

our day he would need a longer life to master the whole curriculum of learning. To some, it may seem easy to decide what to teach, at least in the common and grammar schools, but the view we take of university education must more or less affect the course of training all the way down to the cradle, and both higher and lower education will take their shape from the philosophy of the time. The practical teachers of the country may not be the best judges in this matter, but they will be, when teachers are raised to their proper status, and adequately qualified for their work.

The question, what to teach, complicates with the question, how to teach. If time be wasted and power lost by a bad method of teaching, there will, of course, be so much less room for range and variety of subjects. "Geography," says Burke, "though an earthly subject, is a heavenly study," and yet I have known boys so taught Geography as to waste time enough for the acquisition of a new language. "A new language," says another great man, "is like a new soul," and yet boys are sometimes so taught languages as not only to acquire no new soul, but to lose the old one, giving occasion for the saying that "the study of languages is the soul's dry rot." Spelling is a grand pother, and about as hard to solve as the pacification of Ireland. If I could despair at all of the millennium, it would be from the present anomalous and thorny mode of spelling the English language. It is a disgrace to all who do not believe in works of supererogation. Could we get our orthography simplified and purged of its superfluous material, something would be added to the years, and much to the happiness of children, not to speak of older people, and especially of foreigners. Some seem to regard our present orthography as a part of the essence of our literature, fixed as it were by a law of nature, like gravitation or circulation of the blood. Such persons should read some of the standard authors in their original form. They need not go further back than Shakespeare or Hooker. It seems from evidence in Parliamentary committees that even Cambridge professors have not yet learned to spell; all things considered, it is not to be wondered at. I have no personal interest in this matter, being a capital speller myself, nor have I any scheme to propose, but if anything ever should open the way to an orthographical reformation, let us help on the change. English grammar, of course, is one of the leading branches of early education, and yet a year or two is often wasted by teaching grammar in the wrong way and at the wrong time. The practical part of grammar is best learned by imitation. Let boys and girls hear only correct and elegant speech, and they will as naturally speak with accuracy and grace as in the other way. The abstract