

ARCHDEACON FARRAR ON MODERN SCHOOLS.

We extract the following passages from a recent sermon by Archdeacon Farrar at Westminster, on behalf of the parochial schools. Some of the questions asked and sentiments uttered are worthy of attention by educators in America as well as in Britain :

After a reference to the marvellous advance of the age in material civilization the preacher said, "But when we turn to the higher things of life, it becomes a very anxious question whether there has been any analogous improvement. Have the vaunted glories of civilization tended to anything nobler or better for the race of men in the realm of character, in the domain of spirit? Are human aims more worthy, is the human heart richer now in elements of eternal value? Is human life on the whole happier and more worth living for the great mass of mankind than it was of old? It is obvious that only by the balance of many conflicting elements of decision can we come to a clear opinion respecting so wide a question. It would be wrong to dismiss it once for all with a dashing peremptory answer, but surely there are abundant reasons why we should not indulge in any premature exultation, as though we were so much better in these respects than our forefathers. However, I will only touch, and that very briefly, on one single element of inquiry, and ask whether we have, in this nineteenth century, made an adequate advance in the wisdom of education. That this test is a crucial one you will all acknowledge, since education is of the highest importance to the welfare of mankind. And perhaps you will assume that on this point, at any rate, there will be no doubt as to the answer. 'Look,' you will say, 'at our Educational Acts, look at our compulsory national education, look at our revised Codes, look at our School Boards, look at our flourishing national schools, look at the comparatively few in these days who are still unable to read or write. Look at the fact that so large a multitude of each generation is directly occupied in teaching and training the generation which is springing up. Look at the happy diminution of juvenile crime, and then can any one doubt that, in matters of education, at any rate, we have wrought a very great deliverance in the earth, and are far wiser than our fathers? Now, I desire to admit most fully and most thankfully all our real gains, and especially those of late years. I give the largest meed of generous acknowledgment both to the motives and to the results achieved by all those who have labored to widen and to improve the national teaching of the young. Were it my object to set before you the bright side of the picture, nothing would be easier, or even in some respects fairer, than to pronounce on our modern system of national education a glowing eulogium. That there is a bright side to the shield I do not for a moment deny; but to-day I rather want you to look at the neglected obverse; I want you to see how much remains to be done, and I fear, to be amended. And I must express a sorrowful doubt whether our aims are so sufficient, our methods so perfect, or our results so satisfactory as a self-satisfied optimism is always ready to proclaim. It would be wrong to ignore the very real advance; but, on the other hand, nothing is so deadening, so unfruitful, as self-congratulation on our own virtues or acquiescence in our own failures. We shall make no advance whatever unless we regard the goal of yesterday as the starting-point of to-day.

After some remarks upon the system of payment by results and a powerful allusion to the evils of our over-populated cities, and to the frightful misery existing amongst large masses of the people, coupled with an exhortation to greater self-denial on behalf of the suffering poor, the Archdeacon proceeded. Our education should embrace far more of manual training, more direct training for labour and domestic service, even if it be purchased at the expense of a considerable diminution of mere intellectual knowl-

edge. Of religious education I will say nothing. Owing to sectarian differences and many mistakes I fear we have lost our golden days of opportunity, and religious knowledge can no longer be under the recognition of the State. But what shall we say of moral training? Are we in such a condition as to assert that morals cannot be taught? Are we to satisfy ourselves with the paltry sophism that nations cannot be made virtuous by Act of Parliament? I say, on the contrary, that nations will be what their youth are; that the youth of a nation can be trained, as all history shows, in the highest ideals of a nation, and that a nation can make of its youth "arrows in its giant hand." We boast of our educational ideal. It is nearly as high in some essentials as that even of some ancient and heathen nations long centuries before Christ came? The ancient Persians were worshippers of fire and of the sun; most of their children would have been probably unable to pass the most elementary examination in physiology, but assuredly the Persian ideal might be worthy of our study. At the age of fourteen—the age when we turn our children adrift from school, and do nothing more for them—the Persians gave their young nobles the four best masters whom they could find to teach their boys wisdom, justice, temperance, and courage—wisdom including worship, justice including the duty of unswerving truthfulness through life, temperance including mastery over sensual temptations, courage including a free mind opposed to all things coupled with guilt. Are our moral conditions universally encouraging as to these virtues? I am afraid that I cannot join in the flourish of trumpets about ourselves and our conditions, which we are all so fond of hearing? Do we not hear on all sides of fraud, of the deleterious adulteration of food and drink, of the deterioration of goods, of cheating operations, of things only made to sell, of triumphant success of sham and quackery? Are not our streets and our country made hideous by being plastered over with miles of puffery?

After some further reference to abounding frauds, a scathing allusion to religious hypocrisy, and some remarks on the over glorification of mere physical courage, the preacher proceeded:—*But moral courage, the courage which will tell the truth and shame the devil, the courage which will oppose the violence of unscrupulous factions, the courage which will tell corrupt societies or churches that they lie, the courage of men who would scorn to follow the giddy fluttering rag of public opinion after which in these days, so many run in adoration, where is this courage? And justice and reverence, are they so common? Look, again, at what we call the dark ages. The young knight of those days, though he might not be able to sign his own name, had yet been taught to reverence his conscience, to keep his body in temperance, soberness, and chastity; to respect womanhood, to resist oppression, to protect the weak, to tell the truth always, to take Christ for his captain, and to do his duty to all the world. If they knew little of the three R's, they knew something of the three great elements by which alone the human soul can live, namely, adoration, hope, and love. And too many of us do not equal them in the four cardinal virtues or three Christian graces, and there are not too many who look up, as the best of them did in their souls to God through blue air and starry sky. Would that we had something of the life of that chivalry which has passed away!*

Referring again to the English educational methods the Archdeacon compared them with those of some other countries as follows: In Holland, in Belgium, in Saxony, in Prussia (I believe also in America), the system is purely educational, and not in the slightest degree pecuniary. Nowhere, we are told, does a single penny of the State's money depend on any examination, nowhere is there a system of individual examination, nowhere is there that striving