

V. Papers on Education in Various Countries.

1. DEFECTS IN AMERICAN SCHOOLS.

In the *International Review*, Rev. Dr. McCosh submits an able paper upon Upper Schools here and elsewhere. He ranks the Elementary Schools of the United States as high as those of any other country. After these our system becomes but narrow and deficient compared with that of Prussia. There the boy (every boy, education being obligatory) enters school at six, and at ten makes choice of the *Gymnasien*, or *Real Schule*, in one of which a classical and in the other a scientific training is given. Besides these are the upper and lower *Bürger Schulen*, meant for artisans. In Europe, Austria ranks next to Prussia in the thoroughness of its educational system, Holland coming not far behind. The Scottish system was bequeathed by John Knox; it consists of a parochial free school in each parish, a grammar school in every chartered town, with competent teachers of English, science, the classics, mercantile branches, French, German and drawing. England and Ireland are behind every other enlightened country in educational privileges for the mass of the population, the Endowed Schools, feeders to the great universities, being filled with the sons of the nobility or the wealthier under classes.

Dr. McCosh considers the great want of this country to be high schools; their place being ill-supplied, in his judgment, by the private academies or boarding schools, the latter of which require an outlay of from \$400 to \$500 per annum. He urges wealthier benefactors who propose to endow a college now or at their death, to found instead High Schools, where the training can be similar to that of Prussia; schools to be accessible to the whole population, where young men and young women under eighteen can receive instruction in every useful branch. He also proposes that the large grant of land yet remaining in the gift of the Government be appropriated in this way rather than to Agricultural Schools. Thus far, Dr. McCosh.

Now, while a bad school that is free is certainly preferable to a good paying school to the boy entirely without money, it is not to be chosen by the large class of parents with moderate means, who feel that an education is all that they can hope to give their sons, and therefore chose the best attainable. The question remains, whether the High Schools which we already have, and those which Dr. McCosh proposes, serve the purpose of this class better than the private academies. The defect in every system of graduated schools, is that they must partake more or less of the nature of a mill, through which the scholars are ground, without any more regard to their individual character or capacity than if they were so many grains of wheat. In the private academies there is at least a chance of consulting the boy's bent or talent. Unfortunately the teachers of this generation stand at the crossing of two ways, and not being able to make up their minds to take their charges along either, try to drag them in both. Their own youth having been given to the classics, and science having been the study of maturer years, it seems easy for them to master both; hence the poor little wretches who are brought to them with empty brains are urged (even by so wise a man as Dr. McCosh) to fill them with both the old and new training combined. We offer no opinion in the dispute between the classics and modern science; we only suggest that for the average scholar there must either be a choice between them, or a compromise by a wretched smattering of both.

In no place is this defect in the popular theory of training so apparent as in our higher Public Schools. Instead of making the aim of education the strengthening and sharpening of the intellect for future use, the sole effort is to cram into the feverish, undeveloped brain a mass of uncomprehended facts. In the Public and High Schools of Philadelphia, which Mr. Mundella, M. P., pronounced perfect in system, the children are given from ten to thirteen different text books. An ambitious girl if but of average quickness in memorizing (the only faculty developed), is obliged to study until late in the night to prepare an ordinary day's lesson. This, is alleged, is but an easy task for the best scholars, but it is hardly fair to make an exceptional case the gauge for the school. The condition of our own routine is no better. The teachers have no more time than for the hearing of recitations; all explanations and help must come from the parents. We are strongly tempted to differ with Dr. McCosh, and to hope that as long as the system of cramming and rote teaching is sustained in our High Schools, no effort by the Government or individuals will enable them to supersede private schools where more rational theories have a chance of trial. — *N. Y. Tribune*.

2. EDUCATION OF WOMEN IN ENGLAND.

The London *Daily News* states that the report of the Cambridge Syndicate on the education of women presents more interesting and satisfactory features than usual. The examinations, as compared with those of 1872, show a larger number of candidates and a higher average of work. About two hundred ladies came forward for examination, and although the number of failures in the elementary subjects was exceptionally large, a very good average of success was attained in the higher branches, some of which lie rather beyond the reach of what has hitherto been considered a sound female education. In mathematics, which last year produced no successful candidates, all have this year been successful. There was but little Latin and less Greek among the young ladies, but their French, German, and English obtained excellent reports. The examiners in the English history and composition of the young ladies say that along with a certain amount of proficiency there is exhibited a tendency to rest satisfied with very incomplete information and very loose modes of expression. The examiners have not taken the trouble to record any of the curiosities of the examination, but they speak of "very prevailing inaccuracy," of flippancy, and even of slang. On the other hand, it was distinctly stated that the best essays were better than those of male students writing on the same subject in similar circumstances, and that the worse faults of the women were eclipsed by the worse faults of the men.

3. EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA.

Nearly half a million of money has been voted by the Legislative Assembly in Australia, for the purpose of carrying out the requirements of the new Educational Act in the colony for the present year. This large sum is an increase over the appropriation for the past year under the old educational system of over £250,000. The Legislative Assembly, when called upon to deal with this vote, is said to have exhibited a determination to allow no ill-timed considerations of economy to interfere with a fair trial of the new system, and the liberality evinced by the House surpassed even the expectations of the Government.

4. RELICS OF AN OLD ROMAN SCHOOL.

A traveller writing to the *N. Y. Church and State*, thus refers to the excavations of an old Roman School:—A peculiar interest of a pathetic sort, and caused by reminders of what has not left many relics, attaches to a long edifice composed of several apartments, with a row of columns in front, that lies under the hill on the Western side. This was the school of the Imperial slaves, whom we must not imagine to be what the word suggests to us, but who are from all lands, for a while chiefly Greeks, and carefully trained and educated. The walls of these chambers are covered with inscriptions made upon the plaster with the stylus, a steel-pointed instrument which was then used for writing. It was one of these scribblings that revealed the nature of the edifice when excavated, for it reads: "Corinthus is going away from the school." The number of them is very great, and among them are rude drawings such as school boys still delight to make, wherever they can find a white wall, or on their slates. Very curious is a scratched sketch of an ass making a will, underneath which is printed in straggling letters: "*Asselle labora sicut ego laboravi, et proderit tibi.*" This may have a long story behind it. Some of these are very touching, in that they show the friendship formed by these little fellows in their gilded bondage, as we see to have been the case where two names are written together and surrounded by a traced framework. Others are touching in that they show how far from home the youths were, and how they thought of their distant dear ones, from whom the fortunes of war, or the slave-dealer's greed, had severed them. Near to one corner I saw written "Hadrymettus from Chersonesus made this." When studying at his weary task and thinking of his life of bondage, this poor child's mind had wandered back to the breezy hills of the Crimea, and its unforgotten liberty, and as he wrote these words, it all came back to him again. My companion and I tarried long in these rooms, deciphering all that we could of these mementoes of children who lived and played and wept here nearly two thousand years ago, and more than one sentence and drawing that I have now forgotten, touched us as ruins of old are not apt to do.

And I thought on leaving, what a commentary is this on human fame! The names of the learned who taught here are forgotten; those of many a great and noble one who lived in the palace above have sunk into oblivion; we scarce know more than the names of some of the proud Emperors, and not one word or line of all their mighty writing is preserved. Yet here in these long buried chambers, we