

cheap. It would be no difficult task to extend the results of superfluity on price to the effect of over population in the New Forest, where numbers, exceeding the demand for their labor, have been attracted by the prospects of enjoying for their pigs, and geese, and ponies, unstinted rights of common. Again, the child knows by hard experience that the family must go on half rations when bread falls short on Friday night, and the shop gives no more credit. But ask it what England must do when there is but half a crop. Ask it who will do for England what their mother did for them, when she prevented them from consuming all they had at one meal. You may perhaps lead them, step by step, to see at last that the rise of price is our only safeguard against famine, and that this rise of price is not the work of any one man, or any set of men, but that it originates in the expectation of those who hold corn that they will sell dearer if they sell later. You may perhaps succeed in showing, further, that God has not left the many to be preyed upon by the avarice of the few; that, on the contrary, he has ordered things in this case, and indeed in all other cases, so to make it the interest of the few to consult the interest of the many, and to visit with actual loss those of the few who, out of ignorance, act in opposition to the interests of the many. If, for example, Farmer Styles holds back his supplies in spring, and, by refusing to sell at the price then offered, raises prices to such an extent as to prevent the spring from having its full share of the year's supply, the part of that share which has been unconsumed will be added to the share of the summer, and prices will then fall, when Farmer Styles expects to sell at an enhanced price.

"You may thus go on founding the unknown upon that which is known and familiar, gratifying and exciting, but never satiating the natural appetite for knowledge, inculcating what once, heard and understood, will never be forgotten, at the same time that you cultivate those faculties which distinguish the man from the brute; and you impart an elevation, a self-reliance to his character, which will tend more than anything to raise him above sensual pleasure. By such training as this you will give him more than mere information,—you will give him habits of observing, reflecting, and acting for himself.

"If I want to equip an emigrant for the backwoods, should I encumber him with ready-made articles,—with chairs, and tables, and stools? Do I not rather teach him how to make these articles for himself out of the materials beside him? You are fitting out the youth for the rude campaign of life. How shall he be equipped? Shall it be with cut-and-dried ideas, the fruit of the working and other men's minds,—or shall he go forth trained to gather, combine, and use ideas, the materials for which encompass him round about? You teach him to read, in order that he may in after-life use the thoughts of the wise among men; teach him also to read nature, which is wiser and more powerful still. Books he may or may not have in his emergencies; nature is always with him. That is not the best army which has the most baggage. What the packs of hounds, and the bands of music, and the services of plate were to our Army in Afghanistan, the million facts of modern education are to the boy on his entrance in life; the first serious conflict, the first encounter with realities, dissolves the charm, and the hard-earned inutilities are discarded as superfluous lumber; and yet

'The world is still deceived by ornament.'

"By adopting my suggestions you will not satisfy the majority of those who attend annual inspections. Their admiration is reserved for the brilliant results which are to be exhibited by drawing from the minds of children thoughts transplanted there without roots, the produce of wiser minds. Your pupils will be of altogether a different stamp; they will know comparatively little, but the notions they have will be of home growth, of slender immediate apparent value, proportioned as they must be to the infant minds in which they have sprung, but capable of subsequent development, to meet the emergency which may require their use.

"The man of sense will distinguish at a glance their earnest, intelligent eye, their alert manner, their pertinent answers. He will give due credit to your work and to your system; but you must resign yourselves for a time to the fate of being decried and slighted by the majority, who are too apt to value things as they are, not as they are destined to be, and, above all, to underrate the sure and slow growth which is generally the characteristic of the highest merit. Our busy, thoughtless world is too disposed to despise little gains, and yet little gains store most wealth; little moral gains, triumphs over petty temptations, make the firmest characters. So also little intellectual gains, made hour by hour, and minute by minute, at every step in life, the result of early habit and wise education, do more to ripen the intellect, and even to mature the character, than any instruction that can be hammered in from without.

"It is given to you, teachers of the rising generation, to bend their minds in this direction. The misery which can be remedied by the charity of rich men is purely physical, the relief can extend only to few; it neither elevates those who receive it, nor their children after them. But the misery which the teacher can avert, by substituting

self-support and self-respect for dependence and beggary, has no limits to its amount; it multiplies blessings both on the present and on succeeding generations."

We think this is a very admirable statement of the true aims and objects of common school education, and that we pedagogues, cut off as we are in a measure from our fair share of the active life round about us, and too much shut up with children and books, are far too apt to grow pedantic, and to substitute a bookish and artificial aim for that true one of equipping our charge for a noble and manly contest with the labors of life. We are not wholly to blame. The parents who will not be satisfied with slow growth to a natural maturity, but must have well-crammed exhibitions and foolish shows of book-learning, are partly responsible. We wish they knew how cheap and easy to get up they are.

What Lord Ashburton has tried to do in England for the boys, the wealthy and benevolent Miss Burdett Coutts has done for the girls, by offering prizes at the Whitelands National Society's Training School, for the best knowledge of the science of such common things as are of most use to women in after life, not excluding that, to many shallow persons, most vulgar of all arts, Cookery. But what is Cookery, if not the application of chemistry to the preparation of food? And does it degrade chemistry to be so employed,—or need it be looked upon as any less a beautiful science for this, one of its useful applications? Why may not the result as well be to elevate the art, as to degrade the science? And is it a small advantage, that a needful manual employment, in which so many women must be every day of their lives engaged, should have associations that will raise it above becoming a low drudgery, and make it a rational employment for the mind? We verily believe that the proper teaching of this homely art to the girls of one New England generation would lengthen the lives of the next.

The following sensible observations of the London Times apply to this country quite as well as to Old England:—

"It should never be forgotten that household service is the only school that many women ever pass through, and to many a woman it is a pernicious school. If she has never learned to save in the midst of plenty, she cannot begin to save under the pressure of small means. As she has never had reason for turning small things to account,—to make the most of odds and ends,—she is often reduced, and reduces her husband, to a recurring vicissitude of one day's feasting and three or four days' fasting, with an intermediate day of scraps. And she is utterly ignorant of the thousand ways of dressing vegetables with a little meat or fish, so as to make the absence of a more substantial dish unregretted. And this happens in a million homes in a country which has, on the whole, the finest fish, the richest and most succulent meats, and produces or imports poultry, eggs and butter to an extent which precludes their excessive dearth at any season. And while this happens with us, the French peasant, with far lower wages, with fewer materials of food, is making savory dishes and healthy condiments out of the simplest produce of the field and the moor. Who can wonder, then, that while an English army is half starved, despite of numerous appliances and supplies, a French army feeds itself out of the rudest of Nature's gifts? Miss Burdett Coutts and Lord Ashburton, who took the lead which she has so well followed, will have earned the gratitude of the country, if they have done nothing more than set people thinking about the amelioration of their cookery, and lead high teachers to consider that the art of feeding is really a science which affects the well-being of some twenty million citizens in England, and may often affect the existence of some quarter of a million soldiers abroad: and our social reformers will do well by following her example, and teaching the people of England that which to the majority of them is still a great secret,—what food to buy, and how to cook it."

We might go on to ask what mother is really competent for the care of children, what nurse for the care of the sick, without a practical knowledge of the laws of health; what wife can undertake successfully the management of a household, if she is utterly ignorant of prices, commodities, and accounts,—but the applications are innumerable, and very obvious.

We hope we shall not be misunderstood as advising that superficial empirical teaching of the mere results of science, which will stand in the minds of some of our readers as a definition of a knowledge of common things. We believe that a successful teaching of the simplest practical fact can only be based upon a thorough knowledge of the scientific principle it involves. "Among all practical things," says a sensible writer, "nothing is so practical as a true theory, and among all unpractical things, nothing is so unpractical as practice without theory." We do not mean to lower our demands upon the teacher's knowledge, but rather raise them, inasmuch as we believe that this kind of teaching can only be successful in the hands of those who are thoroughly masters of the subject. It is a sad error to suppose that he or she who has to teach only a little, need only know a little. And we believe that of all school teaching, elementary teaching is the most difficult, and oftenest fails of success. What we want to see, is a change in the mode of teaching, by basing the sciences upon those practical realities