

begun, and industrial habits have no existence. Very likely the best years for the formation of habits of industry, and the learning of a trade, have passed. The school has done nothing toward training the hands to skill in ordinary work. It has unintentionally instilled the idea that wit is better than work to get a living by, and has thus encouraged a proud revolt from the life to which they were born, while yet it has not fitted them for any other. Thus it comes to pass that so many who have passed through our schools are looking for light work, or work that seems genteel, or are rushing half-educated into the professions and lowering the standard of learning there. Thus it happens, too, that there are recruits in abundance for the army of those who live by their wits, whether honestly or not, and often fall into the clutches of the law.

Think how different it might be.

Very sad and very suggestive is this remark of a prison commissioner, that half the benefit of prison life to youthful criminals consists in the formation of habits of patient industry. Why should we leave so great a benefit to be conferred by prison life? Why should society give it only to the criminals? What if the schools gave something of it to all who come within their walls? Is not prevention better than cure? Is not a child saved to industry better than a criminal won back to it by the incidental benefit of his penal shame? Grant that the schools cannot do everything, and cannot do anything very great in this direction: nevertheless, what they can do is well worth doing. What can they do? In answer I may ask, Why should it not be one of the duties of the public school to train the hands of the children to deftness and skill in working? These wonderful hands that God has given us, how little of the work that is possible to them do they do, for want of skill!

If they had been wisely trained and practised in our childhood, so that their utmost had become possible to them, how much better had we been fitted for the daily necessities of our lot! As for the great multitude who must use their hands in some way or other all their days, even a little manual practice, substituted for complete disuse in school-time, would have done them more good than some part of the Roman history that they tried to learn. In this working world, why should not power to work stand among the first lessons that society teaches to its young?

The difficulty of adjusting such instruction to the existing curriculum would, of course, have to be met, but difficulties greater far have been encountered and overcome in the work of education. The solution in this case has already been reached in part, by the introduction of the Kindergarten method. This very thing, which is the foundation of industrial success, the use of the hands, is already taught to many of the youngest children. I believe the time is coming when no primary teaching will be admitted that does not make some use of this natural and charming method. I believe too that kitchen-garden instruction is destined to take its place in the public schools: for it has as good a right there as arithmetic. I doubt not that the system will be extended to other kinds of work, and the rudiments of labour more generally will be taught by illustration. In some cities, moreover, the first steps of learning and practice in some of the leading trades are already taught in the public schools. Wood-work in its various forms, practical and ornamental, from carpentry to carving, is taught under the auspices of the public boards, to the great benefit of the rising race. Slowly, but surely, this work is destined to increase: not to the exclusion of the present work of the schools,