

# FELIX ADLER

THE MORAL  
INSTRUCTION  
OF CHILDREN

**Felix Adler**  
**The Moral Instruction of Children**

*[http://www.litres.ru/pages/biblio\\_book/?art=24166340](http://www.litres.ru/pages/biblio_book/?art=24166340)*

*The Moral Instruction of Children:*

# Содержание

EDITOR'S PREFACE	4
PREFATORY NOTE	10
INTRODUCTORY LECTURES	11
I.	11
II.	24
III.	34
IV.	43
V.	53
PRIMARY COURSE	66
VI.	66
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	69

# **The Moral Instruction of Children**

## **EDITOR'S PREFACE**

Moral education is everywhere acknowledged to be the most important part of all education; but there has not been the same agreement in regard to the best means of securing it in the school. This has been due in part to a want of insight into the twofold nature of this sort of education; for instruction in morals includes two things: the formation of right ideas and the formation of right habits. Right ideas are necessary to guide the will, but right habits are the product of the will itself.

It is possible to have right ideas to some extent without the corresponding moral habits. On this account the formation of correct habits has been esteemed by some to be the chief thing. But unconscious habits – mere use and wont – do not seem to deserve the title of moral in its highest sense. The moral act should be a considerate one, and rest on the adoption of principles to guide one's actions.

To those who lay stress on the practical side and demand the formation of correct habits, the school as it is seems to be

a great ethical instrumentality. To those who see in theoretical instruction the only true basis of moral character, the existing school methods seem sadly deficient.

The school as it is looks first after its discipline, and next after its instruction. Discipline concerns the behavior, and instruction concerns the intellectual progress of the pupil. That part of moral education which relates to habits of good behavior is much better provided for in the school than any part of intellectual education.

There is, however, a conflict here between old and new ideals. The old-fashioned school regarded obedience to authority the one essential; the new ideal regards insight into the reasonableness of moral commands the chief end. It is said, with truth, that a habit of unreasoning obedience does not fit one for the exigencies of modern life, with its partisan appeals to the individual and its perpetual display of grounds and reasons, specious and otherwise, in the newspapers. The unreasoning obedience to a moral guide in school may become in after life unreasoning obedience to a demagogue or to a leader in crime.

It is not obedience to external authority that we need so much as enlightened moral sense, and yet there remains and will remain much good in the old-fashioned habit of implicit obedience.

The new education aims at building up self-control and individual insight. It substitutes the internal authority of conscience for the external authority of the master. It claims by this to educate the citizen fitted for the exercise of suffrage in a free government. He will weigh political and social questions

in his mind, and decide for himself. He will be apt to reject the scheme of the demagogue. While the old-fashioned school-master relied on the rod to sustain his external authority, he produced, it is said, a reaction against all authority in the minds of strong-willed pupils. The new education saves the strong-willed pupil from this tension against constituted authority, and makes him law-abiding from the beginning.

It will be admitted that the school under both its forms – old as well as new – secures in the main the formation of the cardinal moral habits. It is obliged to insist on regularity, punctuality, silence, and industry as indispensable for the performance of its school tasks. A private tutor may permit his charge to neglect all these things, and yet secure some progress in studies carried on by fits and starts, with noise and zeal to-day, followed by indolence to-morrow. But a school, on account of its numbers, must insist on the semi-mechanical virtues of regularity, punctuality, silence, and industry. Although these are semi-mechanical in their nature, for with much practice they become unconscious habits, yet they furnish the very groundwork of all combinations of man with his fellow-men. They are fundamental conditions of social life. The increase of city population, consequent on the growth of productive industry and the substitution of machines for hand labor, renders necessary the universal prevalence of these cardinal virtues of the school.

Even the management of machines requires that sort of alertness which comes from regularity and punctuality. The

travel on the railroad, the management of steam-engines, the necessities of concerted action, require punctuality and rhythmic action.

The school habit of silence means considerate regard for the rights of fellow-workmen. They must not be interfered with, their attention must not be distracted from their several tasks. A rational self-restraint grows out of this school habit – rational, because it rests on considerateness for the work of others. This is a great lesson in co-operation. Morals in their essence deal with the relation of man to his fellow-men, and rest on a considerateness for the rights of others. "Do unto others," etc., sums up the moral code.

Industry, likewise, takes a high rank as a citizen's virtue. By it man learns to re-enforce the moments by the hours, and the days by the years. He learns how the puny individual can conquer great obstacles. The school demands of the youth a difficult kind of industry. He must think and remember, giving close and unremitting attention to subjects strange and far off from his daily life. He must do this in order to discover eventually that these strange and far-off matters are connected in a close manner to his own history and destiny.

There is another phase of the pupil's industry that has an important bearing on morals. All his intellectual work in the class has to do with critical accuracy, and respect for the truth. Loose statements and careless logical inference meet with severe reproof.

Finally, there is an enforced politeness and courtesy toward teachers and fellow-pupils – at least to the extent of preventing quarrels. This is directly tributary to the highest of virtues, namely, kindness and generosity.

All these moral phases mentioned have to do with the side of school discipline rather than instruction, and they do not necessarily have any bearing on the theory of morals or on ethical philosophy, except in the fact that they make a very strong impression on the mind of the youth, and cause him to feel that he is a member of a moral order. He learns that moral demands are far more stern than the demands of the body for food or drink or repose. The school thus does much to change the pupil from a natural being to a spiritual being. Physical nature becomes subordinated to the interests of human nature.

Notwithstanding the fact that the school is so efficient as a means of training in moral habits, it is as yet only a small influence in the realm of moral theory. Even our colleges and universities, it must be confessed, do little in this respect, although there has been of late an effort to increase in the programmes the amount of time devoted to ethical study. The cause of this is the divorce of moral theory from theology. All was easy so long as ethics was directly associated with the prevailing religious confession. The separation of Church and State, slowly progressing everywhere since the middle ages, has at length touched the question of education.

The attempt to find an independent basis for ethics in the

science of sociology has developed conflicting systems. The college student is rarely strengthened in his faith in moral theories by his theoretic study. Too often his faith is sapped. Those who master a spiritual philosophy are strengthened; the many who drift toward a so-called "scientific" basis are led to weaken their moral convictions to the standpoint of fashion, or custom, or utility.

Meanwhile the demand of the age to separate Church from State becomes more and more exacting. Religious instruction has almost entirely ceased in the public schools, and it is rapidly disappearing from the programmes of colleges and preparatory schools, and few academies are now scenes of religious revival, as once was common.

The publishers of this series are glad, therefore, to offer a book so timely and full of helpful suggestions as this of Mr. Adler. It is hoped that it may open for many teachers a new road to theoretic instruction in morality, and at the same time re-enforce the study of literature in our schools.

*W. T. Harris.*

Washington, D.C., *July, 1892.*

# PREFATORY NOTE

The following lectures were delivered in the School of Applied Ethics during its first session in 1891, at Plymouth, Mass. A few of the lectures have been condensed, in order to bring more clearly into view the logical scheme which underlies the plan of instruction here outlined. The others are published substantially as delivered.

I am deeply conscious of the difficulties of the problem which I have ventured to approach, and realize that any contribution toward its solution, at the present time, must be most imperfect. I should, for my part, have preferred to wait longer before submitting my thought to teachers and parents. But I have been persuaded that even in its present shape it may be of some use. I earnestly hope that, at all events, it may serve to help on the rising tide of interest in moral education, and may stimulate to further inquiry.

*Felix Adler.*

# INTRODUCTORY LECTURES

## I.

### THE PROBLEM OF UNSECTARIAN MORAL INSTRUCTION

It will be the aim of the present course of lectures to give in outline the subject-matter of moral instruction for children from six to fourteen or fifteen years of age, and to discuss the methods according to which this kind of instruction should be imparted. At the outset, however, we are confronted by what certainly is a grave difficulty, and to many may appear an insuperable one. The opinion is widely held that morality depends on religious sanctions, and that right conduct can not be taught – especially not to children – except it be under the authority of some sort of religious belief. To those who think in this way the very phrase, unsectarian moral teaching, is suspicious, as savoring of infidelity. And the attempt to mark off a neutral moral zone, outside the domains of the churches, is apt to be regarded as masking a covert design on religion itself.

The principle of unsectarian moral instruction, however, is neither irreligious nor anti-religious. In fact – as will appear later on – it rests on purely educational grounds, with which

the religious bias of the educator has nothing whatever to do. But there are also grounds of expediency which, at least in the United States, compel us, whether we care to do so or not, to face this problem of unsectarian moral education, and to these let us first give our attention. Even if we were to admit, for argument's sake, the correctness of the proposition that moral truths can only be taught as corollaries of some form of religious belief, the question would at once present itself to the educator, To which form of religious belief shall he give the preference? I am speaking now of the public schools of the United States.

These schools are supported out of the general fund of taxation to which all citizens are compelled to contribute. Clearly it would be an act of gross injustice to force a citizen belonging to one denomination to pay for instilling the doctrines of some other into the minds of the young – in other words, to compel him to support and assist in spreading religious ideas in which he does not believe. This would be an outrage on the freedom of conscience. But the act of injustice would become simply monstrous if parents were to be compelled to help indoctrinate their own children with such religious opinions as are repugnant to them.

There is no state religion in the United States. In the eyes of the state all shades of belief and disbelief are on a par. There are in this country Catholics, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, Jews, etc. They are alike citizens. They contribute alike toward the maintenance of the public schools. With what show

of fairness, then, could the belief of any one of these sects be adopted by the state as a basis for the inculcation of moral truths? The case seems, on the face of it, a hopeless one. But the following devices have been suggested to remove, or rather to circumvent, the difficulty.

*First Device.*— Let representatives of the various theistic churches, including Catholics, Protestants, and Jews, meet in council. Let them eliminate all those points in respect to which they differ, and formulate a common creed containing only those articles on which they can agree. Such a creed would include, for instance, the belief in the existence of Deity, in the immortality of the soul, and in future reward and punishment. Upon this as a foundation let the edifice of moral instruction be erected. There are, however, two obvious objections to this plan. In the first place, this "Dreibund" of Catholicism, Protestantism, and Judaism would leave out of account the party of the agnostics, whose views may indeed be erroneous, or even detestable, but whose rights as citizens ought not the less on that account to be respected. "*Neminem læde*," hurt no one, is a cardinal rule of justice, and should be observed by the friends of religion in their dealings with their opponents as well as with one another. The agnostic party has grown to quite considerable dimensions in the United States. But, if it had not, if there were only a single person who held such opinions, and he a citizen, any attempt on the part of the majority to trample upon the rights of this one person would still be inexcusable. In the sphere of

political action the majority rules, and must rule; in matters that touch the conscience the smallest minority possesses rights on which even an overwhelming majority arrayed on the opposite side can not afford to trespass. It is one of the most notable achievements of the American commonwealths that they have so distinctly separated between the domain of religion and of politics, adopting in the one case the maxim of coercion by majority rule, in the other allowing the full measure of individual liberty. From this standpoint there should be no departure.

But the second objection is even more cogent. It is proposed to eliminate the differences which separate the various sects, and to formulate their points of agreement into a common creed. But does it not occur to those who propose this plan that the very life of a religion is to be found precisely in those points in which it differs from its neighbors, and that an abstract scheme of belief, such as has been sketched, would, in truth, satisfy no one? Thus, out of respect for the sentiments of the Jews, it is proposed to omit the doctrines of the divinity of Christ and of the atonement. But would any earnest Christian give his assent, even provisionally, to a creed from which those quintessential doctrines of Christianity have been left out? When the Christian maintains that morality must be based on religion, does he not mean, above all, on the belief in Christ? Is it not indispensable, from his point of view, that the figure of the Saviour shall stand in the foreground of moral inculcation and exhortation? Again, when the Catholic affirms that the moral teaching of the young

must be based on religion, is it to be supposed for an instant that he would accept as satisfying his conception of religion a skeleton creed like that above mentioned, denuded of all those peculiar dogmas which make religion in his eyes beautiful and dear? This first device, therefore, is to be rejected. It is unjust to the agnostics, and it will never content the really religious persons of any denomination. It could prove acceptable only to theists pure and simple, whose creed is practically limited to the three articles mentioned; namely, the belief in Deity, immortality, and future punishment and reward. But this class constitutes a small fraction of the community; and it would be absurd, under the specious plea of reconciling the various creeds, in effect to impose the rationalistic opinions of a few on the whole community.

The *second device* seems to promise better results. It provides that religious and moral instruction combined shall be given in the public schools under the auspices of the several denominations. According to this plan, the pupils are to be divided, for purposes of moral instruction, into separate classes, according to their sectarian affiliations, and are to be taught separately by their own clergymen or by teachers acting under instructions from the latter. The high authority of Germany is invoked in support of this plan. If I am correctly informed, the president of one of our leading universities has recently spoken in favor of it, and it is likely that an attempt will be made to introduce it in the United States. Already in some of our reformatory schools and other public institutions separate

religious services are held by the ministers of the various sects, and we may expect that an analogous arrangement will be proposed with respect to moral teaching in the common schools. It is necessary, therefore, to pay some attention to the German system, and to explain the reasons which have induced or compelled the Germans to adopt the compromise just described. The chief points to be noted are these: In Germany, church and state are united. The King of Prussia, for instance, is the head of the Evangelical Church. This constitutes a vital difference between America and Germany. Secondly, in Germany the schools existed before the state took charge of them. The school system was founded by the Church, and the problem which confronted the Government was how to convert church schools into state schools. An attempt was made to do this by limiting the influence of the clergy, which formerly had been all-powerful and all-pervasive, to certain branches and certain hours of instruction, thereby securing the supremacy of the state in respect to all other branches and at all other hours. In America, on the other hand, the state founded the schools *ab initio*. In Germany the state has actually encroached upon the Church, has entered church schools and reconstructed them in its own interest. To adopt the German system in America would be to permit the Church to encroach upon the state, to enter state schools and subordinate them to sectarian purposes. The example of Germany can not, therefore, be quoted as a precedent in point. The system of compromise in Germany

marks an advance in the direction of increasing state influence. Its adoption in this country would mark a retrograde movement in the direction of increasing church influence.

Nor can the system, when considered on its own merits, be called a happy one. Prof. Gneist, in his valuable treatise, *Die Konfessionelle Schule* (which may be read by those who desire to inform themselves on the historical evolution of the Prussian system), maintains that scientific instruction must be unsectarian, while religious instruction must be sectarian. I agree to both his propositions. But to my mind it follows that, if religious instruction must be sectarian, it ought not to have a place in state schools, at least not in a country in which the separation of church and state is complete. Moreover, the limitation of religious teaching to a few hours a week can never satisfy the earnest sectarian. If he wants religion in the schools at all, then he will also want that specific kind of religious influence which he favors to permeate the whole school. He will insist that history shall be taught from his point of view, that the readers shall breathe the spirit of his faith, that the science teaching shall be made to harmonize with its doctrines, etc. What a paltry concession, indeed, to open the door to the clergyman twice or three times a week, and to permit him to teach the catechism to the pupils, while the rest of the teaching is withdrawn from his control, and is perhaps informed by a spirit alien to his! This kind of compromise can never heartily be indorsed; it may be accepted under pressure, but submission to it will always be

under protest.<sup>1</sup>

The third arrangement that has been suggested is that each sect shall build its own schools, and draw upon the fund supplied by taxation proportionately to the number of children educated. But to this there are again two great objections: First, it is the duty of the state to see to it that a high educational standard shall be maintained in the schools, and that the money spent on them shall bear fruit in raising the general intelligence of the community. But the experience of the past proves conclusively that in sectarian schools, especially where there are no rival unsectarian institutions to force them into competition, the preponderance of zeal and interest is so markedly on the side of religious teaching that the secular branches unavoidably suffer.<sup>2</sup> If it is said that the state may prescribe rules and set up standards of its own, to which the sectarian schools shall be held to conform, we ask, Who is to secure such conformance? The various sects, once having gained possession of the public funds, would resent the interference of the State. The Inspectors who might be appointed would never

---

<sup>1</sup> Since the above was written, the draft of the *Volksschulgesetz* submitted to the Prussian Legislature, and the excited debates to which it gave rise, have supplied a striking confirmation of the views expressed in the text. Nothing could be more mistaken than to propose for imitation elsewhere the German "solution" of the problem of moral teaching in schools, especially at a time when the Germans themselves are taking great pains to make it clear that they are as far as possible from having found a solution.

<sup>2</sup> During the reactionary period which followed the Revolution of 1848, the school regulations of Kur-Hessen provided that twenty hours a week be devoted in the Volksschulen to religious teaching.

be allowed to exercise any real control, and the rules which the State might prescribe would remain dead letter.

In the second place, under such an arrangement, the highest purpose for which the public schools exist would be defeated. Sectarian schools tend to separate the members of the various denominations from one another, and to hinder the growth of that spirit of national unity which it is, on the other hand, the prime duty of the public school to create and foster. The support of a system of public education out of the proceeds of taxation is justifiable in the last analysis as a measure dictated to the State by the law of self-preservation. The State maintains public schools in order to preserve itself – i. e., its unity. And this is especially true in a republic. In a monarchy the strong arm of the reigning dynasty, supported by a ruling class, may perhaps suppress discord, and hold the antagonistic elements among the people in subjection by sheer force. In a republic only the spirit of unity among the people themselves can keep them a people. And this spirit is fostered in public schools, where children of all classes and sects are brought into daily, friendly contact, and where together they are indoctrinated into the history, tradition, and aspirations of the nation to which they belong.

What then? We have seen that we can not encourage, that we can not permit, the establishment of sectarian schools at the public expense. We have also seen that we can not teach religion in the public schools. Must we, therefore, abandon altogether the hope of teaching the elements of morals? Is not moral

education conceded to be one of the most important, if not the most important, of all branches of education? Must we forego the splendid opportunities afforded by the daily schools for this purpose? Is there not a way of imparting moral instruction without giving just offense to any religious belief or any religious believer, or doing violence to the rights of any sect or of any party whatsoever? The correct answer to this question would be the solution of the problem of unsectarian moral education. I can merely state my answer to-day, in the hope that the entire course before us may substantiate it. The answer, as I conceive it, is this: It is the business of the moral instructor in the school to deliver to his pupils the subject-matter of morality, but not to deal with the sanctions of it; to give his pupils a clearer understanding of what *is* right and what *is* wrong, but not to enter into the question why the right should be done and the wrong avoided. For example, let us suppose that the teacher is treating of veracity. He says to the pupil, Thou shalt not lie. He takes it for granted that the pupil feels the force of this commandment, and acknowledges that he ought to yield obedience to it. For my part, I should suspect of quibbling and dishonest intention any boy or girl who would ask me, Why ought I not to lie? I should hold up before such a child the Ought in all its awful majesty. The right to reason about these matters can not be conceded until after the mind has attained a certain maturity. And as a matter of fact every good child agrees with the teacher unhesitatingly when he says, It is wrong to lie. There is an answering echo in

its heart which confirms the teacher's words. But what, then, is it my business as a moral teacher to do? In the first place, to deepen the impression of the wrongfulness of lying, and the sacredness of truth, by the spirit in which I approach the subject. My first business is to convey the spirit of moral reverence to my pupils. In the next place, I ought to quicken the pupil's perceptions of what is right and wrong, in the case supposed, of what is truth and what is falsehood. Accordingly, I should analyze the different species of lies, with a view of putting the pupils on their guard against the spirit of falsehood, however it may disguise itself. I should try to make my pupils see that, whenever they intentionally convey a false impression, they are guilty of falsehood. I should try to make their minds intelligent and their consciences sensitive in the matter of truth-telling, so that they may avoid those numerous ambiguities of which children are so fond, and which are practiced even by adults. I should endeavor to tonic their moral nature with respect to truthfulness. In the next place, I should point out to them the most frequent motives which lead to lying, so that, by being warned against the causes, they may the more readily escape the evil consequences. For example, cowardice is one cause of lying. By making the pupil ashamed of cowardice, we can often cure him of the tendency to falsehood. A redundant imagination is another cause of lying, envy is another cause, selfishness in all its forms is a principal cause, etc. I should say to the moral teacher: Direct the pupil's attention to the various dangerous tendencies in his nature, which tempt him

into the ways of falsehood. Furthermore, explain to your pupils the consequences of falsehood: the loss of the confidence of our fellow-men, which is the immediate and palpable result of being detected in a lie; the injuries inflicted on others; the loosening of the bonds of mutual trust in society at large; the loss of self-respect on the part of the liar; the fatal necessity of multiplying lies, of inventing new falsehoods to make good the first, etc. A vast amount of good, I am persuaded, can be done in this way by stimulating the moral nature, by enabling the scholar to detect the finer shades of right and wrong, helping him to trace temptation to its source, and erecting in his mind barriers against evil-doing, founded on a realizing sense of its consequences.

In a similar if not exactly the same way, all the other principal topics of practical morality can be handled. The conscience can be enlightened, strengthened, guided, and all this can be done without once raising the question why it is wrong to do what is forbidden. That it is wrong should rather, as I have said, be assumed. The ultimate grounds of moral obligation need never be discussed in school. It is the business of religion and philosophy to propose theories, or to formulate articles of belief with respect to the ultimate sources and sanctions of duty. Religion says we ought to do right because it is the will of God, or for the love of Christ. Philosophy says we should do right for utilitarian or transcendental reasons, or in obedience to the law of evolution, etc. The moral teacher, fortunately, is not called upon to choose between these various metaphysical and theological

asseverations. As an individual he may subscribe to any one of them, but as a teacher he is bound to remain within the safe limits of his own province. He is not to explain why we should do the right, but to make the young people who are intrusted to his charge see more clearly what is right, and to instill into them his own love of and respect for the right. There is a body of moral truth upon which all good men, of whatever sect or opinion, are agreed: *it is the business of the public schools to deliver to their pupils this common fund of moral truth.* But I must hasten to add, to deliver it not in the style of the preacher, but according to the methods of the pedagogue – i. e., in a systematic way, the moral lessons being graded to suit the varying ages and capacities of the pupils, and the illustrative material being sorted and arranged in like manner. Conceive the modern educational methods to have been applied to that stock of moral truths which all good men accept, and you will have the material for the moral lessons which are needed in a public school.

## II.

# THE EFFICIENT MOTIVES OF GOOD CONDUCT

There are persons in whom moral principle seems to have completely triumphed; whose conduct, so far as one can judge, is determined solely by moral rules; but whom, nevertheless, we do not wholly admire. We feel instinctively that there is in their virtue a certain flaw – the absence of a saving grace. They are too rigorous, too much the slaves of duty. They lack geniality.

Like religion, morality has its fanatics. Thus, there is in the temperance movement a class of fanatics who look at every public question from the point of view of temperance reform, and from that only. There are also woman's-rights fanatics, social purity fanatics, etc. The moral fanatic in every case is a person whose attention is wholly engrossed by some one moral interest, and who sees this out of its relation to other moral interests. The end he has in view may be in itself highly laudable, but the exaggerated emphasis put upon it, the one-sided pursuit of it, is a mischievous error.

Observe, further, that there are degrees of moral fanaticism. The fanatic of the first degree, to whom Emerson addresses the words, "What right have you, sir, to your one virtue?" has just been described. He is a person who exalts some one moral

rule at the expense of the others. A fanatic of a higher order is he who exalts the whole body of moral rules at the expense of human instincts and desires. He is a person who always acts according to rule; who introduces moral considerations into every detail of life; who rides the moral hobby; in whose eyes the infinite complexity of human affairs has only one aspect, namely, the moral; who is never satisfied unless at every step he feels the strain of the bridle of conscience; who is incapable of spontaneous action and of *naïve* enjoyment. It is believed that there are not a few persons of this description in the United States, and especially in the New England States – fanatics on the moral side, examples of a one-sided development in the direction of moral formalism. We must be very careful, when insisting on the authority of moral ideas, lest we encourage in the young a tendency of this sort. The hearts of children are very pliable; it is easily possible to produce on them too deep an impression: to give them at the outset a fatal twist, all the more since at a certain age many young people are prone to exaggerated introspection and self-questioning. But it may be asked: Are not moral principles really clothed with supreme authority? Ought we not, indeed, to keep the standard of righteousness constantly before our eyes; in brief, is it possible to be too moral? Evidently we have reached a point where a distinction requires to be drawn.

Ethics is a science of relations. The things related are human interests, human ends. The ideal which ethics proposes to itself is the unity of ends, just as the ideal of science is the unity of causes.

The ends of the natural man are the subject-matter with which ethics deals. The ends of the natural man are not to be crushed or wiped out, but to be brought into right relations with one another. The ends of the natural man are to be respected from an ethical point of view, so long as they remain within their proper limits. The moral laws are formulas expressing relations of equality or subordination, or superordination. The moral virtue of our acts consists in the respect which we pay to the system of relationships thus prescribed, in the willingness with which we co-ordinate our interests with those of others, or subordinate them to those of others, as the exigencies of the moral situation may require.

But the point on which it is now necessary to fix our attention is that when morality has once sanctioned any of the ends of life, the natural man may be left to pursue them without interference on the part of the moralist. When morality has marked out the boundaries within which the given end shall be pursued, its work so far is done; except, indeed, that we are always to keep an eye upon those boundaries, and that the sense of their existence should pervade the whole atmosphere of our lives.<sup>3</sup> A few illustrations will make my meaning clear. There is a moral rule which says that we should eat to live; not, conversely, live to eat. This means that we should regulate our food in such a way that the body may become a fit instrument for the higher

---

<sup>3</sup> It must be remembered also that our knowledge of the right ethical relations is still extremely imperfect, and that the duty of extending the knowledge and promoting the recognition of them is perhaps the highest of all – to which, on occasion, every lesser end must be sacrificed.

purposes of existence, and that the time and attention bestowed upon the matter of eating shall not be so great as to divert us from other and more necessary objects. But, these limits being established, it does not follow that it is wrong or unspiritual to enjoy a meal. The senses, even the lowest of them, are permitted to have free play within the bounds prescribed. Nor, again, should we try rigidly to determine the choice of food according to moral considerations. It would be ridiculous to attempt to do so. The choice of food within a wide range depends entirely on taste, and has nothing to do with moral considerations (whether, for instance, we should have squash or beans for dinner). Those who are deeply impressed with the importance of moral rules are often betrayed into applying them to the veriest minutiae of conduct. Did they remember that ethics is a science of relations, or, what amounts to the same thing, a science of limits, they would be saved such pedantry. Undoubtedly there are moral *adiaphora*. The fact that such exist has been a stumbling-block in the way of those who believe that morality ought to cover the whole of conduct. The definition of ethics as a science of relations or limits removes this stumbling-block. Ethics stands at the frontier. With what goes on in the interior it does not interfere, except in so far as the limitations it prescribes are an interference. Take another illustration. Ethics condemns vanity and whatever ministers to vanity – as, e. g., undue attention to dress and adornment of the person – on the ground that this implies an immoral subordination of the inner to the outer, of

the higher to the lesser ends. But, to lay down a cast-iron rule as to how much one has a right to expend on dress, can not be the office of ethics, on account of the infinite variety of conditions and occupations which subsists among men. And the attempt to prescribe a single fashion of dress, by sumptuary laws or otherwise, would impair that freedom of taste which it is the business of the moralist to respect. Again, every one knows with what bitterness the moral rigorists of all ages have condemned the impulse which attracts the sexes toward one another, and how often they have tried, though vainly, to crush it. But here, again, the true attitude is indicated by the definition of ethics as a science of limits. The moral law prescribes bounds within which this emotional force shall be free to operate, and claims for it the holy name of love, so long as it remains within the bounds prescribed, and, being within, remains conscious of them. That is what is meant when we speak of spiritualizing the feelings. The feelings are spiritualized when they move within certain limits, and when the sense of the existence of these limits penetrates them, and thereby imparts to them a new and nobler quality. And, because such limitation is felt to be satisfying and elevating, the system of correlations which we call ethical, and which, abstractly stated, would fail to interest, does by this means find an entrance into the human heart, and awakens in it the sense of the sublimity and the blessedness of the moral commands.

There are two defects of the moral fanatic which can now be signaled: First, he wrongly believes that whatever is not of

morality is against it. He therefore is tempted to frown upon the natural pleasures; to banish them if he can, and, if not, to admit them only within the narrowest possible limits as a reluctant concession to the weakness of human nature. In consequence, the moral fanatic commits the enormity of introducing the taint of the sense of sin into the most innocent enjoyments, and thus perverts and distorts the conscience. Secondly, he is always inclined to seek a moral reason for that which has only a natural one; to forget that, like the great conquerors of antiquity, Morality respects the laws of the several realms which it unites into a single empire, and guarantees to each the unimpaired maintenance of its local customs. These remarks are intended to serve as a general caution. I find that young people, when they have become awakened on ethical subjects, often betray a tendency toward moral asceticism. I find that teachers, in the earnest desire to impress the laws of the moral empire, are sometimes betrayed into disregarding the provincial laws of the senses, the intellect, and the feelings; are apt to go too far in applying moral prescriptions to the minutiae of conduct; are apt to leave the impression that pleasant things, just because they are pleasant, are therefore sinful.

But we have now to take a further step, which will bring us close to our special subject for to-day, viz., the efficient motives of good conduct. The non-moral faculties are not only not anti-moral, as has been shown, but, when appealed to in the right way, they lend to Morality a friendly, an almost indispensable support.

The æsthetic, the intellectual, and the emotional faculty have not in themselves a moral quality, but when used as auxiliaries they pave the way for moral considerations pure and simple, and have in this sense an immense propædeutic value. Without entering in this place into the philosophy of æsthetics, it is enough to say that the beautiful, like the good, results from and depends on the observance of certain limits and certain relations. And it will not seem far-fetched to suggest that pupils who have been trained to appreciate moderation, restraint and harmony of relations in external objects, will be predisposed to apply analogous measures to matters of conduct, and that a standard of valuation will thus be created in their minds which must prove favorable to right action. Æsthetics may become a pedagogue unto ethics. The same pedagogical function may be claimed for the intellect. The intellect traces the connection between causes and effects. Applied to conduct, it shows the connection between acts and their consequences. It is the faculty which counsels prudence. One does not need to accept the egoistic theory of morals to concede that self-interest is an ally of morality, that Prudence and Virtue travel hand in hand a certain distance on the same road. Not, indeed, until the ideal state shall have been reached will the dictates of the two ever coincide entirely; but to a certain extent the coincidence already exists, and the moral teacher is justified in availing himself of it as far as it goes.

To take a very simple case – a child handles a knife which it has been told not to touch, and cuts his fingers. Morally speaking,

his fault is disobedience. He would have been equally guilty if he had escaped injury. But he would hardly be so ready to obey another time, if he had been less sharply reminded of the usefulness of obedience. It is wrong to lie – wrong on purely moral grounds, with which self-interest has nothing to do. But for all that we can not dispense with the lesson contained in the well-known fable of the boy who cried, "Wolf!" It is wrong to steal on purely moral grounds. But even a child can be made to understand that the thief, as Emerson puts it, "steals from himself," and that, besides being a rogue, he is deficient in enlightened self-interest. The maxim that honesty is the best policy is true enough so far as the facts are concerned, which come under the observation of children, though one may question whether it be true absolutely.

Lastly, when we come to consider the emotional faculty, we find that the intimate connection between it and the moral is so generally conceded as to make it quite superfluous to expatiate on it. On the contrary, it seems necessary to expostulate with those who claim too much credit for the feelings, who ascribe to them a moral value which they by no means possess. Thus, gentleness is not necessarily a virtue; it may be a mere matter of temperament. Sympathetic impulses, *per se*, are not praiseworthy. Sympathy quite as often leads us astray as aright; sympathy, indeed, unless tutored and regulated by moral principles, is a danger against which we ought to be on our guard almost as much as against selfishness. Yet, no one will deny that the feelings, when rightly

trained, are of inestimable service as auxiliaries in the task of moral education.

To sum up, let me say that the wise teacher will appeal to the taste, the intelligence, and the feelings of his pupils; that he will touch these various springs of conduct all the time, and get from them all the help he can. Thus, when speaking of cleanliness, he will appeal to the æsthetic instinct of the children, awakening in them a feeling of disgust at untidiness. He will appeal to the prudential motive, by showing that want of cleanliness breeds disease. "You do not wish to be sick? You do not wish to suffer? Therefore, it is to your interest to be clean." But, finally, he will touch a higher motive than any of these. "If you are unclean, you cease to respect yourself." And the term self-respect expresses in a condensed form the moral motive proper. It implies the idea of moral personality, which it is not necessary, nor possible, at this stage to analyze, but which the pupil will somehow understand, for his conscience will respond. In many cases the appeal will be made chiefly to the sympathetic feelings; for through these feelings we become aware of the pains and joys of others, and thus of the consequences of the benefits we confer or the evil we inflict. The sympathetic feelings supply the information upon which the will can act. They tell us that others suffer or are glad. And yet the strength to labor persistently for the relief of others' suffering and the enhancement of others' joy – that we can derive from the moral impulse alone.

The moral motive is the highest, it is really the only sufficient

motive. Pray, understand me well at this point. I should say to the child: It is wrong to lie. That is sufficient. It is wrong, it is forbidden; you must yourself acknowledge the truth of my words, because you despise yourself when you have told a lie. But, in order to strengthen your weak resolution, to confirm you in well-doing, let me show you that it is also contrary to self-interest to lie, and likewise that it is disgusting to be unclean, and that a wrong done to another causes pain. Thus the æsthetic, intellectual, and emotional faculties are called in as witnesses to bear testimony to the moral truths; they are invited to stand up in chorus and say Amen! to the moral commands.

### III.

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR MORAL TRAINING IN THE DAILY SCHOOL

The school should be to the pupil not an intellectual drill-ground, but a second home; a place dear at the time, and to be gratefully remembered ever after; a place in which his whole nature, and especially what is best in him, may expand and grow. The educational aim should be, not merely to pave the pupil's way to future success, not merely to make of his mind a perfect instrument of thought, a kind of intellectual loom, capable of turning out the most complicated intellectual patterns. The aim should be, above all; to build up manhood, to develop character. There is no school in which moral influence is wanting. The pity is, that in many schools it is incidental, not purposed. And yet there are manifold opportunities in every school for influencing the moral life. Let us consider a few of these.

1. The teaching of *science* lends itself to the cultivation of truthfulness. Truthfulness may be defined as the correspondence between thought and word and fact. When the thought in the mind fits the fact, and the word on the tongue fits the thought, then the circuit of truth is complete. Now, with respect to the inculcating of truthfulness, science teaching has this advantage above other branches, that the palpable nature of the facts dealt

with makes it possible to note and check the least deviation from the truth. The fact is present, right before the pupil, to rebuke him if he strays from it in thought or speech. And this circumstance may be utilized even in the humble beginnings of science teaching, in the so-called object-lessons. For instance, a bird, or the picture of one, is placed before the child. The teacher says, "Observe closely and tell me exactly what you see – the length of the neck, the curve of the beak, the colors of the plumage," etc. The pupil replies. The teacher objects: "You have not observed accurately. The color is not what you describe it to be. Look again. The curve of the beak does not resemble what you have just drawn on the blackboard. You must tell me exactly what you see. Your words must tally with the facts." And the same sort of practice may be continued in the science-lessons of the upper classes.

Scientists are distinguished from other observers by their greater accuracy. Intellectual honesty is that moral quality which science is best calculated to foster. All the great scientists have been haunted by a high ideal of truth, and a gleam of that ideal, however faint, may be made to shed its light even into the school-room. It is obvious that this realistic tutoring into veracity will be of special use to children who are led into lying by a too vivid imagination.

Let me add the following remarks in regard to indirect means of promoting truthfulness: The teacher can do a great deal to cultivate respect for the truth among his pupils by frankly

admitting an error whenever he has fallen into one. Some teachers try to save their dignity by glossing over their mistakes. But even young children are shrewd enough to estimate such trickery at its worth; while he who manfully confesses that he has been in the wrong, earns the respect of his class, and sets them an invaluable example.

It is well also to observe strict accuracy even in matters which of themselves are of no moment. For instance, in giving an account of a botanizing expedition, you begin, perhaps, by saying, "It was half-past ten when we arrived at our destination." Suddenly you stop and correct yourself. "No, I was mistaken; it could not have been later than ten o'clock." Does this strike you as pedantic? But if you fix the time at all, is it not worth while to fix it with approximate exactness? True, it makes no difference in regard to what you are about to relate, whether you arrived at half-past ten or at ten. But, precisely because it makes no difference, it shows the value which you set on accuracy even in trifles. And by such little turns of phrase, by such insubstantial influences, coming from the teacher, the pupil's character is molded.

2. *The study of history*, when properly conducted is of high moral value. History sets before the mind examples of heroism, of self-sacrifice, of love of country, of devotion to principles at the greatest cost. How can such examples fail to inspire, to ennoble, to awaken emulation? The great and good men of the past, the virtuous and the wise, serve as models to the young,

and often arouse in them an enthusiastic admiration, a passionate discipleship. In the next place, the study of history may be used to exercise the moral judgment. The characters which history presents are not all good; the characters even of the good are by no means faultless. It is in the power of the teacher to train the moral judgment and to increase the moral insight of his pupils by leading them to enter into the motives, and to weigh the right and wrong of the actions which history reports. He will also find many an occasion to warn against being dazzled by brilliant success to such a degree as to condone the moral turpitude by which it is often bought. The study of history can thus be made the means of enlightening the conscience as well as of awakening generous aspirations – but, let me hasten to add, only in the hands of a teacher who is himself morally mature, and fully imbued with the responsibilities of his task. Lastly, the study of history among advanced pupils may be used to confirm the moral idea of the mission of mankind, and to set it in its true light. The human race, as, from the moral point of view, we are bound to assume, exists on earth in order to attempt the solution of a sublime problem – the problem of the perfect civilization, the just society, the "kingdom of God." But on every page of history there are facts that warn us that progress toward this high ideal is of necessity slow. Whether we review the evolution of religion, or of political institutions, or of industrial society, we are still forced to the same solemn conclusion, that in view of the ultimate goal, "a thousand years are as a day," and that while we may not relax

our efforts to attain the ideal, we must be well content in case we are permitted to advance the mighty work even a little. This conviction is calculated to engender in us a new spirit of piety and self-abnegation, which yet is consistent with perfect alacrity in discharging the duty of the hour.

There could be no better result from the study of history among young men and young women than if it should have the effect of impressing on them this new piety, this genuine historic sense, in which the average citizen, especially of democratic communities, is so conspicuously deficient. But this is a digression which I must ask you to pardon.

3. The moral value of the *study of literature* is as great as it is obvious. Literature is the medium through which all that part of our inner life finds expression which defies scientific formulation. In the text-books of science we possess the net result of the purely intellectual labors of the past; in universal literature we have composite photographs, as it were, of the typical hopes, sentiments, and aspirations of the race. Literature gives a voice to that within us which would otherwise remain dumb, and fixity to that which would otherwise be evanescent. The best literature, and especially the best poetry, is a glass in which we see our best selves reflected. There is a legend which tells of two spirits, the one an angel, the other a demon, that accompany every human being through life, and walk invisibly at his side. The one represents our bad self, the other our better self. The moral service which the best literature renders us is to

make the invisible angel visible.

4. I can but cast a cursory glance at some of the remaining branches of instruction.

*Manual training* has a moral effect upon the pupil, of which I have spoken at some length on another occasion.<sup>4</sup>

*Music*, apart from its subtler influences, which can not be considered here, has the special function of producing in the pupil a feeling of oneness with others, or of social unity. This is best accomplished through the instrumentality of chorus singing, while particular moral sentiments, like charity, love of home, etc., can be inculcated by means of the texts.

*Gymnastic* exercises likewise have a moral effect in promoting habits of self-control, prompt obedience at the word of command, etc. Indeed, it is not difficult to show the moral bearings of the ordinary branches of instruction. It would, on the contrary, be difficult to find a single one, which, when rightly viewed, is not surrounded by a moral photosphere.

Science, history, literature, and the other branches lend themselves in various ways to the development of character. But there are certain other opportunities which every school offers, apart from the teaching, and these may be utilized to the same end. The discipline of the school, above all, has an immense effect on the character. If it is of the right kind, a beneficial effect; if not, a most pernicious one.

The mere working of what may be called the school

---

<sup>4</sup> In the address on the subject, reprinted in the Appendix.

machinery tends to inculcate habits of order, punctuality, and the like. The aggregation of a large number of scholars in the same building and their intercourse with one another under the eye of the teachers, afford frequent opportunities for impressing lessons of kindness, politeness, mutual helpfulness, etc.

The recitations of lessons give occasion not only to suppress prompting, but to eradicate the motives which lead to it, and to impress deeply the duty of honesty.

The very atmosphere of the class-room should be such as to encourage moral refinement; it should possess a sunny climate, so to speak, in which meanness and vulgarity can not live.

But there is especially one avenue of influence, which I have much at heart to recommend. The teacher should join in the *games* of his pupils. He will thus at once come to stand on a friendly footing with them, and win their confidence, without in the least derogating from his proper dignity. And thus will be removed that barrier which in many schools separates pupils and teachers to such a degree that there actually seem to exist side by side two worlds – the world to which the teacher has access, and the world from which he is shut out. Moreover, while they are at play, the true character of the pupils reveals itself. At such times the sneak, the cheat, the bully, the liar, shows his true colors, and the teacher has the best opportunity of studying these pathological subjects and of curing their moral defects. For, while playing with them, as one concerned in the game, he has the right to insist on fair dealing, to express his disgust at cowardice, to

take the part of the weak against the strong, and his words spoken on the playground will have tenfold the effect of any hortatory address which he might deliver from the platform. The greatest and most successful of teachers have not disdained to use this device.

Finally, let me say that the personality of the master or principal of the school is the chief factor of moral influence in it. Put a great, sound, whole-souled nature at the head of a school, and everything else may almost be taken for granted. In every school there exists a public opinion among the scholars, by which they are affected to a far greater degree than by the words of their superiors. The tactful master will direct his chief attention to shaping and improving this public opinion, while at the same time interfering as little as possible with the freedom of his pupils. He can accomplish his purpose by drawing close to himself those scholars who make the public opinion of the school, and these in turn he can win to fine and manly views only by the effect of his personality. The personality of the headmaster is everything. It is the ultimate source of power in the school, the central organ which sends out its life-giving currents through the whole organism. And let me here add that, if I am in favor of excluding direct religious teaching from our schools, I am not in favor of excluding religious influence. That, too, flows from the personality of the true master. For if he be reverent, a truly pious soul, humble in his estimate of self, not valuing his petty schoolmaster's authority on its own account, but using

it lovingly as an instrument for higher ends, he will be sure to communicate of his spirit to his pupils, and by that spirit will open their hearts, better than by any doctrinal teaching he could give, to the reception of the highest spiritual truths.

By all these means – by the culture of the intellect, the taste, and the feelings, by his daily dealings with the young, in work and play – the teacher helps to create in them certain moral habits. Why, then, should not these habits suffice? What need is there of specific moral instruction? And what is the relation of moral instruction to the habits thus engendered?

The function of moral instruction is to clinch the habits. The function of moral instruction is to explicate in clear statements, fit to be grasped by the intellect, the laws of duty which underlie the habits. The value of such intellectual statements is that they give a rational underpinning to moral practice, and, furthermore, that they permit the moral rules to be applied to new cases not heretofore brought within the scope of habit. This thought will be more fully developed and explained as we proceed.

## IV.

# CLASSIFICATION OF DUTIES

The topics of which moral instruction treats are the duties of life. To teach the duties, however, we must adopt some system of classification. To which system shall we give the preference? The difficulty which we encountered at the outset seems to meet us here in a new guise.

For most if not all of the systems of classification commonly proposed are based upon some metaphysical theory or some theological doctrine. To adopt any one of these would be tantamount to adopting the theory or theology on which it is founded; would be equivalent to introducing surreptitiously a particular philosophy or creed into the minds of the pupils; and this would be a plain departure from the unsectarian principle to which we are pledged. Thus, Plato's fourfold division of the virtues into the so-called cardinal virtues of temperance, courage, justice, wisdom, is based on his psychology. Aristotle's division of the virtues into dianoetic and what he calls ethical virtues is clearly dependent on what may be termed Aristotle's intellectualism – i. e., the supreme importance which he assigns to the functions of the intellect, or νοῦς [Greek: *noûs*], in the attainment of the perfect life.

Kant's division of duties into complete and incomplete is an outgrowth of the ideas developed in his Critique of Pure

Reason; the philosopher Herbart's fivefold classification reflects his metaphysical theory of reality; while the systems of ethical classification which are to be found in theological handbooks betray still more clearly the bias of their authors.

We can, I think, find a simple way out of this difficulty by proceeding in the following manner: Let us take for our guidance the objects to which duty relates, and disregard the sources from which it flows. It is conceded on all hands that every one is to himself an object of duty, that he has certain duties to perform with respect to himself, as, for instance, the duty of intellectual development; furthermore, that every person owes certain duties to his fellow-men generally, in virtue of the fact that they are human beings; again, that there are special duties which we owe to particular persons, such as parents, brothers, and sisters; finally, that there are certain duties, into which, so to speak, we are born, like the ones last mentioned, and others which we can freely assume or not, like the conjugal duties, but which, once assumed, become as binding as the former. Thus the very structure of human society suggests a scheme of classification. And this scheme has the advantage of being a purely objective one. It keeps close to the facts, it is in harmony with the unsectarian principle, and it is perfectly fair. It leaves the problem of first principles entirely untouched. That we have such duties to perform with respect to self and others, no one questions. Let philosophers differ as to the ultimate motives of duty. Let them reduce the facts of conscience to any set of first

principles which may suit them. It is our part as instructors to interpret the facts of conscience, not to seek for them an ultimate explanation.

Let me briefly indicate how the different duties may be made to fall into line according to the plan of classification which has just been suggested. The whole field of duty may be divided into three main provinces:<sup>5</sup> those duties which relate to ourselves, those which we owe to all men, and those which arise in the special relations of the family, the state, etc.:

### I. The Self-regarding Duties.

These may again be subdivided into duties relating to our physical nature, to the intellect, and to the feelings.

Under the head of physical duties belong the prohibition of suicide, and the duties of physical culture, temperance, and chastity.

Intellectual Duties. – Under this head may be ranged the duty of acquiring knowledge and the subsidiary duties of order, diligence, perseverance in study; while, for those who are beyond the school age, special stress should be laid on the duty of mental genuineness. This may be expressed in the words: To thine own mental self be true. Study thine own mental bent. Try to discover in what direction thy proper talent lies, and make the most of it. Work thine own mine: if it be a gold-mine, bring forth gold; if

---

<sup>5</sup> It may be urged by some that duties toward God ought to be included in such a scheme of moral lessons as we are proposing. I should say, however, that the discussion of these duties belongs to the Sunday-schools, the existence of which alongside the daily schools is *presupposed throughout the present course of lectures*.

it be a silver-mine, bring forth silver; if it be an iron-mine, bring forth iron. Endeavor to master some one branch of knowledge thoroughly well. It is for thee the key which opens the gates of all knowledge. The need of general culture is felt by all, but the concentration of intellectual efforts on special studies is not inconsistent with it. On the contrary, special studies alone enable us to gain a foothold in the realm of knowledge. A branch of knowledge which we have mastered, however small, may be compared to a strong fortress in an enemy's country, from which we can sally forth at will to conquer the surrounding territory. Knowledge may also be likened to a sphere. From every point of the circumference we can, by persistent labor, dig down to the center. He who has reached the center commands the sphere.

Duties which relate to the Feelings. – The principal duty under this head may be expressed in the twofold command – control and purify thy feelings! The feelings which need to be repressed are anger, fear, self-complacency. Let the teacher, when he reaches this point, dwell upon the causes and the consequences of anger. Let him speak of certain helps which have been found useful for the suppression of angry passion. Let him distinguish anger from moral indignation.

In dealing with fear let him pursue the same method. Let him distinguish physical from moral cowardice, brute courage from moral courage, courage from fortitude.

In dealing with self-complacency let him discriminate between vanity and pride, between pride and dignity. Let him

show that humility and dignity are consistent with one another, yes, that they are complementary aspects of one and the same moral quality. Not the least advantage to be reaped from lessons on duty is the fixing in the pupil's mind of the moral vocabulary. The moral terms as a rule are loosely used, and this can not but lead to confusion in their application. Precise definitions, based on thorough discussion, are an excellent means of moral training.<sup>6</sup>

II. The duties which we owe to all men are Justice and Charity:

Be just is equivalent to – Do not hinder the development of any of thy fellow-men. Be charitable is equivalent to – Assist the development of thy fellow-men. Under the head of charity the teacher will have occasion to speak not only of almsgiving, the visitation of the sick, and the like, but of the thousand charities of the fireside, of the charity of bright looks, of what may be called intellectual charity, which consists in opening the eyes of the mentally blind, and of the noblest charity of all, which consists in coming to the aid of those who are deep in the slough of moral despond, in raising the sinful and fallen.

III. Special social duties:

Under this head belong the duties which arise in the family: the conjugal, the parental, the filial, the fraternal duties.

Under the head of duties peculiar to the various avocations

---

<sup>6</sup> The duties which relate to the moral nature, as a whole, such for instance as the duty of self-scrutiny, may be considered either at the end of the chapter on self-regarding duties, or at the close of the whole course.

should be discussed the ethics of the professions, the ethics of the relations between employers and laborers, etc.

The consideration of the duties of the citizen opens up the whole territory of political ethics.

Lastly, the purely elective relationships of friendship and religious fellowship give rise to certain fine and lofty ethical conceptions, the discussion of which may fitly crown the whole course.

I have thus mentioned some of the main topics of practical ethics, from which we are to make our selection for the moral lessons.

But a selective principle is needed. The field being spread out before us, the question arises, At what point shall we enter it? What topics shall we single out? It would be manifestly absurd, for instance, to treat of international ethics, or of conjugal ethics, in a course intended for children. But especially the order in which the different topics are to follow each other needs to be determined. The order followed in the above sketch is a purely logical one, and the logical arrangement of a subject, as every educator knows, is not usually the one most suitable for bringing it within reach of the understanding of children. It would not be in the present instance. Clearly a selective principle is wanted.

Let me here interrupt myself for a moment to say that the problem which we are attacking, so far from being solved, has heretofore hardly even been stated. And this is due to the fact that moral instruction has been thus far almost entirely in the

hands of persons whose chief interest was religious, and who, whatever their good intentions might be, were hardly qualified to look at the subject from the educator's point of view. The work of breaking ground in the matter of moral instruction has still to be done. As to the selective principle which I have in view I feel a certain confidence in its correctness; but I am aware that the applications of it will doubtless require manifold amendment and correction, for which purpose I invoke the experience and honest criticism of my fellow-teachers. This being understood, I venture to ask your attention to the following considerations:

The life of every human being naturally divides itself into distinct periods – infancy, childhood, youth, etc. Each period has a set of interests and of corresponding duties peculiar to itself. The moral teaching should be graded according to periods. The teaching appropriate to any period is that which bears upon the special duties of that period. To illustrate, the ethics of childhood may be summarized as follows: The personal duties of a child are chiefly the observance of a few simple rules of health and the curbing of its temper. It owes social duties to parents, brothers and sisters, and kinsfolk, to its playmates, and to servants. The child is not yet a citizen, and the ethics of politics, therefore, lie far beyond its horizon; it does not yet require to be taught professional ethics, and does not need to learn even the elements of intellectual duty, because its energies are still absorbed in physical growth and play. The duties of childhood can be readily stated. The peculiar duties of the

subsequent stages of development, for instance, of middle life and old age, are complex, and not so easy to define. But I believe that the attempt to describe them will throw light on many recondite problems in ethics.

My first point therefore is, that the moral teaching at a given period should be made to fit the special duties of that period. Secondly – and this touches the core of the matter – in every period of life there is some one predominant duty around which all the others may be grouped, to which as a center they may be referred. Thus, the paramount duty of the young child is to reverence and obey its parents. The relation of dependence in which it stands naturally prescribes this duty, and all its other duties can be deduced from and fortified by this one. The correctness of its personal habits and of its behavior toward others depends primarily on its obedience to the parental commands. The child resists the temptation to do what is wrong, chiefly because it respects the authority and desires to win the approbation of father and mother. Secondary motives are not wanting, but reverence for parents is the principal one.

Thirdly, in each new period there emerges a new paramount ethical interest, a new center of duties. But with the new system of duties thus created the previous ethical systems are to be brought into line, into harmonious correlation. And this will be all the more feasible, because the faithful performance of the duties of any one period is the best preparation for the true understanding and fulfillment of those of the next. From these

statements the following conclusions may be drawn with respect to the question under discussion – namely, the proper sequence of the topics of duty in a course of moral lessons.

The moral lessons being given in school, must cover the duties which are peculiar to the school age. The paramount duty should be placed in the foreground. Now the paramount duty of children between six and fourteen years of age is to acquire knowledge. Hence we begin the lessons with the subject of intellectual duty. In the next place, the duties learned in the previous periods are to be brought into line with the duties of the school age. At each new step on the road of ethical progress the moral ideas already acquired are to be reviewed, confirmed, and to receive a higher interpretation.

We have already seen that, before the child enters school, its personal duties are such as relate to the physical life and the feelings, and its chief social duties are the filial and fraternal.

Therefore, the order of topics for the lessons thus far stands: The duty of acquiring knowledge; the duties which relate to the physical life; the duties which relate to the feelings; the filial duties; the fraternal duties.

Again, a child that has learned to respect the rights of its brothers and sisters, and to be lovingly helpful to them, will in school take the right attitude toward its companions. The fraternal duties are typical of the duties which we owe to all our companions, and, indeed, to all human beings.

The next topic of the lessons, therefore, will be the duties

which we owe to all human beings.

Finally, life in school prepares for life in society and in the state, and so this course of elementary moral lesson will properly close with "The elements of civic duty."

## V.

# THE MORAL OUTFIT OF CHILDREN ON ENTERING SCHOOL

It is difficult to trace the beginnings of the moral life in children. The traveler who attempts to follow some great river to its source generally finds himself confused by the number of ponds and springs which are pointed out to him with the assurance in the case of each that this and no other is the real source. In truth, the river is fed not from one source but from many, and does not attain its unity and individuality until it has flowed for some distance on its way. In like manner, the moral life is fed by many springs, and does not assume its distinctive character until after several years of human existence have elapsed. The study of the development of conscience in early childhood is a study of origins, and these are always obscure. But, besides, the attention hitherto given to this subject has been entirely inadequate, and even the attempts to observe in a systematic way the moral manifestations of childhood have been few.

Parents and teachers should endeavor to answer such questions as these: When do the first stirrings of the moral sense appear in the child? How do they manifest themselves? What are the emotional and the intellectual equipments of the child at

different periods, and how do these correspond with its moral outfit? At what time does conscience enter on the scene? To what acts or omissions does the child apply the terms right and wrong? If observations of this kind were made with care and duly recorded, the science of education would have at its disposal a considerable quantity of material from which no doubt valuable generalizations might be deduced. Every mother especially should keep a diary in which to note the successive phases of her child's physical, mental, and moral growth; with particular attention to the moral; so that parents may be enabled to make a timely forecast of their childrens' characters, to foster in them every germ of good, and by prompt precautions to suppress, or at least restrain, what is bad.

I propose in the present lecture to cast a glance at the moral training which the normal child receives before it enters school, and the moral outfit which it may be expected to bring with it at the time of entering. Fortunately, it is not necessary to go very deeply into the study of development of conscience for this purpose. A few main points will suffice for our guidance.

*First Point.*— The moral training of a child can be begun in its cradle. Regularity is favorable to morality. Regularity acts as a check on impulse. A child should receive its nourishment at stated intervals; it should become accustomed to sleep at certain hours, etc. If it protests, as it often does vigorously enough, its protests should be disregarded. After a while its cries will cease, it will learn to submit to the rule imposed, and the taking of

pleasure in regularity and the sense of discomfort when the usual order is interrupted become thenceforth a part of its mental life. I do not maintain that regularity itself is moral, but that it is favorable to morality because it curbs inclination. I do not say that rules are always good, but that the life of impulse is always bad. Even when we do the good in an impulsive way we are encouraging in ourselves a vicious habit. Good conduct consists in regulating our life according to good principles; and a willingness to abide by rules is the first, the indispensable condition of moral growth. Now, the habit of yielding to rules may be implanted in a child even in the cradle.

*Second Point.*— A very young child — one not older than a year and a half — can be taught to obey, to yield to the parent's will. A child a year and a half old is capable of adhering to its own will in defiance of the expressed will of father or mother. In this case it should be constrained to yield. We shall never succeed in making of it a moral person if it does not realize betimes that there exists a higher law than the law of its will. And of this higher law, throughout childhood, the parent is, as it were, the embodiment. When I say that obedience can be exacted of a child of such tender age, that a child so young is capable of deliberately opposing the will of the parent, I speak from experience. I know a certain little lady who undertook a struggle with her father precisely in the way described. The struggle lasted fully thirty-five minutes by the clock. But when it was over, the child stretched out her little arms and put up her lips to be

kissed, and for days after fairly clung to her father, showing him her attachment in the most demonstrative manner. Nor should this increase of affectionateness excite surprise – it is the proper result of a conflict of this sort between father and child when conducted in the right spirit. The child is happy to be freed from the sway of its wayward caprice, to feel that its feeble will has been taken up into a will larger and stronger than its own.

*Third Point.*— What is called conscience does not usually begin to show itself until the child is about three years old. At this age the concept self usually emerges, and the child begins to use the personal pronoun I. This is one of these critical turning points in human development, of which there are several. The beginning of adolescence marks another. I am inclined to suspect that there is one at or about thirty-three. There seem to be others later on. At any rate the first turning point – that which occurs at three – is marked unmistakably. At this time, as we have just said, the child begins to be distinctly self-conscious; it says "I," and presently "you," "he," and "they." Now, moral rules formulate the relations which ought to subsist between one's self and others, and to comprehend the rules it is clearly necessary to be able to hold apart in the mind and to contrast with one another the persons related. It is evident, therefore, that the emergence of the concept self must have a decided effect on moral development.

I feel tempted to pause here a moment and to say a word in passing about the extreme importance of the constituent elements of the concept self. For it must not be supposed

that the pronoun "I" means the same thing on the lips of every person who uses it. "I" is a label denoting a mass of associated ideas, and as these ideas are capable of almost endless variation, so the notion of selfhood is correspondingly diversified in different individuals. In the case of children, perhaps the principal constituents of the concept are supplied by their outward appearance and environment. When a child speaks of itself, it thinks primarily of its body, especially its face, then of the clothes it usually wears, the house it lives in, the streets through which it habitually walks, its parents, brothers, sisters, school-masters, etc.<sup>7</sup> If we analyze the meaning of "I" in the case of two children, the one well-born and well brought up, the other without these advantages, we shall perhaps find such differences as the following: "I" in the one case will mean a being living in a certain decent and comfortable house, always wearing neat clothing, surrounded by parents, brothers, and sisters who speak kindly to one another and have gentle manners, etc. In the other case, the constituents of the concept self may be very different. "I" in the case of the second child may mean a creature that lives in a dark, filthy hovel and walks every day through narrow streets, reeking with garbage. "I" may mean the child of a father who comes home drunk and strikes the mother when the angry fit is upon him. "I" stands for a poor waif that wears torn

---

<sup>7</sup> So important is environment in supporting self-consciousness, that even adults, when suddenly transported into entirely new surroundings, often experience a momentary doubt as to their identity.

clothes, and when he sits in school by the side of well-dressed children is looked at askance and put to shame. It is obvious that the elements which go to make up the concept self affect the child's moral nature by lowering or raising its self-esteem. I remember the case of one, who as a boy was the laughing-stock of his class on account of the old-fashioned, ill-fitting clothes which he was compelled to wear, and who has confessed that even late in life he could not entirely overcome the effect of this early humiliation, and that he continued to be painfully aware in himself, in consequence, of a certain lack of ease and self-possession. Hence we should see to it that the constituent elements of the concept self are of the right kind. It is a mistake to suppose that the idea of selfhood stands off independently from the elements of our environment. The latter enter into, and when they are bad eat into, the very kernel of our nature.

We have seen that the development of the intellect as it appears in the growing distinctness of self-consciousness exercises an important influence on the development of the moral faculty. But there is still another way in which this influence becomes apparent. The function of conscience further depends on the power of keeping alternative courses of action before the mind. Angels capable only of the good, or fiends actuated exclusively by malice, could not be called moral creatures. A moral act always presupposes a previous choice between two possible lines of action. And until the power of holding the judgment in suspense, of hesitating between

alternative lines of conduct, has been acquired, conscience, strictly speaking, does not manifest itself. We may say that the voice of conscience begins to be heard when, the parent being absent, the child hesitates between a forbidden pleasure and obedience to the parental command. Of course, not every choice between alternative courses is a moral act. If any one hesitates whether to remain at home or to go for a walk, whether to take a road to the right or to the left, the decision is morally indifferent. But whenever one of the alternative courses is good and the other bad, conscience does come into play.

At this point, however, the question forcibly presents itself, How does it come to pass in the experience of children that they learn to regard certain lines of action as good and others as bad? You will readily answer, The parent characterizes certain acts as good and others as bad, and the child accepts his definition; and this is undoubtedly true. The parent's word is the main prop of the budding conscience. But how comes the parent's word to produce belief? This is indeed the crucial question touching the development of the moral faculty. Mr. Bain says that the child fears the punishment which the parent will inflict in case of disobedience; that the essential form and defining quality of conscience from first to last is of the nature of dread. He seems to classify the child's conscience with the criminal conscience, the rebel conscience which must be energized by the fear of penalties. But this explanation seems very unsatisfactory. Every one, of course, must admit that the confirmations of experience

tend greatly to strengthen the parent's authority. The parent says, You must be neat. The child, if it does as it is bidden, finds an æsthetic pleasure in its becoming appearance. The parent says, You must not strike your little brother, but be kind to him; and the child, on restraining its anger, is gratified by the loving words and looks which it receives in return. The parent says, You must not touch the stove, or you will be burned. The disobedient child is effectually warned by the pain it suffers to be more obedient in future. But all such confirmations are mere external aids to parental authority. They do not explain the feeling of reverence with which even a young child, when rightly brought up, is wont to look up to his father's face. To explain this sentiment of reverence, I must ask you to consider the following train of reasoning. It has been remarked already that the parent should be to the child the visible embodiment of a higher law. This higher law shining from the father's countenance, making its sublime presence felt in the mother's eye, wakens an answering vibration in the child's heart. The child feels the higher presence and bows to it, though it could not, if it tried, analyze or explain what it feels. We should never forget that children possess the capacity for moral development from the outset. It is indeed the fashion with some modern writers to speak of the child as if it were at first a mere animal, and as if reflection and morality were mechanically superadded later on. But the whole future man is already hidden, not yet declared, but latent all the same in the child's heart. The germs of humanity in its totality exist in

the young being. Else how could it ever unfold into full-grown morality? It will perhaps serve to make my meaning clearer if I call attention to analogous facts relating to the intellectual faculty. The formula of causality is a very abstract one, which only a thoroughly trained mind can grasp. But even very young children are constantly asking questions as to the causes of things. What makes the trees grow? what makes the stars shine? – i. e., what is the cause of the trees growing and the stars shining? The child is constantly pushing, or rather groping, its way back from effects to causes. The child's mind acts under what maybe called the causative instinct long before it can apprehend the law of causation. In the same way young children perfectly follow the process of syllogistic reasoning. If a father says, on leaving the house for a walk: I can take with me only a child that has been good; now, you have not been good to-day; the child without any difficulty draws the conclusion, Therefore I can not go out walking with my father to-day. The logical laws are, as it were, prefigured in the child's mind long before, under the chemical action of experience they come out in the bright colors of consciousness. Or, to use another figure, they exert a pressure on the child of which he himself can give no account. And in like manner the moral law – the law which prescribes certain relations between self and others – is, so to speak, prefigured in the child's mind, and when it is expressed in commands uttered by the parent, the pressure of external authority is confirmed by a pressure coming from within. We can illustrate the same idea

from another point of view. Whenever a man of commanding moral genius appears in the world and speaks to the multitude from his height, they are for the moment lifted to his level and feel the afflatus of his spirit. This is so because he expresses potentialities of human nature which also exist in them, only not unfolded to the same degree as in him. It is a matter of common observation that persons who under ordinary circumstances are content to admire what is third rate and fourth rate are yet able to appreciate what is first rate when it is presented to them – at least to the extent of recognizing that it is first rate. And yet their lack of development shows itself in the fact that presently they again lose their hold on the higher standard of excellence, and are thereafter content to put up with what is inferior as if the glimpses of better things had never been opened to them. Is it not because, though capable of rising to the higher level, they are not capable of maintaining themselves on it unassisted. Now, the case of the parent with respect to the child is analogous. He is on a superior moral plane. The child feels that he is, without being able to understand why. It feels the afflatus of the higher spirit dwelling in the parent, and out of this feeling is generated the sentiment of reverence. And there is no greater benefit which father or mother can confer on their offspring than to deepen this sentiment. It is by this means that they can most efficiently promote the development of the child's conscience, for out of this reverence will grow eventually respect for all rightly constituted authority, respect and reverence for law, human and divine.

The essential form and defining quality of conscience is not, therefore, as Bain has it – fear of punishment. In my opinion such fear is abject and cowardly. The sentiment engendered by fear is totally different from the one we are contemplating, as the following consideration will serve to show: A child fears its father when he punishes it in anger; and the more violent his passion, the more does the child fear him. But, no matter how stern the penalty may be which he has to inflict, the child reveres its father in proportion as the traces of anger are banished from his mien and bearing, in proportion as the parent shows by his manner that he acts from a sense of duty, that he has his eye fixed on the sacred measures of right and wrong, that he himself stands in awe of the sublime commands of which he is, for the time being, the exponent.

To recapitulate briefly the points which we have gone over: regular habits can be inculcated and obedience can be taught even in infancy. By obedience is meant the yielding of a wayward and ignorant will to a firm and enlightened one. The child between three and six years of age learns clearly to distinguish self from others, and to deliberate between alternative courses of action. It is highly important to control the elements which enter into the concept self. The desire to choose the good is promoted chiefly by the sentiment of reverence.

We are thus prepared to describe in a general way the moral outfit of the child on entering school. We have, indeed, already described it. The moral acquirements of the child at the age

of which we speak express themselves in habits. The normal child, under the influences of parental example and command, has acquired such habits as that of personal cleanliness, of temperance in eating, of respect for the truth. Having learned to use the pronouns I and thou, it also begins to understand the difference between *meum* and *tuum*. The property sense begins to be developed. It claims its own seat at table, its own toys against the aggression of others. It has gained in an elementary way the notion of rights.

This is a stock of acquirements by no means inconsiderable. The next step in the progress of conscience must be taken in the school. Until now the child has been aware of duties relating only or principally to persons whom it loves and who love it. The motive of love is now to become less prominent. A part of that reverence which the child has felt for the parents whom it loves is now to be transferred to the teacher. A part of that respect for the rights of equals which has been impressed upon it in its intercourse with brothers and sisters, to whom it is bound by the ties of blood, is now to be transferred to its school companions, who are at first strangers to it. Thus the conscience of the child will be expanded, thus it will be prepared for intercourse with the world. Thus it will begin to gain that higher understanding of morality, according to which authority is to be obeyed simply because it is rightful, and equals are to be treated as equals, even when they are not and can not be regarded with affection.

I have in the above used the word habits advisedly. The

morality of the young child assumes the concrete form of habits; abstract principles are still beyond its grasp. Habits are acquired by imitation and repetition. Good examples must be so persistently presented and so often copied that the line of moral conduct may become the line of least resistance. The example of parents and teachers is indeed specially important in this respect. But after all it is not sufficient. For the temptations of adults differ in many ways from those of children, and on the other hand in the lives of older persons occasions are often wanting for illustrating just the peculiar virtues of childhood. On this account it is necessary to set before the child ideal examples of the virtues of children and of the particular temptations, against which they need to be warned. Of such examples we find a large stock ready to hand in the literature of fairy tales, fables, and stories. In our next lecture therefore we shall begin to consider the use of fairy tales, fables, and stories as means of creating in children those habits which are essential to the safe guarding and unfolding of their moral life.

# PRIMARY COURSE

## VI.

### THE USE OF FAIRY TALES

There has been and still is considerable difference of opinion among educators as to the value of fairy tales. I venture to think that, as in many other cases, the cause of the quarrel is what logicians call an *undistributed middle*— in other words, that the parties to the dispute have each a different kind of fairy tale in mind. This species of literature can be divided broadly into two classes — one consisting of tales which ought to be rejected because they are really harmful, and children ought to be protected from their bad influence, the other of tales which have a most beautiful and elevating effect, and which we can not possibly afford to leave unutilized.

The chief pedagogic value they possess is that they exercise and cultivate the imagination. Now, the imagination is a most powerful auxiliary in the development of the mind and will. The familiar anecdote related of Marie Antoinette, who is said to have asked why the people did not eat cake when she was told that they were in want of bread, indicates a deficiency of imagination. Brought up amid the splendor of courts, surrounded

by luxury, she could not put herself in the place of those who lack the very necessities. Much of the selfishness of the world is due not to actual hard-heartedness, but to a similar lack of imaginative power. It is difficult for the happy to realize the needs of the miserable. Did they realize those needs, they would in many cases be melted to pity and roused to help. The faculty of putting one's self in the place of others is therefore of great, though indirect, service to the cause of morality, and this faculty may be cultivated by means of fairy tales. As they follow intently the progress of the story, the young listeners are constantly called upon to place themselves in the situations in which they have never been, to imagine trials, dangers, difficulties, such as they have never experienced, to reproduce in themselves, for instance, such feelings as that of being alone in the wide world, of being separated from father's and mother's love, of being hungry and without bread, exposed to enemies without protection, etc. Thus their sympathy in a variety of forms is aroused.

In the next place, fairy tales stimulate the idealizing tendency. What were life worth without ideals! How could hope or even religion germinate in the human heart were we not able to confront the disappointing present with visions which represent the fulfillment of our desires. "Faith," says Paul, "is the confidence of things hoped for, the certainty of things not seen." Thus faith itself can not abide unless supported by a vivid idealism. It is true, the ideals of childhood are childish. In the story called *Das Marienkind* we hear of the little daughter of a

poor wood-cutter who was taken up bodily into heaven. There she ate sweetmeats and drank cream every day and wore dresses made of gold, and the angels played with her. Sweetmeats and cream in plenty and golden dresses and dear little angels to play with may represent the ideals of a young child, and these are materialistic enough. But I hold nevertheless that something – nay, much – has been gained if a child has learned to take the wishes out of its heart, as it were, and to project them on the screen of fancy. As it grows up to manhood, the wishes will become more spiritual, and the ideals, too, will become correspondingly elevated. In speaking of fairy tales I have in mind chiefly the German *Märchen*

# Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

Текст предоставлен ООО «ЛитРес».

Прочитайте эту книгу целиком, [купив полную легальную версию](#) на ЛитРес.

Безопасно оплатить книгу можно банковской картой Visa, MasterCard, Maestro, со счета мобильного телефона, с платежного терминала, в салоне МТС или Связной, через PayPal, WebMoney, Яндекс.Деньги, QIWI Кошелек, бонусными картами или другим удобным Вам способом.