

APRIL · 1886

my inclinations I would not be before you to-day, but in view of the vast amount that may be said and done in the direction of the subject, I have chosen, to a convention of teachers who are inquiring for ideas from any source, I may be able to say something at least suggestive.

How shall we make the women of our race stronger physically, morally and intellectually? Many of the ideas that I shall bring before you in my endeavor to find a few answers to this question are not really new, but as far as their application to every day life among our people goes, they are new, in the main. Several years of work in positions that have brought me in close contact with many of the women and girls of the race have brought a deep conviction of the need for them of physical, mental and moral development.

It is true there is no people or class of people whose development in all these directions is perfectly symmetrical, or what it should be in any one of them, but among all people except uncivilized ones, more prominence is given all these phases of development than we are giving them.

First, let us consider how the physical development of one woman can be accomplished: James Freeman Clarke,¹ in his inimitable essay on the training and care of the body,² says, "Good health is the basis of all physical, intellectual and moral development. We glorify God with our bodies by keeping them in good health." Mainly because I believe this is true, I have put this part of my subject first.

I think most people would be surprised at the result if a test were in some way given with a view to finding a few perfectly healthy women in any of our communities. Diogenes' search after an honest man was more fruitful of results than this one would be. Why is this? Why are there so many of us miserable invalids either utterly incapable of rendering service in any station or to whom life is a burden, because of the effort of will necessary to be put forth constantly if any thing is accomplished? Nervous and organic diseases have laid tyrannous hands upon us and are leading us helpless captives away from the highest avenues of usefulness into the darker ways of suffering and too often of selfish narrowness, for though a strong, earnest spirit may rise above, and inspire a weak body, generally the weakness of the body will crop the wings and keep the soul from soaring. To answer specifically why this is true is, of course, impossible, but when great and universal evils exist there are usually general causes that can be formulated. First in the list of causes of our physical weakness, I would put the use of