

PAPIER LU A LA CONVENTION DES INSTITUTEURS, PALMER ROAD

PAR M. ISIDORE BUOTE, INST.

DISCIPLINE AND GENERAL METHOD IN TEACHING.

(suite et fin)

Let the teacher punish not to gratify his own passion or revenge, and make the child understand that he punishes him not because he is fond of doing so, but because duty compels him. The teacher who is thus conscientious in administering punishment will find that the occasion for it will gradually diminish, and that his pupils will find out that the master can and will punish when necessary. This will be a sufficient motive to keep them from offending. I have given a few hints by which orders and discipline may be maintained; it remains for me to make a few remarks upon the agencies which the teacher may employ in stimulating exertion on the part of the pupil. One of the agencies which has always held a prominent place is Emulation. Emulation is a generous ardour which nature herself kindles and nourishes in the heart. The question is then not whether Emulation in general should be employed, but it is important to know if it should be stimulated by artificial means, by rewards, and distribution of prizes. To the latter I do not hesitate to answer no. By artificially inciting Emulation, the most intelligent pupils will probably make rapid progress, and procure a brilliant reputation for the teacher, and the school, but others more timid or less happily gifted will be stopped half way. There is a danger that those who feel that they have not as much intelligence as their neighbours, may despair while running the race. Why? because they have been falsely persuaded that the only material point is, not to arrive sooner or later but to arrive before the others.

By awarding public prizes to success there is a danger of filling the most intelligent with vanity and pride, of overworking the middling and of discouraging the weak. I do not wish however, to recommend the total suppressions of artificial Emulation, nor the distribution of prizes, but I would like to see prizes given expressly for conduct and constant application, rather than for success and talents.

Another agency of Emulation exerted to an undue extent by some teacher is place taking in class, I think it is injurious when questions are given with more or less rapidity by the teacher. In this case the answers will not require as much thought as memory, or a certain degree of superficial cleverness compatible with shallowness of intellect. In such cases it often happens that the boy of the largest mind may not occupy a position in class commensurate with the real merit. By this mean you cast a slur upon the mental attainment of that child. But on the other hand when local position in class is given by sterling merit—merit determined by conduct and progress; no harm but much good may ensue.

A few remarks on the general methods of teaching Method is the particular manner in which education is developed and presented to the mind. The one synthetic and the other analytic. Both methods must certainly be employed in teaching. Synthesis is the logical method

of developing truth, and all have examples of this method in the propositions of Euclid. Analysis on the other hand is the natural method of developing truth. It commences with the general and proceeds to the particular. I think the latter should be employed as much as possible in our primary schools. Young pupils long for realities. By the synthetic method the child is for a long period on the outskirts of subject. Analysis possesses this advantage, that it takes things as they really exist, and does not only interest them by exhibiting what is familiar to them, but it exercises their mind in discovering properties. While the two methods which I have spoken of are the only two methods in presenting truth to mind, the practical application of them may vary according to circumstances. Thus we may teach individually or simultaneously. I think the first method should be used, when possible. By this method I mean that each child in the class should be singled out, and made to perform his share of the work. It is the only safe way of ascertaining that the task assigned has been performed. By simultaneous teaching I mean that the questions are addressed to the whole class indiscriminately and the whole class are invited and expected to answer. This plan has also its advantage. It enables the teacher to accomplish a larger amount of work in given time. But the dangers of such a plan in the hands of an unskilful teacher are manifold and obvious. In questioning a class each question should be stated clearly; all technical terms should be avoided until it is known that they are clearly understood by the children. If the child does not understand the question put; it should be thrown into a different form or if too complex into its component parts.

The child should be required to give a complete answer to every question. The substance of the answer is certainly very important, but in some respect the form of it equally so. It should be the aim of the teacher to get the child to answer in the best possible form; for in such a case the teacher can turn the examination on any lesson, into one of the best and most practical means of teaching correct speaking.

Dry grammatical rules will never by themselves teach the correct method of speaking or writing. I believe that no branch of school education is so generally considered by the pupil a plague and torment as grammar. The reason is that it is too often taught as if it consisted of a set of dry rules which have been huddled together for the express purpose of leading the memory without enlightening the understanding.

The children are generally compelled to commit to memory certain rules and definitions and he who can repeat them with the glibest tongue is generally considered the most accomplished grand marian. For a considerable period children should be taught grammar orally, and I might say incidentally. They should learn it in the same manner as they learn to speak. They learn to speak not from a set of former lessons given by the parents but to a large extent from imitations of words and sounds frequently repeated in their hearing. Now so it should be in respect to grammar. Instead of presenting scientific terms containing the principles of grammar, the teacher should by means of oral lessons familiarized them with the simple truths of the subject, and after introduce them to

the systematic study of it. When the pupils have learned first to recognize the thing, and after the scientific term grammar at once becomes an interesting exercise, and a first rate means of training and developing mental powers. Much can be done by attending carefully to their every day phraseology, and especially when giving answer in class on any subject. During class in the absurd excitement which is considered by too many as essential to a teacher's success, it is impossible for a teacher to attend to the forms of expression used by the pupils. Generally the object is to get ready answer no matter in what language uttered. I consider this the greatest evil among many of our teachers, of the present day. It is a radical defect a foul blot on the fair fame of our educational process. Each day's lesson should be as much as possible, a practical lesson on grammar, and these lessons repeated for several years would render the pupil acquainted with the exact meaning and form of a very considerable portion of the language. In concluding allow me to make a few suggestions on the general method of teaching Geography. The subject matter of Geography as commonly taught, is limited in the range, and the mode of teaching generally adopted is still more defective. In all education the point of commencement is the standpoint of the learner. The foundation on which we must build is however limited, the knowledge possessed by the pupil. This is an important principle in Education too often neglected. Instead of leading his pupil from the known to the unknown, the teacher generally begins with the known and ends with the unknown.

In Geography he generally sets out with the wide world and ends with an account of home. It is not to be wondered when we consider the nature of the lessons which occupies the front pages of our Elementary Geographical text book.

The first lesson treats of the solar system with its suns, its planets, and its satellites, from these they pass on to consider the earth, its size, form and motions. Then from that the earth is divided into land and water, the land into continents, the continents into countries, the countries into counties, and it is thus by setting out on his travels from the sun that the boy finally arrives at his father's home and is allowed to look at the hill, dale, forest or river which his home commands. The correct method would be exactly the reverse of what I have been trying to describe. Begin with the child at home make him observe the various features of the little world bounded by his own horizon. The small hill seen from the school window with perhaps the stream running down from its side should be made the basis of the river and mountain system. By this method the child is at once interested. A great deal more might be said on this subject but time and space compels me to stop. In concluding I may say that many of our schools have not the necessary apparatus to teach Geography and other subject carefully. The school should be provided with maps of all kinds, such as Blank maps, outline maps and a pair of globes. But there are not many schools which possess all these. To many school District it would appear like the dream of an enthusiast to suggest that they should ever provide the teacher with even half of the applian-

ces I have mentioned. If they provide a weather proof building, a few desks and forms they imagine they have acted liberally towards education. We talk of Education, we have eloquent speeches on it delivered to admiring and intelligent audiences. We read of noble lords and high born ladies declaring that no subject lies so near their heart, as that of raising the social scale by means of an improved and extended system of Education, and all the time the teacher is allowed to spend his strength and energy, sometimes in a badly constructed, badly ventilated, and badly lighted schoolroom. Need we wonder that in many cases education is not advancing as it should. How can the teacher work unless he has materials with which to work? Our school and colleges are training good, enthusiastic, earnest, god fearing teachers, but when they go teaching in our country schools, their hands are tied down by the miserable and pernicious economy which refuses to supply them with the appliances which are absolutely essential to the right discharge of their duties. Worse than all they are endeavouring by every possible means to futher reduce his meagre salary. They have done admirably well in that respect these few years back, and it looks very much as if they intended to continue their deplorable work! But let not the faithful teacher despair: let him take courage and work with the appliances he has, and thus give evidence that he is not unworthy of his noble and grand vocation.

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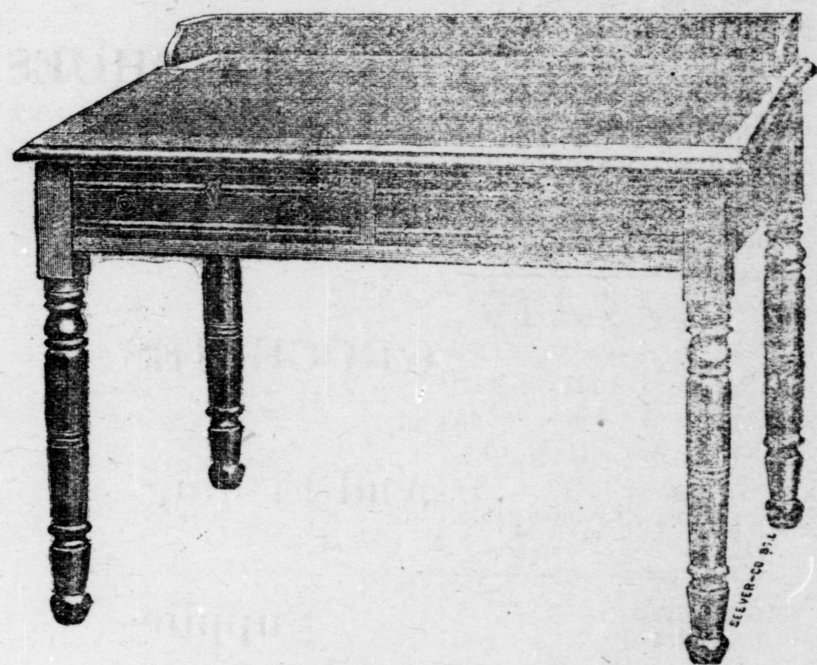
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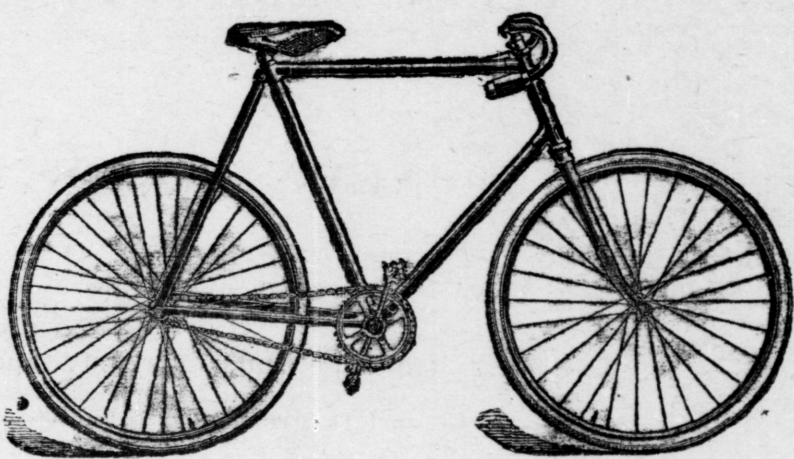


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