

THE SPIRITUAL SIDE.

THERE are many who decry the influence of an enlarged scope of education, who say that the increase of free schools and colleges has not produced a perceptible increase in the general stock of knowledge or made mankind any better; that the real result has been to substitute illusive half knowledge for the unlettered simplicity that once prevailed, and awaken hopes of some easy way to wealth by means of a sort of conjuring with terms of which others are ignorant. There is no doubt that many a boy has been kept in school and made into a sort of intellectual machine of no value to himself or to the community; while certifying to the lack of judgment in the teacher the pessimistic public consider him as displaying the failure of the scheme for general education.

But there is something omitted in the calculation. Let it be conceded that the boy who is good for nothing but to use the spade or the hoe is set to read some extracts from Hamlet when he reaches the Fourth Reader, and that it is one of his tasks to learn something about Milton and Columbus, even of Raphaël or Phidias, we are to remember that man is a complex being. It is possible for a man whose lot is to handle the hoe and the spade to employ his mind meanwhile on subjects that give him content amid his toil. It is not that he has been taught too much; he has, on the contrary, been taught too little. The fault is that the school is an intellectual factory rather than a place of stimulation to spiritual excellence, a place for addressing the entire being.

Man is not a machine to be made to a model, but a sentient creature, a spiritual being that demands for his perfection the employment of spiritual

forces. The school must address the spiritual side of the child; for life is a mission to all. Something must hallow our work and give strength and stability to the mental structure. The school may thus rightly deal with high things; nor is it any excuse that the lads before the teacher are to tread the common paths of life. Work is the lot of all; it was the command to Adam that he was to care for the garden in which he was placed. How shall man's work be hallowed? That is the problem that must stand before the teacher, not to show how work can be avoided. The man who addressed a large school of boys and urged them to study hard or they would have to work for a living was all wrong. He might have justly told them they would all have to work, but by knowledge and by trained minds they could choose that kind which would be most appropriate, and that is about all.

In this busy on-rushing world what is it that sustains mankind? The main object put before our youth out of school is unfortunately money. Too often those who address schools speak of men who started in life with nothing and ended with a million. But if this were a great accomplishment it is in the reach of but few; labor all must, whether much or little be reached. In the battle of life it is spiritual upholding that men need; no matter in what path the boy's steps may wander, how long and severe, or how short the hours he may labor; how few the things he may own or how abundant his possessions he will need to feel that life, his life, is a mission.

This is not so stated to demand that religious forms have a place in the school. When it is seen how poorly attended the churches are it