

TRANSACTIONS

7481
2-2

OF THE

FIFTH ANNUAL MEETING

OF THE

WESTERN LITERARY INSTITUTE,

AND

COLLEGE OF PROFESSIONAL TEACHERS,

HELD IN CINCINNATI, OCTOBER, 1835.

Promote then, as an object of primary importance, institutions for the general diffusion of knowledge. In proportion as the structure of a government gives force to public opinion, it is essential that public opinion should be enlightened.

WASHINGTON'S FAREWELL ADDRESS.

CINCINNATI:

PUBLISHED BY THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

1836.

✓
HARVARD COLLEGE LIBRARY
GIFT OF THE
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

NOV 7 1923

HARVARD UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
MCNROE C. GUTMAN LIBRARY

L13

.W52

54w

1835

Entered according to an act of Congress, in the year 1836, by ALBERT PICKET,
Sen., in behalf of the Western Literary Institute, and College of Professional
Teachers, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of Ohio.

Printed by N. S. Johnson :
No. 133, Main street,
Cincinnati.

VI. DUTIES OF TEACHERS AND PARENTS.

LECTURE ON THE RELATIVE DUTIES OF TEACHERS AND PARENTS.

BY WM. H. MCGUFFY.

FELLOW-CITIZENS :—The time has gone by in which doubts were entertained by the intelligent, as to the necessity and practicability of *general* education.

Our public servants, and professional men, are educated ; and the *people* must speedily be educated, that they may, on the one hand, protect their own interests; and, on the other, prevent the suspicions and temptation to which popular ignorance must always expose the better informed portions of the community.

Our citizens, at large, are less informed on subjects connected with the medical profession, than, perhaps, any other; and, consequently, it is in that profession that their credulity is most extensively abused. But, in *all* the professions, the suspicions that haunt the public mind, and the credulity that tempts to public abuse, are alike the offspring of popular ignorance. Honest men, therefore, of all ranks, will, for their own sakes, desire and strive to promote the thorough education of the **WHOLE PEOPLE**, as the only means of allaying suspicions of fraud on the part of the public, and removing temptation from the path of those who serve that public.

The *practicability* of educating the whole community, seems to be less convincingly before the minds of those concerned than the necessity of such education. And yet, the proof of this proposition, is both more conclusive and more abundant. What *has* been done *can* be repeated; and in no country, under heaven, are there to be found such facilities for universal intelligence amongst the citizens, as in our own

avored land. Here, a competency can be acquired, in the lowest classes, by the well-directed labor of four or five days in each week; and thus, two-sevenths of their whole time may be appropriated to intellectual and moral improvement. That state of society must add largely to the effects of the curse pronounced upon the rebellion of our first parents, which requires the poor man to spend more time in earning his bread, than is fairly compatible with *piety* and *intelligence*. This enterprise, then, if earnestly undertaken, *must* be successful. There are in the community abundant resources, both physical and moral, for the education of the people—the *whole people*—to any extent that may be found desirable.

But this cannot be effected without effort, and united effort. There must be concert between the people and their legislators; between those who are already educated, and those who have yet to acquire their education; between the instructors of youth and the parents of the children.

The object of the present lecture is to point out some of the *respective and relative duties of teachers and parents*; in order that they may the more successfully co-operate in their mutual work of training, to intelligence and virtue, the future citizens of our happy republic.

1st. *There must be an increase of teachers.* Not more than thirty pupils ought ordinarily to be committed to the care of a single instructor, at any one time. This ratio must, when all our youth shall be in the schools, augment the number of teachers beyond that of any other profession, or even mechanical employment, in the whole-land.

It is the duty, therefore, of our young men, of liberal education, to fill up the ranks of this most *respectable* (and, we trust, soon to be *respected*) of all professions, the *profession of teaching*. It is the duty of those already engaged in this profession, resolutely to decline all offers of patronage that would involve the necessity of dividing their attention between a greater number of pupils than they can thoroughly instruct. And, as interest and duty are, in the moral government of God, inseparably connected, those who engage in the business of instruction, with a capable facility, cannot fail of employment, and a competent support.

The other professions are full. We have doctors enough; we have lawyers enough; we have politicians more than enough; and if we have not preachers enough, we have certainly more than are *wanted*, or *well paid*! The last fact is evidence of the first. But in the business of instruction, where is the *professional* teacher, much less an *adequate supply* of *professional* teachers, to be found? This field of enterprise, if not new, is certainly almost unoccupied. No where else can talents, and learning, and worth find such certain and profitable investment.

But if it were even not so, still it would be the duty of teachers to persevere; and of those who are competent to teach, to commence and persevere, until the ranks should be filled up, and the public compelled, by the force of truth and experiment, to award to the faithful and competent instructor of youth, the honor and maintenance which are his due. The work *must* be done. The existence of our institutions depends upon it. The people have been complaining (and they have had cause to complain) that teachers were not worthy of their patronage; and the teachers have, in turn, complained that their compensation was not equal to their toil; and these complaints have been but too lamentably just. But, fellow-teachers, crimination and recrimination will not reform the abuse. Grant that our compensation has not been equal to our pains, is there any better way to liberalize our patrons than by doing our work faithfully, and on more patriotic principles? But, fellow-teachers, we are not to depend upon the mere fee for tuition as even our *pecuniary* reward. Our profession has a rare felicity in this respect—that while others find employment from the miseries and vices of mankind, our gain, both in the extent and profit of the employment which we receive, will be in proportion to our success in diffusing through the community a love of learning and an adherence to sound morals and true religion. The more intelligence is diffused through the community, the more will the desire to improve be increased. And in proportion as the business of instruction is understood, will impossibilities cease to be expected of the instructor. Besides, the effect of correct knowledge, in promoting the general prosperity of

society, and in enhancing the value of property already acquired, must secure for the teacher, as a member of the community, an adequate, though sometimes protracted reward for his labor and his time. It is *knowledge* that prompts to enterprise and devises plans for the general good. It is knowledge that renders available facilities for the accumulation of property, and the suppression of expensive crime.

It is knowledge, and morality, the offspring of knowledge, that alone can give general prosperity to society, and thus benefit all, and, consequently, the school-master; whose business it is to promote both knowledge and morality, in his official capacity. It is our duty, then, fellow-teachers, and we rejoice to add, our *privilege*, to labor assiduously in our vocation—a vocation which, though it might receive no *direct* reward, must compensate us, by the general prosperity which it cannot but promote, and with the least possible tendency to selfishness, because it is in common with *all* our fellow-citizens.

2d. In the former topic we deduced our interest from our duty; in this let us learn our duty, in the light of our interest. We may know what we ought to do, when we have learned what is rightly expected of us.

The faithful and competent teacher never fails to secure the confidence, respect, and even affection of his pupils. He is as he ought to be, esteemed "in place of a parent." He is thought to be infallible. He *ought* therefore to be correct. He is esteemed as possessing the whole cyclopaedia of knowledge. He ought, therefore, to be a man of extensive acquaintance with the principles of science. He is thought by the confiding pupil, to be incapable of any measure, or even intention, at variance with honest views of promoting the best interests of those entrusted to his care. And he ought, accordingly, to enlist all his energies in promoting the solid improvement and moral growth, of every mind submitted to his influence.

Nor does his influence stop here. We go out into the world, and retain our schoolhouse impressions of our former instructor. No matter what may be our mental superiority,

or subsequent acquisition ; we still think of our former school-master, as the same great man, which relatively to ourselves, he *was* in the period of our novitiate. And from this, fellow-teachers, our duty is clear. We *ought*, as far as possible, to continue through the whole period of our lives, as far in advance of those who were once our pupils, as we were found to be upon their introduction to us. The same *proportion* cannot be preserved—but the same *distance* in advance may. I am not *twice* as old as you, who are more than half my age—but I shall always continue *as many years* older than you, as I was at first. The more we know, the more rapidly can we acquire. Why then is our improvement less in riper years than it was in youth ? Obviously, because our industry has declined ; or our attention to the business of our profession has become relaxed. The experience of *individuals* alone can increase the knowledge of mankind. He therefore, who is faithful to himself, will while he contributes to the general improvement of the species, by his own accurate observation, be able, by the same means, to avail himself of all the advantage of the general stock of information to which he is a contributor.

Here are two men, equally ardent in their pursuit of useful discoveries. The one has knowledge enough to fit him to become the instructor of the other ; and they are about equal in strength and capacity of mind. Which do you suppose, will most likely succeed in making discoveries ? The one undoubtedly, (other things being equal,) who has the most knowledge. If we were unacquainted with their relative acquisitions we should feel safe to infer, as a general result, that he who succeeded best, must necessarily know most. "Knowledge is power." And in proportion to the efficiency so will be the effect, wherever that power is applied. Why then should *old men* fall behind the age in which they live ? And of all old men, aged teachers are most inexcusable for this, which so frequently happens.

The expectation, then that teachers will continue to improve, is a rational one, nay, almost instinctively rational ; and we are bound, therefore, to versify it, by our industry. We, fellow-teachers, must mould the opinion of society, especially on a

subjects connected with education, I say *must* because, from the nature of the case we cannot avoid it, if we would. The future opinions, plans, and enterprises of our pupils, on these subjects, will be not only tinged, but characterized, if not created by our influence upon their forming minds. All that they shall hereafter think, will in great measure, be the *results* of what we have previously thought, and inculcated. With us rest the tremendous responsibility of laying the *foundation* of a nation's literature; and of saying what shall be its future character, for morality and religion.

The foundation *can* be laid but *ONCE*. The character of the superstructure, does not depend so much upon those who shall complete the edifice, as upon us, who are called to lay the corner stone. Let us then, divest ourselves of all selfish views; of every narrow prejudice; of every local preference; and of the whole class of temporary expedients, and come up to the work with a zeal, a devotedness, and perseverance worthy of so good a cause. Let us remember too, that when those who are now our pupils, shall have become the legislators and governors of the republic; when they shall have devised means, raised funds, organised colleges, and founded universities, and are looking out for those, to whose care these institutions shall be entrusted, that their attention will most likely, be directed to *us*, their former instructors. This will be both natural and just. All these their doings will, we have said, take their character from our former instructions. Who then, so suitable to carry into effect those principles and plans, as those with whom they have virtually originated? But in order to this,—we must never sleep at our post—we must continue to improve, we must add the experience of yesterday to that of to-day, and the experience of both to the business of to-morrow.

We must accumulate the experience of the whole profession, in the person of each individual, and personally add to the stock from which we so largely borrow. We must study the human mind; and watch it, in all its varieties of development and growth. We must become *scientific* and not *empirical* teachers, who shall know how to give permanent direction—to the public mind; and not content ourselves with that evanescent or erroneous impression, which disap-

pears of itself, or requires to be effaced, to make room for that which shall be both more correct and more enduring.

If we become dilatory, and cease to improve, we shall be guilty of alternately defeating those very plans, which through our earlier pupils, we have ourselves matured. For, that we shall not be permitted (or be inclined) to retire, is demonstrated by facts—most of our Presidents of colleges have been called to these present places, of honor and trust, by their former pupils—many of the professors, in our literary institutions, have been selected, by intelligent men of other professions, from among those to whom they recited in the *log school-house*; or, the but little more pretending academy. And it will, because it *must* continue to be so. Illy qualified for promotion, as most of our profession may be found to be—still, our experience, in despite of our indolence, gives us a decided advantage over gentlemen of any other profession, in the management of literary institutions. Few instances are on record, of gentlemen taken from the bar, or the pulpit, or the profession of medicine, that have succeeded as the *presidents* of colleges, or universities. And fewer still, are the recorded instances of TEACHING PROFESSORS (for any one may *compile* and *read lectures*;) who have not found their way to the professor's chair through all the grades of elementary instruction, up from the "common school." Let us take special care then, to acquire the skill which shall be requisite to cultivate, in its approaching maturity, that tree of science, which we ourselves are planting; and which if left by us, *must* be abandoned to still less skilful hands.

3. In the preceding remarks, we have noticed duties that are less relative, than those which remain to be mentioned. But here, as before, we may discover our duty, fellow-teachers, from the trust reposed in us. Parents commit to us their richest treasures, their dearest hopes. In this they are too exclusive; but their fault cannot lessen our responsibility. It rather increases it. We have the formation of *character* committed to us. The intellectual habits of our pupils will be very much as we form them. Their modes of thought—their principles of taste—their habitude of feeling, will all take their complexion, if not their character, from our

methods of training the mind. Who then can enter the classroom without trembling? Where is the spirit stout enough to try *experiments* upon an immortal mind? No man is fit to teach who does not understand human nature. Nor will an empirical knowledge of the mind suffice. Principles and experiment must go together. Theory, without practice, will be mischievous; and practice without theory must, of course, be at random.

We owe it, then, to our pupils, and to their parents, thoroughly to understand what we profess to teach. For who can communicate intelligibly to another, that which he himself does not clearly comprehend? That man is a swindler of the worst description, who "procures, upon false pretences," the *intellectual* wealth of the community, and submits to, he cares not what, venturous process, for his own paltry and sordid gain. The fraudulent merchant destroys but the fortunes of those whom he plunders. But the incompetent teacher ruins the immortal mind, which is of more value than all temporal riches.

Nor is it enough *once* to have understood what we profess to teach. We must constantly review our studies. This is necessary in order to promptness of explanation; without which, much time must be lost to our pupils, and sluggish habits of mental action, unavoidably induced upon both us and them. We should be master of our subject—familiar with its details—clear in our explanations—rapid in our mental movements—glowing in our conceptions of truth—impassioned in our admiration of its beauty—and incessant in our endeavors to produce the same results on the minds of our pupils.

But the most difficult part of a teacher's duty, arises from the great variety of intellectual and moral character, found amongst his numerous pupils. No two minds are alike, in all their powers and susceptibilities. Every mind, therefore, requires a mode of treatment, somewhat different from that which is suitable for any other mind; and here, both the skill and the honesty of the teacher are put to the test. Every new pupil is, not only a new *lesson*, but a new *book*, which the teacher *must* study! And a book too, in which new pages are continually unfolding, which require a new analysis,

and frequently compelling a change of estimate, and consequently a change of procedure, in regard to the whole matter. In such cases, fellow-teachers, it is feared, that ability sometimes, and industry much more frequently, may fail. Let us be on our guard here. Let no temptation, of a higher fee, induce us to advance a pupil to higher studies, for which he is not prepared. Let not our indolence prevail with us, to class others with those who are obviously their inferiors in either talents or acquirements, much less in both, that we may thus lighten our own labors, at the expense of their improvement and "mental training." Let not our misjudging desire for popularity or patronage, ever suggest the thought of lowering the standard of education, in our public institutions. Such conduct is not only dishonest, in public teachers, but clearly impolitic. A "*short course*" can be a recommendation only to short-sighted judges, whether pupils or parents. Those are certainly enemies to the dearest interests of their country, whether intentionally or not, who erect depositories for intellectual *chaff*; scrape together, that which has not substance enough to abide the siftings and winnowings of a thorough education, nor weight enough to find its proper level when separated from the purer mass; manufacture it by some new but patent process, which requires but little time, and less labor, though frequently at great expense to the owners; and then throw it into the market, bearing falsely, the brand of a genuine article, to the defrauding of an unsuspecting public, and the ultimate disparagement of all sound education. Nor can any censure, too severe, be passed upon that instructor, who can, for the sake of popularity, or any such motive, lower the standard, or relax the discipline of a co-ordinate department in a college, or university; or of either a co-ordinate, or subordinate school, or department in a school, connected with our general system of education.

Let us then be honest with ourselves; honest with our pupils; honest with their parents; and honest with the public. Let us not drive a pupil too fast, and thus destroy the vigor and energy of his mental action. Let us not check the natural activity of his thought; and thus induce a habit of mental *moping*, alike unfriendly to accuracy and despatch,

whether in acquisition or execution. Let us not flatter our patrons, that their children are capable of professions, for which nature never intended them. Let us be careful never to inculcate any *doubtful* principle of morality or religion; or to recommend, by precept or example, any wrong, or even equivocal sentiment or feeling.

We may, nay we must, have our own speculative opinions—hypotheses in morals, which we have not yet been able either to verify or disprove by inductive experience. But, in this state, fellow-teachers, let them never once be named in our schools: nor let them begin to influence our conduct as practical teachers. The intellectual and moral character of our pupils is too valuable, to be made the subject of rash and hazardous experiment.

The christian religion, is the religion of our country. From it are derived our prevalent notions of the character of God, the great moral governor of the universe. On its doctrines are founded the peculiarities of our free institutions. From its sanctions are derived the obligations to veracity imposed in the administration of justice. In its revelations are found the only certain grounds of hope in reference to that, else unknown future, which lies beyond the horizon of time. It alone places a guard over the conscience, which never slumbers, and whose eye cannot be evaded by any address of the delinquent. Its maxims, its precepts, its sentiments, and even its very spirit, have become so incorporated with the mind and soul of civilization, and all refinement, that it cannot be eradicated, or even opposed, without imminent hazard of all that is beautiful, lovely, and valuable in the arts, in science, and in society.

Let us then, fellow-teachers, avoid, on the one hand, the inculcation of all sectarian peculiarities in religion: and on the other, let us beware of incurring the charge, (which will not fail to be made, and justly made,) of being enemies to our country's quiet, by teaching to our pupils the crude notions, and revolutionary principles of modern infidelity. It is, at best, but an unsustained *hypothesis*.

4. The duties that remain to be noticed, in the fourth place, as incumbent on teachers, in relation to the parents of

those who are their pupils, are, if possible, more important than any that have yet been noticed. Teachers ought to know best *how* to do that which is required of them—but parents are, or ought to be, the better judges, as to *what is to be done*. We, fellow-teachers, are the servants of the public. We have a deep interest, as has been shewn, in the results of our own labors in their effects upon public prosperity and national character. But, much as we love, and ought to love those committed to our care, they are but our pupils, not our children. This last relation is one which can be constituted only by the author of our being. All attempts, artificially to form it, must end in comparative defeat. None but the *natural* parent, can feel that natural affection, which is adequate to the duties of *properly educating* an immortal mind.

Our duties, then, paradoxical as it may seem, are only subordinate in that very business which we pursue as a profession. The teacher, I repeat, should know better than any other man, how to produce a given result in mental training; but the parent, who is the natural guardian, or in want of parents, the authorised adviser, alone has a right to say what that result, which is attempted, shall be.

We may, and ought to advise with our friends, as to the best methods of accomplishing their wishes, in the education of their children. But there our jurisdiction ends. We have, as teachers, no right to dictate; and we ought to use the most constant caution and vigilance, not to impair that sacred attachment to the persons, and respect for the character of parents, and guardians, which, to the credit of human nature, generally does, as they always ought, characterize the unsophisticated mind of youth.

Let us then pursue such a course as shall be most likely to interest parents in the progress, as well as the results of our labors. Let us encourage them to visit our schools; to take part in the examinations of *our* scholars, but *their own* children. Let us refuse those, whose parents will not co-operate with us, or who decline giving a specific view of what they wish us to accomplish, in behalf of their children. Let us, like the mechanic, insist upon definite instructions, as to what is to be done; and then, like him, let us throw ourselves upon

our skill, and the intelligence of our patrons, for our character, and our reward.

The second general division of our subject, is the duties incumbent on *parents*, in the business of education.

And here, as in the first division of this discourse, I have the pleasure to rank with those whom I address. I have long been a teacher; and expect to remain in the profession for life. But I am also a parent, who has children to educate, and may therefore be supposed to feel, in some degree at least, the importance of those duties which I venture to urge upon my fellow-citizens.

As, in the preceding remarks, the duties of teachers have been shown to be subordinate to those of parents; so, in what is to follow, I wish the paramount importance of the parent's interests, and the parent's duties to be kept distinctly before us. We who are parents are the employers—teachers our assistants, in the all responsible business of training up the future governors of this republic, who are to give character to the world, and to form characters for eternity.

1. In the first place, we must provide suitable accommodations for our schools. Children cannot learn when uncomfortable. And they cannot be comfortable, either in cold weather, or in hot, unless the school-house, or recitation room, be such as can be both warmed and ventilated, as occasion may require. How much time, and money, and that which is more valuable than both time and money, I mean mind, is wasted; simply for the want of suitable buildings for schools? Nor is mere convenience, of itself, sufficient. Children are creatures of association and habit; and much depends upon the cheerfulness and taste of that which is connected with their early mental efforts, as to whether they shall become attached to study, and take a delight in thought; or shall contract a disgust for every thing like literature and science. Time was, when the log school-house, with gable-end chimney, clap-board door, and long, narrow windows, papered and greased, was all that could be looked for, in a country that was still a wilderness. But that time is now past. And yet, even these *cabin colleges* were often more

comfortable, and better conducted, than some of our public schools, at the present day. It must make the heart of philanthropy bleed, to see the youth of our country so frequently collected, (when in school at all,) in uncomfortable, and even filthy hovels, in which the farmers of the neighborhood would hardly consent to house their sheep; surrounded by every thing calculated to disgust them with learning, and to make them loathe even the sight of a slate or a book. But on the other hand, in contact, as if by design, with whatever can minister to grossness of sentiment, confusion of thought, and ferocity of character. And all this, for want of such accommodations, as could be procured for a less sum than one half of that which those most intimately concerned are known to expend upon that which is worse than useless. I make these remarks with the greater freedom, because they are generally known to be true—and because, from the enterprise of this city (Cincinnati) they cannot be construed as conveying any reproof to those who constitute the present audience. And yet, the newly painted spires of your public school-houses, and other literary edifices, seem to imply, fellow-citizens, that it is but recently, since the spirit of improvement commenced its work, even amongst *you*. But the extent of that work, in so short a time, is the more honorable to the enterprise that has accomplished it.

2. The next duty devolving upon parents, in relation to teachers, is to furnish them with suitable tools, with which to work. They must, we have seen, have comfortable shops—a school-house is the teacher's shop—but this will not avail, unless those shops be furnished. We must furnish or compensate the teachers for furnishing *uniform sets* of suitable class books. No teacher can instruct successfully when the variety of books is nearly equal to the whole number of scholars. Every thing that saves time to the teacher, must benefit the school. And nothing is more desirable to a conscientious instructor, than to be able to devote a large portion of his time to every individual under his care. But this cannot be done without careful classification, which classification is impossible without a uniformity of class books. As we value the improvement of our children, then we ought

not only to permit, but to encourage the instructors whom we employ, to introduce as rigid a system of classification, and as great a uniformity of books, into the schools, as possible. But still more than books, and classifying is needed to furnish a school-room. Our teachers must have maps and globes, and a variety of apparatus, suitable to illustrate these branches of knowledge, which we expect our children to learn. But the compensation which we ordinarily allow them, is not sufficient to warrant, or enable them to procure these articles, at their own cost. We must furnish them; and in doing so, we shall be the gainers. Our children will learn more rapidly; understand more clearly what they do learn; and retain with more permanency, and greater accuracy, the principles of those practical sciences, which even a school apparatus is sufficient to illustrate.

3. But, to keep up the figure of a shop—it is not enough that our teachers have tools—they must also have stock, or the raw material upon which these tools are to be employed, and their skill expended. This material, parents are to furnish; and it is of vast importance, to success in the result, that it be of the right kind. Children receive their characters from the preponderant impressions to which they are habitually exposed. Thus their characters will be formed within the domestic circle. Teachers can do but little to alter the tendencies of that almost uninterrupted, influence exerted upon young minds by the example of parents, domestics, and friends. Nay, it has before been shown, that it was not the province of the teacher, to oppose, what must be presumed to be the deliberate arrangement of the family circle, in relation to children. Teachers must not only take children as they are; but must permit them to remain as they were, in the respects just noticed. For where is the parent, that will patiently permit any teacher to obliterate those impressions; or change those characteristics; or to interfere with the formation of those habits, in his children, which he has been so solicitous to secure? For I cannot, I will not suppose; that there is a single parent who hears me, that is so ignorant of the facts, or so regardless of the consequences just stated, as not to give all possible attention to the arrange-

ment of every part of his domestic relations, in reference to its influence upon the education, and consequently upon the character of the children belonging to the family.

We, then, who are parents, must from the constitution of society, form and sustain, the character, intellectual and moral, of those who reside under our roof. The teacher cannot do it without our aid; nor ought he to be permitted to do it without our co-operation. We must lay the foundation; he may help us to build. We must furnish the materials; he may fit and adjust them; but only under our direction and supervision. The teacher may, and will exert an incalculable influence upon the minds of his pupils; and through them on society. But parents are responsible for a great part even of that—because it will be modified by their superior, and antecedent influence. The result will be different, and something more than would follow from parental education alone—or else the employment of teachers would be useless. But it never can be much different, in kind or degree, from the general character of that influence, which is exerted by the specific circumstances of the domestic fire-side.

What then is our duty in this business? We shall best answer the question, by ascertaining what are the chief hindrances to success in our own attempts to communicate information to the infant mind. We will not stop to enumerate, much less to classify these hindrances here. We shall take for granted, that they are familiar, and distinctly recognized by all, as they must be, by every parent who has done his duty in the instruction of his family. These we must labor to remove, as much as possible, out of the way of the teacher. We must, as far as practicable, so arrange matters at *home*, that our children may come into the hand of the school-master, docile, ingenuous, affectionate, intelligent, honorable, magnanimous, rational, conscientious, and pious children. These are the fundamental elements of a right character; and *not one* of them can be dispensed with, in the very commencement of a school education. Or if there *is one*, which *one* will any father, or mother, in this audience designate to be excluded? Or which one would any parent

be willing, were it possible, should spring up in the mind of the child, under the fostering care of any hand but his own? Where is the mother that would not resent the imputation, that her child had grown old enough to attend school, without her having cherished or implanted in its opening mind, one and every one, of the principles above enumerated? I know it was once objected, that *piety* was not compatible with the infant mind. But the author of the only true religion, ever professed by men, was of a different opinion. He recognized in the minds of "little children" something so *like* to piety, in the adult mind, that he made the former a *test* of the genuineness of the latter. "Except ye be converted, and become as *little children*, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Piety is right sentiments towards supreme excellence. And would not the parent who should discourage *that*—run an awful risk, of obliterating *all* right sentiments in relation to *every species* of moral excellence? How could he after this, hope to maintain his authority, as a father? Or command the respect of his child?

But it may be said—that these are the traits of an educated mind—and instruction has become useless where these principles exist. It is admitted that education, neither purchased nor domestic, can *implant* such principles—*piety* for example. But some of the above traits are *habits*—and all require to be cherished at first by a *parent's hand*. And if they are not, it will be little less than miraculous should they survive the rude culture and the chilling atmosphere of public instruction, in its best forms. They can be cherished at home. They are successfully cherished in many families. But we might challenge the world, to produce, even a few instances, where they have been successfully cultivated, in any other field.

Let me not be misunderstood. I do not say that *any principle* can be implanted by education. Piety is the result of divine agency; but may be cherished by human means. All I contend for here, is, that the fundamental elements of character cannot be so well, if at all, developed any where else, as in the family; nor by any other hand, so appropriately as by that of a parent. Infant piety, youthful ingenuousness,

and juvenile honor, are of too delicate a texture, to bear an early transplanting into our public schools—even those which are under the best possible regulations.

Let us then, who are parents, prepare our children for the school, by training them to *think* by means of *rational conversation*; by cherishing honesty of character, through a proper treatment of their natural ingenuousness: by cultivating in them a respect for all that is valuable, and praiseworthy in human character around them; by teaching them a *rational* subordination to just authority, as connected with intelligence superior to their own, and an undoubted intention to promote their interest; by encouraging them to examine into the grounds of even authoritative injunctions, not that they may find reasons to disobey, but that they *may obey more intelligently*; by showing, what we must be careful honestly to feel, a uniform respect for those whom we employ, to assist us in the business of educating those minds, which God has entrusted to our care—and thus exciting in their minds that respect and confidence towards their instructors, which is ever found indispensable in the business of instruction. How inconsistently some parents are found to act in this matter! It is inconsistent to employ as an instructor a person whom we cannot respect; and even if this should happen, through mistake, it is highly injudicious to manifest disrespect towards their teacher, in the presence of our children, until we are fully prepared to remove them from his care. Parents are commendably careful, not to marry their daughters to unworthy men. But why should we not be equally careful, not to commit either our sons, or our daughters, to the care of disreputable teachers? Will it be said that the former connection is for life; the latter but temporary? I reply, the influence of the former is upon *happiness* only—that of the latter upon *character* first, and subsequently upon happiness.

We owe it as a duty, to the whole profession of teachers, to discourage every thing in them that is wrong, by resolutely refusing to employ, at any price, those who are not of reputable character; and to encourage whatever is commendable by showing *equal respect* for virtue and excellence in that profession, as to that in any other. We owe it, moreover,

to teachers, and to the public, not to send to an institution of learning, a young man of insubordinate temper, or bad moral character. How often are both teachers, and students in our public seminaries, most grossly imposed upon, by the stealthy introduction of such young men, as never ought to have been admitted into any public institution, unless perhaps it were a penitentiary. Schools and colleges are not houses of correction. They were intended to *educate*; not to *reform* young men. But these are our own sons, and we are anxious to reclaim them. Very well. And so are all our friends, and the public. But this gives us no right to jeopard the morals of others, from the very slight prospect of good to our own unfortunate children. The risk of increasing, or of at least spreading the moral contagion, is much too great to warrant any judicious, much less conscientious man, so to offend against the morals of his country, as to cast poison into the fountains of science. The whole community would unite in reprobating the man who should introduce the *cholera* into an institution of learning, induced by the hope of recovering the patient infected, even though that patient were an only son. But to introduce a *moral pestilence* is still worse than this.

4. The last class of duties, devolving on parents in relation to teachers must be briefly discussed, for the present. It has been frequently hinted, in the progress of the lecture, that the business' of instruction was a joint concern, of the teacher and the parent. The part which the parent must take in it, throughout, comes now to be noticed, in its most important aspect. And that is, fellow-citizens, we must *ourselves* be the prominent and persevering teachers of our children, during the whole period, in which their characters are forming. We must subordinate every other concern to that. We must not leave it to hired help. We must not permit either business or pleasure, or even other duties, (none can be paramount,) to interfere with this class of obligations. We must not allow any man to dictate to us in the course which we pursue; nor must we ever lose sight of the actual engagements which employ our children from day to day.

We must here, as in other business, *superintend* at least, the whole concern, or it will not succeed. Let us decide what our children are to learn—procure for them suitable accommodations, books and apparatus—employ, for their benefit, the ablest instructors—and then keep our eye constantly upon them, their progress, and their instruction—encourage their despondency—repress their waywardness—show an interest in their studies, or we may be assured they will not. In a word, let us post up, *every day*, the whole concern, that we may have it under our eye, and let all concerned know that it is so.

Is it objected, that we have not time, thus to attend to the education of our children, in person. The answer is, we have as much time to spare from business, as our children have from amusement, and healthful exercise. But if time be wanting, then let us employ assistants, in our other avocations. Why should ladies fear to trust the management of household affairs to the exclusive care of servants, while they make no scruple of abandoning the education of their daughters, to those who are not, or are not known to be, any better qualified for their task, than servants are for theirs? Why should fathers consider it indispensable to superintend, in person, the concerns of their farms or their shops, or their merchandise; while they wholly neglect the proceedings of the school, to which are sent those sons for whom they are thus laboring? If we want leisure, let us employ more help, in every department of our business; but let us not be seduced, nor withheld by any engagements, so as not carefully to accompany our children, on the thorny path of elementary acquisition.

But we are ourselves ignorant of many things which we wish our children to learn; and in these we may be excused from accompanying them. If they are valuable acquisitions, and useful in life, (and children should not be doomed to study any thing of a different character,) our ignorance furnishes an additional motive why we should accompany our children in these very studies. We can hardly claim respect for our opinions from those who are confessedly wiser than ourselves. We ought, therefore, in defence of our authority, to keep pace with the improvements in school education. Besides,

we can hardly hope that our children will be much interested in those studies, which they are aware we are ignorant of, unless we show sufficient interest to be willing yet to attend to them. If, when they come to us with a difficulty, which they have met with in their lesson, we put them off, with a declaration that either we do not understand, or do not care about what they are studying, can we be surprised, or blame them if they show but little farther concern in the matter? But even if it should prove impracticable (which I believe it will do only through indolence) to learn what our children are learning, though we may not have acquired it before, still we can show an interest in their studies like that of the heathen mother, who, though she could not read, yet required her son to read to her his daily lesson at the school, and judged of his proficiency, as she could, by general appearances, so that she correctly applauded his industry and rebuked his indolence, as they respectively occurred. Your speaker has seen the grandfather of eighty years, induced to look into a geography, in order to correct his little grandson, that glaring heresy of modern times, *that the earth turns round on its axis*, and after pronouncing the assertions of the little philosopher "*nonsense*"—"silly nonsense," became interested in the child's artless defence of his book, and finally to take lessons from his pupil, and become a companion of his studies for months together. The results were valuable. They showed that an aged man, in the midst of business engagements, could learn a new science; and that the effects of such a companionship were most salutary upon the mind of the child. That child was my pupil, and far surpassed his classmates, from the time he took his grandfather into partnership in his studies.

Every intelligent teacher will expect success, just in proportion as he can induce parents to take an interest in the business which he conducts, but which they must superintend. Let parents then be the instructors of their own children—employing all the assistance they may need or desire; but never *resigning* the business into the hands of another.

It must be obvious, from the foregoing remarks, that children and youth ought to be kept under the parental roof,

during the period of their elementary education; and the experience of public teachers abundantly confirms the remark. A very large proportion of those who leave their parental home, before their characters are pretty well confirmed, are more or less injured, and many of them ruined, by their residence at even our most respectable public schools.

How can it be otherwise? Who is to watch over the daily conduct of the stranger student? His instructors cannot do it; and if they are honest men they will not engage to do that which they know is, from the nature of the case, impracticable. The young man is, in a great degree, cut off from the restraints of society, the advice of friends, and the protection of parents. He is exposed to the excitement of a hundred companions, who, like himself, are deprived of the ordinary amusements found in social life, and left to expend that buoyancy of spirit, which even the severest study cannot always suppress, in boisterous mirth, or acts of mischief.

His steps are watched by the unprincipled and designing, who take advantage of the excellencies of his generous nature, to lead him into vice, for their own sordid gain. And often, alas too often, all that remains, after the period of education has elapsed, is the wreck of what was once a noble spirit, but now fallen.

How poor a compensation is a little *knowledge* for the loss of moral excellence? How pitiful the acquisition of mental dexterity, at the expense of all correct habits. Teachers may instruct, but society must *educate*. And what society can be compared with that which is enjoyed around a father's table, and under the domestic roof? No responsibilities are more reluctantly assumed, or more painfully regretted, than those which are imposed upon the officers of literary institutions in the west, by the absurd practice of sending sucklings to college. We must then have schools, within the reach of every family, sufficient to give to the son of every American citizen, an education that shall enable him to discharge the highest duties, to which his fellow-citizens may appoint him; and to the daughter of every American mother, such an one as shall fit her to become the wife and mother of freemen.

Fellow-citizens, my thoughts, on this subject, are now before you. The importance of the topics discussed, must be my apology for the length of the lecture. Let teachers fill up the ranks of the profession; let them trust to the inevitable effects of their well directed labors, for their reward; let them be careful to improve as society advances; and let them be content with their subordination to parents, as the only effectual means of bringing every power of society into requisition in the business of universal education.

And, on the other hand, let parents come up to the work as *they* ought. Let them provide suitable houses, suitable books, suitable apparatus, and suitable instructors for the benefit of their children; and all this within reach of their own homes. And let them be careful to cherish in their children those traits of character, that will make them at once active, and docile, respectful and persevering. And, in addition to all this, let them, as they would discharge the high responsibility that heaven has laid upon them, accompany their children through all their studies, and, in person, superintend the whole process of their mental, moral, and religious training. And, through the blessing of Heaven, the result will be as they could wish. "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it,"— is a declaration that never *has*, and never *will* be falsified. It is the declaration of **ETERNAL TRUTH.**