

pay-masters. Writing is writing, and spelling is spelling. The process by which the one is taught is absolutely distinct from the other. To combine the two is to injure both—at all events, it is not likely to help the penmanship. It is otherwise in the case of drawing, and the Commissioners have given an overwhelming amount of testimony in favour of the recommendations which they have now made. We invite the attention of our readers also to the suggestion that handicraft skill on the part of boys should be rewarded in the same

way as needlework is now on the part of the girls. In suggesting that the work should, as far as practicable, be done out of the regular school hours, they anticipate objections which might have been most reasonably raised against the proposal. That agriculture should receive due prominence in the rural schools, also, is one of those things that must meet with very general consent, so long as the conditions under which it is to be taught are not likely to be otherwise than reasonable.—*The School-master.*

## WHAT IS A LIBERAL EDUCATION?\*

BY PRESIDENT CHARLES W. ELIOT

THE general growth of knowledge and the rise of new literatures, arts, and sciences during the past two hundred and fifty years have made it necessary to define anew liberal education, and hence to enlarge the signification of the degree of bachelor of arts, which is the customary evidence of a liberal education. Already the meaning of this ancient degree has quietly undergone many serious modifications; it ought now to be fundamentally and openly changed.

The course of study which terminates in the degree of bachelor of arts ordinarily covers from seven to ten years, of which four are spent in college and three to six at school; and this long course is, for my present purpose, to be considered as a whole. I wish to demonstrate, first, that the number of school and college studies admissible with equal weight or rank

for this highly valued degree needs to be much enlarged; secondly, that among admissible subjects a considerable range of choice should be allowed from an earlier age than that at which choice is now generally permitted; and, thirdly, that the existing order of studies should be changed in important respects. The phrase, "studies admissible with equal weight or rank" requires some explanation. I use it to describe subjects which are taught with equal care and completeness, and are supported by the same prescriptions, and which win for their respective adherents equal admission to academic competitions, distinctions, and rewards, and equal access to the traditional goal of a liberal education, the degree of bachelor of arts. Coördinate studies must be on an equal footing in all respects: of two studies, if one is required and the other elective, if one is taught elaborately and fully and the other only in its elements, if honors and scholarships may be ob-

\* This paper was read on the 22nd of February last before the members of the Johns Hopkins University, an institution which from the start has effectually promoted many of the reforms herein advocated.