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ETHICAL AND MORAL INSTRUCTION IN SCHOOLS

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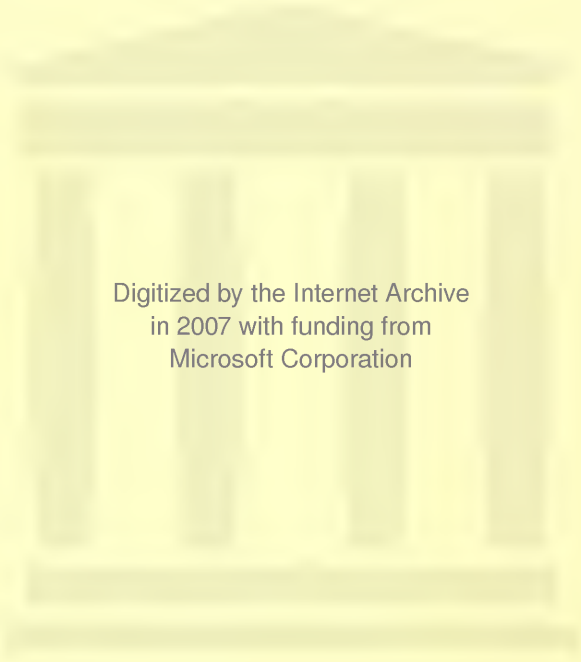

INTRODUCTION

The problem of moral education

THE problem of moral education is an old one, — older indeed than schools. The obligation for its solution has therefore rested upon the shoulders of others besides schoolmasters; every responsible class in the community has borne a share of the burden. That our present discussion should emphasize schools and school-teaching merely indicates the special form which the problem takes in our time. In no way does it denote that moral education is wholly the business of the school, or that it is the school's whole business. It simply suggests that there is an increasing conscious dependence upon the school as a moulder of character.

Social change in moral training

The conditions of our American life have changed marvelously during the past century, and we are now feeling the full momentum of the consequences of these changes. The moral weak-

ness of men before the pressure of temptations arising from our modern life has become painfully apparent. Something needs to be done to make men better able to meet the powerful attacks upon their moral natures which seem to be a part of modern social conditions. Life moves swiftly and complexly now. The old day's work in the field and the old neighborhood life, with its exacting standards of conduct, are for the most part gone. Even the home and the church are feebler at their tasks than in years gone by. We must wait — perhaps long and patiently — for these conservative institutions to grow responsive and strong in the new ministries which our day demands. Where, then, but to the school can society turn for release from its threatened moral degradation? It has, in fact, already turned to the public school as the most potent factor in the solution of the great problem.

The effect of the school's increased moral responsibility

It has made a large difference in the teacher's view of the moral nature of school-teaching to

have his responsibilities thus increased. School education has always had a moral end in view even while it specifically pursued culture, knowledge, or discipline. But in times past it was no more conscious of the particular agencies and processes that achieved this end than were other less intellectual institutions. The bringing to consciousness of the need of moral training in the schools has focused the attention of teachers upon the work of estimating the instruments of school life through which the instincts and impulses of growth are made into the rounded characters of full-statured men.

Three recent policies in moral education

In the earnest but somewhat feverish attempts of teachers to strengthen the moral power of the school, they have not altogether agreed upon the worth of the means at hand in school life. There may be said to be three distinct positions on the question that have been taken by various groups of educational thinkers. (1) Those who believe that in direct and systematic ethical teaching in the classroom lies the best means for enlarging

the moral influence of the school. This belief expresses itself in the provision of regular courses in "morals and manners," "ethics," "behavior," "civics," and the like, — facts about morality being taught in much the same way that facts about land forms are taught in geography.

(2) Another group, with a much larger constituency, hold that all true moral training must be indirect, and that it will be best secured by maintaining a high moral tone in all the work of the school. This indirect method of moral education expresses itself in the extension and supervision of the social activities of school life, and in such a reform of classroom methods as will lead to more nearly normal modes of doing work. The new importance in our recent educational literature of playgrounds, school athletics, and sociable organizations on the one hand, and of the doctrine of interest and coöperation in class instruction on the other hand are evidences of the progress of this point of view.

(3) The third point of view is that of the eclectics. These hold that the policy for the public schools to pursue is to extend the opportunities

for moral growth in both of these directions, — to give more direct and systematic ethical teaching and at the same time to enrich the human relations of school life by giving them moral significance. This point of view presupposes the need of *theory* and *practice* in moral training as in every other course of the curriculum.

It is the editor's privilege to offer in this compact volume a masterly discussion of the issues involved in the varying points of view named. No more scholarly and practical estimate of the worth of the various factors of school life for moral training can be found in all our professional literature. It is commended not alone to teachers, but to all citizens interested in the promotion of our nation's moral welfare.

ETHICAL INSTRUCTION IN THE SCHOOLS

I

ETHICAL INSTRUCTION IN THE SCHOOLS

WITHIN a few years a strong demand has arisen for ethical teaching in the schools. Teachers themselves have become interested, and wherever they are gathered the question, "What shall this teaching be?" is eagerly discussed. The educational journals are full of it. In the year in which I write there have been published seven books on the subject. Several of them — it would be hardly an exaggeration to say all — are books of marked excellence. Seldom does so large a percentage of books in a single year, in a single country, and on a single subject reach so high a level of merit. I shall not criticise them, however, nor even engage in the popular discussion of which they form a part. That discussion concerns itself chiefly with the methods by which ethics may be taught. I wish to go behind this

controversy and to raise the previous question whether ethics should be taught to boys and girls at all.

Evidently there are strong reasons why it should be. Always and everywhere it is important that men should be good. To be a good man!—it is more than half the fulfillment of life. Better to miss fame, wealth, learning, than to miss righteousness. And in America, too, we must demand not the mere trifle that men shall be good for their own sakes, but good in order that the life of the state may be preserved. A widespread righteousness is in a republic a matter of necessity. Where all rule all, each man who falls into evil courses infects his neighbor, corrupting the law and corrupting still more its enforcement. The question of manufacturing moral men becomes, accordingly, in a democracy, urgent to a degree unknown in a country where but a few selected persons guide the state.

There is also special urgency at the present time. The ancient and accredited means of training youth in goodness are becoming, I will not say broken, but enfeebled and distrusted. Hith-

erto a large part of the moral instruction of mankind has been superintended by the clergy. In every civilized state the expensive machinery of the Church has been set up and placed in the hands of men of dignity, because it has been believed that by no other engine can we so effectively render people upright. I still believe this, and I am pretty confident that a good many years will pass before we shall dispense with the ennobling services of our ministers. And yet it is plain that much of the work which formerly was exclusively theirs is so no longer. Much of it is performed by books, newspapers, and facilitated human intercourse. Ministers do not now speak with their old authority; they speak merely as other men speak; and we are all asking whether in the immense readjustment of faith now going on something of their peculiar power of moral as well as of intellectual guidance may not slip away.

The home too, which has hitherto been the fundamental agency for fostering morality in the young, is just now in sore need of repair. We can no longer depend upon it alone for moral guard-

ianship. It must be supplemented, possibly reconstructed. New dangers to it have arisen. In the complex civilization of city life, in the huge influx of untutored foreigners, in the substitution of the apartment for the house, in the greater ease of divorce, in the larger freedom now given to children, to women, in the breaking down of class distinctions and the readier accessibility of man to man, there are perils for boy and girl which did not exist before. And while these changes in the outward form of domestic life are advancing, certain protections against moral peril which the home formerly afforded have decayed. It would be curious to ascertain in how many families of our immediate time daily prayers are used, and to compare the number with that of those in which the holy practice was common fifty years ago. It would be interesting to know how frequently parents to-day converse with their children on subjects serious, pious, or personal. The hurry of modern life has swept away many uplifting intimacies. Even in families which prize them most, a few minutes only can be had each day for such fortifying things. Domestic training

has shrunk, while the training of haphazard companions, the training of the streets, the training of the newspapers, have acquired a potency hitherto unknown.

It is no wonder, then, that in such a moral crisis the community turns to that agency whose power is already felt beneficently in a multitude of other directions, the school. The cry comes to us teachers, "We established you at first to make our children wiser; we want you now for a profounder service. Can you not unite moral culture with intellectual?" It may be; though discipline of the passions is enormously more difficult than discipline of the mind. But at any rate we must acknowledge that our success in the mental field is largely staked on our success in the moral. Our pupils will not learn their lessons in arithmetic if they have not already made some progress in concentration, in self-forgetfulness, in acceptance of duty. Nor can we touch them in a single section of their nature and hope for results. Instruction must go all through. We are obliged to treat each little human being as a whole if we would have our treatment wholesome. And

then, too, we have had such successes elsewhere that we may well feel emboldened for the new task. Nearly the whole of life is now advantageously surveyed in one form or another in our schools and colleges; and we have usually found that advance in instruction develops swiftly into betterment of practice. We teach, for example, social science and analyze the customs of the past; but soon we find bands of young men and women in all the important cities criticising the government of those cities, suggesting better modes of voting, wiser forms of charity; and before we know it the community is transformed. We cannot teach the science of electricity without improving our street-cars, or at least without raising hopes that they may some day be improved. Each science claims its brother art. Theory creeps over into action. It will not stay by itself; it is pervasive, diffusive. And as this pervasive character of knowledge in the lower ranges is perceived, we teachers are urged to press forward its operation in the higher also. Why have we no school-books on human character, the highest of all themes? Once direct the

attention of our pupils to this great topic, and may we not ultimately bring about that moral enlargement for which the time waits ?

I have stated somewhat at length the considerations in behalf of ethical instruction in the schools because those considerations on the whole appear to me illusory. I cannot believe such instruction feasible. Were it so, of course it would have my eager support. But I see in it grave difficulties, difficulties imperfectly understood; and a difficulty disregarded becomes a danger, possibly a catastrophe. Let me explain in a few words where the danger lies.

Between morals and ethics there is a sharp distinction, frequently as the two words are confused. Usage, however, shows the meaning. If I call a man a man of bad morals, I evidently mean to assert that his conduct is corrupt; he does things which the majority of mankind believe he ought not to do. It is his practice I denounce, not his intellectual formulation. In the same way we speak of the petty morals of society, referring in the phrase to the small practices of mankind, the unnumbered actions which disclose good or bad

principles unconsciously hidden within. It is entirely different when I call a man's ethics bad. I then declare that I do not agree with his comprehension of moral principles. His practice may be entirely correct. I do not speak of that; it is his understanding that is at fault. For ethics, as was long ago remarked, is related to morals as geometry to carpentry: the one is a science, the other its practical embodiment. In the former, consciousness is a prime factor; from the latter it often is absent altogether.

Now what is asked of us teachers is that we invite our pupils to direct study of the principles of right conduct, that we awaken their consciousness about their modes of life, and so by degrees impart to them a science of righteousness. This is theory, ethics; not morals, practice; and in my judgment it is dangerous business, with the slenderest chance of success. Useless is it to say that the aim of such instruction need not be ethical, but moral. Whatever the ultimate aim, the procedure of instruction is of necessity scientific. It operates through intelligence, and only gets into life so far as the instructed intelligence afterward

becomes a director. This is the work of books and teachers everywhere: they discipline the knowing act, and so bring within its influence that multitude of matters which depend for excellent adjustment on clear and ordered knowledge. Such a work, however, is evidently but partial. Many matters do not take their rise in knowledge at all. Morality does not. The boy as soon as born is adopted unconsciously into some sort of moral world. While he is growing up and is thinking of other things, habits of character are seizing him. By the time he comes to school he is incrusted with customs. The idea that his moral education can be fashioned by his teacher in the same way as his education in geography is fantastic. It is only his ethical training which may now begin. The attention of such a boy may be called to habits already formed; he may be led to dissect those habits, to pass judgment on them as right or wrong, and to inquire why and how they may be bettered. This is the only power teaching professes: it critically inquires, it awakens interest, it inspects facts, it discovers laws. And this process applied in the field of character yields

ethics, the systematized knowledge of human conduct. It does not primarily yield morals, improved performance.

Nor indeed is performance likely to be improved by ethical enlightenment if, as I maintain, the whole business of self-criticism in the child is unwholesome. By a course of ethical training a young person will, in my view, much more probably become demoralized than invigorated. What we ought to desire, if we would have a boy grow morally sturdy, is that introspection should not set in early and that he should not become accustomed to watch his conduct. And the reason is obvious. Much as we incline to laud our prerogative of consciousness and to assert that it is precisely what distinguishes us from our poor relations, the brutes, we still must acknowledge that consciousness has certain grave defects when exalted into the position of a guide. Large tracts of life lie altogether beyond its control, and the conduct which can be affected by it is apt—especially in the initial stages—to be rendered vague, slow, vacillating, and distorted. Only instinctive action is swift, sure, and firm. For this

reason we distrust the man who calculates his goodness. We find him vulgar and repellent. We are far from sure that he will keep that goodness long. If I offer to shake hands with a man with precisely that degree of warmth which I have decided it is well to express, will he willingly take my hand? A few years ago there were some nonsense verses on this subject going the rounds of the English newspapers. They seemed to me capitally to express the morbid influence of consciousness in a complex organism. They ran somewhat as follows:—

> The centipede was happy, quite,
> Until the toad for fun
> Said, "Pray which leg comes after which?"
> This worked her mind to such a pitch
> She lay distracted in a ditch,
> Considering how to run.

And well she might! Imagine the hundred legs steered consciously—now it is time to move this one, now to move that! The creature would never move at all, but would be as incapable of action as Hamlet himself. And are the young less com-

plex than centipedes? Shall their little lives be suddenly turned over to a fumbling guide? Shall they not rather be stimulated to unconscious rectitude, gently led into those blind but holy habits which make goodness easy, and so be saved from the perilous perplexities of marking out their own way? So thought the sagacious Aristotle. To the crude early opinion of Socrates that virtue is knowledge, he opposed the ripened doctrine that it is practice and habit.

This, then, is the inexpugnable objection to the ethical instruction of children: the end which should be sought is performance, not knowledge, and we cannot by supplying the latter induce the former. But do not these considerations cut the ground from under practical teaching of every kind? Instruction is given in other subjects in the hope that it may finally issue in strengthened action, and I have acknowledged that as a fact this hope is repeatedly justified. Why may not a similar result appear in ethics? What puts a difference between that study and electricity, social science, or manual training? This: according as the work studied includes a creative ele-

ment and is intended to give expression to a personal life, consciousness becomes an increasingly dangerous dependence. Why are there no classes and text-books for the study of deportment? Is it because manners are unimportant? No, but because they make the man, and to be of any worth must be an expression of his very nature. Conscious study would tend to distort rather than to fashion them. Their practice cannot be learned in the same way as carpentry.

But an analogy more enlightening for showing the inaptitude of the child for direct study of the laws of conduct is found in the case of speech. Between speech and morals the analogies are subtle and wide. So minute are they that speech might almost be called a kind of vocal morality. Like morality, it is something possessed long before we are aware of it, and it becomes perfect or debased with our growth. We employ it to express ourselves and to come into ordered contact with our neighbor. By it we confer benefits, and by it receive benefits in turn. Rigid as are its laws, we still feel ourselves free in its use, though obliged to give to our spontaneous feel-

ings forms constructed by men of the past. Ease, accuracy, and scope are here confessedly of vast consequence. It has consequently been found a matter of extreme difficulty to bring a young person's attention helpfully to bear upon his speech. Indirect methods seem to be the only profitable ones. Philology, grammar, rhetoric, systematic study of the laws of language, are dangerous tools for a boy below his teens. The child who is to acquire excellent speech must be encouraged to keep attention away from the words he uses and to fix it upon that which he is to express. Abstract grammar will either confound the tongue which it should ease, or else it will seem to have no connection with living reality, but to be an ingenious contrivance invented by some Dry-as-dust for the torture of schoolboys.

And a similar pair of dangers await the young student of the laws of conduct. On the one hand, it is highly probable that he will not understand what his teacher is talking about. He may learn his lesson; he may answer questions correctly; but he will assume that these things have no-

thing to do with him. He becomes dulled to moral distinctions, and it is the teaching of ethics that dulls him. We see the disastrous process in full operation in a neighboring field. There are countries which have regular public instruction in religion. The argument runs that schools are established to teach what is of consequence to citizens, and religion is of more consequence than anything else. Therefore introduce it, is the conclusion. Therefore keep it out, is the sound conclusion. It lies too near the life to be announced in official propositions and still to retain a recognizable meaning. I have known a large number of German young men. I have yet to meet one whose religious nature has been deepened by his instruction in school. And the lack of influence is noticeable not merely in those who have failed in the study, but quite as much in those who have ranked highest. In neither case has the august discipline meant anything. The danger would be wider, the disaster from the benumbing influence more serious, if ethical instruction should be organized ; wider, because morality underlies religion, and insensitiveness to the moral claim is

more immediately and concretely destructive. Yet here, as in the case of religion, of manners, or of speech, the child will probably take to heart very little of what is said. At most he will assume that the text-book statement of the rules of righteousness represents the way in which the game of life is played by some people; but he will prefer to play it in his own way still. Young people are constructed with happy protective arrangements; they are enviably impervious. So in expounding moral principles in the schoolroom, I believe we shall touch the child in very few moral spots. Nevertheless, he becomes dulled and hardened if he listens long to sacred words untouched.

But the benumbing influence is not the gravest danger; analogies of speech suggest a graver still. If we try to teach speech too early and really succeed in fixing the child's attention upon his tongue, we enfeeble his power of utterance. Consciousness once awakened, the child is perpetually inquiring whether the word is the right word, and suspecting that it is not quite sufficiently right to be allowed free passage. Just so a momentous trouble appears when the moral con-

sciousness has been too early stirred. That self-questioning spirit springs up which impels its tortured possessor to be continually fingering his motives in unwholesome preoccupation with himself. Instead of entering heartily into outward interests, the watchful little moralist is "questioning about himself whether he has been as good as he should have been, and whether a better man would not have acted otherwise." No part of us is more susceptible of morbidness than the moral sense; none demoralizes more thoroughly when morbid. The trouble, too, affects chiefly those of finer fibre. The majority of healthy children, as has been said, harden themselves against theoretic talk, and it passes over them like the wind. Here and there a sensitive soul absorbs the poison and sets itself seriously to work installing duty as the mainspring of its life. We all know the unwholesome result: the person from whom spontaneity is gone, who criticises everything he does, who has lost his sense of proportion, who teases himself endlessly and teases his friends — so far as they remain his friends — about the right and wrong of each petty act. It is a disease, a moral

disease, and takes the place in the spiritual life of that which the doctors are fond of calling "nervous prostration" in the physical. Few countries have been so desolated by it as New England. It is our special scourge. Many here carry a conscience about with them which makes us say, "How much better off they would be with none!" I declare, at times when I see the ravages which conscientiousness works in our New England stock, I wish these New Englanders had never heard moral distinctions mentioned. Better their vices than their virtues. The wise teacher will extirpate the first sproutings of the weed; for a weed more difficult to extirpate when grown there is not. We run a serious risk of implanting it in our children when we undertake their class instruction in ethics.

Such, then, are some of the considerations which should give us pause when the public is clamoring at our schoolhouse doors and saying to us teachers, "We cannot bring up our children so as to make them righteous citizens. Undertake the work for us. You have done so much already that we turn to you again and entreat your help."

I think we must sadly reply, "There are limits to what we can do. If you respect us, you will not urge us to do the thing that is not ours. By pressing into certain regions we shall bring upon you more disaster than benefit."

Fully, however, as the dangers here pointed out may be acknowledged, much of a different sort remains also true. Have we not all received a large measure of moral culture at school? And are we quite content to say that the greatest of subjects is unteachable? I would not say this; on the contrary, I hold that no college is properly organized where the teaching of ethics does not occupy a position of honor. The college, not the school, is the place for the study. It would be absurd to maintain that all other subjects of study are nutritious to man except that of his own nature; but it is far from absurd to ask that a young man first possess a nature before he undertakes to analyze it. A study useless for developing initial power may still be highly profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. Youth should be spontaneous, instinctive, ebullient; reflection whispers to the

growing man. Many of the evils that I have thus far traced are brought about by projecting upon a young mind problems which it has not yet encountered in itself. Such problems abound in the later teens and in the twenties, and then is the time to set about their discussion.

But even in college I would have ethical study more guarded than the rest. Had I the power, I would never allow it to be required of all. It should be offered only as an elective and in the later years of the course. When I entered college I was put in my freshman year into a prescribed study of this sort. Happily I received no influence from it whatever. It passed over and left me untouched; and I think it had no more effect on the majority of my classmates. Possibly some of the more reflective took it to heart and were harmed; but, in general, it was a mere wasting of precious ointment which might have soothed our wounds if elected in the senior year. Of course great teachers defy all rules; and under a Hopkins, a Garman, or a Hyde, the distinctions of elective and prescribed become unimportant. Yet the principle is clear: wait till the young man is

confronted with the problems before you invite him to their solution. Has he grown up unquestioning? Has he accepted the moral code inherited from honored parents? Can he rest in wise habits? Then let him be thankful and go his way untaught. But has he, on the other hand, felt that the moral mechanism by which he was early guided does not fit all cases? Has he found one class of duties in conflict with another? Has he discovered that the moral standards obtaining in different sections of society, in different parts of the world, are irreconcilable? In short, is he puzzled and desirous of working his way through his puzzles, of facing them and tracking them to their beginnings? Then is he ripe for the study of ethics.

Yet when it is so undertaken, when those only are invited to partake of it who in their own hearts have heard its painful call, even then I would hedge it about with two conditions. First, it should be pursued as a science, critically, and the student should be informed at the outset that the aim of the course is knowledge, not the endeavor to make better men. And, secondly, I would insist that the

students themselves do the work; that they do not passively listen to opinions set forth by their instructor, but that they address themselves to research and learn to construct moral judgments which will bear critical inspection. Some teachers, no doubt, will think it wisest to accomplish these things by tracing the course of ethics in the past, treating it as a historical science. Others will prefer, by announcing their own beliefs, to stimulate their students to criticise those beliefs and to venture on their own little constructions. The method is unimportant; it is only of consequence that the students themselves do the ethicising, that they trace the logic of their own beliefs and do not rest in dogmatic statement. Yet such an undertaking may well sober a teacher. I never see my class in ethics come to their first lecture that I do not tremble and say to myself that I am set for the downfall of some of them. In every such studious company there must be unprepared persons whom the teacher will damage. He cannot help it. He must move calmly forward, confident in his subject, but knowing that because it is living it is dangerous.

MORAL INSTRUCTION IN THE SCHOOLS

II

MORAL INSTRUCTION IN THE SCHOOLS

THE preceding paper has discussed sufficiently the negative side of moral education. It has shown how children should not be approached. But few readers will be willing to leave the matter here. Are there no positive measures to be taken? Is there no room in our schools for any teaching of morality, or must the most important of subjects be altogether banished from their doors? There is much which might lead us to think so. If a teacher may not instruct his pupils in morality, what other concern with it he should have is not at once apparent. One may even suspect that attention to it will distract him from his proper work. Every human undertaking has some central aim and succeeds by loyalty to it. Each profession, for example, singles out one of our many needs and to this devotes itself whole-heartedly. Such

a restriction is wise. No profession could be strong which attempted to meet the requirements of man as a whole. The physician accordingly selects his little aim of extirpating suffering and disease. His studies, his occupation, his aptitudes, his hopes of gain, his dignity as a public character, all have reference to this. Whatever is incompatible with it, of however great worth in itself, is rightly ignored. To save the soul of a patient may be of larger consequence than to invigorate his body. But the faithful physician attends to spiritual matters only so far as he thinks them conducive to bodily health. Or again the painter, because he is setting ocular beauty before us, concerns himself with harmonies of color, balance of masses, rhythms of line, rather than with history, anecdote, or incitements to noble living. I once heard a painter say, "There is religion enough for me in seeing how half-a-dozen figures can be made to go together," and I honored him for the saying. So, too, I should hold that the proper aim of the merchant is money-making, and that only so much of charity or public usefulness can fairly be demanded of him as does not conflict with his

profits. It is true that there are large ways and petty ways of acquiring gain, and one's own advantage cannot for long be separated from that of others. Still, the merchant rightly desists from any course which he finds in the long run commercially unprofitable.

What, then, is the central aim of teaching? Confessedly it is the impartation of knowledge. Whatever furthers this should be eagerly pursued; and all that hinders it, rejected. When schoolmasters understand their business it will be useless for the public to call to them, "We want our children to be patriotic. Drop for a time your multiplication table while you rouse enthusiasm for the old flag." They would properly reply, "We are ready to teach American history. As a part of human knowledge, it belongs to our province. But though the politicians fail to stir patriotism, do not put their neglected work upon us. We have more than we can attend to already."

Now in my previous paper I showed how a theoretic knowledge of good conduct had better not be given to children. By exposition of holy laws they are not nourished, but enfeebled. What they need

is right habits, not an understanding of them: to become good persons rather than to acquire a critical acquaintance with goodness. What moral function then remains for the schools? To furnish a knowledge of morality has been proved dangerous. For teachers to turn away from imparting knowledge and devote their scanty time to fashioning character is to abandon work which they alone are fitted to perform. Yet to let them send forth boys and girls alert in mind and loose in character is something which no community will long endure.

Until one has clearly faced these alternative perplexities he is in no condition to advise about grafting morality into a school curriculum; for until then he will be pretty sure to be misled by the popular notion of morality as a thing apart, demanding separate study, a topic like geography or English literature. But the morality nutritious for school-children is nothing of this kind. No additional hour need be provided for its teaching. In teaching anything, we teach it. A false antithesis was therefore set up just now when we suggested that a teacher's business was to impart

knowledge rather than to fashion character. He cannot do the one without the other. Let him be altogether true to his scientific aims and refuse to accommodate them to anything else; he will be all the better teacher of morality. Carlyle tells of a carpenter who broke all the ten commandments with every stroke of his hammer. A scholar breaks or keeps them with every lesson learned. So conditioned on morality is the process of knowing, so inwrought is it in the very structure of the school, that a school might well be called an ethical instrument and its daily sessions hours for the manufacture of character. Only the species of character manufactured will largely depend on the teacher's acquaintance with the instrument he is using. To increase that acquaintance and give greater deftness in the use of so exquisite an instrument is the object of this paper. Once mastered, the tools of his own trade will be more prized by the earnest teacher than any additional handbook of ethics.

It will be easiest to point out the kind of moral instruction a school is fitted to give, if we distinguish with somewhat exaggerated sharpness

its several lines of activity. A school is primarily a place of learning; it is unavoidably a social unit, and it is incidentally a dependent fellowship. No one of these aspects is ever absent from it. Each affords its own opportunity for moral training. The combination of them gives a school its power. Yet each is so detachable that it may well become the subject of independent study.

I. A school is primarily a place of learning, and to this purpose all else in it is rightfully subordinated. But learning is itself an act, and one more dependent than most on moral guidance. It occurs, too, at a period of life whose chief business is the transformation of a thing of nature into a spiritual being. Several stages in this spiritual transformation through which the process of learning takes us I will point out.

A school generally gives a child his first acquaintance with an authoritatively organized world and reveals his dependence upon it. By nature, impulses and appetites rule him. A child is charmingly self-centred. The world and all its ordered goings he notices merely as ministering to his desires. Nothing but what he wishes, and

wishes just now, is important. He relates all this but little to the wishes of other people, to the inherent fixities of things, to his own future states, to whether one wish is compatible with another. His immediate mood is everything. Of any difference between what is whimsical or momentary and what is rational or permanent he is oblivious. To him dreams and fancies are as substantial as stars, hills, or moving creatures. He has, in short, no idea of law nor any standards of reality.

Now it is the first business of instruction to impart such ideas and standards; but no less is this a work of moralization. The two accordingly go on together. Whether we call the chaotic conditions of nature in which we begin life ignorance or deficient morality, it is equally the work of education to abolish them. Both education and morality set themselves to rationalize the moody, lawless, transient, isolated, self-assertive, and impatient aspects of things, introducing the wondering scholar to the inherent necessities which surround him. "Schoolmasters," says George Herbert, "deliver us to laws." And probably most of us make our earliest ac-

quaintance with these impalpable and controlling entities when we take our places in the school. There our primary lesson is submission. We are bidden to put away personal likings and see how in themselves things really are. Eight times nine does not permit itself to be seventy-three or sixty-four, but exactly and forever seventy-two. Cincinnati lies obstinately on the Ohio, not on the Mississippi, and it is nonsense to speak of Daniel Webster as a President of the United States. The agreement of verbs and nouns, the reactions of chemical elements were, it seems, settled some time before we appeared. They pay little attention to our humors. We must accept an already constituted world and adjust our little self to its august realities. Of course the process is not completed at school. Begun there, it continues throughout life; its extent, tenacity, and instantaneous application marking the degree which we reach in scientific and moral culture. Let a teacher attempt to lighten the task of himself or his pupil by accepting an inexact observation, a slipshod remembrance, a careless statement, or a distorted truth, and he will cor-

rupt the child's character no less than his intelligence. He confirms the child's habit of intruding himself into reality and of remaining listless when ordained facts are calling. Education may well be defined as the banishment of moods at the bidding of the permanently real.

But to acquire such obedient alertness persistence is necessary, and in gaining it a child wins a second victory over disorderly nature. By this he becomes acquainted not merely with an outer world, but with a still stranger object, himself. I have spoken already of the eagerness of young desires. They are blind and disruptive things. One of them pays small heed to another, but each blocks the other's way, preventing anything like a coherent and united life. A child is notoriously a creature of the moment, looking little before and after. He must be taught to do so before he can know anything or be anybody. A school matures him by connecting his doings of to-day with those of to-morrow. Here he begins to estimate the worth of the present by noticing what it contributes to an organic plan. Each hour of study brings precious discipline in pre-

ferring what is distantly important to what is momentarily agreeable. A personal being, in some degree emancipated from time, consequently emerges, and a selfhood appears, built up through enduring interests. The whole process is in the teacher's charge. It is his to enforce diligence and so to assist the vague little life to knit itself solidly together.

Nor should it be forgotten that to become each day the possessor of increasing stores of novel and interesting truths normally brings dignity and pleasure. This honorable delight reacts, too, on the process of learning, quickening its pace, sharpening its observation, and confirming its persistence. It is of no less importance for the character, to which it imparts ease, courage, beauty, and resourcefulness. But on the teacher it will depend whether such pleasure is found. A teacher who has entered deeply into his subject, and is not afraid of allowing enthusiasm to appear, will make the densest subject and the densest pupil glow; while a dull teacher can in a few minutes strip the most engrossing subject of interest and make the diligence exacted in its

pursuit deadening. It is dangerous to dissociate toil and delight. The school is the place to initiate their genial union. Whoever learns there to love knowledge, will be pretty secure of becoming an educated and useful man and of finding satisfaction in whatever employment may afterwards be his.

One more contribution to character which comes from the school as a place of learning I will mention: it should create a sense of freedom. Without this both learning and the learner are distorted. It is not enough that the child become submissive to an already constituted world, obedient to its authoritative organization; not enough that he find pleasure in it, or even discover himself emerging, as one day's diligence is bound up with that of another. All these influences may easily make him think of himself as a passive creature, and consequently leave him half formed. There is something more. Rightly does the Psalmist call the fear of the Lord the beginning of wisdom rather than its end; for that education is defective which fashions a docile and slavish learner. As the child introduces order into his

previously capricious acts, thoughts, and feelings, he should feel in himself a power of control unknown before, and be encouraged to find an honorable use for his very peculiarities. He should be brought to see that the world is unfinished and needs his joyful coöperation, that it has room for individual activity and admits rationally constructed purposes. From his earliest years a child should be encouraged to criticise, to have preferences, and to busy himself with imaginative constructions; for all this development of orderly freedom and of rejoicing in its exercise is building up at once both knowledge and character.

II. Yet a school becomes an ethical instrument not merely through being a place of learning, but because it is also a social unit. It is a coöperative group, or company of persons pledged every instant to consider one another, their common purpose being jarred by the obtrusion of any one's dissenting will. Accordingly much that is proper elsewhere becomes improper here. As soon as a child enters a schoolroom he is impressed by the unaccustomed silence. A happy idea springs in his mind and clamors for the same outgo it would

have at home, but it is restrained in deference to the assembled company. In crossing the room he is taught to tread lightly, though for himself a joyous dash might be agreeable; but might it not distract the attention of those who are studying? The school begins at nine o'clock and each recitation at its fixed hour, these times being no better than others except as facilitating common corporate action. To this each one's private ways become adjusted. The subordination of each to all is written large on every arrangement of school life; and it needs must be so if there is to be moral advance. For morality itself is nothing but the acceptance of such habits as express the helpful relations of society and the individual. Punctuality, order, quiet, are signs that the child's life is beginning to be socialized. A teacher who fails to impress their elementary righteousness on his pupils brutalizes every child in his charge.

Such relations between the social whole and the part assume a variety of forms, and the school is the best place for introducing a child to their niceties. Those other persons whom a school-boy is called on continually to regard may be either

his superiors, equals, or inferiors. To each we have specific duties, expressed in an appropriate type of manners. Our teachers are above us, — above us in age, experience, wisdom, and authority. To treat them as comrades is unseemly. Confession of their superiority colors all our approaches. They are to be listened to as others are not. Their will has the right of way. Our bearing toward them, however trustful or even affectionate, shows a respectfulness somewhat removed from familiarity. On the other hand, schoolmates are comrades, at least those of the same sex, class, strength, and intelligence. Among them we assert ourselves freely, yet with constant care to secure no less freedom for them, and we guard them against any damage or annoyance which our hasty assertiveness might cause. In case of clash between their interest and our own, ours is withdrawn. And then toward those who are below us, either in rank or powers, helpfulness springs forth. We are eager to bridge over the separating chasm and by our will to abolish hindering defects. These three types of personal adjustment — respect, courtesy, and helpfulness,

with their wide variety of combination — form the groundwork of all good manners. In their beginnings they need prompting and oversight from some one who is already mature. A school which neglects to cultivate them works almost irreparable injury to its pupils. For if these possibilities of refined human intercourse are not opened in the school years, it is with great difficulty they are arrived at afterwards.

The spiritualizing influence of the school as a social unit is, however, not confined to the classroom. It is quite as active on the playground. There a boy learns to play fair, accustoms himself to that greatest of social ties, *l'esprit du corps*. Throughout life a man needs continually to merge his own interests in those of a group. He must act as the father of a family, an operative in a factory, a voter of Boston, an American citizen, a member of an engine company, union, church, or business firm. His own small concerns are taken up into these larger ones, and devotion to them is not felt as self-sacrifice. A preparation for such moral ennoblement is laid in the sports of childhood. What does a member of the foot-

ball team care for battered shins or earth-scraped hands? His side has won, and his own gains and losses are forgotten. Soon his team goes forth against an outside team, and now the honor of the whole school is in his keeping. What pride is his! As he puts on his uniform, he strips off his isolated personality and stands forth as the trusted champion of an institution. Nor does this august supersession of the private consciousness by the public arise in connection with sports alone. As a member of the school, a boy acts differently from what he otherwise would. There is a standard of conduct recognized as suitable for a Washington School boy, and from it his own does not widely depart. For good or for ill each school has its ideals of "good form" which are compulsive over its members, and are handed on from class to class. To assist in moulding, refining, and maintaining these is the weightiest work of a schoolmaster. For these ideals have about them the sacredness of what is traditional, institutional, and are of an unseen, august, and penetrative power, comparable to nothing else in character-formation. To modify them ever

so slightly a teacher should be content to work for years.

III. A third aspect of the school I have called its character as a Dependent Fellowship, and I have said that this is merely incidental. A highly important incident it is, however, and one that never fails to recur. What I would indicate by the dark phrase is this: in every school an imperfect life is associated with one similar but more advanced, one from which it perpetually receives influences that are not official nor measurable in money payment. A teacher is hired primarily to teach, and with a view also to his ability to keep order throughout his little society and to make his authority respected there. But side by side with these public duties runs the expression of his personality. This is his own, something which he hides or discloses at his pleasure. To his pupils, however, he must always appear in the threefold character of teacher, master, and developed human being; while they correspondingly present themselves to him as pupils, members of the school, and elementary human beings. Of these pairs of relationships

two are contrasted and supplemental, — teacher and pupil, master and scholar, having nothing in common, each being precisely what the other is not. As human beings, however, pupil and teacher are akin and removed from one another merely by the degree of progression made by the elder along a common path. Here, then, the relation is one of fellowship, but a fellowship where the younger is largely dependent on the older for an understanding of what he should be. By example, friendship, and personal influence a teacher is certain to affect for good or ill every member of his school. In any account of the school as an ethical instrument this subtlest of its moral agencies deserves careful analysis.

There are different sorts of example. I may observe how the shopman does up a package, and do one so myself the next morning. A companion may have a special inflection of voice, which I may catch. I may be drawn to industry by seeing how steadily my classmate studies. I may adopt a phrase, a smile, or a polite gesture, which was originally my teacher's. All these are cases of direct imitation. Some one possesses a trait

or an act which is passed over entire to another person, by whom it is substituted for one of his own. Though the adoption of such alien ways is dangerous, society could hardly go on without it. It is its mode of transmitting what is supposed to be already tested and of lodging it in the lives of persons of less experience, with the least cost to the receivers. Most teachers will have habits which their pupils may advantageously copy. Yet supposing the imitated ways altogether good, which they seldom are, direct imitation is questionable as disregarding the particular character of him in whom the ways are found and in assuming that they will be equally appropriate if engrafted on anybody. But this is far from true, and consequently he who imitates much is, or soon will be, a weakling. On the whole, a teacher needs to guard his pupils against his imitable peculiarities. If sensible, he will snub whoever is disposed to repeat them.

Still, there is a noble sort of imitation, and that school is a poor place where it does not go on. Certain persons have a strange power of invigorating us by their presence. When with

them, we can do what seems impossible alone. They are our examples rather as wholes, and in their strength and spirit, than in their single traits or acts; and so whatever is most distinctive of ourselves becomes renewed through contact with them. It was said of the late Dr. Jowett that he sent out more pupils who were widely unlike himself than any Oxford teacher of his time. That is enviable praise; for the wholesomeness of example is tested by inquiring whether it develops differences or has only the power of duplicating the original. Every teacher knows how easy it is to send out cheap editions of himself, and in his weaker moments he inclines to issue them. But it is ignoble business. Our manners and tones and phrases and the ways we have of doing this and that are after all valuable only as expressions of ourselves. For anybody else they are rubbish. What we should like to impart is that earnestness, accuracy, unselfishness, candor, reverence for God's laws, and sturdiness through hardship, toward which we aspire, — matters in reality only half ours and which spring up with fresh and original beauty in every soul

where they once take root. The Dependent Fellowship of a school makes these larger, enkindling, and diversifying influences peculiarly possible. It should be a teacher's highest ambition to exercise them. And though we might naturally expect that such inspiring teachers would be rare, I seldom enter a school without finding indications of the presence of at least one of them.

But for those who would acquire this larger influence a strange caution is necessary: Examples do not work that are not real. We sometimes try to "set an example," that is, to put on a type of character for the benefit of a beholder; and are usually disappointed. Personal influence is not an affair of acting, but of being. Those about us are strangely affected by what we veritably are, only slightly by what we would have them see. If we are indisposed to study, yet, knowing that industry is good for our scholars, assume a bustling diligence, they are more likely to feel the real portion of the affair, our laziness, than the activity which was designed for their copying. Astonishingly shrewd are the young at scenting humbug and being unaffected by its pretensions.

There is consequently no method to be learned for gaining personal influence. Almost everything else requires plan and effort. This precious power needs little attention. It will not come in one way better than another. A fair measure of sympathetic tact is useful for starting it; but in the long run persons rude and suave, talkative and silent, handsome and ugly, stalwart and slight, possess it in about equal degree, the very characteristics which we should be disposed to count disadvantageous often seeming to confirm its hold. Since it generally comes about that our individual interests become in some measure those of our pupils too, the only safe rule for personal influence is to go heartily about our own affairs, with a friendly spirit, and let our usual nature have whatever effect it may.

Still, there is one important mode of preparation: seeing that personal influence springs from what we are, we can really be a good deal. In a former paper, on The Ideal Teacher, I pointed this out and insisted that to be of any use in the classroom we teachers must bring there an already accumulated wealth. I will not repeat what

I have said already, for a little reflection will convince any one that when he lacks personal influence he lacks much besides. A great example comes from a great nature, and we who live in fellowship with dependent and imitative youth should acquire natures large enough to serve both their needs and our own. Let teachers be big, bounteous, and unconventional, and they will have few backward pupils.

Personal influence is often assumed to be greater the closer the intimacy. I believe the contrary to be the case. Familiarity, says the shrewd proverb, breeds contempt. And certainly the young, who are little trained in estimating values, when brought into close association with their elders are apt to fix their attention on petty points and so to miss the larger lines of character. These they see best across an interval where, though visible only in outline, they are clear, unconfused with anything else, and so productive of their best effect. For the immature, distance is a considerable help in inducing enchantment, and nothing is so destructive of high influence as a slap-on-the-back acquaintance. One

who is to help us much must be above us. A teacher should carefully respect his own dignity and no less carefully that of his pupil. In our eagerness to help, we may easily cheapen a fine nature by intruding too frequently into its reserves ; and, on the other hand, I have observed that the boy who comes oftenest for advice is he who profits by it least. It is safest not to meddle much with the insides of our pupils. An occasional weighty word is more compulsive than frequent talk.

Within the limits, then, here marked out we who live in these Dependent Fellowships must submit to be admired. We must allow our pupils to idealize us and even offer ourselves for imitation. It is not pleasant. Usually nobody knows his weaknesses better than the one who is mistaken for an example. But what a helpful mistake! What ennobling influences come to school-boys when once they can think their teacher is the sort of person they would like to be ! Perhaps at the very moment that teacher is thinking they are the sort of person he would like to be. No matter. What they admire is worthy, even if not

embodied precisely where they imagine. In humility we accept their admiration, knowing that nothing else can so enlarge their lives. As I recall my college days, there rise before me two teachers. As I entered the lecture rooms of those two men, I said to myself, "Oh, if some day I could be like that!" And always afterwards as I went to those respective rooms, the impression of dignity deepened. I have forgotten the lessons I learned from those instructors. I never can discharge my debt to the instructors themselves.

Such are the moral resources of our schools. Without turning aside in the slightest from their proper aim of imparting knowledge, teachers are able — almost compelled — to supply their pupils with an intellectual, social, and personal righteousness. What more is wanted? When such opportunities for moral instruction are already within their grasp, is it worth while to incur the grave dangers of ethical instruction too? I think not, and I even fear that the establishment of courses in moral theory might weaken the sense of responsibility among the other teachers and lead them to attach less importance to the moraliza-

tion of their pupils by themselves. This is burdensome business, no doubt, but we must not shift it to a single pair of shoulders. Rather let us insist, when bad boys and girls continue in a school, that the blame belongs to the teachers as a whole, and not to some ethical coach. It is from the management and temper of a school that its formative influence proceeds. We cannot safely turn over anything so all-pervading to the instructors of a single department. That school where neatness, courtesy, simplicity, obtain; where enthusiasm goes with mental exactitude, thoroughness of work with interest, and absence of artificiality with refinement; where sneaks, liars, loafers, pretenders, rough persons are despised, while teachers who refuse to be mechanical hold sway — that school is engaged in moral training all day long.

Yet while I hold that the systematic study of ethics had on the whole better be left to the colleges, I confess that the line which I have attempted to draw between consciousness and unconsciousness, between the age which is best

directed by instinct and the age when the questioning faculties put forward their inexorable demands, is a wavering one and cannot be sharply drawn. By one child it is crossed at one period, by another at another. Seldom is the crossing noticed. Before we are aware we find ourselves in sorrow on the farther side. Happy the youth who during the transition time has a wise friend at hand to answer a question, to speak a steadying word, to open up the vista which at the moment needs to be cleared. Only one in close personal touch is serviceable here. But in defect of home guidance, to us teachers falls much of the charge of developing the youthful consciousness of moral matters naturally, smoothly, and without jar. This has always been a part of the teacher's office. So far as I can ascertain, schools of the olden time had in them a large amount of wholesome ethical training. Schools were unsystematic then; there lay no examination paper ahead of them; there was time for pause and talk. If a subject arose which the teacher deemed important for his pupils' personal lives, he could lead them on to question about it, so far as he believed discussion

useful. This sort of ethical training the hurry of our time has largely exterminated; and now that wholesome incidental instruction is gone, we demand in the modern way that a clear-cut department of ethics be introduced into the curriculum. But such things do not let themselves be treated in departmental fashion. The teacher must still work as a friend. He cannot be discharged from knowing when and how to stimulate a question, from discerning which boy or girl would be helped by consciousness and which would be harmed. In these high regions our pupils cannot be approached in classes. They require individual attention. And not because we are teachers merely, but because we and they are human beings, we must be ready with spiritual aid.

OUTLINE

I. ETHICAL INSTRUCTION IN THE SCHOOLS

II. MORAL INSTRUCTION IN THE SCHOOLS

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