

as high a degree of activity as they are capable of. For culture, so understood, it seems to me that a great deal might be said. If it be objected that culture in this sense is not within reach of all, or indeed of more than a small minority of the community, I answer that the highest blessings of civilization have never been within the reach of more than a small minority,—that the highest blessings of Christianity itself have never been brought home to more than a small minority. All good causes must advance as best they may. What we are just now concerned with is the probable effect upon individual happiness and public morality of such a culture as has been hinted at, seconding the teachings of nature and of circumstances. The logic of facts is often persuasive when other logic fails, and what I have now in view is a system of education which would aim at anticipating the logic of facts, so as always to be confirmed by the latter.

I am well aware that this question of education, considered especially in its moral and social aspects is one which many persons are pondering, with not interest only, but anxiety. Youth is ever hard to control, but possibly the youth of to-day is paying even less heed than might, in the light of past experience, be expected to the counsels of the elder generation. If we are to trust what is being said on every side, the problem what to do with boys is becoming a more difficult and embarrassing one day by day. Why should this be so? There is only one possible cause that I can suggest; and that is a decline in moral authority on the part of parents and instructors. But why such a decline? Simply—if I must give an answer—because the present age is one, as has been said, of “weak convictions.”—Before we can teach we must believe. Make-believe will not do; it may impose upon ourselves, but its weak-

ness will come out when we try to make it a ground-work for influencing others. Nor shall we be any better off by trying to strike a safe average between extreme opinions; belief is not to be got at in any such fashion; and nothing but belief can give the intellectual and moral momentum required for swaying the mind of youth. We must have a system to work on, and one not arbitrarily chosen as a matter of convenience, but one to which we give a full, sincere and involuntary adhesion. A defective system earnestly believed in will prove vastly more efficacious than a more advanced and rational one, which is but indolently accepted and languidly held. It was the stern Roman mother that made the heroic and virtuous Roman citizen; but the sternness in this case—as in all cases where sternness has been useful—was not mere hardness of nature, but the natural temperament of a mind at one with itself and holding to certain views of life and duty, with inflexible grasp. In our more favoured day there may perhaps be similar mental unity, with less severity of temper; but we must, before all things, know our own minds, before we can successfully undertake to guide the minds of others. Nor will our methods be satisfactory until we can feel ourselves working hand in hand with nature, not striving to keep up an artificial system, nor letting sentiment usurp the place of reason, but speaking and acting at all times the thing that is true. How many children are brought up without any preparation at all for the struggle that awaits them in life? How many are allowed to contract habits of indolence and self-indulgence which wholly unfit them for manful exertions,—which perhaps blast their careers at the very outset? How many youths are allowed—pardon me an expressive vulgarity—to “loaf around” for