of the mother-tongue seems to form a natural center about which all other educational agencies can be easily arranged. The teacher who lacks this knowledge, who is unfamiliar with the correct forms of English is guilty of inexcusable ignorance.

The demand for teachers who have a competent knowledge of English is a growing one. No longer is the idea prevalent that anybody "will do" to teach English; and seldom is a teacher employed in any department who is not well versed in the art of using the vernacular.

There may have been a time when a lack of the knowledge of English or

the part of the teacher meant a want of opportunity for securing this knowledge. Now a lack of opportunity can no longer be counted a valid excuse. True there are, yet, many capable young people who have not the means whereby they can attend a good school, but none are so poor that they cannot afford books. Never before have books been so plentiful; never have they cost so little money.

A knowledge of English means a knowledge of the correct use of words; it means a knowledge of how these words should be arranged in order that the pupil may understand the full significance of the thought presented to him; it means a knowledge of how to present knowledge in a manner that cannot be misunderstood. No matter how thorough-

ly versed a teacher may be in the subject matter to be presented, unless he presents this in a manner that appeals to the understanding of the pupils they will learn little or nothing.

Many teachers have failed to recognize the fact that the medium by which a truth is conveyed to the pupils requires as much earnest study as it does to learn the truth itself. Insufficient knowledge of language, of English has driven many young teachers against the rock of failure and caused a shipwreck of their hopes of becoming successful teachers.

The method of expression is co-equal in value with the thought expressed. This assertion may at first seem open to adverse criticism; yet, has not experience proved its truth? Socrates.

convinced his hearers that he uttered
 truths mainly because of the manner
 in which they were spoken. Pestalozzi
 is remembered not by the knowledge
 he possessed, so much as the manner
 in which he conveyed this knowledge
 to others. The truths as taught by
 Christ, the greatest of all teachers, are
 rendered doubly significant by the
 plain, beautiful words in which these
 truths are set forth. The hand-writing
 on the wall conveyed little meaning
 to Belshazzar until Daniel had trans-
 lated it into words that he under-
 stood. The great book of knowledge
 spread open before the pupil will be
 of little use to him, unless he has
 a Daniel to interpret the language
 of the book.

The value of the study of English to the teacher is not measured alone by the facility of expression it gives him. This, in itself, is of inestimable worth and would be conclusive evidence of the necessity for its study, were there no other reasons for commending it. More than this, however, the expression of a thought reacts upon the thought expressed: a richer fuller meaning is given it each time the thought is expressed in words. The capability for thought grows wider and deeper, and a broad basis of general culture is created.

What course of study a teacher should pursue in order that he may strengthen his knowledge of English rests with the individual teacher. A

thorough course in a school where principles of English are not only given, but where he is required to put these principles into use is the ideal course.

It sometimes happens that to the beginning teacher such a course is impracticable, nay impossible: yet there is still a means of advancement open to him. It will demand a more persistent effort on his part and the results may not be equal to his expectations, yet it is a method that cannot fail of good results. This method is the careful study of good books. The study of good books, of the modes of expression used by those great masters who have appealed so strongly to the great mass of the common people,

will be of the greatest assistance to
him who would become versed in
the English Language.

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James Hadley.