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Methods of Teaching

A Practical Guide to the Schoolroom

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P R E F A C E.



I N this work, which the author ventures to offer the teaching profession, it is assumed that children are possessed of intellects, memories, and a variety of faculties, all of which are capable of development; and that there are teachers of every grade of ability. For the expert, whose success in teaching is mainly the outcome of innate aptitude and consequent love of the art, this work is not specially intended, although from a perusal of it he may derive such benefits as are likely to accrue from the comparison of methods. While fully aware that it is difficult to formulate a series of rules for guidance in teaching without interfering with the privileges and discretion of the teacher, the author hopes that, in thus elaborating and promulgating a body of school methods, he does not appear in any way to hamper or subvert what in actual practice has already proved thoroughly sound and successful. As expounding methods, perhaps very far from the best, yet, it is hoped, worth trying, the book is particularly recommended to those entering the profession, to unsuccessful teachers, and to those whose efforts are industrious but unfruitful. It is hoped that even the down-hearted teacher, whose motto may have become *laissez faire*, may, under the guidance and stimulus of these pages, change his attitude and bestir

himself to verve and profitable activity. Good methods should tend to encourage application in the teacher, and foster a desire to learn in the taught. It has been the author's endeavour to inculcate methods thoroughly practical and specially adapted to the juvenile intellect, which must not be driven or pressed beyond its natural capacity, and in opposition to the will. Pressure is injurious, and utterly antithetical to educational principles. Roger Ascham in "*The Scholemaster*" shows himself in full sympathy with the Socratic apothegm, which he thus translates:—"No learning ought to be learned with bondage: For, bodelie labors, wrought by compulsion, hurt not the bodie: but any learning learned by compulsion, tarieth not long in the mynde."

Just as there are intelligible ways of putting matter before the mind, so there are points connected with every subject upon the mastery of which knowledge of it depends. The author has endeavoured to show throughout the work that success in teaching largely results from the teacher's comprehension of these "sticking-points," and his ability to cope with them so as to remove all obstacles promptly and effectively. The long-standing and ubiquitous nature of the branches forming the groundwork of primary education makes it impossible on all occasions to hit upon methods entirely novel, but it is believed that many of those herein advocated are new to the teaching profession. The subjects treated *in extenso* are those characteristic of the elementary school curriculum. The theoretical side has been referred to only in so far as it has been found necessary to emphasize and explain the practical. The fact that the work is adapted for reference at any time and at any point has necessitated occasional repetitions and redundancies, for which the author begs to apologize. Further, in order that the context may be understood as fast as read, the language has been studiously made as plain and readable as possible.

The diction employed where the pupils are addressed will be found to be specially simple and even commonplace. By its lucidity, intellectual progress is insured, and that discomfiture and *ennui* obviated which are apt to result from the use of an unintelligible vocabulary. When learning, the child's mind should not be exercised about the words, but about the idea embodied in them.

In conclusion, although the methods set forth in these pages may not for various reasons always reach the ideal involved in the highest educational principles, the author may be allowed with becoming modesty to express the hope that they contain at least such a modicum of common sense as will render their application in the schoolroom at once pleasant and profitable.