

a complete substitute for national education, in this larger meaning of the term, than sucking at a cylinder of oxygen is a substitute for healthy exercise in pure air. Of course the last thing I want to do is to argue against schools. I admit, as someone says of women, that they are necessary evils. But in so far as the school or educational institution is a necessary factor in the process of national education, it must contain moral as well as intellectual elements in its discipline. The combination of these elements is essential.

And I venture to dwell on this as a fact of the first importance, because by far the gravest truth which all of us have to face, is that our lot is cast in a time of painfully difficult transition in the sphere of intellectual and moral, no less than in that of material and industrial things. Only once, or at most twice, during the last 2,000 years has civilized Europe passed through so dark and difficult a time of intellectual change. We cannot evade this fact even if we would. You can already trace its consequences in public and in private affairs. Like all spiritual changes, it has material results. It is beginning to affect men's ideals of the duty of state to state, of employer to employed, of one class of the community to another, of individual to individual. It has been accompanied by an immense increase in the attractive force of material wealth. It may portend grave mischief in the future. But, on its brighter side, it is driving us back in upon ourselves. And the more certain we are at heart that light will come to us at last, if we patiently work towards it, the more earnestly shall we plead for those kinds of education which prepare the rising generation to look the great problems of life bravely in the face, modestly, courageously, honestly, helped by faith and guided

by knowledge, without superstition and without conceit.

Education must be practical, in the sense that we do not want it to produce pedants and dilettantes. We do not want it to be thought the pink of culture to be too fastidious for common tasks. Education, whatever else it does for us, ought to fit us to bear a more useful part in the practical duties of life. It ought, that is, to produce some return, but we ought to take a long view about the return, and not forget that some of the very best investments are those of which the return is long deferred, or perhaps entirely indirect.

No great system of education has ever thriven on pecuniary self-interest alone. Nor can it ever so thrive. Education aims, it is true, at training aptitude and at giving knowledge, but far more ought it to aim at producing a reverent attitude of mind and heart, and at deepening and strengthening character. And character rests on self-discipline and on faith. These are the true springs of educational excellence. Let us beware of degrading it by working for lower aims. England is happily not the country which is most in danger of falling into this error. All over our history one lesson is writ large—that the English nature has a mystical as well as a practical side, and no system of education will be appropriate to us that starves the one or ignores the other. Our chief danger lies in our finding in the money-making aim the line of least resistance among the various conflicting ideals of education in its highest sense. But I would earnestly plead against any such shrinking from our difficult task. Think what would be the outcome of a national system of education the dominant aim of which was the pursuit of individual self-