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ARTICLE IX.

EDUCATION AND CHARACTER.

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THE human infant is a most helpless creature. How much less he can do for himself than many a young animal! The colt, as soon as it is born, can stand on its clumsy legs and walk with awkward gait. The fishes of the sea can swim from the start and forage for themselves. A chicken, the moment it escapes from the shell, can run about and pick up its own food. But the child of proud man can only lie where he is placed and feed on what is given him. To be sure the same is true at first of many young birds, but with them the helpless condition is gone by in a few days. In the case of the child it is months before he can even creep. He may walk in a year, but many years must pass before he can provide for himself.

Nevertheless the possibilities of the child are immeasurably beyond those of the whole animal world. The mature, developed man is the highest of all creatures on the earth and has dominion over all the works of God. Look with awe upon the infant! This now helpless creature may attain a place among the great. Once such an one as he, became in thirty years the world-conquering Alexander. Such another became Plato, and yet another, Shakespeare. How puny the creature lying in the arms of Jocabed, the bondwoman, in Egypt! Let him not perish by the cruel edict of Pharaoh. This is Moses,

who may become the deliverer of a nation and the lawgiver of the world.

The contrast between an acorn and the oak into which it may grow, is infinitesimal, compared with the difference between that babe in Egypt and the leader of Israel. The transformation of the acorn into the oak is simply a matter of growth. Also in the passage from infancy to manhood a striking feature is the growth of the body, and far more marvelous is the development of the mind. The senses of the infant are little more than rudimentary. If warm and well fed and blessed with good digestion, this little germ of humanity will pay so little attention to sights and sounds as to sleep on by the hour amid all the stir of the family life. After sight and hearing develop, there is no judgment of the distance of visible objects, or of the direction of sounds. He has no language but a cry. Months pass before muscular activity can be coördinated enough to turn the body in the cradle. Yet in twenty or thirty courses of the sun through the zodiac the infant Raphael has developed the sense of sight to paint a Sistine Madonna, the infant Beethoven has developed the sense of hearing to compose his immortal music, the infant Paganini has attained such power of coördinating the muscles of arm and fingers that he can thrill an audience by successive tones from the four strings of a violin. In the same length of time the infant Cicero reached a power of speech that could change the political life of Rome and send an impulse of oratory down the centuries to our own time. All the wonders of science and invention,—tracing the course of the planets, measuring the velocity of light, weighing the mass of the earth, harnessing steam and lightning to move our machinery, discovering the causes of disease that may be avoided,—these, and countless more, are the achievements of

beings who a few years before they did these things were babes in arms.

A part of this change from infancy to manhood comes spontaneously by simple growth. As a young robin flies when its wings have become strong enough, and its nervous system has developed the power of making the proper muscles work in harmony, so the child will walk when his muscles are strong enough, and his nerve cells have reached coördinating power. He needs little or no teaching in that matter. If we can imagine a child fed by wild beasts, his body might grow to complete physical development. But the mind and all the higher powers of such a child would be almost atrophied.

For the development of the human mind there must be intercourse with other human beings, and a long process of learning to know, to think, and to communicate. From the helpless infant to the capable man there is a long road of continuous education. The child's organs of speech will grow in the course of unaided nature, and no doubt there will grow within him an impulse to express his wants and feelings. But he must be taught language before he can express discriminatingly even his feelings. The infant's cry makes us sure he is in pain, but the mother often searches long before finding the location of the suffering. Language does not come by instinct, but by learning from others in social contact. The child has the capacity of learning a language or several languages. But no child, though he be descended from a family of orators, will grow into a language by himself. He can learn language only from others; English from those who use English, Choctaw from those who know Choctaw.

The supposition of a child growing up among wild beasts with no human intercourse may suggest how incalculably various and important are the things we learn from our fellow-

men. Such a wild man of the forest would be destitute of the refinements of civilized life. He would also be ignorant of the most commonplace things that distinguish our human life from that of the brutes. He would neither sow nor reap, nor have storehouse and barn. For he would not know when to put into the ground the different kinds of grain nor what tillage each requires. In fifty years of experiment he might stumble on a few of the facts that are essential to agriculture; but how few! In such an important matter as how to make iron tools out of iron ore all the centuries through which the American Indians occupied this continent were not a sufficient time for them to find out the process. They acquired wonderful skill in the use of flint and birch-bark and the bow, but their lack of the knowledge of reducing iron ores limited their civilization to a pitifully low level.

It is only educated man that can do great things. A child left to himself cannot bring honor to the human race. He will not grow into greatness, but must be taught, trained, educated. Only by education can his possibilities become actualities.

In considering the relation of education to character, the word "character" is to be taken in its broadest sense of permanent qualities. We may in this sense speak of the character of three pieces of metal,—a brittle piece of cast-iron, a tough band of wrought iron, a keen-edged blade of steel. All these may be produced from one mass of iron ore. How different the qualities that result from three different methods of treatment! Iron ore in its original state is practically worthless. It possesses, however, the possibilities of all the countless iron and steel products on which it may be said our material civilization depends. None of these valuable products will come out of any piece of iron ore left to itself. And the child left to himself will not alone and of himself grow into an efficient

man. What he will be depends on how he is educated. The process of education will be much more than drawing out what is in him. Education must train him to qualities of which he is capable, but which will appear only in rudimentary form, and perhaps not at all, if he is not educated. His character, the sum of his permanent qualities, will be almost entirely the result of his education.

I. A fundamental quality in human character is *self-reliance.* There is a reckless self-assertiveness that is born of ignorance and leads into every kind of folly and danger. On the other hand, a true knowledge of one's own powers of endurance and action, and a sense of ready command of the means of achievement, give an intelligent self-reliance that is an invaluable element of power, and a strong protection in time of peril.

Self-reliance comes from knowledge of one's own powers. Such knowledge is made definite, and the powers themselves are developed, by experience in doing things. Edward Baxter Perry, who is one of America's great musicians though he has been blind since the age of four, tells us that after he became blind his mother was wise enough not to pick up the ball or other plaything he had dropped on the floor. She left him to find it for himself. He soon was able to find such lost articles almost or quite as quickly as the children about him who had the use of their eyes. Not only did she thus teach him to do things for himself, but this shouldering of responsibility trained him in the self-reliance which has been one of his most important assets through life.

The chief educational value of play is in giving the child a chance to find out what he can do, and thus developing both his power to do particular things and his general self-reliance. If a game call out the activity of only a few, while the crowd

are mere spectators, it lacks by that token the highest sort of educational value. If a game gets to the pass that it is played with a determination to win whether by fair means or foul, and becomes chiefly an occasion for the betting of incipient gamblers, it is then high time it was banished from educational institutions.

Manual training, it will readily be seen, has great value in developing self-reliance. To know how to use tools, to find by actual experience that one can do carpentry or iron work, to be able to make garments that fit, and bread that will not breed dyspepsia,—to know how to do these things, and to know that one knows,—lays a solid foundation of self-reliance on which to build the structure of a well-planned life.

Games and manual training are not the only things to make the child conscious of his powers. Every study of the schools may serve this end. History awakens a sense of capacity in directions before unimagined. For, as Emerson has said, the student of history "should see that he can live all history in his own person," identifying himself with Cyrus, Alexander, St. Paul, Columbus, and the rest. We are men, and how marvelous the capacity of man appears as we read the record of human endeavor! All these great deeds were wrought by men of like passions with us. With what confidence, then, may we also attempt heroic deeds.

On another side any study in the schools becomes a training in self-reliance if the pupil masters its difficulties. Whether he solve a problem in mathematics, write a clear-cut paragraph of English, translate a difficult sentence in Cæsar, attain the right fingering of a passage on piano or violin, or the effective modulation of a song; by accomplishing any of his tasks he attains greater confidence in himself and is by so much stronger for succeeding tasks. Much of such education comes

from self-imposed tasks. But the skillful teacher has a most important office in grading the tasks and arranging them in such order that the pupil shall not be discouraged by too abrupt difficulties, but rather be lured on from one attainment to another till he surmounts what beforehand seemed utterly beyond his power. No development of self-reliance can be secured by doing things for the pupil. He must be led and inspired to do things for himself, and thus learn what he is capable of. One who thus comes to have a well-grounded and intelligent confidence in his own powers is by his training better prepared to cope with every sort of difficulty that may confront him at any turn of life's journey. His education has built into his character, like the steel framework of a lofty city structure, the iron element of self-reliance.

II. Important as it is for man to know his own powers, and thus to have a well-grounded self-reliance, this will avail little toward a satisfactory career, unless he also knows the forces that environ him, and has an intelligent respect for what is outside of himself. It is essential for man's well-being, and indispensable for his power of achievement, that he know his limitations and realize his dependence. We may call this element of character *reverence.*

1. Thorough education will teach one reverence for the forces of nature that limit our physical life. We live among these forces. We can often use them if we know their laws and are willing to adapt our plans to them. We cannot, so long as we are in the body, escape from these natural forces for an instant. We do not know these forces by instinct, but must be taught. Often we must bow to them, for they are too powerful to be resisted. Often if we do not keep out of their clutch, they will do us great harm. We do not know by instinct that a red coal or a blazing flame will burn us. But the burnt

child learns to dread the fire. That is, he is educated by painful experience to be afraid of one of nature's forces. The human race has learned by painful experience that poke-root is poison, that a tiger is as ready to tear a man as a cat is to devour a mouse, that the bite of a rattlesnake brings speedy death. By word of mouth from father and mother to child this knowledge is passed on as a part of human wisdom. He who has been educated to a wholesome fear of these and similar dangers may save his life, not once nor twice, by using his knowledge, while the foolish pass on and are destroyed.

One aspect of the study of the natural sciences is that by such study we come to know something of the reach and power of gravitation, of momentum, of electricity, of chemical affinity. Such knowledge not only enables us to use these forces by wise direction in our industries, and thus gain added self-reliance; it teaches us, also, the limits beyond which we cannot safely go. We learn to light our streets and our houses with electricity, but we also learn that we must not touch a live wire. How soft and almost impalpable the air around us! Nevertheless, when moving in a tempest, it can impart to the waters of the sea an awful momentum, lifting the waves till sea and clouded sky seem one chaotic mass. Not till multitudes of men, venturing out on rafts, had perished at the hand of the sea, did the survivors learn the art of building ships that can ride the waves, and of managing them safely over thousands of miles of changing waters. A rational fear of the sea was the starting-point of the sciences of ship-building and of navigation. So a perfectly reasonable fear of yellow fever has been the incentive for searching out its causes, and finding that it can be effectually prevented by destroying the breeding-places of the peculiar species of mosquito which is its only means of transmission.

The thousand ways in which fear of natural forces, which is one form of reverence, furnishes a motive for finding out means of safety, make up only a part of the value of reverence in human character. How the sweep of any great science brings man to a juster estimate of himself! So said the eastern observer who long ago exclaimed: "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained; what is man that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man that thou visitest him?" The astronomer without reverence is mad.

Every natural science when profoundly studied teaches some lesson of reverence. The microscope is fitted to stir our amazement and awe as much as the telescope. While the work of human artisans shows imperfections under the magnifying-glass, the works of God in nature disclose minuter completeness when we apply the most powerful lenses to their smallest parts. A freshly fallen snowflake thus appears more marvelous than the cathedral of Milan.

All the natural sciences teach their powerful lesson of reverence. Whether we study Physics or Chemistry, the vital forces of Botany and Zoölogy, or the comprehensive subjects grouped in Physical Geography and Geology, every one leads to a mount of vision from which we survey wide kingdoms which show forth in countless variety and measureless extent the wisdom and power with which all things were made and are still upheld. No one is fitted to live well in this world till he has learned reverence for the laws of the material universe.

2. It is also no unimportant part of education to teach reverence for the forces that move in society. When one comes among us he must learn the requirements of our civil law and adapt himself to them. If one finds entrance into any circle of society he must learn and adopt its customs, or he will

not long be comfortable in that circle, nor be able to accomplish much there. Good manners in their substance are a matter of the heart, but their forms are matters of convention. Hence manners must be learned as truly as language. Who will consent to be taught manners unless he has first learned a measure of reverence for the opinion of mankind as expressed in the demands of society? Desire for public approval, dread of public disapproval, furnish motives for acquiring that adaptability which is one of the important qualities of a truly educated person.

History is full of examples illustrating how much greater is a nation than a man, the human race than any individual. The great literature of the world, especially the literature of tragedy, has for its commanding lesson the terrible condition of him who struggles against the tide of some almost omnipotent sentiment. He may be wicked like Milton's Satan justly overthrown by righteous powers. He may be a hero like Prometheus daring the rage of offended jealousy for attempting to benefit men. In either case the tragic interest of the situation teaches us to realize that we have our being in the midst of forces whose terrible powers may well fill us with awe. Truly educated persons have learned that life is not a childish playtime, but is crowded with serious possibilities, that must be met with earnestness, showing itself in unwearied patience and unflagging activity.

While teaching reverence we must not leave out that which is highest of all, reverence toward God. Whether we trace back material forces to find their source, or study the methods and processes of our own minds, and, especially, the power of choice in our wills and the mandatory voice of conscience, by every road we come to the great First Cause, who has more fully disclosed himself to us through Jesus Christ as God, our

Heavenly Father. Of all our environment he is the chiefest fact. Physical environment and social environment have come from him, and he is immanent in them and also transcendent above them. In him we live, and move, and have our being. Reverence for him is more than fear; it passes over into love, which can cast out fear, and can

> 'Take up the Harp of life, and smite on all its chords with might;
> Smite the chord of self, till, trembling, it pass in music out of sight.'

Self-reliance, through well-grounded knowledge of one's own powers, and reverence for the forces that environ us round,—these are essential elements of character that wise education can develop. Education is not worthy the name unless it does develop both.

> "Let knowledge grow from more to more,
> But more of reverence in us dwell;
> That mind and soul, according well,
> May make one music as before."

The educated man knowing himself and knowing his surroundings can best adapt himself to his surroundings. He is not mechanically fitted into one place, but is a trained and intelligent center of force. He can meet changing conditions. He can surmount difficulties. He can seize opportunities. Life may be to him a strenuous effort many a time, but never a hopeless struggle.

III. The third great element of character which education should seek to produce is *altruism,* regard for others. The individual man is not a solitary atom. Every man is a part of society. We have noted the fact that the individual cannot learn language at all unless he is associated with others. A careful survey of all man's attainments would show that he has very little he could have secured in absolute isolation. The

slowly acquired knowledge of previous generations is poured out around him. He must assimilate it before it can become his own. But of himself he could find out *de novo* only an infinitesimal part of the world's accumulated wisdom and knowledge.

This dependence on society means that there must be mutual give and take in men's relations to one another if they are to attain the best things. If the subject were considered solely from the self-interest of the individual, we should thus find that he must have regard for others, in order to make the most of himself. He must be ready to learn from others, and must establish such relations with them that they will spontaneously communicate to him the things he needs to know, or spontaneously furnish him the opportunities for activity that will develop his efficiency. One cannot learn to play base-ball alone. He must be a member of a team working together for a common end. The team also must be in such friendly relations with another team that the two can play together. There are a few things of a warlike nature that may be learned from bitter enemies. But in most matters suspicion, jealousy, hostility, raise effectual barriers against profitable intercourse. As he that will have friends must show himself friendly, it is essential for even the narrowest self-interest that a person should have developed in him the spirit and habit of *regard for others.*

Education, moreover, has a broader outlook than the welfare of the educated person. The chief justification of taxation for school purposes is in the confident belief that those who are educated by the schools will serve the community better than if they were left uneducated. The prime motive is not to enable the educated to have an easier time in life, but to enable them to contribute more to the general welfare.

If education develops self-reliance and reverence, these qualities will go far to protect the community from crime. For cowardly fear is one of the great sources of temptation to crime. He who has acquired no art by which to earn an honest living is tempted to steal whenever he is hungry, or cold, or whenever he sees anything he wishes for. In the panic of a shipwreck, he who knows he cannot swim is tempted to push his fellow-man off the plank that he may get it for himself. Whoever feels helpless to face the real truth is tempted to lie to others and to deceive himself. In like manner the absence of reverence for natural law and social law may result in recklessness like that of a man furiously drunk or violently insane. The state is repaid for its school taxes by the lessening of crime through these two elements of self-reliance and reverence produced by the schools; for these bring it to pass that few educated people are found in our prisons. But there is need also of developing positive virtue by education.

If the moral element of regard for others is not secured in educated people, their education may bring great mischief to the public. If they are made more skillful in robbing the public, whether by violence or cunning, how is the world any better for their education? The general welfare is not promoted by what the burglar has learned of the locksmith's art, nor by the fine penmanship of the forger, nor by the oratorical skill of the demagogue. The United States was never reimbursed for its expense in the military training of Benedict Arnold. What was spent on the college and professional courses of Aaron Burr yielded dividends of mischief. If our schools of various grades fail to make their pupils better lovers of their kind they miss the most important object of the schools. Whatever else they accomplished, this would be a

fatal lack. It is a false education that makes men despise others who do not know as much as they, or whose manners are less polished, or whose grammar and pronunciation are less refined. It is a false education that makes one critical of others instead of helpful. Better no education than one that makes its possessor feel himself too fine for this world; and so he will lift no finger to meet the world's needs, but shrivels his narrow soul to the task of flattering his own vanity with a false sense of superiority.

While the doctrine of Socrates, that virtue can be taught and that all wrong-doing is to be traced to ignorance, cannot be accepted, there is yet no doubt that almost every subject of the curriculum can be so taught as to develop sympathy and helpfulness. Even the alphabet and the multiplication table have their direct moral lessons. The letters we use give us kinship with all who employ the same symbols; and when one learns Greek letters he becomes by that knowledge a neighbor to Plato. And as to the multiplication table, how skillfully Edward Everett Hale, in his little book "Ten Times One are Ten," brought out the law that if you multiply a kindness the product is many kindnesses, and they tend to increase by geometrical ratio.

When pupils come to the study of history and literature, to which they can come only after acquiring letters and at least simple mathematics, then every page is crammed with moral instruction. This is preëminently true of the Bible, but is also true of all history. The teacher should regard it as one of his most important functions to see to it that the right lessons are impressed by history. Never let the glamour of Napoleon's marvelous achievements on the battle-field and in the council-chamber obscure either the miseries his wars brought to France and all Europe, nor the selfish vanity and ambition of the man

himself, which brought him to ruin and turned France into the path of decay, when, if his powers had been directed by generous purposes, the name of Napoleon might have stood to the end of time one of the most honored on history's roll, and France might have gained a leadership in the world's noblest life that she would not have lost for centuries.

Pupils are to be taught regard for others not simply nor chiefly by precepts and formal lessons in ethics. Far more important results of high moral training can be secured by establishing the habit of finding the lessons written in history, and the ideals that fill the best literature. Fundamental for moral training is high character and worthy example in the teachers themselves. Those who have the responsibility of appointing teachers cannot be too particular on this point. It is vain for one who is corrupt in his life to attempt to cultivate virtue by his words. The youngest pupils are too keen to be long deceived by hypocrisy. If there is anywhere a teacher who has low ideals or is living a base actual life, what a powerful influence to change his life for the better should come from realizing how closely his pupils' eyes are upon him, and how profoundly their character may be affected by his. Character is contagious. It is lifted and enlarged by the companionship of the noble. Its best development can be looked for only when the soul of its own choice keeps in touch with the divine grace that came into the world with Jesus Christ.

We have been considering a broader question than what education will make one a good lawyer or physician, a good housewife or nurse or teacher. Encompassing all these details is the relation of education to the man himself. Specific special training is requisite for every specific calling. The training of character is prerequisite to all the value of technical training. A surgeon's learning will avail little in a

critical emergency if he has not attained a self-reliance that can reach a prompt decision what to do, and a reverence for the vital laws of human physiology that holds him back from careless strokes. Only on the foundation of a well-developed character can the superstructure of a well-equipped specialist be built.

If it be asked what sort of studies are adapted to the development of character, it has already been suggested that any study rightly pursued may contribute to character building, and that sports can be made serviceable to the same end. And it should never be overlooked that the ordinary business of life is a great developer of character. Schools have no exclusive patent for this work; but they have special facilities for it, and have a great advantage in dealing with material that is far more plastic than it will be in later years.

In regard to studies, some train the memory, some the reasoning powers, some the powers of observation, and others the power of making the body carry out the behests of the mind. There is choice for developing this or that side of the pupil's nature. But any of these may be used in bringing out and building up character. A combination of several quite different kinds of training may be essential to the strongest self-reliance and the profoundest reverence. The commander of a modern battleship, for example, must know the theory of navigation and the mathematics of gunnery. He must also have at command the knowledge of a great multitude of facts in regard to his ship,—where every speaking-tube or electric bell communicates, what will be the effect of pushing any of the levers this way or that, where the compartments are divided and whether their valves are open or shut, how the fuel is holding out and the ammunition, what devices can be instantly brought into use if the rudder is shot away or any

other important part injured. He also needs to be a master of a practical psychology to keep his crew bold and enthusiastic. Knowledge of these and many other complicated details will not only show him what to do at each turn of the battle, but more important than that is the self-reliance the knowledge will give him. Only if self-reliant can he calmly take in all the elements of each new situation, and promptly yet deliberately act a true commander's part. At the same time this knowledge gives him reverence for the serious perils that attend an iron ship fighting a like enemy on the deep sea, and he is kept from foolhardy risks. Mere mechanical skill to do certain things is of little significance unless there is along with it a calm and penetrating intelligence deciding what to do. Wild panic from not knowing the full situation, or not seeing what to do, will paralyze the greatest technical skill. And technical skill applied in misapprehension of the real situation only rushes the possessor the more swiftly to destruction. I do not belittle the practical in education. But character is so essential to the practicing of the practical that we may rightly maintain that character is the most important aim of education. It is the man behind the gun.

What we call discipline in school may make important direct contributions to character. A marking system may be necessary to goad the indolent to steady work, as Burns says:

> "The fear o' hell's a hangman's whip
> To haud the wretch in order."

The danger in the marking system is that some pupils will seek reputation instead of character; will even cheat in examinations, as if their grade on the book were more important than the attainment of real power. Of much greater importance is the maintenance of quiet in the school-room, and of

order during the recitation-hour. This is essential to securing good use of all the time. It also cultivates self-control, which is an element of self-reliance. And the pupil in keeping order and quietness is practicing regard for others. Whenever a person restrains or denies himself for the sake of others, the outward act of altruism exerts an influence to deepen his inward thoughtfulness for others. It has often been remarked that women are as a rule more ready to make sacrifices for others than men are. If this be true, may it not be explained by the fact that so commonly from childhood in the home the girls are habituated to waiting on the rest of the household, and the boys habituated to being waited on? How many a mother has worn her life out waiting on her children, both sons and daughters, to find that, instead of inspiring them to gratitude, she has only developed their selfish indolence and made them indifferent to the comfort of others, even of their mother! It is far better to compel young people to pay regard to the welfare of others than to permit them to crystallize their selfish habits.

Teachers have great opportunity of increasing the capacity of the men and women of the next generation to fill a worthy place in the world. They can impart to them much positive knowledge, and put them in the way of acquiring much more that will be of incalculable value in fitting them into the circumstances of their time. Right instruction can train them in technical skill that will enable them to make vastly better use of the material they will find about them. More important than these things, it is within the power of the schools to make their pupils stronger, broader men and women, and to inspire them with nobler purposes. The great work of education is the production of character, self-reliant, reverent, regardful of others.