

THE FAILURE OF EDUCATION.

IT may be assumed that every normally endowed person born into the world has a mind which is as capable of development as his body. Every one has not the stuff in him of a great athlete or of an Apollo Belvidere; but, given an ordinary human frame, and the strength, agility and grace that can be communicated to it by proper training are very considerable. So should it, on general principles, be with the mind. A man might not have sufficient brain power to become a Bacon, a Newton or a Macaulay under any system of training whatever; but it is hard to see why, if justice were done to average mental faculties, they should not develop into something very respectable to say the least.

Now consider: very few persons comparatively get any systematic physical training; nearly all on the contrary get what professes to be systematic mental training, generally prolonged for several years. One would suppose therefore that, upon the whole, minds would be much better developed than bodies. Is it the case? Or is it the case that, in general, physical development is more satisfactory than mental development? We incline to answer the first question in the negative and the second in the affirmative. Without insisting on this, however, let us consider for a moment how certain, comparatively speaking, the methods of the physical instructor are. Taking a summary view of your physique, he can promise you with tolerable confidence certain definite results within a limited time, if you will but put yourself into his hands. Contrast with this the uncertainty of the methods of intellectual education. How empty of all valuable results a five or six years' course of schooling may be, hundreds of parents are daily forced to recognize.

The conclusion that we draw is that in general the physical trainer knows what he is about, and that the intellectual trainer does not. Of course the training of the body is a simpler thing than the training of the mind; but we are still forced to ask the question whether the art of mind-training is in as forward a condition as it ought to be considering for how many centuries it has constituted a separate and recognized profession. The answer to this we are persuaded will be a negative from all who have thought seriously on the subject. But many will go further, as we do ourselves, and assert that, in a large number of cases, so-called intellectual training defeats and frustrates its own main object, so that the last state of the individual subjected to it is worse than the first. The idea of induced electricity has become familiar of late years even to the non-scientific, but the idea, representing an equally real fact, of induced stupidity is, we fear, familiar to very few. We need to think about it. If we could only bring home to our minds how many primary circuits, so to speak, of stupidity are in full and paid operation throughout the country, and by what a fatal law they are inducing stupidity in other currents of thought, we should recognize the seriousness of the situation. Every teacher in the land who divorces words from realities and thoughts from things, who puts meaningless or evasive reasons into the mouth of pupils, who fills the mind with abstractions before the perceptive and apprehensive faculties have had any proper exercise, every teacher, we might almost say, who follows the ordinary methods of the schools is inducing stupidity, more or less, in the minds of his or her pupils. The worse than nullity of the intellectual discipline in such cases is masked by the fact that a certain amount of positive knowledge has been communicated; and parents, who unfortunately judge of schooling by what their children seem to have learnt in certain recognized "branches of study," are sometimes satisfied, though more often not. "My child seems to be learning absolutely nothing at school!" is an exclamation not unfrequently heard. We should not advise the parents of such children, however, to despair. Barring cases of vicious obstinacy, the child who seems to be learning nothing at school may perhaps at least be keeping his faculties unimpaired for future use; while the boy who is the teacher's pride may be surrendering up his own individuality, in a most hurtful degree, to the will of another and taking an impress of artificiality and intellectual dependence that he will not free himself from for the remainder of his days. Not often is the winner of many prizes at school the winner of the great prizes of active life.

The question therefore which a parent interested in his child's welfare should ask is not, What does my child know? but, What can my child do? or, What use can he make of his faculties, physical and mental? As far as "knowing" is concerned, the child may know too much; and, if he is docile and attentive, probably does—knows things the knowledge of which might much better come later and for which at present there is no proper place in his mind. The thing to enquire about and to be anxious about is growth of faculty and balance of functional activity. If there were any means of graphically delineating what takes place in the case of children undergoing what is called education we should see some queer things. We do see queer things now and again when some one sets to work to collect some of the more striking answers given by young people under examination; but what we ought to recognize in these often mirth-compelling absurdities is the intellectual distortion that rendered them possible; and that is not a thing to be merry over. As regards "induced stupidity" many parents, unfortunately, could not recognize it, even when plainly indicated; but others might, and it is a thing to watch for. The great and almost unerring sign of it is where the

child begins to use words without attaching any definite meaning to them and to put forward explanations that do not explain. These things are not characteristic of unsophisticated childhood; they belong to the muddled intellectual condition of a child in process of education, whose attention is being withdrawn from the world of simple realities and chained to formulas, to abstractions, to complex ideas having little or no relation to the child's own experience. What, it may be asked, is the parent to do at such a juncture. There may be, probably is, no better education available than that which his child is receiving. All he can do, in such a case, is to check, as far as he can, by his personal influence the growing habit of subjection to words, and bring back the mind of his child as often as possible to the great source of vivid impressions and real knowledge—nature. The question, however, is, Cannot we have somewhere, as a beginning, a system of education not only founded on nature, but that will at no point depart from nature—one that shall apply itself to the development of faculty and that shall regulate the supply of knowledge, both in quality and quantity, to that supreme end? We need not look to the State to give us such an education, for it can never do it. State education is and always will be book-education, if only on account of the uniformity that must necessarily characterize it. What is wanted at the head of an educational establishment is a strong and original personality; and when you have that you must allow it scope—more scope than it can have under the regulations of any department of education. A really rational system of education, moreover, would necessarily be much in advance of average opinion, and could, therefore, not be administered by the State which in all things can only go as far as average public opinion permits. The thing must be started and maintained by private enterprise, and be allowed an opportunity of vindicating itself by its results. When we come to think of it there is no more important question than this, as to whether the rising generation is getting the benefit of the best educational methods, or whether its intellectual interests are being sacrificed to the dull routine of a State-directed educational machinery. The desideratum of the age is a system of mental training that shall do as much for the mind as judicious physical training does for the body. The problem is not incapable of solution. He who fully solves it, theoretically and practically, will stand high on the roll of the world's benefactors.

W. D. LESUEUR.

CONSECRATION.

I HEARD, in wonderment, that they had made
The sunny hill, the softly shaded glade
Into a graveyard: blessed the blossoming sod
And sanctified those acres unto God.

They knew not summer suns and winter fires
Had flamed and died since many dear desires,
There resting 'neath that tear-bewatered sod,
Had hallowed it by unsaid prayer to God.

Sherbrooke.

MAY AUSTIN.

PARIS LETTER.

"HIC JACET!" The death of Boulangerism is now official. The General's Committee went to Jersey, and, with taper in hand, announced that the melodrama was played out, and that the curtain should drop. He entertained them at a funeral breakfast, and a few days ago formally accepted the notice served on him to quit the political stage. Boulangerism existed exactly four years, four months and nine days—just a little longer-lived than a nine days' wonder. As many persons still believe that the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa is not dead, so a few may remain incredulous as to the dissolution of Boulangerism.

Shakespeare alludes to "man's acts being seven ages." Boulanger has in his time played fourteen parts, since he made his entrance on the stage in January, 1886, as Minister of War. It was said, that since Louis XIII. no French sovereign ever wore a beard, till Boulanger. No French War Minister ever wore whiskers, and they were as potent as the black steed in the manufacture of his popularity. The 14th July, 1887, the *brav' général* at the military review, intoxicated the multitude with his black horse and brilliant escort; Paulus, the comic singer, apotheosised the event in a ballad of his best. Then came the Duc d'Aumale incident, where the general displayed such an economy of truth; next followed the De Lareinty duel, succeeded by the League of Patriots becoming his bodyguard.

The Schnebelé affair led France to believe that Boulanger was a bug-bear for Germany. The "Revenge General" was ordered not the less to Clermont-Ferrand and 200,000 Parisians at the Lyons terminus objected to his departure. That was Boulanger's psychologic moment; he had only to head the multitude and he had Paris and France at his feet—plus Germans massed on the frontier.

From Clermont-Ferrand his sorrows, his down-hill, began. He came to Paris clandestinely—sometimes in blue spectacles and on crutches. This ended in the general being placed on the half-pay list. He retorted by throwing himself into the maelstrom of politics, reaping electoral triumphs wherever he offered himself as deputy. The monarchists of all shades took him up; the "pink" became the flower badge of his "ism"; grand duchesses

wore it in their bodices, and gave dinners in his honour. This was psychologic moment number two. But Home Minister Constans was in the meantime setting his snares and weaving his net to catch the general. One night the latter bolted with a lady for Belgium; M. Constans had started his game; it was necessary to run it to earth; the High Court of the Senate did that on 14th August, 1889, and Paris viewed the hunting down with indifference. The exhibition had taught them in the interim to cry *Vive Carnot!* and Paulus had composed a counter-blast ballad, this time in honour of the President's grandfather, the *Père de Victoire*.

The "people will alone be my judge" wrote Boulanger. Well, the Cantonal, the Legislative, and the Paris Municipal elections successively condemned him. It was the "*Bonsoir, Monsieur Pantalon!*" The "reed of fortune" can devote the remainder of his life to writing his "Memoirs—of Jersey," but, unlike the hero of the "Memorials of St. Helena," he will have no Hudson Lowe to guard him, and will have no necessity to pass his time disputing "o'er curtail'd dishes, and o'er stinted wines."

What was the object of Prince Bismarck taking to his home and to his bosom a French journalist—M. des Houx—to be interviewed? Why this lying down of the lion with the lamb? M. des Houx has had the ear of the late Comte de Chambord, and he is a pet with His Holiness. During dinner at Friedrichsruhe, Bismarck had the French journalist on his left—nearer the heart; Marshal Niel roses faced him on the table, and only French wines circulated during the repast. If M. des Houx felt like Orestes, who, having solicited an audience with Pyrrhus, said, "I wish an interview and fear to obtain it," what must have been his state of mind, when the great man poured out his soul in confidence to the representative of the fifth—for the labour world has appropriated the fourth—estate? Naturally, the Gaul concludes that the Prince is not an ogre; has not *delenda Francia* on the brain, but is a real friend of humanity. The French rank the interview as the best joke of the season. They positively go into fits at Bismarck asking, "What is the name of that Minister—the one with the long whiskers, you know?" He alluded to M. Jules Ferry—that most Bismarckian of French premiers and the most unpopular. The satire is next to a compensation for being saddled with Tonkin.

Another source of fun with the French—for one is always pleased a little with the misfortunes of dear friends—is the manner Germany is wheedling England out of East and Central Africa. After playing out Bismarck, Emperor William is amusing himself making a colonial shuttlecock of John Bull. The latter must get up earlier, if he intends to secure the early worm before the mild-eyed and straight-haired Teuton. Germany's programme for civilizing Africa is admitted to be after all the most expeditious; bullets without English bibles or De Brazza cotton handkerchiefs.

Paris consumes daily mushrooms to the value of 1000 francs. Only those approved by the inspectors at the Central Market are allowed to be offered for sale.

It was the influence of Madame de Staël, in 1795, that permitted Talleyrand to re-enter France. He had then neither influence nor money. Owing to a short leg, he could not walk much. One day he called on Madame de Staël and said to her: "I have only 500 francs in the world; that will allow me to live one month; you know I cannot walk and I must have a carriage. If you do not arrange to secure me a suitable position, I will blow out my brains; so if you love me, you know what to do." Madame de Staël called on Barras, and, by force of wit and insisting, forced him to make Talleyrand Minister of Foreign Affairs.

How to write history! M. Debidour relates, that the Duke of Wellington did nothing—the contrary is the fact—to save Marshal Ney from being shot, but urged that the execution be at once carried out. He "hints" that the Duke of Wellington, in grand uniform, was present on horseback, at the execution, and that the Marshal had scarcely fallen from the balls, than the Iron Duke caused his horse to jump over the quivering corpse of the "bravest of the brave."

In November, 1815, denunciations were so general—the *terreur blanche* reigned—that there more than 100,000 Bonapartists and Republicans in prison. Tit for tat is the law of political victory in France.

Z.

A MODERN MYSTIC.

I COULD never bring myself to believe in phrenology; yet, since that man Fowler examined my head and revealed to me a great many mysterious truths about myself, as for instance, that I have literary tastes; like a walk on a bright breezy day with a pleasant companion, and am naturally, especially when hungry, fond of a good dinner, I find myself when introduced to anyone, or employing a new workman, instinctively looking at his head. I have battled against the weakness, but it seems like that nature of which Horace says, if you kick her out of the hall door, before you have closed your portal she will be in at the window and seated very comfortably in your best arm-chair. I don't know that Horace mentions the arm-chair, nor, at this moment, if my life depended on it, could I translate into unexceptionable Latin the word for that convenient piece of furniture. I have been carefully grounded in the Christian system; am a thorough believer; have read, but never been captured by Colenso; have studied the "Essays and Reviews," and remained unshaken; nay, what is more,