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Ethics in the School

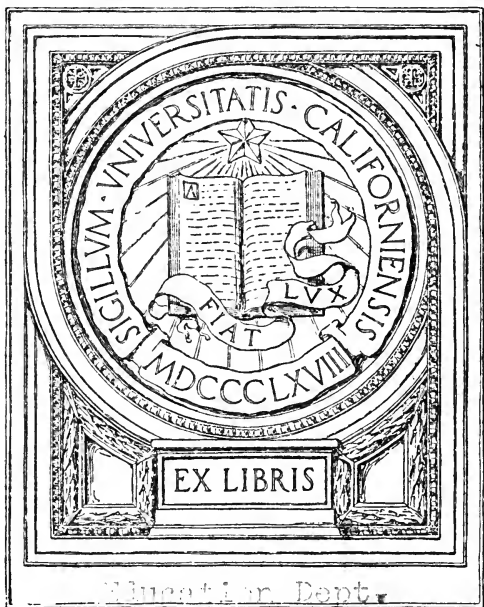
By

Ella Flagg Young

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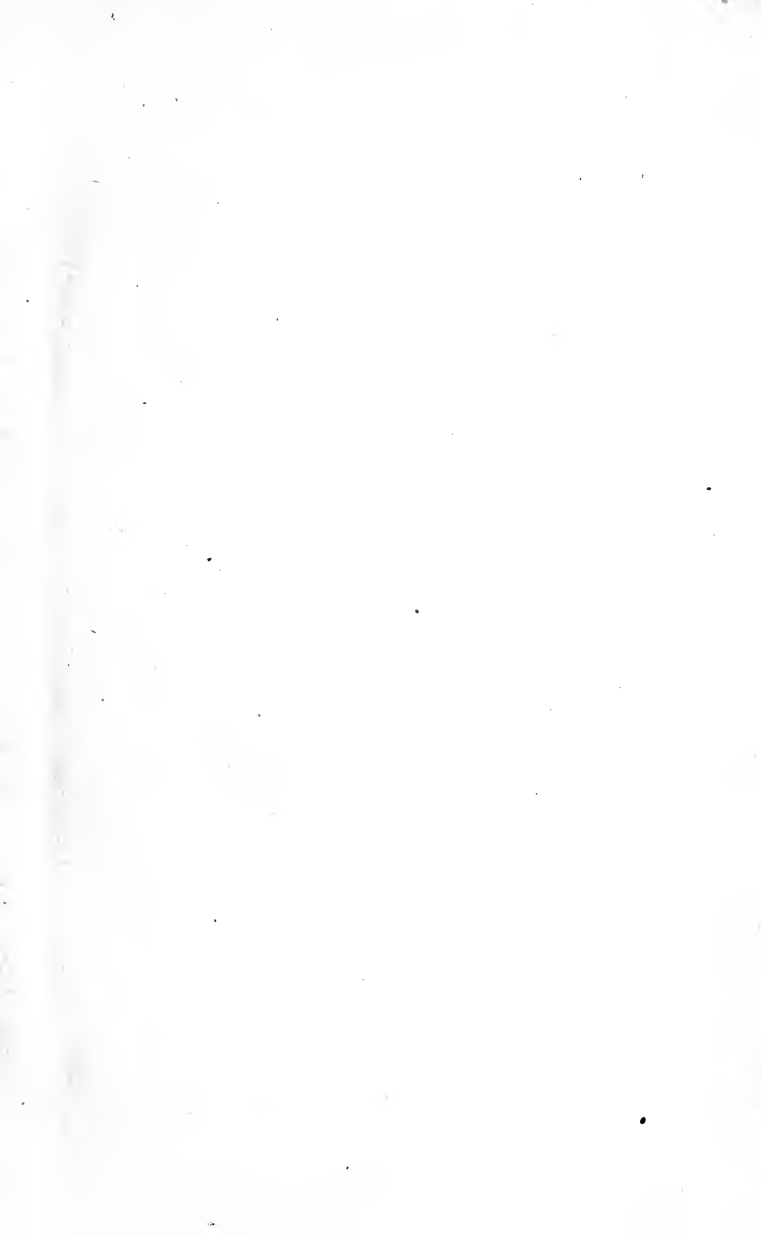
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ETHICS IN THE SCHOOL

BY

ELLA FLAGG YOUNG

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ETHICS IN THE SCHOOL

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INTRODUCTION.

THIS study aims to assist inexperienced teachers, and also those who, though having considerable experience back of them and much pleasure in teaching, still find themselves sometimes troubled and discouraged because of their inability to discover those causes which are active in many trying cases that arise in school discipline. Though the questions discussed are raised by means of the presentation of practical situations, I hope the treatment is sufficiently suggestive to make it effective in endeavors to answer others which originate in conditions not involved in the observations forming the basis of this inquiry.

One of the most difficult tasks set for us is the application of principles to the direction of our acts in the familiar affairs of life; hence no apology is offered for making a study of the perplexities and trials that beset the teacher in the daily experience. I believe the petty annoyances, as well as the greater problems of the class room, may be focused in the light of ethical principles, so that we shall transcend the commonplace in everything which pertains to the conduct of the schools.

E. F. Y.

CHICAGO, December, 1901.

ETHICS IN THE SCHOOL.

RUNNING through the works of the theologian and the poet, of the philosopher and the novelist, is the question, What is the end and aim of this life? The answer, whether expressed in argument or in song, by inquiry into the mystery of life, or by the portrayal of a great passion, is ever the same: our being's end and aim is the evolution of a character which, through thinking of the right and acting for the right, shall make for right conduct, rectitude, righteousness.

Interest in this, the greatest question put to the human race for solution, is not limited to a particular type of mind nor to a single class in society. The blacksmith at the forge, as well as the philosopher in his study, discusses the fundamental conditions in the attainment of the good as an ultimate end of this life's activity. The maid in the kitchen, as well as the teacher in the school, weeps over the failures and glows over the victories of the creations of the dramatist and the novelist. Each knows as she follows the deft weaving of character that time will bring many conflicts ere the judgment, Well done, faithful one,

can be passed. As the drama or the novel closes, the beholder, awed by the long struggle to gain the heights, murmurs, "Heaven is not gained at a single bound."

Before reaching manhood or womanhood we all come to know that a something called virtue must, by a slow process, be realized in the daily life. But when the ideals of virtue are examined, we find that they range with infinitesimal variations, from the extreme where virtue is painted as mere self-abnegation, to that other where virtue is defined as a voluntary effort having three things in view: the interest of self, the benefit of others, and conformity to the law of right.

Considering the magnitude of the question, What is the end and aim of this life? and the widespread interest in its answer, would it not be reasonable to infer that first among the problems carefully studied are those in ethics? Ethics is the science of duty, of conduct. It deals with the causes of acts, considered not from the gains or losses that will accrue to the self, but from the nature of the causes themselves. So long did duty necessarily pertain to self-preservation, and character stand for the ability to cope with a foe, that for many generations the standard of conduct was not based on the principle laid down in the definition of

ethics. In recent years there has been a rapid evolution of a higher standard of conduct than that of earlier times. There has been, however, and there still is, a widespread belief that the iteration and reiteration of maxims, precepts, and rules, based in part on definitions of the moral ideals and in part on the customs of society, is an excellent method for developing a high standard of living and thinking in the young. In the minds of teachers and adult friends, the acceptance of this code *without objections* insures for the youth the promise of a fine character.

Theories and customs that for centuries have guided the human race in its upward march cannot and should not be set aside lightly. All interpretations of truths pertaining to the higher nature must, however, from time to time, be subjected to revision. As humanity moves forward its soul's vistas enlarge, taking in new sympathies and new beauties. So today, if we have been reared and nurtured in the time spirit, the ideal of virtue as objectified by our characters should include elements only foreshadowed in the characters of our ancestors a few generations back. What is true of a race, or of a nation, as regards its character development, is true of that part of the body politic known as the teaching corps.

Too long has the school been viewed as an institution having a morality peculiarly its own; too long have its particular rules and customs been made the basis for only an initiation into the social life of humanity. The day has come when the teaching corps must, as a body, pass in review the customs of the school; must analyze those based on the morality of an institution which separated itself from the social whole; must reject those which develop a traditional morality for a brief period of life; must move in step with the time spirit, developing throughout the school those sympathetic and sterling qualities which make for righteousness all through life.

Necessarily the problems and illustrations presented in this paper will be taken from everyday life in the school.

The first problem set for solution is this: Is rivalry, emulation between children, a healthful factor in the school? A prominent psychologist says:

The feeling of rivalry lies at the very basis of our being, all social improvement being largely due to it. Can we afford to throw such an ally away? Ought we seriously to hope that marks, distinctions, prizes based on the pursuit of recognized superiority, should be forever banished from our schools? As a psychologist, obliged to notice the deep and pervasive character of the emulous passion, I have my doubts.

Let us first meet his position with an illustration that might be taken from almost any school. The names of three children in a reading class are George, Lucy, and Frank. George has just read a paragraph aloud and the teacher has called upon Lucy to read the same. When Lucy reads that paragraph what should be her motive—to express the thought as she understands it, or to surpass George? If we wish to know what that printed page means to her; if we wish her to read so as to describe the mental image constructed by her mind, why say, “Lucy, see if you can read that better than George did?” If we wish her to read for the purpose of surpassing George, what a motive has been given her for reading! Outside of the schools in what is termed real life, friends do not ask one another to read a sentence, a stanza, a business proposition to see if one can read it better than another. They ask for the interpretation, or, as usually expressed, to find out what different people understand by it.

Let us return to our little class. After George and Lucy have read, Frank is asked if he does not wish to see if he can do as well as, or better than, the others. Frank knows that he is a poor reader; knows that any attempt to play the rôle of a superior reader

will make him appear ridiculous; or, possibly, he is not sufficiently imbued with the spirit of rivalry to care to surpass his mates, so, he replies, "No, I don't care to." According to the moral code in most schools, Frank should have desired to read, not necessarily to express the thought as he understood it, but to surpass his classmates, and that chiefly because his teacher had summoned the ally, rivalry, to speed on the contest. What is the prospect as to Frank's evolution of character?

Some will say that the changes rung on better, "Who can do better?" "Mary, try — I know you can do better than John;" "That is better than Lucy's" mean little; they are rung for the purpose of arousing enthusiasm. Enthusiasm for what?

In an overwhelming majority of homes and schools, rivalry is the spur constantly applied by parents and teachers. Right there is the cause of the trouble, in that spur. The discussions that go on about emulation and imitation as factors in education, are based on the same kind of confusion in thinking. The difficulty in each case originates in calling in the passion or the power as an ally, and the mistaken "ally" idea originates in the failure to distinguish between spontaneous activity and directed activity. It is not whether we imi-

tate, or do not imitate, that makes us original, individual, talented. It is the motivation of the imitation. The same is true of emulation. It is the willed imitation that gives an unchanged copy; that is a foe to independent action. It is the directed, the suggested, the premeditated rivalry that develops low forms of competition.

The difference in influence of suggested imitation and emulation, and of unconscious imitation and emulation was well illustrated in a school which contained forty-eight six-year-old children and two teachers. The teacher in charge was giving the children exercise by having a child at the head of each aisle run, upon the giving of a signal, to see which could beat in reaching the back of the room. It was a painful exercise to witness. It was a scramble, almost a stampede. The fastest runner was noisy and rough; the children were urged to run like him, and beat him. They formed themselves on the model as directed. It was a painful sight, those hard lines in the faces, those flying arms, those pounding heels. The other teacher rose and asked if the children might be seated, as she wished to run. The first teacher assented, and the second, a graceful, fleet runner, ran a few times back and forth. The children were filled with delight.

When she changed and ran without comment, two or three steps as they had been running, they were dismayed. When the light running was resumed, it was a joy to see the changed faces, and the endeavor to run as the admired one ran. It was a perfect illustration of the great gulf between suggested imitation and rivalry on the one hand, and spontaneous effort to do a fine thing well on the other hand.

Let us turn to a consideration of the claims that determine our relations with the self and our relations with others: the egoistic and the altruistic claims.

Often when a child is attractive physically, or is quick mentally, parents and friends recognize the beauty or the precocity, until the egoistic claims are uppermost in the child's mind, and a Tito Melema is the outcome. Just as often, when a child is unattractive physically, or is slow mentally, the claims of others upon his time and strength are enforced until an Ishmael is the outcome. Fortunate is it for children suffering from this one-sided home training, if in the schools they have large-minded teachers; teachers who will counteract the vanity of the flattered one by arousing thoughts about the excellencies of others; teachers who will pour the sunshine of love into the life of the unhappy one, by recogniz-

ing the excellencies and the rights of the lonely soul whose hand is against everybody. Such large-minded teachers will study children as they reveal themselves in speech and acts. They will never construe the flippant manner and inattention of the one, or the sullen air and rude reply of the other, as a personal affront. The training of these children so that they shall grow to a recognition of the true claims of self and of others, may be from the standpoint established by the traditions of the school, or from that indicated by ethics. The vain and the sullen may be led to see that other children, those liked by the teacher, do whatever the teacher requests, and also answer in a tone and manner different from theirs. By following this line of observation and reasoning, they may learn, as a means of personal advancement, to pay proper respect to the professional dignity of the teacher. On the other hand, they may be led to change their tone and manner because of a belief in helpfulness and kindness as a means to the happiness of all.

One afternoon at the close of school, a teacher said to the principal, "I have told Sumner Brown to report to you before he takes his seat again in *my* room." The principal looked anxious, and then expressed re-

gret that Sumner was in trouble again, finishing with the comment: "He is not a bad boy, but he will be if he continues to have trouble with his teacher." The teacher quietly and dignifiedly repeated the impertinent question injected by Sumner into the orderly recitation, and then gave a description of the scene resulting from the silly question: some laughed outright, some tittered, and even the good had *to assume* a disapproving look. In reply to the inquiry, "What would you have thought if the child of a friend had raised the question out of school?" the woman, not the offended dignity, replied, "I should have thought it rather bright." In response to the remark that it was nevertheless flippant and should under any circumstances bring forth reproof, she bristled and said, "When I am out in society, I am not going to act like a schoolma'am." Evidently her professional self did not rank very high in the estimation of this teacher. She viewed neither it nor the school as a part of the social organization. A moment later the real self, which was a noble one, said to the principal, "When Sumner comes tomorrow morning, please send him directly to me." Sumner learned in course of time to guard his thoughts and control his tongue.

Here arises a question in ethics: Was this

control based on the recognition by the boy of the gain that would accrue to him if he kept in good standing with his teacher's dignity or was it founded on a recognition of the needs and rights of classmates and self and teacher in the recitation? The question may be put in another form: Was self-control acquired because of the peace and advancement it brought in a preparatory world ruled by a dictator, or was it acquired because of an appreciation of an egoistic and an altruistic claim, existing in a real world—in a democracy of an advanced type?

The professional self that for a time obscured the vision of Sumner's teacher is an interesting study. In *The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table*, Holmes lists the different Johns and Thomases engaged in a dialogue between John and Thomas. In his *Psychology*, James has an interesting dissertation on our different selves; the bodily, the social, and the spiritual. The professional self is probably a subclass of the social self. Unfortunately, the professional self is a familiar figure, for it is not uncommon to see a man, upon entering the class room in which he teaches, suddenly transformed into a being devoid of the graces which mark him in his intercourse with friends and acquaintances who are not members of

his academic world. His voice will ascend to an unnaturally high pitch, and will vibrate without variation or any of those cadences which indicate the play of thought and sympathy. His dull wit will play on the deficiencies of the young who are to learn from him. It is not uncommon to see a young woman with an attractive face and manner undergo a transformation equally surprising, upon entering the schoolroom for the work of the day. The corners of the mouth will take a downward direction; the eye will become alert, suspicious, reproofing; even the personal identity will be lost, and she will know and speak of herself in the third person during those hours when she should say, with the Great Teacher, "Suffer little children to come unto me." The pronoun of the first person will be unknown in her schoolroom, and the words of that beautiful command be changed to "Suffer little children to come unto Miss Smith." The care and attention which are bestowed on the professional self in protecting its rights and its dignity have brought many a teacher into severe straits, the culmination of which is expressed in the familiar explanation: It is unfortunate that I gave those directions. They were unnecessary — yes, even wrong; but now that they have been

given they must be obeyed, otherwise the children, the young people, will lose their respect for me as their teacher! Would it not be better to be a man or a woman than to be the guardian of a professional self?

In the case of Sumner Brown, the teacher dealt with a child made vain and selfish by parental admiration of his quickness of the wits. The conditions were not so trying as they would have been had the teacher been met with a sullen manner and a rude reply. The first time that Grant Stearns's new teacher called upon him to read, the pose of the body, the mumbling tone, the sly wink to his comrades as he slid down into his seat after reading, all gave proof that Grant had been in many a conflict with his former teacher, and that he had not come off second best, in the attempt to roil his natural enemy, the professional dignity of his teacher. This new teacher, however, having no false dignity to maintain, did not pick up the gauntlet thrown down by the boy, though each evening when alone the continued rudeness would come before her, but always could she say, "It cannot be a personal matter between Grant and me, for he had that manner the first time I called upon him to recite." Yet this query always followed, Shall I ever be able to influence

the boy for good? Before long, Grant wearied of his useless efforts to tease a teacher who could not be teased, and who had so much that was interesting in the lessons. One day, after two or three children had read the same paragraph, the teacher said: "There is still a thought that has not been brought out. How would you read that, Grant?" When the boy sat down, the teacher had the wisdom not to make him self-conscious by words of praise for his intelligible and intelligent reading.

Let us return to a general consideration of the personal and social claims of the children. In arousing thought in regard to his relations to others and their claims upon him, it is necessary, first, to consider his relations to himself, to his rights, to his own needs. Recognition of his better self and of his rights must be accorded him, if he is to see and acknowledge the good in others, and also their rights. Neglect to give recognition to the efforts and rights of the child or of the adult allows jealousy to establish itself in the neglected soul. Jealousy, the second in rank of the seven deadly sins, needs from the cradle to the grave the repressing hand of parent, of teacher, of friend, and most of all of self. How often, instead of repressing this deadly

passion, foolish parents, teachers, and friends stimulate it by neglect or by invidious comparisons, hoping by arousing it to enkindle intellectual activity. Miserable, jealous self sheds bitter tears, not because of its own shortcomings, but because another has superior merit.

If one were asked what advance step has been taken in the development of character of the young in the last decade, there would be no hesitancy in replying, for there has been a general awakening to the necessity of cultivating the feeling of pity for the sufferer; of tenderness toward the weak and inferior; of compassion for the poor and unfortunate; of kindness to animals. But we may well ponder these questions: Are we still using rivalry and jealousy as incentives to learning? Are we theoretically developing the emotions in one direction, and practically training them in another? What do the changes rung on "better than your classmates" indicate? Why do so many school exercises terminate with our writing in a conspicuous place the names of a successful minority, so that the overwhelming majority that fell by the wayside may be reminded that others are stronger? Do we make a sharp distinction between developing the essentials in the moral character of a child

and the essentials in the developed moral character of men and women?

Alongside these questions about motivation, the subject of punishments presents itself. Marvelous tales are told of a manly spirit aroused in a boy by a flogging. Some assert that the management of a school is made easier often, not by whipping the children, but by having them know that the teachers have the right to whip them. This seems to me a fair presentation of their view of the subject: Children should be taught to know something of the wonderful structure and mechanism of the body; they should be taught to care for that body; to keep it clean, to keep it pure; they should be made to realize that knowledge of their environment comes by way of the organs of special sense; that the interchange of thought with parents and friends is effected through the action of nerve and muscular structure; after teaching them to respect this temple and having them memorize the lines:

"Make the house, where Gods may dwell,
Beautiful, entire, and clean."

Then to beat the ends of these nerves, to mar the skin, will awaken a manly spirit in a troublesome child; at least, the knowledge that the teacher has the right to treat that

*corporal
punishment*

temple scornfully, will make the children better.

In some schools where the teaching corps has not moved forward in the training of children to a belief in the abolition of the non-ethical whip, but has been forced by the rules of the board of education to discontinue whipping, another instrument, sarcasm, that weapon whose lash cuts and stings the soul, has been substituted.

The abolishment of the rod and of sarcasm does not mean that punishment is never necessary. Logical punishment for wrong doing should follow the deed. But how many punishments inflicted are the logical outcome of the offense? Sometimes one hears or sees this announcement in a schoolroom: "The whole class must stay after school to make up the geography lesson." How applicable to that wholesale punishment are these words of Horace Mann:

Where all share the same odious fortune, disgrace attaches to none. Like the inhabitants of Botany Bay, all being rogues, nobody loses caste. Shame never belongs to multitudes.

There is another saying of his that reaches the subject from another standpoint: "You cannot open blossoms with a northeast storm." The question regarding that class in geography

is this: Could it be possible that a whole class of children, under healthful influences, would wilfully neglect the preparation of work assigned by the teacher? That some had been indolent, that some had been negligent is probable, but that a whole class had failed to prepare a lesson, suitable as regards length and matter, is incredible. What was the ethical training in the punishment for the children who had accomplished the possible, or for those who had struggled to accomplish the impossible? What brings an erring man or woman to the knees? Not an illogical punishment. The erring one will spend hours, trying to prove that the punishment was unjust. In the same way will the child concentrate thought, not on his error, but on the illogical, or as he terms it, the unfair punishment. Is not this question of the logical a fruitful one for thought as we pass in review the time-honored methods for the development of character through punishment? The child as well as the adult should learn to make expiation without shame and without weakness. The man or the woman, training children is not assigned the single rôle of an avenging Nemesis; there is the other and higher, that of an ethical guide.

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Let us make a brief survey of some questions concerning habits and manners.

Though there have been exceptional cases, yet in the main it has held and still holds true that a wide gulf exists between the home and the school. In one matter, however, there has always been a demand on the part of each that the other should supplement its endeavors to bring about a desired result. This common demand refers to the formation of habits which will be operative in society. Sometimes the desired result is classed under habits and sometimes under manners, but whichever be the general term, there is no uncertainty as to the subject-matter. It includes bodily postures, and forms of speech in asking for favors or courtesies and in replying to questions of a commanding nature. In the whole range of ethics, the science of values, there is nothing more remarkable than the varying ideals of desirable habits of bodily attitudes and of speech—the unconscious modes of expressing the self. No sooner is there an expressed agreement between parents and teachers as to the importance of these, than a difference in opinion becomes apparent. The parent has one ideal, the teacher another, which in each case is based on the customs of the group in which the individual's social interests center. Neither ideal

has significance as a factor in education if it is set up for copy for the child to imitate. Each ideal has great value if it is used as a means of interpretation of conditions and their causes. Such, however, is the attitude toward habits of bodily postures, and words of appreciation or non-appreciation of courtesies and kindnesses, that adults prescribe the habits without asking such questions as these: How do habits originate? What do they signify? Why is this form of speech desirable always? Is it desirable always? What is the hygienic value of this mode of sitting, standing, writing, or holding the book or other material? Why do I, an adult, vary from these standards in my conduct, though well-trained to them in youth? Has this form of activity a useful function, or is it merely a mode of action that pleases me personally? Is the law of life repression in childhood and overt action in adult life? Or, to put it in another way, is this the law: Out of repression, correct expression will develop? If these questions concerning habits, and all other questions bearing on the development of character in school, are to be answered so that children shall have a high standard of conduct and behavior, we must study them as we study questions concerning habits influencing our own lives. It is worse than useless to attempt to

create in the minds of the young, unnatural ideals in which self-sacrifice and self-repression are the chief attributes of goodness. Such ideals make the attitude of parents and teachers harsh, or weakly sentimental. Equally objectionable is it to permit children, through their speech and acts, to develop ideals in which rude self-assertion and lawlessness are elements in right conduct. Parents and teachers in America have taken advanced position on the training of children through their activities. Some, however, fail of that conception of character which includes the development of the child not only as an individual but also as a member of society. To let him run riot, as a law unto himself and the only law, is to help him to become a one-sided, ill-equipped individual in the social community. In the revolt against Czarism in parents and teachers, it is a fatal mistake to let the child set himself up as Czar; because in that case, the wand of unbridled authority has merely changed hands. It is dangerous to seize upon new half-truths and substitute them for old half-truths.

No sooner is the wand of authority mentioned in connection with children than parents and teachers begin to discuss the question of a child's will and its development. According to the general consensus of opinion, the

will acts in those moments only in which reason and desire are in conflict; and in that conflict will appreciates the arguments of reason. If the rational line of action is followed out, will is declared victorious; it is strong. If irrational or foolish motives, that is desires, prevail, the will is declared vanquished; it is too weak for battle with the agents of evil. In this conception adults find not only unanswerable reasons for alertness in strengthening the will of a child, but also excuses for their own weaknesses and shortcomings. The assignment of the will to playing the leading part or character, in a process separate and aloof from the emotions, from the motives that have been developed by habit, and from the mental content which functions behind those motives, has limited it to being a choosing power of the mind. This limitation of the will entirely obscures the impulses and emotions as the beginnings of the act—obscures the intellectual phase of the act. In other words, many today, like the old psychologists and metaphysicians, fail to observe all that is involved in a voluntary act—lose sight of the fact that the whole self is carried into the realization of an idea. They fail to see that an act of the will is an expression of that which satisfies one's self; in short, that the will is simply the final step in

the activity through which we make ourselves known.

In training the will of a child, it is generally assumed that what is called reason is the ideal constructed by the trainer, and desire is the alluring, deceiving ideal constructed by the one to be trained. Without depreciating the value of the experience of the adult in weighing conditions that are often new and perplexing to the boy or girl, one sees in this assumption of a command of all that is right and reasonable by the adult, an ignoring of mentality in the child. The conduct of a home or a school on the theory that it is the parent's home, or the teacher's school, and hence the child must conform to the laws, rules, or customs which the parent, or teacher, has decided to be satisfactory to him, is hostile to the growth in the mind of the child of an ideal of co-partnership in and responsibility for the order and care of that home or that school. When the child doubts the reasonableness of the customs or rules, he expresses his doubts as his elders do, by glances and movements that are intelligible to every on-looker. In the case of Sumner Brown, to see himself the observed of all observers was the boy's conception of pleasure. The customs of the school interfered with his individualistic theory of activity. When his

teacher endeavored to develop an idea of the school as a coöperative workshop, two conditions must have pressed for recognition in her mind, before she was properly prepared to advance any valuable ideas: first, the boy's idea of the recitation was such that he was an actor ready to break into her game; second, her idea of the recitation was such that thought in its free play was subjected to the limitations, not of the subject, but of what she deemed admissible in her domain. She indicated this when saying she should have thought the question "rather bright" outside of the school-room. These conditions carry or force the question back of the expression of the boy's idea of individualistic smartness to a consideration of the intellectual habits and ideas that are the mainspring of his activity. These habits and ideas will necessarily be studied as results of the response to stimuli in the social environment.

In the case of Grant Stearns, there was the expression of a mind that had been finding little nutriment in the material spread before it, in the conditions surrounding it. The mental disgust was shown in such a manner as to stimulate a similar reaction by the adult unless the conditions back of the conduct were analyzed to their causes. In the accen-

tuation of the school conditions that entered into the environment of these boys, it is not forgotten that much of their conduct may have been a reproduction of the speech and manners of older associates on the street, or in the home. Each boy may have been finishing the circle of action that began in stimulations entirely outside of the school, and were worked into images that waited time and place for presentation. And yet there must have been in the atmosphere of the school, conditions analogous to those outside. The intellect which had found pertness or rudeness stimulating to constructive activity, was by association again busy with a like construction. In the first illustration the teacher found she had not gone far enough to discover the cause; in the second, the teacher did not offer stimuli for like productions to the mind that had images of itself as a tantalizing being stirring the wrath of a superior.

The strength of the pioneer kindergartners lay in that comprehension of the relation of teacher and pupil which precludes the teacher's offering or responding to stimuli that are the basis of images of rude self-assertion or over-emphasis of the individual. With the influx of thousands into the teaching corps of the kindergarten, there have entered some

who have not studied this subject so thoroughly that they recognize the never-failing truth that the mind reacts with its natural vigor to a stimulus that is sincere, genuine; and that it reacts with disgust or a weak sentimentality to a stimulus that is affected and insincere. It would be unnecessary to refer to this condition were it not that the reference helps emphasize the truth that the intellect consciously, or unconsciously, constructs images and ideas that are similar in nature to the stimulus to which it responds, and in the will it gives the outward expression of the results of that activity.

In this brief survey of the will nothing has been said of those desires that draw us hither and thither after the intellect has made its decision. This conflict between desires and reason is not a combat over which will presides. The selection or setting of an end or aim to be attained, the selection of the means by which it shall be attained, depend upon intellectual qualities. The intellect is the selecting and constructing activity, the perceiving and conceiving part of us. It builds ideals and directs the realization of them. The emotions encourage or discourage us with their return waves of approval or disapproval of the aims which spirit has chosen and

the degree of success with which it has made them effective in life.

In the last analysis, the fundamental in the ethical life is the same in the school as it is in all other divisions of society. It is the determining cause of the act that makes the individual weaker or stronger. In the determining cause are involved the original motivation, the criticism of self upon its own motive and act, and the effort to elevate both to a higher plane. The ethical life cannot be separated or differentiated from the intellectual life. If, in the work of the school, haste and facility in forming and stating opinions and judgments are the predominating characteristic, then sincerity in getting at the essence of things cannot be the final result. If knowledge acquired in the school is used there only, then it must be viewed as something that has no intrinsic value—has a marking value merely.

A little eight-year-old girl, after reading a paragraph, said, "I didn't make it mean what I think it means," and then, without any remark from her teacher, re-read it to her own satisfaction. This demand by the little child that she should rightly interpret the author; this giving the soul's touch to the expression of thought; this permeating the whole with

the spirit of the worker, means an advance in the ethical life far beyond that in the child who is trained to read according to a model. To train to imitate is to ignore the relation of expression to thought, the relation of will to intellect. In the act of the little girl, the recognition of the symbols of thought as given on the printed page, the grasp of the author's meaning, the command of the vocal apparatus so that the technique would be coordinated with the idea, were those determinations by the self which resulted in an overt act that showed a developing and disciplined will.

This training of the ethical nature through free expression is understood in diverse ways. A discussion between several teachers who were representatives of various theories once presented the diversity in four lines of thinking. It was opened by a teacher who secures highly-finished results in everything she deems worthy of undertaking in her school-room; who secures courteous behavior from all children. The discussion was brought on by an inspection of work in water colors which some elementary school children had been doing.

The first speaker gave vent to her indignation over the masses of crude, inharmo-

nious colors in some of the work exhibited. She outlined her theory as follows: A child should never be permitted to experiment and go wrong. The teacher should carefully instruct him in the harmony of colors, and the necessity for toning down the standard colors if they are to cover comparatively large spaces. In all work the teacher should have a clear conception of an artistic whole, and the pupils should be so directed that they will come out of a school exercise with a composition, a drawing, a reading of an article, a bit of color work, a carriage in walking, a manner in addressing others, superior in its finish to anything they could have conceived without suggestion and direction. This general advance of the pupils, she concluded, would prove the teacher to be a good one. One of the listeners murmured, "Now I understand why I always think her pencil has touched up the children's drawings."

A second teacher, after inveighing against such a system of repression, summed up her theory and practice about as follows: Miss X is right when she says, "A teacher should have a clear conception of an artistic whole, and that the class should come out with a result in harmony with that conception." But, between the beginning and the end, there

should come in the self-activity of the children. This activity would be manifested in their attempts to tell what sentences would sound well in the written composition; what emphasis would be best in the reading; what colors should be used in the picture or drawing; what carriage would be most graceful in walking. The teacher should show the congruity or incongruity of the various suggestions, and when the right ones were secured, then should the children begin constructing in accord with the light given. In reply to the question, "Would not the exercise be largely an attempt to guess at your standard?" she replied: "Guessing games have always been helpful."

The third group was represented by one who said she did not form any conception of the result; she let the children work out whatever seemed right to them. When asked what growth there was under this method, she said the very small number that had enough mental power to become scholars and artists came out strong at the end of the year; and the large numbers that were indolent and indifferent, and always wanting to try something else, simply proved that the majority of children in our schools should be taken out and put to some kind of regular work.

The members of the fourth group were not so positive in their statements as were those of the first three. Each deprecatingly referred to the fact that she had once thought as those of the first or second or third group thought. One of them finally said she agreed with the first two speakers, that the teacher should have a clearly defined idea of the movement in a literary production; should read sympathetically and understandingly; should be familiar with the structure of English prose composition; should appreciate rhythm in music and harmony in color; should have the speech and manners of a well-bred woman. She agreed with them, that the result of class work should be an advance on the children's power before the new exercise came into the field. But when the results were obtained they should not be duplicates of the teacher's constructions. They should each be a construction resting on a child's conception. And the vitalizing force in each construction should be the child's endeavor to convey to others through the media of the voice and the reading, of the pen and the written language, of the brush and the picture, of the speech and the manner, the mental creation on which the construction rested. In response to the question, "What would you do when that construc-

tion was a meaningless jumble of words, a meaningless repetition of the words in the book, a meaningless rendering of the song, a meaningless combination of lines and colors, a meaningless combination of awkwardness and timidity?" she said she should not drop that product and begin working for a new one, as she used to; that she would positively desire to know what this, which was to her a meaningless construction, stood for with the child; that she had found since she had come to desire positively to understand the child's mental creation through his construction, instead of worrying because the construction did not tally with hers, the dullest child had responded to her desire; she had found that kindness and the atmosphere of a few good beautiful, and true things, had in time enriched the mental creation and strengthened the objective construction.

This last theory and method of teaching recognizes the will as a function of the thought that is back of it; it is based on the belief that the development of the will is the growth of power in the individual to make his acts express more and more truly the feeling and thinking that are their motif; it aims to keep the child-self a unit in what the psychologist calls his feeling, thinking, and willing, *i. e.*, it

does not inject another's thought between thinking and willing in that mental movement which takes its rise in feeling, develops in thinking, culminates in doing, and then with the judgment, "well-done," or "fairly done," or "badly done," reverberates back into the emotions; in short, it makes frankness, sincerity, and integrity in dealing with one's self the basis of the ethical and social virtues. The development of character in children will be in harmony with their mental life-process when they know (possibly unconsciously) their teachers as sensitive to and sympathetic with the aims of their struggling and often baffled young souls; as intelligent in regard to the truth and the way thereof.

There are, and there have always been, teachers who have sustained to their pupils the relation of friend and guide. One can safely assert that the teaching corps as a body, longs to be the means of turning the light into the souls of children so that no darkness shall thwart and hinder the upward climb. Right there, in the very form of that longing, lies the beginning of the mistake of many teachers: for, in their vain imaginings, they are the beginning, the middle, and the end of the movement of which light is to be the result. The very talent that makes many successful in the

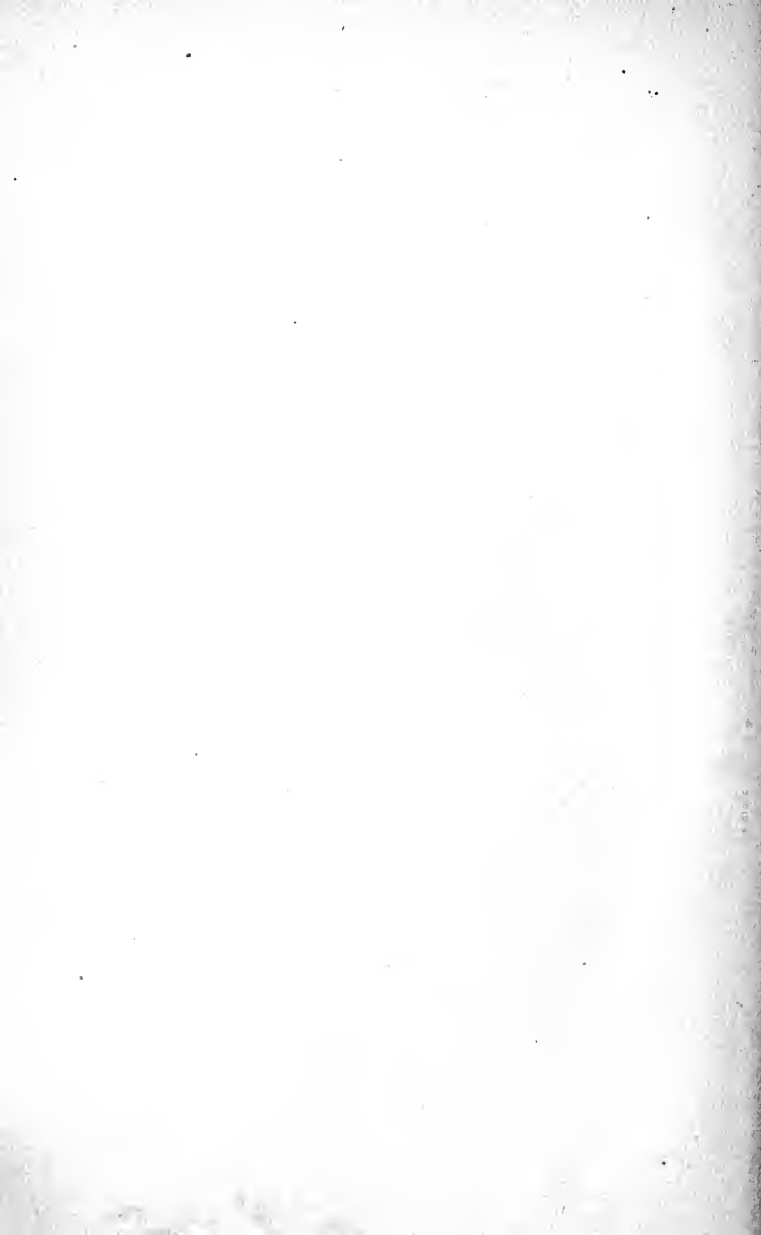
schoolroom, combined with the traditional theory regarding teachers and teaching, helps develop self-assertion, rather than sympathy and intelligent helpfulness. In some this undue self-assertion takes on a form of dictation that crushes the timid, and makes the bold rebellious. In others, it takes on such an ingratiating manner, that both teacher and children are stifled in an atmosphere laden with adulation and sentimentality.

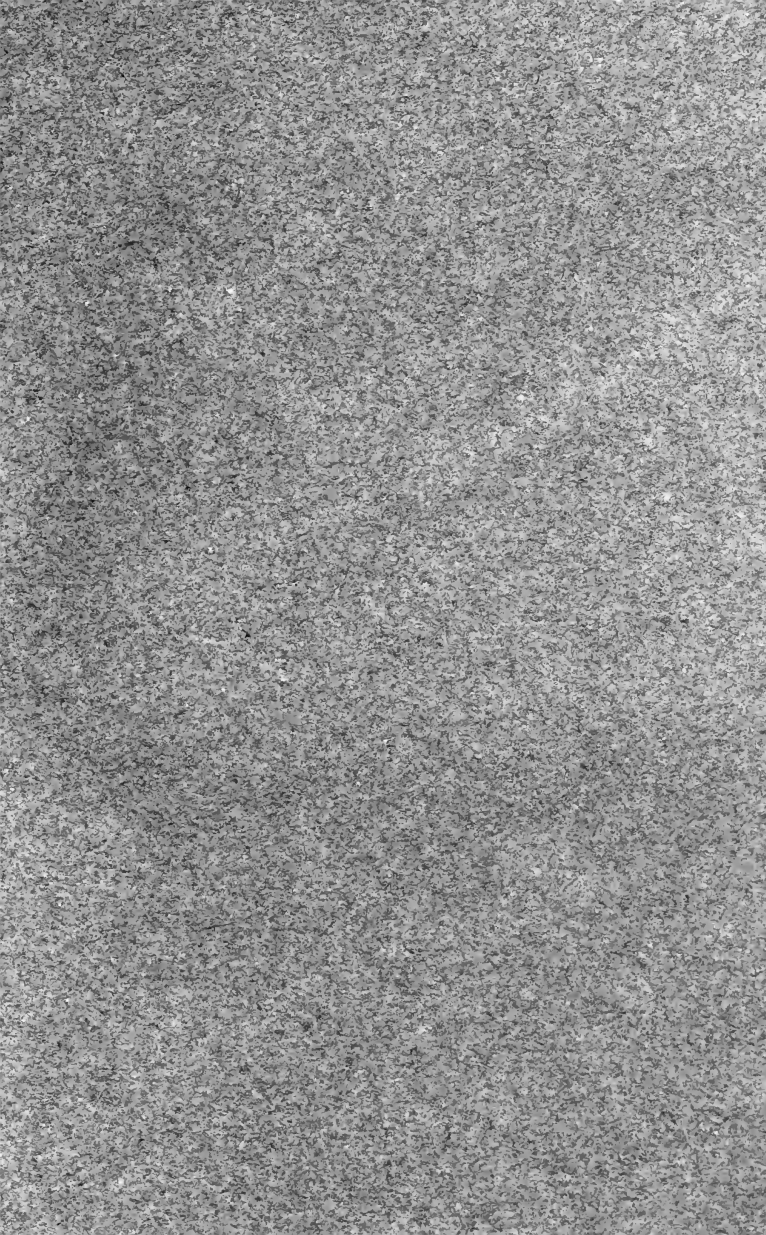
Sympathy cannot develop where children are accustomed to hear others reproved constantly. Sarcasm, reproofs, stern descriptions of the beautiful, the good, and the true, kill sympathetic tendencies and cause to blossom selfishness and indifference; sympathy cannot expand where children are accustomed to constant praise. Flattery, indiscriminate praise of results having neither function nor value, kill sympathetic tendencies and cause to blossom self-satisfaction and *ennui*. That sympathy, which characterizes the wise parent and the thoughtful teacher, makes the dull child feel that the result of his slow thinking will be treated with respect; it makes the vain one realize that the expression of his thought is prized and yet that his vanity grieves a friend; it makes the indolent regret that he has nothing to offer; it makes the over-shrewd blush

as he fumbles with counterfeit coin; it makes the faint-hearted wrestle with thought; it makes the gifted feel the responsibility for strengthening his talents. Pupils always look with an open eye and direct gaze toward a sympathetic teacher. The open eye and the direct gaze indicate a mind turned toward a light that it knows will not blind or dazzle, but will illumine.

With the teaching corps standing in this sympathetic attitude toward the young, the school will not set up an external which an adult has worked out for the young to copy through blind obedience. A far higher principle than that of obedience in conscious subservience or submission to another's thought will permeate the school. The principle that is recognized as fundamental in intellectual growth will be recognized as fundamental in the expression of growth. Ideals of relations to others and of duty to self will be constructed out of the stimuli arising from the world in which the children find life. This will not be a world determined by one being; it will be the product of the coöperation of many workers. Activity in such a school-world will develop habits of doing with and for others; will develop attention to the far-reaching effects of everyday conduct; will

develop conceptions of truth, sincerity, goodness, and loveliness as outgrowths of the daily experience; will develop a will that identifies itself with the longings, the aspirations, the weaknesses, and the strength of the mind which it makes known to its fellow-beings. In such an atmosphere the strong will be generous, the weak will dare to be true; the gifted and the lowly will each strive for the good of all.





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