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RECENT EDUCATIONAL SPEECHES IN ENGLAND.

JOHN ARTHUR ROEBUCK, ESQ., M.P.

BENEFITS OF EDUCATION TO THE WORKING MAN.

FROM an Address on Education delivered by Mr. Roebuck in a Congregational School House in Dorsetshire we make the following extracts:—

"As it is my wish to point out to the working man the great advantages of education, I will speak firstly of Education as giving him the means of raising himself among his fellows, of carving out for himself a great fortune among his fellows. Now this, Sir, seems to me to be a great mistake. Very few people can draw prizes in the great lottery of life: where one man makes his fortune a million must rest where they began. Therefore, the great object I have in view is to point out to the working man the benefits—the great benefits which he may derive from education itself—to make him understand that his life will be purer, his life will be better, his life will be a more virtuous life if he has obtained the benefits of education. I don't point out to him such great examples as George Stephenson, who at eighteen years of age did not know how to write; that man taught himself how to write, taught himself everything that he knew; he acquired a great fortune, and was, in fact, the father of all the railways in England. That man's life is almost a miracle, and I would not point out to labouring men him as an example, because millions of labouring men cannot attain that which he attained. But every working man can get the benefits of education, can derive the advantages, such as no other means can give him, which would make him a happier and better man. (Applause.) Now, sir, it is not for me to say

whether among the various races of mankind one is better or more capable than another; but we say this of the race to which we belong, that we are among the foremost of mankind: that England has exhibited in all her classes the greatest possible greatness to which man can rise. (Hear, hear.) Our nobles, our gentry, our merchants, our clerical class, our lawyers, our farmers, our working men, have shown themselves to be among the foremost of mankind. Therefore I say to you who are among the working men of this country, who are possessed of great intellect, which God has given you, but from the want of education have not the opportunity of making use of it, it is indeed like the bright diamond hidden in a dark cave:—

"Full many a gem of purest ray serene—
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen
And waste its sweetness on the desert air."

So it is with my fellow countrymen. There are millions of you who are possessed of great abilities, of wonderful capacity, who are bound down and grovelling in a state of ignorance. Why is this, sir, I would ask you? What are the pleasures of an ignorant man? I would ask you to make a comparison between the pleasures of that man and those of the educated man, and by that comparison would woo you to see that intellect exalts each man who has availed himself of the advantages of education. And why? The uneducated man is born to labour, and passes the greater portion of his life in labour; but there are hours when he is unemployed, hours of leisure. And how does he employ those hours? Unfortunately, for the most part in sensual enjoyments, by which he recreates himself, by which he gets rid of that which is more painful than labour, the tedium of his leisure time which sometimes he acquires. Now, sir, what does an educated man do? His enjoyments are multitudinous. No hour of any man's life may be without the enjoyment of a book. No matter what may be your state of mind, no matter what may be the state of mind of those who surround you, a book is ever your equable, calm, and generous friend. You open it, and there is spread out before you the wealth, and mind, and language of the author. On every occasion he is willing to come forward and benefit you. I would say to you, learn all that the knowledge by which you are surrounded can give to you: and there is one thing above all others which I desire you to remember, and that is that it is within the reach of every working man to attain to pretty nearly all the enjoyments of civilized life. I am not speaking of the enjoyments which wealth gives. All the pleasures of civilized life are