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ONE PHASE OF THE EDUCATIONAL PROBLEM.



AM confronted by a two-fold difficulty at the outset of this, which must necessarily be a very incomplete treatise. On the one hand, there is the magnitude and importance of the subject, and my conscious inability to cope with it, and on the other, I am incurring the danger of imposing upon the reader opinions and theories, which have already found expression at the hands of others who have made the question of education the object of their study and research.

That I should say anything of what has been already said, would not perhaps be surprising, seeing that to imitate is easier than to be original; nor, if it were well said, would it be seriously wrong to repeat it, but it is chiefly because so much has been said on this subject, that I am urged to offer my quota to the general contribution.

The educational system of our day, is presently the topic about which centres the attention of almost all who lay claim to an independent thought. What has come from this general inquiry into educational matters? Lest no more tangible effect be forthcoming, we will say that, at least the deficiencies of the system as at present constituted, have been made plainly manifest. But this is the less important result which this inquiry may have. To the defects alluded to, will naturally

suggest themselves effectual remedies, and thus our system, gradually changing, will ultimately become perfect, the adherents of ancient customs and traditions to the contrary notwithstanding. Yet, withal, the progressive spirit of our age may be pregnant with evil, in so far as education is concerned, unless special care be exercised as to the manner in which reforms are effected, and the motive which prompts them. As regards the motive, there should be but one—man's higher, nobler and ultimate end: but concerning the former, opinions differ, and hence, the reason of the few reflections contained in this paper. For it is possible that the true object has been missed, it may be that we have been proceeding in the wrong direction, towards the solution of a difficulty which demands a speedy and a permanent settlement. Has the earnest band of enthusiastic workers in the cause of education, been marching on in blissful ignorance of the real position of the foe? It may be. What do we want to accomplish? This, once firmly set down, would be the first step gained in solving the difficulty. However, a little examination will reveal the fact, that even this point has not been sufficiently well established, to render progress easy.

There are at present afloat and in very general acceptance, certain misconceptions with regard to the end and object of education, which render the public opinion of the comparative importance of its different branches, precisely the reverse