

Culture the Product of Efficient Teaching.*To the Educational Review;*

Mr. Editor,—I have read with much interest your editorial in the July-August number on *The Plea of Utility in Education*, and also Mr. Steeves' comments in the September number on the same subject. If by utility in education is meant merely the imparting of information with no other aim than making the recipient a greater producer of wealth, I would agree with you. We would soon tire of such utility in education. There is no place for it in our public school system.

But the mistake lies in assuming that there are two classes of subjects, one of which lends itself exclusively to so called culture and the other exclusively to utility in its narrow sense, and that the utility subjects can not be used as effectively for culture as those subjects which have no direct application to industry. The claim of the advocates of the utility subjects is that the pursuit of these studies will result in culture equal in value to that derived from the study of any subjects now on our common or high school programme provided they are taught in the right way. Dr. L. H. Bailey says: "Any subject when put into pedagogic form is capable of being the means of educating a man. The study of Greek is no more a proper means of education than is the study of indian corn. The mind may be developed by means of either one. Classics and calculus are no more divine than machines and potatoes are. We are much in the habit of speaking of certain subjects as leading to 'culture'; but this is really all factitious, for culture is a product only of efficient teaching whatever the subject matter may be."

Science has now a recognized place on all modern programmes of study. It is even taught in arts colleges, the professed guardians of culture, and its value for culture when well taught is admittedly equal to that of any subject. But science taught with relation to life, to industry, becomes a utility subject. Does it then lose its cultural value? If the study of botany has cultural value—the study of the Mayflower for example,—will the study of a common weed, such as ragwort, have less value? Both are plants. Both may be used to teach the same great biological laws. Are we to think because the knowledge gained from the study of one can be put to some use in life that therefore it loses its educative power? In entomology if the study of the beautiful cecropia moth results in some measure of culture, will the study of the brown-tailed moth, or the canker worm be any less cultur-

al merely because a knowledge of these insects help people better to make a living?

Dr. Dewey says: "The assumption that a training is good in general just in the degree in which it is good for nothing in particular is one for which it would be difficult to find any adequate philosophic ground. Training, discipline, must finally be measured in terms of application of availability. To be trained is to be trained to something and for something."

" * * * * * It is no longer possible to hug complacently the ideal that the academic teacher is perforce devoted to high spiritual ideals, while the doctor, the lawyer, and man of business are engaged in the pursuit of the vulgar utilities."

"It is flat hostility to the ethics of modern life to suppose that there are two different aims of life located on different planes; that the few who are educated are to live on a plane of exclusive and isolated culture, while the many toil below on the plane of practical endeavor directed at material commodity. The problem of our modern life is precisely to do away with all the barriers that keep up this division. If the university cannot accommodate itself to this movement so much the worse for it. Nay, more; it is doomed to helpless failure unless it does more than accommodate itself; unless it becomes one of the chief agencies for bridging the gap, and bringing about an effective inter-action of all callings in society."

The mistake which the literary trained man makes is in assuming that the utility subjects have no other value than that of increasing the efficiency of the producer. Hence when such a person wishes to praise an agricultural college the best he can think of in its favor is that it will make our land more productive. But the leaders in agricultural thought insist that the farmer is no more important than the farm, that "the first tillage and fertilizing and pruning and spraying should be applied to the man not to the land nor the crop; and whilst the man is acquiring discipline for the direct prosecution of his business, he is at the same time opening his mind to all the sweetest pleasures of living." Dr. Bailey again says: "The real solution of the agricultural problem—which is at the same time the national problem—is to give the countryman a vital, intellectual, sympathetic, optimistic interest in his daily life. For myself, if I have any gifts, I mean to use them for the spiritualizing of agriculture."

The claim then for the utility subjects is that when properly taught they have two values, and the cultural value is not secondary to that of any subject.

P. J. SHAW.