

For the purpose of my argument, I will assume that due regard is paid to the physical, to the mental, to the moral training of each pupil, and to the due development of each of his senses. I therefore necessarily assume that out of each working school day two adequate portions of time are allotted respectively to the physical and moral training, and that the working hours remaining for the mental work are proportionately curtailed.

The details of physical and moral development I pass over as foreign to the immediate objects of this paper,—with, however, two observations, viz.—1. So far as I know, nothing approaching a rational, much less a scientific, system of moral training exists in our schools. Morality and religious creed or dogma are commonly confounded. Religious instruction is considered sufficient to satisfy the requirements both of religion and morality. 2. Mental work appears to be fast driving the physical out of school hours, even in schools where its importance as a branch of school work was formerly recognized,—a fact sufficient in itself to render it at least doubtful whether the present tendency is wise.

If when, some twenty years ago, an admirable idea was started,—I refer to the creation of volunteer cadet corps,—an Act of Parliament had been passed making it compulsory to devote a certain number of hours per week out of the ordinary school hours of every boy, school to military drill, superintended by a competent drill sergeant, schoolmasters would have been pleased, the boys would have been delighted and greatly benefited, and the state would at this moment have had a large army of at least half-made soldiers, in addition to the regular forces, the volunteers, and militia. The mistake then made, as I then ventured to point out, was fatal to the success of the scheme. It was to take the drill time outside of the ordinary drill hours. Boys are boys, and should be boys; they want their play, and ought to have it. Nothing could be worse for the future interests of this country than to make them effeminate, or more intellectual machines.

If we admit, as we necessarily must—first, that no man can know everything, and, secondly, that there are many subjects, no one of which can ever be thoroughly mastered by any one, be his life ever so long, his energy ever so great—it appears to me that we cannot avoid certain consequences. They are these:—If perfect knowledge of one subject cannot be acquired when the whole time and energy is devoted to it, in proportion as the number of subjects is increased, the possible knowledge of each must decrease, and the consequent value of the knowledge acquired must correspondingly decrease till ultimately it becomes practically worthless as a matter of knowledge, though the universal smattering may have been the result of long and laborious labor. "Jack of all trades and master of none" is an old saying worthy of modern consideration. It was believed in, in the days when Englishmen preferred quality to quantity—in the days, now gone, when the British brand always fetched the long price abroad.

What more objectionable individual can be met with than the would-be omniscient—the man of reviews, short essays, newspaper cuttings, who, thus crammed, feels himself master of the Land question, or the Eastern question, or more than able to settle the Irish or any other difficulty? Is it not well to take heed lest we breed and multiply this hateful brood?

If we admit that the primary object of the educational establishment, be it school or college, is not to complete education and instruction, but to begin it, not to exhaust powers, but to develop and strengthen them; not to satisfy wants, but to create those of a wholesome character;—we necessarily admit that the education given, and the instruction imparted, are given and imparted as means to two distinct ends: the first being the fitting of the pupil to commence life; the second, and far more important, being the fitting of him to do justice to himself in life.

To fit him to commence life—that is, to pass out of the educational establishment into the world in the particular sphere of life then open to him—it is obvious that he must be made, if I may so express it, fashionable according to the fashion of that sphere; for he cannot be at his ease in that sphere, nor can he benefit by the advantages peculiar to it, unless, at the start, he is more or less like others in it.

If, therefore, it is the fashion of his class to know a little Greek and Latin, he should be taught a little Greek and Latin. If it is the fashion of his class to know a little French and German, he should be taught a little French and German. If it is the fashion of his class to content themselves with the three R's, he should at least be taught the three R's. There is, of course, no objection to his being fashionable among the fashionable, provided always that in this, as in other respects, excess of fashion does not render him

ridiculous. We all know how little we know. We all know how to excuse ourselves and others, when the expected standard is not reached; but we despise those who, aping greater things, show like shortcomings.

Upon the principle, and upon that alone that it is the fashion to do so, can the fact of teaching seven, eight or more different subjects concurrently be justified. At least, such is my opinion. It is now the fashion to pass examinations. I venture to say that is a good fashion. It is the fashion at present to include in those examinations a vast number of subjects. I venture to think that a bad fashion. Be that, however, as it may, so long as the examinations and the subjects of examinations are in fashion, they must be passed, or the pupil and schoolmaster must lose caste.

Am I, or am I not, justified in saying, that to fit the pupil to do justice to himself in life, he should be taught, while at school and at college, and while preparing to pass his examinations, that the information he acquires, or can possibly acquire, at either, is a thing of but little value—a matter of minor importance; and that the great object of his training is, not that he may acquire knowledge of a particular subject or subjects, not that he may pass this, that or the other examination, but that he may learn how to learn and how to work that he may become able to learn or to work intelligently at any subject?

If this suggestion is sound, the course to be pursued with him, so far as practicable, regard being had to the satisfying of the first demand in point of time, appears obvious. It is to develop observation, memory, reason, industry, moderation, and, above all, thoroughness. These are the latent forces which, if developed, give strength and the consciousness of power sufficient to induce and warrant effort in any direction. But how can thoroughness be made possible when a number of different subjects is demanded? The problem is this:—How can we educate and instruct so as, at one and the same time, to satisfy the demands of the immediate and of the more distant future?

It appears to me that the first thing to be done is to examine, and if possible classify, all the subjects of study. They appear to be capable of division into three classes, viz.—

1. Subjects that are essentially educational; e.g., reading, writing, arithmetic, including the higher branches of mathematics, drawing, and the like.

2. Subjects essentially instructional; e.g., history, geography, philosophy, literature, and general information.

3. Subjects that may fairly be styled semi-educational and semi-instructional; e.g., languages, chemistry, music.

It is impossible to look at the first class without at once seeing that the burden of the labor in that division must be undertaken by the pupil. Reading, writing, and arithmetic cannot be done for him, though his tutor may materially lighten his labor by suggestion, example, and especially by marshalling his work, and placing it before him in the order in which it should be undertaken.

It is equally clear that, in the case of the subjects of the second class, the burden of the labor can, and I suggest should, be taken upon himself by the tutor. My proposition is, that all subjects properly belonging to this class should be taught orally, and, where possible, illustrated by maps, charts, models, and diagrams. My Chronometrical Chart of the History of England will be my illustration of my view as to the proper method of teaching subjects of this class. Where they are not taught orally, they might be made the subjects of reading lessons. To stuff their leading facts and propositions into small books, and compel the pupil to learn them, is to fill him with husks, not pleasing to the taste, that are difficult of digestion, and profitless in assimilation. Such books contain the dry bones without the comely flesh or vital spark of history. What is true of books of this kind upon history is no less true of books of like kind upon the other subjects. I must not, however, be understood to suggest that books of this kind are bad; on the contrary, they are, in my opinion, most useful. It is not their use, but their abuse, against which my observation is directed. That abuse is the treating them, or allowing them to be treated, as *the source, the beginning, and the end* of historical or scientific instruction, instead of regarding them as mere indices.

In the case of subjects of the third class, it appears to me that the labor can and should be divided, and that by such a division the respective duties of educating and instructing may be discharged with equal pleasure and profit both to teacher and pupil.

With your permission, I will illustrate my meaning by stating, in distinct and separate propositions, the bases of my practical Linguist series. Where it appears necessary, I will comment upon