

happens that at times an old truth grown dim and dull, and almost dead, becomes suddenly and strangely luminous, electrical, and life-giving. In what I have to say, therefore, I will as little shun the threadbare, as seek the brandnew; and if I say here and there what you all know and believe already, I beg that you will set off against it whatever I may say that few or none of you believe or will accept. I aim at no complete or very systematic, much less at an exhaustive treatment of the subject. The term "exhaustive" is ambiguous, even ominous, and susceptible of very sinister and uncomplimentary application. My main purpose is to indicate, as briefly as I can, and as fully as time permits, certain aspects in which the course of recent and passing events seems to me to be gradually bringing our schemes of education more and more into harmony with a high ideal of education; and certain other respects in which for this end improvement in our plans and methods is greatly to be desired. On the whole, in spite of much that is discouraging, I view our progress hopefully; if I did not, I should have more hesitation in suggesting aught to render it more rapid or more sure.

#### *The Ideal of Education*

What, then, is the ideal of education to which I have referred? Education, even in its narrower sense of school-teaching and school-training, ought to aim at fitting and preparing for the discharge of the various duties of the coming life; and as a means to that end, but not less as an end in itself, at the harmonious and orderly development of the diverse powers of mind and body, so that each and all may work for good, and at the formation of character, of which conduct is the issue and the evidence, while it is not less true that conduct reacts on character. Education, then, must be physical as well as mental, emotional, moral and religious and æsthetic, as well as intellectual. The interdependence of each on the others cannot here be expounded; but the more each is studied, the more is it found to mix itself with the others, affecting, and in turn affected by them. The attempt to sever them, to strengthen one by the neglect of others, results only in distortion and failure. The emotions must be held in view as well as the understanding, and the moral faculty as well as the emotions, in the controlling and guiding of which its great function lies; and even for the sake of the mind, the body must be disciplined and invigorated. It is the more important to insist on this now familiar truth, because, as a matter of history and fact, our English education has too long, and till of late, been in intention and in tendency predominantly intellectual rather than moral, literary rather than intellectual; and dealing with memory rather than with judgment and reflection. Confined at first within a very narrow social circle, as its range has widened, its nature and aims have not proportionally changed; what was designed for the few has been extended to the many, and even when the details have varied the spirit has been retained. The sort of teaching which was at first restricted to the clergy, and specially fitted (I do not say fit) for their vocation in times when the Douglas is reported to have said,

Thanks to St. Bothwell; son of mine,  
Save Gawain, 'ne'er could read a line.

was by degrees extended to the upper strata of the lay community, and made its way gradually downwards through the social mass. That it did not penetrate to the lowest has been due mainly to the fact that till a time surprisingly and humiliatingly recent it was generally denied that the great body of the people should be taught

at all. They were the workers, by whose brute labour the minority were to be relieved from drudgery alike irksome and degrading; and anything in the shape of instruction would only disqualify and indispose them for the sphere "in which Providence had placed them," making them discontented and insubordinate, a danger to the State, and a nuisance to themselves. This superstition of caste, this notion that the workman exists for the work, not the work for the workman, is still deeply rooted, and widely spread. Thus recently a well-informed "Country Squire" writes to the *Spectator*: "The tenant-farmers, as a class, are bitterly opposed to education. They look upon it as the root of their troubles, of the present movement among the labourers, and of the action of the Labourers' Union. They say, now that labourers can read, they learn what goes on in other districts, and are thus led to agitate for higher wages, to strike, to migrate; and they hold that an educated labourer works less well than one who is uneducated." And it is not tenant-farmers only who thus believe. There are thousands of well-fed, well-clothed, well-disposed, and not uncharitable persons who still believe, though they are more shy than formerly of avowing their belief, that the instruction of the worker is fatal to the work, and who (whatever may be their sentiments about negro-slavery) have no misgiving about keeping minds in darkness if thereby their own boots may be better blacked, and their own parlours be more punctually swept. But numerous as this class may be, it is nowadays in the minority; and schooling for even the humblest classes has been declared a necessity, and has been progressively provided for. Still, the narrowness that long characterised the upper education has clung to even this, in spite of inevitable differences. "I do not object to my servant learning to write," said once the mistress of a house-hold, "but I do object to her writing like a lady." And so, even after the propriety of some popular instruction has been reluctantly conceded, the great anxiety has been to restrain it within safe bounds, and in a measure the State has embodied this spirit in its educational enactments. Not many months ago a Liberal candidate for the House of Commons told his hearers that it is "the duty of a State to give all children a *minimum* education." "I wish you would pay a little attention," said a teacher to an idle pupil. "So I do," was the reply, "I pay as little as I can." And thus, if the State must meddle with education, let it give the barest *minimum* compatible with the seeming discharge of a duty unwillingly assumed.

#### *Humanistic View of Education.*

Now, as soon as we rise to what I may call the *humanistic* view which recognises the essential unity of humanity, and the common claim of every human being as such to have what faculties nature has bestowed fully cultivated and trained, for the sake at once of the individual and of society—the folly and iniquity of all pre-arranged restrictions on education become at once strikingly apparent. It is doubtless true that, *in practice*, the education of all cannot be equally carried forward—that there are obstructions and limitations that cannot wholly be surmounted. There are differences of capacity, of social position, of "the hard necessity of daily bread," that render all hope of equality in educational progress chimerical. But all the less reason is there for adding to these real practical restrictions others that are theoretical or rather conventional, if not arbitrary, in their nature. There need be no fear of transcending the possible, however we may strive; but what can be, now and here is not the final measure of what ought to be—of what it is desirable should be. Let each advance as far and as fast as he can, and still individual and even class differ-

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