

imaginative which predominates in Plato laid down by anticipation the history of the Platonic philosophy; and in like manner in the common sense of Socrates was the germinating principle of his influence. If you had heard Plato lecture in the Academy, if you had seen the fire of his eye, marked the deep tones of his eloquence, observed how his chest swelled, and his figure became erect, on occasions when he was under the inspiration of a great thought, you would then have known what impression his writings would make on the world—who would be his admirers, who his opponents. Not more certain is the chemist of the result when he puts oxygen and hydrogen together in one vessel, than might you have seen that those words would have affinity for men of soaring thoughts, and delicate sensibilities, and refined speculations—with the elements of whose soul they would blend and unite, adding 'fuel to fire,' until, as with a hot iron, they would burn their own likeness on individuals, systems, and institutions.

All great men have their prophetic thought, which is a condensed summary of their lives. The classics were aware of the truth which we are endeavouring to expound. Accordingly they made the infant Hercules strangle a serpent while yet in his cradle, and tell how bees gave sweetness to the infant lips of Plato. Could we see and study the features of illustrious men ere they left their mother's arms, we should discern their essential qualities, and be able to lay down the chief outline of their history. Those smiles that pass across the countenance of the sleeping babe are sparklings of the heavenly waters of its soul; they are flashes from the past into the future: rending the veil of the inner temple, they show things to come in the shadowy light of things that are.

Some illustration and enforcement of our views may be found in the great diversities which children present in the cradle and the nursery, and long before the outward can have had any marked influence on their characters. Of the existence of these diversities every thoughtful mother is well aware. I have myself observed them in great number. Indeed every child may be said to have moral and intellectual qualities peculiar to itself; and so intimately interwoven with the fibres of his being are these qualities, that they make him what he is—forming his disposition, giving expression to his features, and determining even the tones of his voice. Any attempt to classify and describe these idiosyncrasies must fail—so minute as well as numerous are they, and so imperfect an organ is language when it has to speak of spiritual realities. Look round your own family, and you will understand what I cannot set forth. And in your fears for this child, and your hopes for that child, in the choice of a profession which already you have half-made for a son who yet sits on the lowest form in the school, you have divined the prophetic thought of each, and believe in it so firmly that you act under its suggestions.

Would that its mother and its father could discover and respect the prophetic thought of that infant whom I left nestling in its sister's arms! No ordinary history lies in embryo in its bosom. The first germs of that history may have to be sought in the blood of some distant Saxon dame—so linked to the past is our present life; and the remotest branches of that history run out into a futurity which no human being can measure, so close on the infinite does the soul of man press. But who shall estimate the weal and the woe which lie between these two extremes? Who shall say which will be the greater? Intense in that child's case will both be—the joy exquisite, the woe terrible. No, I cannot tell whether she will be an actress, and marry a coronet, or prove a castaway, and perish while yet little more than a girl. But I do know that hers will be no common lot. Her sister may become a kitchen-maid, and marry a chimney-sweep. She herself is both lovely and loving: lovely and loving will she long remain. As she is loving, so will she be loved. Such a soul as hers will burn with affection: some return, a large return it will exact. Will it be a pure return?

I see that sweet child again. No longer innocent, she sits in the corner of a prison, her face towards the door, as if to salute the comer with a look of defiance. As I contemplate her face, the prophetic thought passes in thick shadows over her brow. Once, again, in a thousand times her past determines her future; and force having done its best, or rather its worst, and found no response in a heart which would have answered to the lightest touch of love, she is set on shore in a distant land, and falls a prey to the degradations of a penal colony. Thus a human spirit which might have become an angel has to stand before its Maker in the attributes of a demon.

If in our birth we are all big with our future selves, parents at the earliest day should study, learn, and watch the prophetic thought of each of their children. Very soon is there some manifestation thereof. One child will bite and kick, another child will sulk, if interfered with. This child is forgiving, that child is vindictive. See what an affectionate nature shines forth in the eyes and looks of that little girl! That boy has the soul of a braggadocio, and that other possesses the self-denial and generosity of a hero. Do not all these qualities require cultivation? Some may be encouraged, others must be restrained; and others again must be counteracted, overcome—nay, eradicated. A wise parent has now to soften a disposition, now to give firmness and strength to a character. Here restraint is required, there impulse. In all cases proportion and harmony are of great consequence; what is weak should be fostered, what is defective should be supplemented, what is low should be raised, what is gross should be refined; all excess should be pruned away; and head, heart, and soul should be brought into a well-balanced and effective operation. If so high a work is to be accomplished, it must be begun in the very first days of our earthly existence.—*Chambers' Journal*.

EDUCATION AND IGNORANCE—THE OPPOSITE EFFECTS ON THE VALUE OF LABOUR.

Without an intelligent and instructed mind, a man may have strong arms, and other bodily powers, with little or no advantage to himself or his employers; and everything that he attempts to execute, will be performed in a clumsy manner. Just look at those parts of our own country, where the population are least educated, and see how the arts and trades in which they engage are carried on. In Bedfordshire, Sussex, and Devonshire, it has been ascertained that only about one-half of the population can write their names, and in the last-named county a few years ago, only one-fourth of the overseers of the poor were able to do so. This deplorable fact, is no doubt, the chief reason why agriculture in these counties is so very far behind the state to which it has reached elsewhere. In the county of Sussex, where I have lately been residing, when the stubble land is ploughed, a huge clumsy machine on three wheels, drawn by 6 or 8 oxen, guided by 2, sometimes 3 men, is the plan adopted. A grubber by 6 oxen and 2 men. Harrows are driven by 4 oxen and 2 men; carts for driving out manure from the curtains are driven by 2 oxen. Corn is thrashed with the flail. Look on the other hand to Yorkshire, where the proportion of persons who cannot write is only 15 or 16 to the hundred, and you find agricultural and all other trades carried on in a more efficient manner. Looking to our own country, can any doubt, that one chief cause why Scottish farmers succeed in raising better crops at less cost, is that they have intelligent servants and labourers. But though this is the general character of the Scotch farm servants and labourers,—thanks to our parochial schools—it is not equally so throughout Scotland. In some of the Highland parishes, which are extensive, at a distance from schools, a great many of the labouring classes are almost uneducated. The disadvantage to the farmers in those districts was so great, and felt to be so, that about six years ago the farmers in Aberdeenshire, at their own expense, established classes similar to the apprentice schools at Edinburgh, at which their ploughmen and other servants were taught the branches of elementary education; and I remember their applying to the directors of the Highland Society to assist them in the attempt. In their application they stated that they found it difficult to make their farm servants understand the operations of husbandry, or to get them to use implements except of the commonest kind, without breaking them; and that so long as they remained in an uneducated, unintelligent state, it was in vain for farmers to attempt to introduce any improvement in agricultural operations. These facts very clearly prove that it is not merely bone and muscles which make a good workman, but these bodily powers accompanied by a cultivated mind; and if we wish to see the great arts flourish on which the prosperity of our country depends, and our labouring classes with abundance of employment and good wages, we must afford to them facilities for obtaining education at school, and for continuing to improve their minds after they have left school.—*Lecture by David Miles, Esq., at the Eyemouth Library.*

Every man ought to aim at eminence, not by pulling others down, but by raising himself.