

**TALKS ON
EDUCATION
AND ORATORY**

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Talks on Education and Oratory by Silas S. Neff

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SILAS S. NEFF

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ON

EDUCATION AND ORATORY

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PREFACE

These extracts are taken from lectures and magazine articles. There was no intention originally of publishing them in this form but it was thought well to put them in more permanent shape that students of Neff College might have for reference a general statement of some of the fundamental principles upon which the work of the institution is based and that others interested in the modern fact of personal development might have this means of guiding their thinking.

INTRODUCTION.

THE growing of the brain, mind and soul is man's highest experience; the discovery and application of the laws of mental development are the greatest achievements of this scientific age, and the practical results are the most beneficent effects of true education and the realization of man's earthly hopes.

What is the *nature* of mental power?

As the *track guides* and *electricity propels* a trolley car, so, extending in many directions through the substance of the brain, is a network of small but very powerful nerves (electric wires) which perform the double office of *guiding and propelling* human thought and action. *The number of these nerves varies greatly in different brains. The greater their number and strength and the more numerous they are connected with one another, the higher the mental ability of the man and the more great things he can do.* From this brain-dynamo comes the power that moves the world. Here is the source of the orator's persuasive eloquence, of the reader's enchanting interpretation, of the business man's organizing skill, the author's creative imagination, the actor's psychic incarnation, the musician's emotion; and from here spring the physical element of character and all the successes of human genius.

Can brain power be increased by special means of development, thus insuring larger success?

Yes. These brain nerves can be so strengthened and so multiplied in number and in their connections as to grow an *average* mind into a *great* one. They grow by *use* and by *nourishment*. They are used when we observe, think, feel and imagine. They receive their physical nourishment from the blood, and their mental nourishment from the impressions of the outside world. But, only when the brain is in all respects *rightly* used, when the blood is of the *best quality* and when all of the impressions, or mental images taken into the mind, from nature and experience or through the medium of books, are of the *highest degree of vividness*, do the brain nerves grow rapidly and vigorously.

The more completely the absolute laws of brain action and nourishment are conformed to, the more rapidly the brain nerves will grow. Not merely because a man uses his body in daily labor and eats three meals a day will he become highly developed physically. It all depends on *how* he works and eats. He may violate the laws of exercise and nourishment by over-working or by over-eating, and in very many other ways. The great majority of people gain but a small degree of physical health and power from their daily work and nourishment, and if they desire *great strength and endurance* they must put themselves under training with a *specialist who has mastered the laws of health and physical development, and who will direct them in complying with these laws.*

The brain growth which results from man's daily mental work and mental nourishment, or which students obtain from their school studies, is very limited, because they violate many of the most important