

Thus there are strong characters and weak characters, there are characters consistent and inconsistent, which is very nearly another name for the same thing. There are characters which we call high-principled, by which we mean lives which are under the influence of high and noble motives; and there are those which we call unprincipled, by which we mean characters

which are either under the influence of low, ignoble, or vicious motives and principles, or else those which seem to be under the guidance of no special principle at all, except that of unreflecting selfishness. In short, there are characters which we call good and other characters which we call bad.

*(To be continued.)*

---

## THE TEACHING OF CIVIC DUTY.

BY JAMES BRYCE.

“SO far I have spoken of the instruction. I come now to the other and not less important side of the matter—the means of stimulating interest in public affairs and inspiring the sense of civic duty. Here we may depend, to some extent, upon the natural play of imagination and emotion so soon as the necessary basis of knowledge has been supplied. No rightly constituted mind can help feeling some pride in the constitution of his country and in her greatness, some interest in the vast issues which its representative bodies and executive authorities have to deal with. The more that knowledge can be combined with whatever tends to touch imagination and emotion, the better will the knowledge be remembered and the more powerfully will it work in forming the character. Hence the value of two kinds of reading: historical passages relating to great or striking persons or events, and pieces of poetry. The difficulties that attach to the systematic teaching of history do not attach to the reading of historical matter, whereof the more a boy reads the better. If well written historical narratives, fresh, simple, dramatic, were put into the hands of

boys from ten years onward, given to them not as task books but as books to read for their own pleasure, not only would a good deal of historical knowledge be acquired, but a taste would often be formed which would last on into manhood. Though the boy, however, ought to be tempted to read for his own pleasure much more than could be read in class, a skilful teacher will make a great use of class reading, and will, by his explanations and familiar talk over the book, be able to stimulate the intelligence of the pupil, setting him to think about what he is reading—the habit without which reading profits little to any of us.

“Next, as to poetry, which may do as much to form a patriotic temper as even the records of great deeds in history. For a country with two such histories as England and Scotland have, and for a country with a poetry even more glorious than its history, a people whose long succession of great poets no other people in the ancient or modern world can rival, it is strange that so comparatively little of our best poetry should run in a historical and patriotic channel. No poet has yet given to Britain her sixth