

"There are, however, objects for which it would be highly desirable to analyze the character of our present generation—objects perfectly attainable, of high professional interest to you, and immediately connected with the study of the principles of common things. The trying incidents and fearful struggles of the Russian war afford us the opportunity.

"We know that education has been spreading day by day; the present generation is better instructed, more civilized, more softened in manners, more amenable to just contro., than any preceding generation within the period of our known history.

"What has been the result of this increased knowledge, this higher civilization, those softened manners, on the conduct of that portion of our people which has been exposed to the arduous trials of a winter campaign in the Crimea? Have they fallen behind their predecessors in courage? Has increased knowledge rendered them arrogant and presumptuous, less amenable to discipline, less attached to their officers? Far from it. Never has a British army displayed such chivalrous gallantry before the enemy, such order and regularity in quarters, such heroic constancy in the cheerful endurance of extreme privation. So far the evidence is most satisfactory. The prognostics of those who distrusted the effects of education are disproved. But is there no reverse to this picture? Education has indeed been proved to have worked no ill, but has it worked all the good of which it is capable? I fear not; I fear that some more permanent mischief has been at work. So long as our troops had to contend against hostile bayonets, to storm hostile batteries, they showed every virtue, every capacity of a soldier, but when it became their lot to contend with nature, when appeal was made to their ingenuity and contrivance in their encounter with material difficulties—when they came to provide themselves with shelter, food, and clothing, officers and men alike proved themselves more helpless than the rudest barbarian, while at the same time they were encumbered by all the wants, the necessities of civilization. This has been attributed, I am aware, to our extreme civilization; but our allies did not suffer as we did; were they exempt because they were uncivilized?

"It is certainly true that the French peasant is in the habit of making many things for himself at home which we buy at the shop; but this is not the case with the French officer, who differs from our officers in this respect only, that he has been from his early education instructed in the natural sciences, and is capable therefore of taking care both of himself and of the men under him.

"Civilization, no doubt, like every other blessing, brings its bane with it. Civilization confines, and at the same time concentrates, the practical experience of each man to some minute detail of these operations which jointly compose perfect works, the boasted produce of our industry. The works are well, rapidly, and cheaply produced on account of this division of labor; but the result of the division of labor is that each individual in our highly civilized community becomes like a member of a Russian musical band, in which a performer has but the production of a single note assigned to him. The united harmony is exquisite; remove but a few performers, and the remainder become paralyzed, unserviceable, and worthless. But if this be the necessary effect of civilization, that we should each of us earn our livelihood by the employment of one mechanical process while we hire others to do for us whatever else we may require,—if civilization consists in using railways without a notion of the steam engine—in masticating food prepared by others we know not how, and all but put for us into our mouths—in occupying palaces without an idea of the mechanical contrivances by which they have been constructed—in the enjoyment of the luxuries of Sybaris, with knowledge inferior to the knowledge of nature possessed by the savage, who can at least, in his own rude way, provide for himself food, shelter, and raiment,—if the civilized man must be turned out into life with the knowledge only of one note in the world's concert, helpless when thrown upon his own resources, why then it becomes a question whether civilization be, indeed, a blessing—whether it be anything but corruption and rotteness, the precursor of decay and dissolution.

"But the facts are not so; civilization may have a tendency to produce these evils, but it has its remedies; civilization carries with it in its train those who can redress the evil if they be only permitted to do so.

"The schoolmaster is its rightful minister. He can teach us how to deal not only with the wills of men, but with the powers of nature; he can in early childhood impart such habits of observation, such insight into the workings of nature, such powers of turning its operations to account, as will arm the grown man with resources to meet whatever casualties he may have to encounter. But then the bent of mind must be given in childhood. The practical faculties must be called out before they get withered by inaction. No time must be lost, for the power of resource, the faculty of ingenious contrivance, can be imparted only as the result of long habit. They are not to be picked up from books, for they depend upon the cultivation of the eye and the touch, of the ear and the smell, as well as on the cultivation of that which combines, compares, and uses their perceptions.

"God gave us these senses for our defence and preservation; and because in this age of peace and order we can, without danger to life or property, dispense with their exercise, are we to allow them to become all but obliterated by inaction? The young child is restless and inquisitive. It is ever exercising its senses on the objects within its reach. It is by its senses that it lays up its stores of facts whereon to employ its rising faculties. Nature at the same time gives it a love of sport that it may develop its limbs, that it may acquire strength and symmetry by their use; but what is our practice? We seat it upon a bench and make it learn from books. But I hear a voice say on the authority of Miss Nightingale that four-fifths of our soldiers have been seated at no school. I do not deny the fact, but I answer that these four-fifths are the Pariahs of civilization. The rest are its spoiled, its mis-directed children. In what condition is that society which comprises no others? If I had space I would attempt to shew you that it is not in the Crimea only, but that in our fields, in our towns, at our very thresholds, are to be found the same fatal results of misdirected intelligence. I would take you on that sea which we claim as our element, and show you the sails of our merchantmen cut against all rule of science to hold the wind rather than to stand flat as a board; I would take you amid the high-priced stock of our farms, and shew you that the medical attendance to which their care is intrusted is as inferior to the instructed veterinary practitioner as was the surgeon-barber of Queen Elizabeth's time to Astley Cooper or Brodie of the present; I would shew you our churches built without reference to acoustics—our schools and houses without regard to ventilation. All this misdirected industry in manhood is the fruit of the misdirected bias imparted in childhood; you are answerable for that bias; may your efforts be successful!

"I remain your obedient servant,

"ASHBURTON."

April, 1855.

AUSTIN LAYARD, ESQ. D. C. L. ON PRACTICAL EDUCATION.

Dr. Layard, the celebrated explorer of Nineveh, having been recently elected Lord Rector of Marischal College and University, Aberdeen, Scotland, delivered the following forcible address at his installation. After referring in very eloquent terms to the talents and acquirements of his more immediate predecessors, Dr. Layard proceeded to say that education—practical education—was the great question of the day. "This subject," he said, "I firmly believe to be one of the utmost importance at this moment—one well deserving the thoughtful and earnest consideration of every one truly anxious for the welfare of his country, jealous of her renown, and trembling lest, unhappily, she should fall from her ancient greatness. It is only when great emergencies arise that nations, as well as individuals, know what is required of them, and what they are capable of effecting. Such an emergency—one almost unparalleled in the history of our country—has arisen. We are engaged in a great war, after a long peace. It is, perhaps, well for us that the emergency has occurred before it is too late to meet it. No impartial man will venture to assert that we have not been found wanting. The reputation of this great empire has, to a certain extent, been tarnished; and its high estate among the nations of the earth has been shaken. In a moment of national difficulty and danger we have been found unequal to the duties which are imposed upon us. To account for so great a calamity—for calamity it undoubtedly is—we must seek for the evil at home. While we have undoubtedly to deplore as the cause of enormous evils the reckless manner in which merit is overlooked in public employments, and is passed over to satisfy private and party interests and influences—a subject upon which I do not now wish to dwell—I believe that among the most prominent and immediate causes of our misfortune, will be found the defective condition of our system of national or State education. It may seem strange that I should venture to make such an assertion in the middle of the 19th century, when I may be reminded that at no period of our history has education been more general or been brought more within the reach of all classes. But a vicious application of the very best principle may be the cause of as much evil as its right application would be of good. After all, the test of national education must be its result upon the national character and upon the condition of the people. Unless that result be to raise us as a nation—to make us more wise, more honest, more capable of filling that station which Providence assigns to a truly civilized and educated people—national education is of little comparative value. If our educational system should tend rather to enervate than to strengthen the mind—if we should find that the intellectual powers with which God has endowed us are rather paralyzed than brought into full vigour—if it should appear that it rather favours error than encourages truth—surely we may well infer that there is something essentially wrong in that system. I fear there is too much reason to suspect that the evils to which I have alluded have already, to a certain extent, ensued, and that they may extend still further. I believe that our present system of education is rather directed to the overcharging of the memory than to the true cultivation of the intellect and strengthening and discipline of the mind—that it