

—a servile cherishing of old-world thought and information. A man is now expected to know all the 'ologies, all countries, all histories, all languages, or at least something about everything there is, or ever has been, under the sun. It is quite impossible, Mr. Froude says, that any one man can possess very much and profitable knowledge of all things, or even many things. He is a bit of an historian himself; that or nothing; and upon glancing over an examination-paper in history for young men at college, he found one or two questions that perhaps he could answer. To minds engaged in the process of accumulation, all statements become verbal formulas, without life or meaning. Upon that other knowledge, which deals neither with men nor with things, but which professes to define the infinite and express the unknown, Mr. Froude is evidently sure of the full sympathy and concurrence of his northern hearers. A keen air has invigorated his mind, and he tells . . . the admirers of Knox, and the near descendants of Covenanters that all the matters with which the mind can deal belong to the age, that one controversy and one trial only succeeds another, and that the good and true man who would have been brought to the stake three or four centuries ago, has now to undergo a similar ordeal of mental perplexities, battle with prejudices and entanglement with human inventions.

There are several praises it would be impossible to deny to this address. It is really interesting. It throws the light of experience, of wit, and even of genius, on the folly of trying to teach a youth everything while he can do nothing, and while he really knows nothing. He exhibits the man stuffed with words and ideas hardly better than words, possessed with the conceit of universal knowledge and universal capacity, when a slight change of place and circumstances would bring out the lamentable truth that he can do nothing but break stones on the road — if, indeed, physical strength has survived his educational training. The world is full of such wrecks, and the addition of more studies and more subjects to the old, narrow routine, has not imparted to the education of an English gentleman either greater certainty of knowledge or more practical power. Mr. Froude evidently feels himself competent to measure, at least on one subject, the ignorance prevailing in the educated, or what should be the educated classes. They know nothing; or what they do know they know wrong, and to no good purpose. Meanwhile the world, while it flies from ignorance, attempts to learn still more; and they who know nothing well must show a smattering of every thing. All this is true, too true. It must be so, when Mr. Froude tells us so, for he ought to know; and it confirms our sad suspicion.—*Times.*

Individual versus Class Teaching.

When Lancaster, under high patronage, and with liberal support, introduced the monitorial, or mutual instruction system into these countries, a craze of admiration pervaded all classes interested in the progress of popular education, the most stupendous results were confidently predicted from its operation, and every partial success was received as incontestable proof of its universal adaptability. The ancient philosopher informed his prince that there was no royal road to the mathematics, but here was a republican road to the whole circle of the sciences; the master's labour was reduced to the minimum of mere superintendence, and according to the theory it did not much matter whether he himself was very deeply versed in the subjects to be learned or not. Some few who would have gone a little way with the system but could not be made to perceive all the results anticipated from it, were contemptuously regarded as narrow minded obstructives, old-world fogies whose mental vision was too contracted to permit of their sharing in the larger views of their contemporaries. A sufficiently long experience of the system, however, had the effect of very considerably moderating the enthusiasm of some of its most ardent supporters; it was found to fail in realising the great things expected from it, while its author, with those who still believed in it, attributed each

failure to want of capacity or of confidence on the part of those who had tried it in their schools. We believe the Lancasterian system, pure and simple, is still adhered to in a very few schools under local boards or committees, particularly in England; but though all that was good in it has been generally retained, no body of persons having a large control over popular education would now recommend the adoption of it in its entirety.

There are men however, at the present day, quite as much wedded to theories in education, and quite as jealous of any deviation from their favourite system as the most enthusiastic disciples of Lancaster were in respect of his. A large number of persons from whose minds the memory of the primary school, or the fire side, where they were instructed in the first rudiments, has faded away, remember only the lecture hall, or the class room, where the Professor, not held in the slightest degree accountable for those who *will* not learn, finds it as easy to impart instruction to one hundred adults, in the main attentive pupils, as to one. Conscious, for the time, only of how much of a subject they have mastered at a single lecture simultaneously with dozens of others, they are apt to forget how much at an earlier age, they have acquired from individual teaching nay, the amount of individual teaching they must have given to themselves in preparing for the lecture, and without which the Professor's labour would be comparatively fruitless. Seeing the decided advantage in schools and seminaries for advanced pupils, of simultaneous instruction, many are apt to rush to the conclusion that under all circumstances, and from the alphabet up to the sciences and humanities (inclusive), it must be the best, and, in fact, the only mode in which instruction should be imparted. So strongly is this idea impressed on the minds of some, that in the smallest primary school, they would not allow the least deviation from it; and the consequence is, under such strict and constant surveillance that he dares not venture an occasional departure from it, although a fair proportion of the more intelligent and attentive children will, in a reasonable time and with a hard working teacher, be found to have made fair progress, a large number of the slower and less attentive will, after perhaps a lengthened period of attendance, leave the school little better than they entered; and this is the experience of perhaps a greater number of teachers than are willing to acknowledge it.

In the National Board's "First Book" in-use a few years ago, there was a preface the principle of which was deemed of so much importance that at their examinations by both Professors and Inspectors, the teachers were usually required to repeat it from memory; in that preface, teachers were enjoined "never to advance a child to any lesson till he had completely mastered the preceding one." The writer of that preface seems to have understood the requirements of the class for which the book was intended: but, as it could not have been meant that a child who had mastered a lesson should be kept back for days, or perhaps weeks, until the duller or idler of his class or draft had come to a level with him, it necessarily—as far at least as that book was concerned—implied individual lessons; hence, perhaps, its omission from the present book.

Plume ourselves as we may on the superiority of our present over former systems, or, as we would call them, no systems, of education, numbers who are old enough to bear testimony in the matter know that in former years, fluent readers were made with more ease and in a shorter time than at present; and that such was the result of the nature and arrangement of the lessons in the reading books then in use, and to the universal practice of the then unwritten principle of the preface alluded to above of individual lessons, and of thoroughly learning at least the mechanical reading of one lesson before proceeding to another. We think we see Theoricus and Egotus, those two great oracles in matters educational, start at the bare mention of the word "mechanical" in relation to the teaching art; but we say, even with the aid of Dean Swift's laputan literary machine, make your pupils