

Educational Men and Matters

THE UNIVERSITY AND THE SCHOOLS

By Thomas Allardyce Brough.

IN almost every civilized country a system of public education has been instituted, not primarily because the state can provide better educational training than private bodies, but because education is necessary to the well-being, if not to the very existence, of the state. Hence education is a matter of the greatest moment to every citizen—to rich and poor, to the childless man and to the happy parent of a numerous family.

Whether we are materialists, setting our hearts only on money and the things money can buy, or idealists, regarding material things as merely the basis on which the higher life, the life of the mind and spirit, are conditioned, a few moments' reflection will suffice to convince any thoughtful person that the education of every individual ministers to the good of the community as a whole.

But unfortunately all persons are not seriously thoughtful; hence many who have no children of their own, or whose children have already passed through the schools, grudge every cent they are forced to contribute to schools of every class. Others, while conceding that the training furnished by the primary school may be a good thing for the community as a whole, consider secondary education, and university training especially, as matters of private advantage only, and therefore privileges to be enjoyed only by those who are able to bear their entire cost.

But if we admit that primary education is a good thing for the community as a whole, a public necessity, and therefore to be provided at public expense, we are tacitly admitting that secondary and also university training for a large number of persons is a matter of the greatest public concern. For, looking at the question in the narrowest possible way, we shall see that, if for nothing else, good high schools are needed at least for the training of teachers for our primary schools. And if high schools are needed to train teachers for our primary schools, then universities are needed to train efficient instructors for our secondary schools.

Having demonstrated the necessity for primary, secondary and university education, let us ask the question—At which stage shall we begin if we would bring about appreciable educational improvement? To many this answer comes at once: Give more efficient training in the primary schools, and thus provide better material for the secondary school instructor to work upon, this in turn ensuring a more capable student body in the university.

This reasoning, however plausible as it appears, would reverse the proper order of procedure, forgetful of the fact that quickening life comes from above, not from beneath. Improvement in education is most readily brought about if we begin at the fountain-head of educational life and inspiration, namely, the university. Let us improve the university, and we at once furnish a better class of instructors for our secondary schools. With better instruction in our secondary schools we are able to do more efficient work there, and thus furnish a more efficient body of teachers for our primary classes.

Thus, taking the narrowest possible view of public education, we see that the university is of supreme importance, and that secondary schools are just as necessary in their place as are the primary schools themselves. We see also that the work of the university affects in a vital manner the life of every child.

But to provide the teachers needed for our secondary and

primary schools is but a small part of the work of a modern university. The university trains teachers whose field is not the class-room. Every great ecclesiastical organization recognizes the importance of university training for its ministry. More and more the university man is sought for journalistic work: more and more we train in our universities the writers of books. More and more we depend on the university to advance our knowledge of pure science. More and more we look to the university to train those who shall lead us in sane thinking in economics, social science and politics. These are all educators, and through them directly or indirectly every member of society is influenced, and thus the university becomes an alma mater, a benign mother, to all.

Nor does the university here conclude its labors. It furnishes us also with physicians and surgeons, with legal experts, with men of business. It trains engineers, and thereby enables us to make the best of our natural resources, increasing many fold the material wealth of our country, and raising the standard of living for every man.

The prosperity of the university is thus every man's interest, and it should therefore be the concern of every man that the university be worthily housed, adequately equipped with the most modern appliances, and staffed with the ablest thinkers and leaders and the most inspiring teachers that can anywhere and at any cost be procured.

Vancouver is marvellously beautiful for situation. Its climate is as healthful and genial as that of any other city in the world. It possesses untold wealth potentially in the resources of its vast hinterland of mountain and valley and prairie. Its favored location in the world's main artery of trade gives promise that in a generation or two at latest it will have become one of the world's leading commercial centres. But it cannot expect to be truly great, to be a city of the soul, to be a community stamping its impress on the civilization of the world, unless it cherishes, develops and popularizes those institutions which are the source of our noblest aspirations and achievements.

SONNET

The days of deep, unpenetrable gloom
Have lighted to a hue of sober gray,
But the tense lips, the tortured heart-strings stay
Harsh and unsweetened; echoes of our doom
Still tear the silence; life cannot resume
Unchanged the tenor of its old calm way.
Men meet as strangers—friendship lies in clay:
They talk of faded things that had their bloom
Ere the great tempest fell upon the world
And stripped it of its beauty and the dew
Of morning. I am grown old; and you, you too
Are bruised and weary, though the wave that hurled
Thee shoreward rests! All Nature waits the truth
Unthought, which yet will wake this world to youth.

—DONALD GRAHAM.

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