

think of sacrificing the truth of the Gospel—the light which was lighted in the fires of Oxford and Smithfield—to any specious pleading for union with a "Catholic Episcopate," knit together in the visible Communion of an infallible Vicar of Christ upon earth, in which are taught the "dangerous deceits" of "the Sacrifices of Masses."

Certainly we have learned from our ancestors, and our Fathers have taught us (always excepting the *furiosi* of Archbishop Wake, and making allowance for individual eccentricities), to seek Christian fellowship and hold brotherly communion with imperfectly ordered Churches of the Reformation, much rather than with the most carefully guarded succession, and the most completely and perfectly organized system of ecclesiastical unity, held together and compacted by bonds of medieval error and scholastic superstition.

But a few additional words on this subject must be reserved for a future paper.

N. DIMOCK.

(To be continued.)



### ART. III.—THE OBJECTIVE IN POPULAR EDUCATION.

IT is not so long since we were informed by Mr. Harold Gorst that our educational machinery turns out a uniform type of mind.<sup>1</sup> He reminded us "that the process of teaching, to which children are subjected at too early an age, succeeds in ninety-nine cases out of one hundred in merely checking their intellectual development." He pointed out that "England has never felt more acutely than in the past eighteen months the want of great men." This lamentable and admitted defect he attributed to the fact that the "idiotic" plan of class instruction merely develops "conventionally-educated, uniform-patterned, honourably-intentioned mediocrities." Doubtless there are various influences at work in the production of mediocrities. The frivolous and lying literature which, as Sterling said, infests our very chambers; the incessant calls entailed by ever-increasing population and frenzied locomotion; the agitating of men's minds by the wonders of modern discovery; the electric transmission of the world's news—all tend to foster a certain amount of mental feebleness induced by bewilderment and exhaustion. There is great weight in Mr. Gorst's indictment of our educational errors. Summing up his article in one word, we ought to leave young minds

<sup>1</sup> In the *Nineteenth Century*, May, 1901.

free till the age of seven to gratify their natural instincts of observation and reflection, and afterwards develop by individual care their peculiar powers.

Let us see how far this treatment can be applied to the improvement of our national teaching.

It will be necessary at the outset to guard against unjustifiable assumptions. For instance, we may assume in respect to the children of rustics that during this period of seven years the mind will be developing habits of accurate observation, and that these habits will eventuate in mental power. No assumption could be more at variance with facts. It has been said of Captain Burton that he *absorbed* languages; and to judge by the immensity of their acquirements, it would appear that such persons as Linnæus and Darwin do apparently *absorb* impressions of natural phenomena, otherwise their colossal acquirements would be inexplicable. It may be admitted also that in all healthy minds there is in early youth a certain degree of this absorptive faculty, too often abused and stultified by the gratuitous blundering of irascible dogmatists. But granting that the average mind is thus gifted with absorptiveness, it can but absorb the element that surrounds it. The mind needs *direction*,<sup>1</sup> and it needs aliment. Direction in most cases comes from other more developed and contiguous minds; aliment, from environment. A decided, innate, individual, mental bias towards science or literary form is so rare that it deserves whenever seen the appellation of "genius." Among the English working-class not one in a thousand (or one-tenth per cent.) seem to possess this decided bias. Dr. Smiles has, indeed, informed us that Locke, Helvetius, and Diderot believed that all men possess the same *aptitude for genius*. It is a comfortable doctrine; but the phenomenal attention evoked by the apparition of a Keats, or a Faraday, or a Gifford, with his problems engraved upon flattened leather, indicates its falsity. A youth, triumphing over obstacles and uncongenial surroundings, amply vindicates his title to this Divine inheritance called "genius." The "aptitude" may certainly exist in the average mind, but it is the aptitude of the sparrow to sing the canary's song. He has now and then learned to do it, but how rapidly he reverts to type! Just so the labourer who has been through the standards of a country school after a few years of toil often cannot write his own name. He, too, reverts to type. "You cannot," says the proverb, "make more of a cat than its

---

<sup>1</sup> Let us note also that, to fairly apply this principle of a seven years' assignment to Nature's school, we should start clear of hereditary bias and evil environment. What applies in this matter to a country boy of self-respecting parents can scarcely be true for the City arab.

skin." Nor can you "make a silk purse of a sow's ear." By generous treatment, indeed, you may expand a small mind, but you cannot make it large. Scrooge transformed is but a master fancy. Quantity, quality, and peculiarity are all practically permanent factors in the average human subjects of secular education.

But whatever theory we may hold regarding the individual mind, probably few legislators would aver that the view of the *State* educator must embrace man's final condition. Limitations of time and instruments forbid the pursuit of ideals that relate to his possible "imago" condition.

If the three stages of insect growth afford a true type of man's development, it is to be feared that the masses must in this life remain intellectual larvæ. For, indeed, much that operates in all the schools is not merely, as Mr. Gorst would say, idiotic in its futility, but potently pernicious in its tendency to stunt and to distort. Universities are no exception. Have we not all known men whose special acquirements, instead of really helping, entirely befooled them; who, instead of applying those acquirements to some useful pursuit, were wagged by them as the tail wags the dog? This ludicrous spectacle, not merely irritating to practical minds, but even exasperating, shows how a man may be educated beyond his natural powers, and placed in the pitiable position of the diver, who thought he had found a treasure, but soon realized that something—*i.e.*, the octopus—had found him.

Educators, from the University to the ragged-school, seem often to forget that the vision of the average mind embraces but a small field of view. They would make not merely a University, but an Omniversity, and that, too, for the "man in the street." Plainly put, it is the creation of a true and sound unit of the social organism, not the *ultimate* development of the individual, that should suggest the limits of our educational objective. It is a common lament of Churchmen that it is so hard to evoke amongst the people a sense of the grand ideal, the harmonious onward movement, and the glorious destiny of the Church, and by consequence to value and maintain their membership in its living, spiritual organism. Just so might it well be with the State. But, alas! the leaders themselves have been too much actuated by their own party and personal ends to inculcate among their constituents the sense of patriotism, and in elementary schools failure has often resulted from the application of middle and upper class ambitions to the primary curriculum.

The evolution of a genius or a hero may be a laudable objective to the sixth-form master in a Grammar School; it can scarcely be a reasonable one to dominate the mind of a

teacher of embryo ploughmen. Let us fire lower and take truer aim. Let us cultivate, among our boys especially: (1) *Esprit de corps*—the most potent influence that exists among lads and yokels, who think more of the jeers of their comrades than of the majesty of the law or the King's proclamation. (2) Submission to authority and command—the beginning, though often, we fear, the end, of religion with vast numbers of the "masses." (3) A sound and healthy physical frame—a far surer aid to social independence than (even great) intellectual endowments. (4) Alertness of mind and keen perception—this, in its application to trade, manufacture, or agriculture, must, if attended by industry, augment the productiveness and wealth of a nation. (5) A reasonable temper and a just sense of proportion, specially in relation to studies and the work of life. The fads and theories of educational cranks have done vast mischief to the faculty of just perception. (6) A sense of the mighty unseen forces of the physical world. (7) Last, but in importance first, the fear of God, reverence for parental authority, awe for the moral forces of social government, and respect for humanity.

The true and enduring basis of social advancement has been laid down with pregnant brevity by St. Peter in a single verse of his weighty epistle: "Honour all men, love the brotherhood, fear God, honour the King." This we also believe to be the bed-rock upon which a sound structure of public education must be reared.

In extending the application of these principles "line upon line, precept upon precept," will be found, I verily believe, the only guarantee for solid national and educational progress. And in thus speaking we admit to the full the necessity and importance of mere intellectual development; the exigencies of trade demand it; the increasing love of knowledge will insist upon it. Yet in the final struggle, in the cyclic upheavals of the world, survival will depend upon truth and courage, endurance and right. The moral is (as Napoleon justly said) to the physical "as ten to one." Witness Marathon. Witness the conquests of Christianity.

One very obvious reason for adopting a short view, or near educational objective, lies in the fact that the ultimate development of individual minds must result from voluntary and strenuous personal effort. Every instance of men who have attained true eminence witnesses to this. Personal self-discipline is based upon an intelligent appreciation of the educational blunders and defects by which progress has been hindered. Mental development is not the accretion of matter to a crystal, but the growth and expansion of a living organism. False methods are an obstruction to that growth, and a

thoughtful habit must be the basis and starting-point of true personal development.

Now, when we come to apply these principles to the elevation of the masses, we have to face the conviction that their operation would infallibly result in an upheaval of society. Such thoroughness would entail, in fact, a radical change in existing conditions, and it has never been considered a function of a wise government to initiate social cataclysms. However, when we calmly examine our instrumental equipment for popular elevation we are constrained to acknowledge an appalling deficit, and to admit that there is but a slender chance for the application of such scientific methods.

Where is that vast army of teachers necessary for the awakening of thought among the masses of our people? Echo answers, Where? Whilst, on the one hand, the teaching staff would need to be quadrupled to evolve individuality in children, it will be admitted by practical teachers that, with a vast number of them, not even Locke, Roger Ascham, or Socrates himself, could assure a fruitful return for such specialized tuition. Too many not only will, but *must* "stick at K." And the most potent factor in this retardation is the semi-idiotic family type of brain, or the immoral proclivities so often entailed by heredity. "Their fathers," as the schoolmaster puts it, "also stuck at K." On the other hand, a Garfield or a Franklin is as sure to rise as the man of whom the poet wrote the following couplet is sure to fall:

"He knew no medium betwixt guzzling beer,  
And his old stint, a thousand pounds a year."

Dr. Smiles has reminded us that a representative Government which is better than the people deserve will surely be dragged down to suit them. By a similar law Cowper's young gentleman of pothouse affinities inevitably forfeited his position. Truly "Excelsior" is a noble motto, and the right "ascent of man" eminently desirable; yet, in the coming age, it is a problem, indeed, who will be the dockmen and scavengers. Practical recognition of the dictum of Carlyle that there is "a perennial nobleness in work" would seem, to judge by recent results, incompatible with a superficial education. In itself it indicates a nobility of disposition which is above and beyond beggarly elements. On all sides it is admitted that England has been receding in those technical arts and processes of which accurate observation and intelligent interest in natural phenomena form the basis. Social ambition and superficiality go hand in hand, and their best corrective is a return to that open book of priceless

object-lessons which the Divine Artificer has so lavishly bestowed upon us.

Let us then, in recasting our educational methods, reverence and act on the advice of Wordsworth: "Let Nature be your teacher." By doing so we shall indisputably lay the foundation for a supply of experts and skilled mechanics, and for national advancement in art and science; but beyond and above this we shall encourage and foster those habits of true thought and reasonable action which are eternally opposed to bigotry, partizanship, and social disorder.

Speaking to an assembly of young women, not long ago, a lecturer remarked that the education of a child should begin, not at the age of seven, or any other age, but a little while before it was born—with the *mother*. We cannot begin too soon. Heredity is against us, and the transmission of habits from one generation to another by imitation is against us. We are moulded, not only by the forces of what we call "the present," and the environment of our own individual youth, but by all the cumulative influence of our ancestors. Hence the necessity of using every possible means to influence parents as well as children. It has become a truism that the best chance of elevating the masses is to get hold of the young. But the enemy has *the start* against us in the form of vicious home influence. We have to wield the sword with one hand, while we build with the other.

Carlyle's dictum, that the people are "mostly fools," is best illustrated by the fact that they *hate knowledge*. They positively resent it, as conveyed in the ordinary channels—*i.e., by books*. What a rustic mother likes in a book is its brilliant cover, by which she can exhibit to strangers the perfection of her own Johnny, who took it as a prize. They resemble a Hunts cottager who gruffly assured the writer that what she liked to see about her husband was his *back*.

How to impart even the faintest tinge of a love of reading to country folk is a problem not yet tackled.

It is, indeed, still a problem, even with the middle class. The pestiferous swarms of pernicious periodicals, so far from increasing real readers, are making them more scarce. No stimulant of thought can vie with parables of Nature, nor is there any incitement to inquiry, like the impulse of an observant eye. Ruskin's idea that every country school should have attached to it a garden, as well as a playground, goes to the root of the matter, and ratepayers would gain by it in the end if such gardens were used for imparting object-lessons.

Indoor museums will prove a costly addition to expenditure: the best school museum is like Wordsworth's study—

out of doors. By an able demonstrator elementary lessons in almost every branch of science needful for rustics might be deduced in the open air, amid suggestive surroundings, from a selection of plants in various stages of growth.

If teachers do not come forward under our present system, why not engage a travelling staff? Is intelligent observation on the part of our rustic population an important national factor or not? We know by experience that they *will not read*. We also know by observation that they do take interest, and keen interest, in their little gardens, their caged birds, and their *tame* rabbits. Why then drive them to take interest in *wild* ones, and turn them into criminals, by imprisoning them for breach of the game laws?

The truth is that both schoolmasters and scholars are hungering for a reform in the direction of advanced object-lessons. I trust I may be allowed to offer two illustrations of this fact.

Being a lover of birds, I recently asked a village schoolmaster if he would like a lecture upon this subject, with special reference to local species. He gladly agreed, and arranged the entire school for the purpose. I was amused, some time after, while visiting in the village, to find that one of the smallest boys had carried home a graphic account of a sketch made on the blackboard—viz., a curlew carrying a large shoreworm in his beak. This evidently aroused the mother's interest also. Similar interest was shown in a lecture which I gave in the same schoolroom upon the "Forms of Cloud," explaining some of the properties of the atmosphere by the help of lantern-slides. A goodly number of cottagers, chiefly young people, attended, a small charge being made. Over half a guinea was raised for a local object, and at least one farmer expressed his satisfaction, and declared that he had no idea so much could be said about clouds. Surely our numerous "wranglers" and "honour men" might do a little social work in this way to elevate and amuse their parishioners. They would not lose, but gain by it, in their proper clerical sphere. Witness Henslow of Hitcham and his use of natural science as a parish civilizer, with the best results.

One objection raised at times by teachers themselves is the "spelling difficulty." Some thirty years ago, after I had advocated the teaching of physiology in schools, a Liverpool elementary schoolmaster wrote to say that he would be delighted to support the movement if this spelling difficulty could be disposed of. The answer is obvious. Everything that quickens perception helps to dispose of that difficulty. The very reason why children spell badly is because their perceptive faculty has not been applied to the form of words. How is it that a lad with a turn for languages—in this I

speak from experience—never requires to be taught Greek or Latin *spelling*? Simply because his linguistic faculty and the necessity of the case compel him to observe, and to observe with brains.

So much for the class of objections advanced by the "spelling difficulty." But there are a thousand other benefits, both moral and intellectual, which accrue from obedience to Nature's dictates in the matter of education, which go far beyond mere sense-perception. Perhaps no profession has gained more from an attentive study of her methods in the structure of animal dwellings than engineers. Indeed, it may be said that there is no constructive art which does not owe much, and which might not owe more, to the structures of animal and insect life. Observation, however, like the painter's colours, should be mixed with brains, and the subjects "Eyes and no Eyes," and "Learning to Think" should be studied contemporaneously.

Low conceptions of life involve low ideas of education. By the bulk of our people Napoleon's dictum is necessarily inverted. The physical *is* to the moral as 100 to 1, and to the spiritual as 1,000 to 1.

A Yorkshireman, being visited by his clergyman, who desired to console him upon the loss of his little boy, remarked, in the midst of his tears: "If t'warn a gin t'law, A' should liked to have t' little beggar stoofed."

Does not this contain the key to our modern—let us hope temporary, descent upon the rungs of the educational ladder? Outward form before inner quality. "The world is still deceived with ornament."

"Flannelled fools at the wicket, and muddied oafs at the goals," cries the indignant poet, and the wrath of the galled sportsman re-echoes to the end of the earth. How, then, shall we stay the advancing tide of frivolity? We answer: By a return to national sobriety and seriousness; by the restoration of parental discipline; by the inculcation of nobler and truer ideals of life.

What constitutes a State?

"Not high-raised battlement or laboured mound,  
Thick wall or moated gate . . .  
But men—high-minded men—  
With powers as far above dull brutes endued  
In forest brake or den,  
As beasts excel cold rocks and brambles rude.  
Men who their duty know,  
But know their rights, and, knowing, dare maintain."

To form such men should be the true objective in national education.

S. BARBER.