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## THE EARLY WITHDRAWAL OF PUPILS FROM SCHOOL.

ITS CAUSES AND ITS REMEDIES.

An Essay read by Wm. T. Harris, at the National Educational Association, in Boston, August 7th, 1872.

Of all subjects of investigation that claim the attention of the active laborers in Physical Science at the present day, that of Meteorology holds the foremost rank. The next great victories over nature are likely to be obtained in this province, and the benefits to be derived from an application of discoveries in this realm will far transcend anything hitherto achieved. The government of the climate, or the complete avoidance of its inconveniences, the development of a completely scientific agriculture, are foremost and obvious advantages resulting from this application.

But there are more remote and far more valuable fruits. The final conquest of the sea, which will be effected by this, is not of so great moment as the conquest of the air as a means of transit. The age of steam has created for us a new type of man, and a new spiritual world of humanity has been the result. The age of aerial navigation will be still more potent, in developing for us a new era of spiritual growth.

Looked at from a scientific standpoint, Meteorology differs from other natural sciences in the fact that its object is a kind of synthesis of all the other departments. The ends of the special threads of the sciences of nature come together into one knot, and this knot is the problem for the solution of meteorology. Optics discovering the lines in the spectrum; Astronomy discovering the flames and spots in the sun; Geology noting the causes of earthquakes; Mineralogy noting the laws of crystalization—all these find themselves in a vortical whirl, swiftly drawing near a center wherein they are to form one process of action and interaction.

The profounder thinkers in natural science announce for us the doctrine of the correlation of forces, wherein light, heat, electricity, magnetism, and organization, rise from the abyss of gravitation and ceaselessly vanish into each other, weaving the web of creation. What Faust heard in the depths of his cell when the world-spirit came before him blinding his vision, that we are slowly realizing in science: it is this subtle correlated process, deep down in nature, thought out by the natural philosopher and traced out by the meteorologist, that manifests the "Erd Geist"

"At the roaring loom of Time I ply,  
And weave the living garments of the Deity."

What emotions arise in the mind of the astronomer as he looks out upon the universe of stars, and sees them "slowly gathering into one flock," impelled by the resistless might of gravity! Similar must be the feelings of the positivist who sees the special sciences blending in one dissolving view—an intimation of one all-pervading impulse to unity. All things return to the center whence they originated.

But to pursue this thought into the abyss of nature is not edifying. The most ancient nations looked as we do upon the spectacle of nature—a vast process of creation and destruction of individual forms—the perpetual losing of individuality. The worship of Adonis—the pitiful wailing and lamentation over individuality that is born only to die—was wide-spread, and became the basis of the "mysteries" of the Greeks and Romans, and of the rites of our secret societies in modern times. Man saw all natural forms rise and decay, impelled by a negative, destroying might, and he shuddered at the thought of his own destiny. The deep sadness, the inward pain at the thought of dis-

solution has made man more and more internal, more and more it has caused him to build up, out of the substance of his thought, a spiritual dwelling of his own, "far removed from birth and decay." This imperishable world of spirit—the joint product of the earnestness, the suffering, the sweat of blood, the wrestling prayers of the human race—is the complex of the institutions of civilization. Nearer to man by far than the physical world around him it stands to each human soul. For it is by its meditation alone that the material world shall be used and enjoyed, or the cup of sorrow tasted at its hand. If you but think of it, you shall not put forth your hand to take aught—whether it be of the nature of food, clothing, or shelter—unless with the goodwill and consent of human society. For in all your actions you shall presuppose continually the laws of property and possession. These laws are the acts of recognition on the part of society in anticipation of the individual; society stands waiting for him, and insists persistently on this point of etiquette—"You, particular individual, shall take what you need only in the form of property (i.e., universalized goods and chattels), and thus shall recognize me (society) as your ALTER IDEM, and through such recognition shall elevate yourself to a universal existence—that is to say, to a spiritual existence." Therefore it is that man, at his advent, finds not only his presupposition in the family, but he finds it still more in civil society and the State. He cannot make his exit, nor can the earth hide him, without the same recognition on the part of society: the formal registration, or the still more formal sitting of the coroner's jury.

Therefore it is that we speak of man's spiritual dwelling—civilization with its mansions of special institutions, the family, society, the State, religion—as a more direct and immediate existence to the individual than mere physical nature; for it is on all hands the instrument through which the latter is seized and appropriated by him. Physical nature must first be universalized—made property through the impression of the spiritual stamp upon it—before it can be used by the individual. Like the current coin, it must first receive the stamp of society before it can lawfully circulate, i.e., be used by the individuals of the community. Even the general elements shall not be enjoyed except through the same mediation. The individual man shall not walk in the street, breathe the common air, be warmed by the sun, or fanned by the wind, unless society licenses him, with more or less formality, to live within its precincts.

Our thoughts, at the contemplation of the science of meteorology, with its cosmical interaction of correlated forces, recur as we look upon the vast web of conventionalities and formal usages organized into institutions under the aggregate name of civilization. Here at last we have found a *one*, a *unity*, for which, in which, and through which, all individuals exist and come to the fruition of their being.

It is the investigation of this wonderful process that gives rise to social science, the foremost spiritual science of the day, just as meteorology is the foremost physical science. Like the latter, too, it comprehends in its extent the functions of a myriad of minor instrumentalities. These latter depend upon the general science for their explanation, for the central process contains the moving principle in its entirety. It was Aristotle who first taught the scientific thinker to trace the fragmentary provinces of a system back to the central moving principle; by its means are to be explained the others; they are only its accidents—in its evolution it produces them.

In studying the phenomena of human life, from the broad point of view of social science, we find the definitions and limits