

Literature, Historical Notes, etc.**BOYS' SCHOOLS IN ANCIENT ATHENS.**

You cannot drive out nature with a fork, nor can you produce such-and-such an individual by such-and-such a method of education. The Athenians, like genius, were born, not made. Nevertheless, there is a fascination in the study of the methods of education adopted by the finest race the earth has ever produced, and the descendants of generations whose mental lives have been nourished by the literature of a dead world, may care to investigate the educational notions of those among whom that literature arose.

But we have first, if I may be allowed the expression, to undifferentiate ourselves. We must give up the dividing lines which mark us out into intellectual, moral, physical, or social beings. In the Athens of Pericles intellectual education, as such and for itself, was hardly conceived of: the whole man was to be educated. (I say man advisedly, for woman, alas! from the Athenian point of view, was not a thing to be educated at all.) Moreover, to appreciate the meaning of education among the Greeks, one needs to realize a far more vivid feeling of patriotism than modern life in Western Europe admits of. The chief aim of the educator was a moral one; and the chief part of morality was to be a good citizen. To produce a brave soldier, a wise ruler, a just judge, in one and the same individual, was the purpose of education, where each citizen might be called to fulfil all these duties in turn. Thus the harmonious development of all the faculties was the result desired, rather than the acquisition of knowledge for its own sake.

Realize an education carried on mainly *without books*, in which no foreign language was ever taught, and in which so little was one branch of learning marked off from another that all necessary subjects—apart from the physical training—were briefly summed up under the head of “music.” Such was the teaching of those whose writings have inspired all subsequent literature. They do not seem, however, to have escaped educational difficulties of a very common sort. A remark of Plato’s leads one to suspect that stupid boys were by no means uncommon in favoured Athens, and that even this attractive method of education was not infallible. Those, he says, who cannot learn to read and write quickly and well within a suitable time should be “let go.” How much trouble this simple