

lines of education—the literary, the commercial, the manual. Which of these any particular student is to follow is his business, or his parents’.”

Dr. Ridding is of opinion that “all this accommodation” is not needed for really clever boys, who can *step off one ladder to another* if they find themselves on the wrong one; and neither ladder need be spoiled to ease them. He proceeds to point out that what is far more desirable than any attempt to unify education, is to achieve improvements which shall make each sort of education good of its kind. Much fault has been found with the present system of industrial education. Our artisans are said to fail in foreign competition from want of general education, and clerks or travellers from ignorance of foreign languages. And the blame of these two defects has been laid by some persons on middle-class schools. But, the Bishop pertinently asks, is that just? He mentions a school of which he himself was on the governing body, with business men for his colleagues—men who were zealous for modern theories, and very eager to give a good commercial education, book-keeping, shorthand, etc. The Bishop asked “Why do the boys not learn French and German?” and was answered “Oh, French and German are no use to our boys here.” In short, the teaching of French and German would have been the administration of a supply without a demand. Whether the demand ought to have existed is another point altogether.

And as regards the second indictment against middle-class schoolmasters—*i.e.*, the alleged falling-off in certain handicrafts wherein Englishmen were formerly supreme—Dr. Ridding’s argument appears to us to be unanswerably cogent. Grant, he says, that English workmen have deteriorated, and German workmen improved,

as much as is alleged, can the blame of this be laid on the schoolmaster, or on the lack of adequate school teaching? Surely not; seeing that fifty years ago, when, for instance, English cutlery and English leather were supremely excellent, and acknowledged to be so all over the world, no one can say there was more schooling than at the present day. “There was,” says Bishop of Southwell, “more apprenticeship, more drill in craft elements, more pressure to do good work, but fewer books, and less science and art teaching.” And again, “Ask a foreign hotel-keeper, whose guests are nearly all English, why he has no English waiters? He does not say, ‘They cannot talk the language’; but ‘Germans cost less, are more amenable, and ready to put up with what is required, and what Englishmen refuse,’ etc.”

All this mainly to rebut the nonsense talked about schools, as though a certain curriculum, approved by a Governmental body, and paid for by ratepayers, could supersede diligence, and practical labour, and honest earnestness, and an adequate length of time devoted to learning a trade, a calling, or handicraft.

Can we suggest a more practical and common-sensible utterance on the subject than Dr. Ridding’s remarks that “manual skill must be acquired young, and under a close discipline only enforceable on the young. Its teachers must know it. A handicraftsman’s secondary education *must be that of his hands; his secondary school the workshop, under skilled workmen.* . . . I believe we shall go on a wrong tack if we try to improve manual skill by lengthening schooling and delaying the secondary education of the workshop and the farm.”

There are probably few persons who would deny the energy, acuteness, and business abilities of the citizens of