

examinations, who dips his patent pen in a patent inkstand, and keeps his record in an improved register, and has all manner of surprising methods of instruction and discipline—and yet the results are not, perhaps, perfectly satisfactory. Insomuch that some ancient men, remembering the old battered desk and hacked benches of their boyhood, shake their heads and venture to doubt whether boys get a much better education than they did in old times. They are not always justified in their doubt, but they are justified whenever it is their good fortune to remember as presiding at that old battered desk, the vigorous mind and mellow heart of a really good teacher.

Who would not be glad to have sat in ever so bare a room under the plain instruction of Arnold, of Rugby? Who would not like to have had a winter's schooling in the Puritan house where Milton taught when he returned, a vigorous young scholar, from his travels on the continent? Perhaps we might not consider it a hard fate to have learned "small Latin and less Greek" at the rusty old school house a little out of Stratford, where Shakespeare is said to have taught school. I repeat, it is the man that makes the school, not the apparatus nor the methods. You can no more prevent the mind and character of a large-souled man from irradiating and inspiring the little people on whom they shine than you can put out the sun. Nor can all the educational machinery—past, present, and to come—make anything of a dull and dishonest teacher but a stupefying poison to every child within his reach.

The education is what the mind of the teacher can do for the mind of the child; all else is accessory and unimportant. We must come back from our mooning after appliances and methods, and remember this.

We have thought too little of the men. There is madness in our methods. It is the mistake of a young country that has accomplished great material results by its ingenuity, and has been patted and praised for it by its neighbours. It is the mistake of a time whose proudest blossom is the industrial exhibition. In Greece the Olympic games were not for the competition of sewing machines and bonnet decorations, but of men. The truth simply is that material progress has absorbed the attention of the world. We gaze in admiration at the new steam engine; the man that made it is an old story—he was invented long ago. And when we see, after all, how little can be done for us by mechanisms and devices and ingenious methods, while men are lacking, we get a feeling that our boasted progress has not set the world so much farther ahead than it used to be. What advantage, we say, has the locomotive over the stage coach, if the man it carries is a clod or a churl? . . .

I would not be thought to overlook the fact that there are better methods than of old. But we must cease to hope that such methods, however admirable, will be of much avail without the best men and women as teachers. We can do most for the schools by uniting our efforts to secure the best teachers. I mean to say that we must not stop short of an earnest effort to have the schools filled with the best men and women in the community. Certainly, in theory, every community ought to select the choicest and highest of their number to guide the destinies of the children. It is of comparatively small importance who are the physicians and ministers and judges: the question that determines the whole character of society is, Who are the teachers? No doubt, it would be of some use to raise the salaries of teachers. If in any case the present salary seems too high, it is not the