

should carefully safeguard them against all risks by suitable counteraction.

The importance of education has been stressed by many representative thinkers:

"Man is everything or nothing, according to the education he receives."—*Clement XIV.*

"The sound education of the young is the first step towards human happiness, and I have always felt that to reform the human race, we must first reform our method of education."—*Leibnitz.*

"The greatest calamity for a nation is not to have received the education which it deserved."—*René Bazin.*

Experience has proved the disastrous effect of Rousseau's theories; it is therefore easy to show the *importance* and the *necessity* of education: (1) for the *individual*, who is given health and physical strength, and is taught to succeed in his undertakings and to lead an honest life; (2) for *society*, which can neither exist nor prosper without education. Education is the basis of public order and of general security; it helps in the advancement of art and science, and is a source of universal well-being.

The work of education cannot be carried out at random; its high aim, its true worth and significance demand that it be founded on certain principles.

Let us consider these great, general principles.

Education must be *suitable*. It must take into account the character, tastes and aptitude of the pupils, as well as their social surroundings. Hence the necessity for the instructor to study the character of his or her pupils, to watch them intelligently and to allow them considerable freedom in order to discover their natural propensities.

Education must be *continuous*. To be effective, it must begin from the cradle and continue steadily and without a break of any kind to the grave. Man's education is never finished on this earth, because the ideal aimed at is perfection. When the instructor has carried out his task wisely, and the time wrongly termed "completion of education" arrives, the student should be capable of continuing alone along the road to perfection.

Education must be *natural*. It will be so, said Fénelon, if the instructor understands his duty, which is to "follow and assist nature." Education should take account of personality. Each human being possesses particular characteristics that require careful attention in his education. The instructor must be a student of psychology in order to succeed in his great task.

Education must be *complete*. It must develop as harmoniously as possible every physical, intellectual and moral faculty, and maintain the balance between body, intellect and will.

*Physical training* gives health and strength, and develops manual aptitudes that enable man to help himself and to solve the problems of life.

The better the balance of a man's intellectual faculties, the sounder his knowledge will be.

*Moral education* trains the finer aspects of heart, will, and character, by teaching certain qualities and eradicating faults. Its influence on the other forms of education is very great. Indeed, both in the case of physical or intellectual training, the results obtained are proportionate to the effort voluntarily made and to the perseverance shown. Moral education produces good citizens, honest workers and parents fit for their task. It is founded on good habits: obedience, self-sacrifice, faithfulness to duty, courage, honesty, sincerity, industry, justice, charity, purity, dignity, good-breeding, etc. Whole volumes exist dealing with each of these virtues. We should remember, however, that no habit is acquired except through constant practice. It has been found useful to induce the students, singly or in groups, to adopt a motto summarising their duties; for example, "Will," "I can, I will," "Forward," "Still higher," "Excelsior."

Discipline is a powerful aid to moral education. The force of education, said Platon, lies in intelligent discipline. A pupil who obeys the will of his teacher gives his own greater strength and flexibility every day. He has the opportunity of learning manly qualities of self-control, earnestness, and readiness to answer the call of duty. Discipline should obviously aim at guidance and prevention, since prevention has always been better than suppression. But if education is to correspond to a high ideal, it must, above all, be placed on a religious foundation.

In education as in everything else, says Monseigneur Dupanloup, religion is the supreme aim, the beginning and end, the alpha and omega of all endeavour. Religion, says Monseigneur Moulart, should be the unchanging basis of all education; in religion alone can be found the principle, the rule and the consecration of all duties. There are not two educations, says Rutché, one of the world and one of God; there is one only, in which everything is connected, because in the soul also everything is connected, because conscience forms a whole and is responsible for all we do, because the ultimate end of man is single and subordinate to all worldly purposes. This ultimate end is God himself.

We shall now see if these educative principles can be applied to the training of the nurse.

This special training begins precisely at a time when young girls begin to feel the desire to make themselves useful, to devote themselves to some purpose, but are ignorant of how to reach their ideal. Nursing is essentially a woman's business; it can satisfy both hand and heart, but needs careful preparation. The teacher who undertakes the serious task of training a nurse must not lose sight of the general principles in education that answer to its full and definite aim.

We have said that education must be suitable. As Florence Nightingale so aptly said: "Nursing calls for a special vocation in so far that it demands from those who feel the call a series of qualities whose absence may endanger the full attainment of their purpose." Since the aim of education is not to create, but to help mould and direct, it is advisable to weed out from the very beginning all girls who afford no proof of this special vocation.

Because education should be continuous, the student must remain in particular educative surroundings, and the living-in system is thus necessary. To abandon this system would be to disregard one of the first principles in education.

As the training of the nurse is a difficult business, on account of the student's youth and the ideal aimed at, the teacher must remember, above all, that the training must be natural. She must, therefore, study her pupils and know their way of thinking; she must therefore follow them step by step, share their everyday life and thus win their confidence. She will thus discover that certain errors are due merely to temporary moral or physical weakness, and that the student often deserves pity rather than blame. The school directress should, therefore, interview the nurse instructors at regular intervals. Fuller knowledge of the students' frame of mind will make her better able to understand the reason of their conduct, and to give them work suited to their character. No student can be subjected to duplicate training in the school and in the wards. She is a reasonable human being and must be treated as such.

Nobody would dream of inflicting on the student nurse the intellectual, individualistic or other forms of education mentioned here. The student nurse obviously needs a comprehensive training: the professional side, which includes physical, intellectual and technical instruction, and the moral side. She must become an expert in matters of "health" and "hygiene," and apply all their rules, which should even become part and parcel of her daily life. The school should possess every up-to-date health

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)