

This principle granted, and the school admitted to be a substitute for the home, a good school is that in which the best features of the home are copied, and its highest advantage secured. By this practical test the merits of the system may be tried, and the causes of failure indicated.

1. In the first place, if a school is to resemble a home, some proportion must exist between the numbers contained in both. And here I should observe, that I am speaking altogether and entirely of female education, and of education as apart from, and above, mere instruction. Large public schools for boys are, by common consent, one of the many necessary evils with which the world abounds. With these, therefore, we have no desire to meddle. But desirable as public spirit and hardihood may be for boys, they are not the objects we propose to ourselves in bringing up our daughters; neither for them do we make the attainment of intellectual excellence our first desire. On the contrary, the culture of the domestic affections, the formation of the character, the strengthening of that heroic, self-denying element which is the basis of a woman's nature, and which enables her to find in duty its own motive and reward, and to do right for the right's sake—these are the ends every thoughtful parent would seek to pursue in the education of his daughters. As much intellectual attainment, as many external accomplishments, as may be consistent with these, he will desire; and no more. Now the home influences, where the moral atmosphere is pure, will be found precisely adapted to secure these ends. The parental affection in which children 'live, move, and have their being,' tends to develop the feeling of love in their young hearts; whilst the deep interest of the parent must quicken his comprehension of the individual character of the child, and teach him how to bring about that peculiar combination of qualities which he desires to see him possessed of.

These being some of the peculiar characteristics of home education, it is at once evident that a large school can never supply its place; for the affection and interest with which each child is regarded by the 'principal' must be infinitely estimable, even if, as too often happens, the feeling of individuality is not lost sight of altogether. If a school, then, be intended to supply the place of the home, it must be sufficiently limited in extent to admit of the same close study of individual character, and will differ chiefly from the natural home in bringing together companions nearer of an age than can possibly be found amongst brothers and sisters. In this respect, and in this only, the school has necessarily the advantage. Many children, studying single-handed, find a degree of dullness in their occupations which would be quickly removed by the presence of companions. Again: unless two or three sisters are very nearly of an age, the consequence of teaching them together is, that the elder is kept back, and grows idle; or, more probably, that the powers of the younger are overstrained. Now, it is by no means asserted that many girls of twelve are incapable of studying with sisters two or three years older—for age is by no means synonymous with power, there being greater capability in some at ten than in others at fifteen. Still, the rule of course is, that fellow-students of the same age are preferable. Moreover, all wise teachers know that children often gain from each other, both mentally and morally, fully as much as it is in the instructor's power to bestow. Difficult as it is to make this clear to any who have not studied education practically, by those who have, it will be readily admitted, because the philosophy of it is rightly understood.

II. The first point being established—that a school must resemble a family in extent—the second is naturally connected with it—that its mode of government shall be the same; namely, patriarchal. That all large schools are despotisms, is by no means asserted; but that they have a natural tendency to become so, can scarcely be denied. In legislating for numbers, recourse must be had to rules, regulations, formulae, and other mechanical substitutes for personal direction; whilst every school not larger than a family might be governed, as all wisely-ordered families are, almost, if not altogether, by principles. Each member might feel herself the object of the watchful care and affectionate interest of the head, and might partake as largely of the infusion of her

spirit. But this is only possible on the supposition that her heart is loving, her judgment sound, and her energy un-failing.

III. In the third place, every head of a school who undertakes to supply the place of home education, must have deeper views of what is required from her, and be more far-sighted with regard to the future, than the majority of our teachers at present are. A school is too often a mere intellectual mill, employed in grinding out of unfortunate children a certain quantity of labour for present purposes. Lessons appear to be learned in order to be said, and said to be speedily forgotten. Candour, however, requires us to admit that the whole of this mistake is not to be charged to school-mistresses; parents often, by their ill-judged desire to see their children advance rapidly, adding fuel to that flame by which the powers of young minds are wasted and destroyed. On both sides there is a want of that wise economy by which the immediate results of intellectual efforts are made a part, and but a small part, of the advantages to be derived; the chief gain being the moral discipline involved, and the power this gives for future years; or, to confine our attention to the intellect, the sharpening and strengthening of the faculties, rather than the immediate knowledge they are the means of procuring. Now, the great intellectual mistake in many schools is; that there is no working for the future. Young people are not shown practically that all their studies and pursuits are mainly valuable for the promise they hold out, and the facilities they afford, for future attainments. Could we show them in the present the germ of the future, and make it clear to their minds how much their happiness here and hereafter depends on the faithful fulfilment of those simple duties which they are accustomed to regard as mere indifferent routine, how much more lifelike and earnest would be their daily employments! Common situations, and unromantic circumstances, would then content them; for into the meanest they would see the possibility of carrying all those great deeds and high thoughts which they have revered in others; and perhaps sighed for in themselves. Their life would thus become a connected whole, instead of in its two periods offering the slavery of school, and the emancipation of leaving it, with nothing to show the oneness and reality of existence. There can be no doubt that, if judiciously attempted, it will be found possible, without making young persons prematurely thoughtful, to show them the close connection between those two stages of education which they have been accustomed to think so different—the school-teaching, and the life-teaching. A wise teacher will do even more than this. Foreseeing the end of all her efforts from the very beginning, and gradually approximating towards it by slow degrees, in proportion as she finds the power of self-guidance developed, she will remove external motive and stimulus, and so prepare the mind to depend on itself, that, when the period arrives for losing sight of authority altogether, the change shall be in many important particulars imperceptible.

Neither is it necessary that young women should leave school, as they often do, with little preparation for the active duties of life. No other law but the absurd one of fashion has laid down the cultivation of all kinds of useless and frivolous needlework, to the exclusion, in many cases, of that particular branch in which every woman should be well practised. The period of life passed at school is that on which future happiness and usefulness mainly depend, it being during the course of this that habits are, to a certain extent, unalterably formed. To accustom young people, therefore, exclusively to the use of Berlin wools and floss silks, is to preclude the hope of their being, in one important particular, useful mistresses of families.

IV. Are schools and school-life necessarily and unavoidably the dull, formal, negative things we commonly find them? May not the cultivation of a loving spirit in the young people, together with constant cheerfulness, intelligent conversation, and an animated manner in the principal, help to make a school-life a happy and pleasant one—inferior to home only in the one great particular, of separation from relative?

In the present administration of schools, one of the principal mistakes arises from the fear of giving too free a course