

My present purpose is to bring before the association a question on which a great deal has been said of late, and on which I believe a very erroneous public sentiment is being formed. I refer to the loud demands we hear on every side for what is styled more practical training in our public schools and in those schools immediately bearing on their work.

My own contention is that the programme is sufficiently practical as it is, that what is needed is not more of the practical, but renewed energy, on the part of the schools towards intellectual, æsthetical and moral culture. "The age is a practical age" say the apostles of utilitarianism. "Dollars and cents rule the day, and man's chief or only concern is with the hard facts of existence as experienced in his struggle for his daily bread." Yes, it is a practical age—dollars and cents do rule the day, and only too true is it that the facts of existence are exceedingly hard, through man's perverted obstinacy in making them so. And yet our schools are to be made the medium of hardening existence, still further of increasing the callous materialism of a materialistic age, by familiarizing the impressionable minds of the young with the various lessons of doing, making and contriving. It is not enough for the man, on taking his stand alone amid the giddy vortex of toiling humanity, to find that henceforth all the powers of his life are to be monopolized in one continuous strain of doing, being and suffering, with no opportunity for exercising those faculties for higher intellectual enjoyment with which, as a rational being, he is endowed, but the very desire for such exercise, the very tendency of thought and feeling to assert themselves in a sphere of their own, the barest possibility of human nature revolting against the self-imposed tyranny of incessant, all-absorb-

ing and soul—darkening toil must be stamped out and effaced forever by that very agency, planned and intended for developing the highest faculties of the human soul. "But," say some, "this is exaggeration; no one proposes to exclude intellectual culture from the curriculum of our schools. It is merely proposed to add more of the practical." But with the present limited opportunities of the teacher to develop mental power and refine the tastes of his pupils, I say to crowd in more of the practical would be to reduce to *nil* the influence of the school in the direction of the former. Without delaying further over this point, I shall submit for consideration two reasons why the demand for a greater amount of practical instruction in the schools should not be acceded to.

1. There is no time for it.

2. It would only serve to confirm one of the evil tendencies of the day.

It is the duty of the state-aided school to develop the future citizen, the future man or woman as a member of society. This development, I think, can be accurately described as culture. In order that society may be in a healthy condition, its individuals must be intellectually strong, sympathetically inclined, and accustomed to act with ease in accordance with the rules by which society, like any other organism, is governed. Moreover, its members must be happy—not with a sordid, selfish happiness centring in their own individual efforts to exist; but with that happiness that adds intellectual joy to their daily labour and puts them in harmony and sympathy with their fellow men. Ruskin says, "It may be proved with much certainty that God intends no man to live in this world without working: but it seems to me no less evident that He intends every man to be happy in his work."

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