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EDITOR'S NOTICE.

It has been justly remarked, that, if any thing, at any time, can be devised for the improvement of the national mind and manners, any thing to augment the comforts, the conveniences, and even the embellishments of life, it argues a deficiency of spirit to be deterred from immediately attempting it, through the fear of failure. The present times are to us who live in them, of infinitely more consequence than the past or the future, and no effort should be spared to adorn and improve them to the utmost limit. For future times, indeed, we provide most effectually, by advancing the present to the highest degree of attainable perfection. To sit down with tranquil indolence, in an unimproved state of things, when a little exertion would certainly ameliorate them, and great efforts entirely reform them, is a dastardly dereliction of our own duty, our own interest, our own happiness, and the regard due to posterity.

Entertaining such principles, and with the firm conviction, that the times require united action, on what may be deemed the basis of individual and national happiness and prosperity, we venture to add another to the numerous existing periodicals. If number, without relation to matter, would answer

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most in the philosophy of language, the ancients failed most in its history. They are rarely to be relied on as etymologists, whilst the moderns, who have enjoyed so much better opportunities of cultivating this branch of the science, have obtained in it, a decided superiority. They have discovered, that most of those auxiliary words, which are employed in aiding the construction of nouns and verbs, were once nouns and verbs themselves; and that those which appear now void of signification, were formerly significant.

It seems to follow from what has been said, that in order to study Grammar as a science, a general survey of the mental faculties should be premised or presumed. These will lead us in our future numbers to a detailed consideration of the parts of speech, both in regard to their separate properties, and also to their syntax or union.

PHILOSOPHICAL EDUCATION.

BY REV. WILLIAM H. M'GUFFEY.

No man can teach, who is destitute of *mind*. No child can be taught, who is without the ordinary faculties of the mind. Nor can the mind of the instructor be made to operate upon the mind of the pupil without an intelligent employment of the means, necessary to mutual intercourse.

It is plain, then, that mind is the *agent* in the business of education, and the *instrument*, and the *object*. It is the mind that *operates*; it is the instrument with which the teacher puts in requisition the means of instruction, and it is the object upon which the instructor expends his skill.

It must be obvious then, that, in order to complete success, the teacher must understand the powers and susceptibilities of that agent, the mind, which is constantly and necessarily employed in every attempt to give instruction. If this is not the case, all his doings must be at random.

No one would be thought likely to succeed in business, who did not understand nor regard the character and abilities of the agents whom he employed. They might be honest, but they would be misdirected, or left to pursue their way without instructions of any kind.

Such is too much the case in every profession; but more lamentably true of the profession of teaching.

But it is even more important, that the teacher should understand the properties of the mind, as an instrument, than

that he should know its powers as an agent. An artist may not be fully aware of his own powers, and yet if he has "the use of his tools," he may employ them to some good purpose, in obtaining desirable results. But if he is unacquainted with the use and construction, and temper of the implements necessary to be employed, he cannot fail to be unsuccessful.

Suppose a man to be unacquainted with the corporeal faculties, so far as not to know to what organ the several sensations of sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell, are respectively referable; he would be in great danger of falling into ridiculous, if not dangerous mistakes. He would, to be sure, be susceptible of all the variety of sensations experienced by other men. But let him attempt the *voluntary* exercise of his organs; and his want of knowledge would become painfully conspicuous. Or let him undertake to instruct a child in the use of its organs of sense, and (if as ignorant as we have supposed) he would be found holding his watch to the *tongue* of the child in order that it might *hear* the sound which it made; or he might be seen applying a colored object to the *ear* that the learner might be amused with its brilliancy.

Similar mistakes must ensue in case of equal ignorance as to our mental powers and moral susceptibilities; not when they are left to their instinctive tendencies—but just so soon as their possessor undertakes to give them a voluntary or philosophical direction, and this he must do in every attempt at rational instruction.

But can an instance of such extreme ignorance of our mental character be presumed to exist amongst those of adult years, and the least pretensions to education? Would that a prompt and decisive answer could be given in the negative. Should you ask a dozen of intelligent individuals, taken at random from the ranks of professional teachers, the difference between *memory* and *imagination*, for example, or between *reason* and *judgment*, would you be likely to receive a prompt and intelligent answer? Might we not rather expect (and that too without the least disrespect to either the talent or industry of the persons thus interrogated) that they would at once confess, that they had never given any attention to the differences between these very distinct mental operations.

Now, in education, the different powers of the teacher's mind have different functions to perform, which can no more be transferred from one, to the other, than the function of sight can be performed by the organ of hearing. What chance for success, then, can there be, except what may accrue from mere accident?

The danger is now greatly enhanced from the fact, that instruction by rule or by rote is no longer tolerated. Once it

was enough, that the schoolmaster kept in the track that custom, or his predecessors had marked out for him. No one enquired farther than whether the "master" went the accustomed round; and if the answer was in the affirmative, all was well. But of late, philosophy has touched the schoolmaster with her wand—innovation on old customs is the order of the day. Philosophical systems and shreds of systems are found on almost every page of every newspaper, and in the preface of every school book. New plans are introduced, and experiments are tried in school houses from the log cabin to the University. And it is all right. Let no one check it, if he could. Only let us all use our best efforts to bring correct *principles* into use, since we have with *one* consent agreed to be governed by principle, and not any longer by rule. Necessity, then, for us as teachers, to study our own minds as the instruments which we use, arises in a great measure from the impulse given to the *science* of education.

But it is mainly, as the *object* upon which education operates, that a knowledge of the mind becomes important to the instructor. No two minds are alike. This enhances the difficulty. For, how shall he distinguish between minds that are different, who knows not what are the general properties or peculiar faculties of the human intellect? The statuary may know his own powers; he may be acquainted with the nature and use of the implements which his art employs, but still he will not be successful in the execution of his task, unless he can distinguish between the freestone and the marble that may come under his chisel. The man wholly ignorant of mind, may strengthen the passions while he is aiming to cultivate the understanding; and will be likely to produce results the very reverse of what he intends. Indeed, if such a one is ever successful as an instructor, it must be by mere accident.

These views cannot be better confirmed than by an extract from the work of that judicious writer, and most laborious compiler on Mental Science, Thomas C. Upham, of Bowdoin College.

"It is well known," he remarks, "that children and youth adopt almost implicitly the manner and opinion of those under whom they happen in Providence to be placed, or with whom they much associate, whether they be parents, instructors or others.

"Let it, therefore, be remembered, that passions, both good and evil, may then rise up and gain strength which it will afterwards be found difficult to subdue. Intellectual operations may, at that time, be guided and invigorated, which, if then neglected, can never be called forth to any effective purpose in after life.

“Associations and habits of various kinds may then be formed which will defy all subsequent attempts at removal, and will follow the subjects of them down to the grave. In a word, the soul may be trained in no small degree, either to truth or falsehood, virtue or vice, to activity or sluggishness, to glory or infamy.

“When we take these things into view, and when we further recollect the frequency of characteristic if not original differences in intellectual power and inclination, no one certainly can be considered properly qualified for the great undertaking of a teacher of youth, who has not formed a systematic and philosophic acquaintance with the principles of the mind.”
Ment. Phil. p. 25.

The writer of this article would not have it understood, that the knowledge of mind, requisite to success in teaching, can be acquired only from *books*. Indeed, it cannot be acquired from *books alone*, however extensive may be our reading. If our acquaintance with the philosophy of mind must be confined (but why need it be?) to any one source of information, let books be neglected rather than men.

The *living* subject is a *better* study in mental as well as in material physiology than *dried specimens*, however well selected or perfectly preserved. There are in the ranks of professional teachers, many who have never read a single work on Systematic Metaphysics, who nevertheless have, from observation and experience alone, acquired a more profound, and what is better, a much more practical acquaintance with the human powers and susceptibilities, than falls to the share of any mere book learned pretender to philosophy. Nothing more is wanting to a great majority of those already engaged in the business of instruction, than that they should have their attention turned to this matter in order that their success might be complete. They have the talent. They have the intelligence. They have the industry. They can command the *attention* of their pupils—a task harder to perform than to command the attention of the largest audiences; they can and do communicate to the minds of their pupils their own mental movements. What then do they need but to make their profession a *science* as well as an *art*. Let no one in our ranks despair. The most eminent men in all the liberal professions in our country have found their way through the “school house” to their present elevation. And if they can rise from such beginnings to the highest eminence in other professions, why may they not rise still more easily to the highest rank in their profession as teachers—an eminence it will not be disputed, still greater than the same rank in most other professions? “The man,” said an intelligent citizen of this city

very recently, "who has reached the head of his profession as an instructor of youth, must be admitted to occupy higher ground than the most distinguished member of the other professions. What merely professional man in our land, would not envy the more than desirable reputation of the veteran instructor of youth, who has grown gray in the service of the most valuable part of his fellow citizens, the youth of his country? Who, in old age is so likely always to be distinguished by the members of his profession as the aged teacher? Who can meet his fellow citizens of all ranks in society, on grounds that preclude debate and contention, except it be the aged and eminent instructor of youth? In politics, party spirit prevents this. In literature rivalry will prevent. In religion, sectarian views always have prevented it, and it is to be feared, always will. It is only in education, that the foul fiend of discord has not found, and may we not hope, *can* find no entrance.

TEACHERS, PARENTS AND COMMON SCHOOLS.

BY THE EDITOR.

The expression, that education forms the man, has become a maxim. Its operation commence swith our existence. Every thing, whether proper or improper, which passes, strikes with amazing force, the mind and heart, and leaves a strong impression. Hence the necessity of excluding the young from seeing or hearing any thing which may tend to injure moral purity, or weaken the growing strength of their understandings and affections. Since impressions and habits formed in the vestibule of life, adhere strongly in after years; since future character and conduct are shaped by the actual condition of the mind; since too, both mind and heart are formed by the nature of the discipline to which they are subjected in early years; it becomes a duty, superior to all other considerations, of those who have given life to human beings, to watch them with an eye that never tires; to see that those who have the charge of their intellectual and moral instruction, are adequate to the task, and that, *they themselves*, fail not in the performance of the high duties which by becoming parents, they have imposed upon themselves, and that they aid those whom they delegate to act in their place, to train them up as dutiful children and good members of society, respecting the laws of their country, and obeying the laws of God.