

psychology it is believed the science of education will soon take its place among the other sciences, with the principles on which it is founded just as well defined. But while it is in the province of the educator to study the laws of mental development, and the application of those principles by which the best results can be secured, it is the duty of the legislator to consider the various interests of the community for whose benefit these principles are to be applied. Any system of education which does not consider the social, and perhaps the religious organization of the people, their business life, their material resources, and their political wants, is necessarily defective. Out of deference to the religious differences of the people our school system is non-denominational. On any other basis it could not exist as a national system. It is the common property of every member of the State. Not that it is irreligious by any means; for it recognizes in the fullest degree the cosmopolitanism of Christianity without those denominational limitations by which, as society is constituted, its different families are now designated. Happily for us in Ontario, the unity of our system in this respect has been well sustained. Similarly our social organization has rendered us practically a homogeneous people. The distinctions which arise from the accumulation of wealth in the hands of the few, or, worse still, the distinctions which arise from what Tennyson calls "long descent," from fortuitous preferment and consequent assumption of superiority, do not appreciably interfere with the social equality of our people. It is easy, then, for us to establish a system which compromises no man's social position. To the rich man it is no reproach that his child sits on the same form with the child of his poorer neighbour. Nor does the poor man boast, that in securing the education of his children without cost he has obtained a socialistic victory over the rich. But when we come to consider a system of education adapted to the business life of a people, we are met with difficulties of no ordinary nature. What might suit a rural population, might not be as well adapted to an urban population, and so on through all the variations of trade and commerce. In seeking the solution of this problem for ourselves, there are certain considerations at least common to all systems of education. (1.) Education is not *knowledge*, but *power*. True, this power is to be acquired partly through knowledge, that is through the discipline which the acquisition of knowledge gives, but, after all, the real purpose of the educator is to generate power. The function of the furnace, if I may use such a word, is to generate the steam by which the engine is driven, but the furnace is not the *power* which drives the engines. It is not necessarily *what* the pupils learn, as *how* they learn, that determines the value of any department of knowledge as an educating force. The classics may be as good a means of mental discipline as the sciences—a passage from Burke's *Reflections* as a problem in commercial arithmetic—and yet, considering all the circumstances of the learner, the latter may be far more important from a practical standpoint than the former. The question then to be considered is, "How can we apply the educational forces which the various branches of knowledge contain in such a way as to generate the greatest power and secure the best results?" In other words, *can we frame a curriculum of studies which is educating and at the same time useful?* This is the question discussed by Prof. Elliot in his able address before the members of the Johns Hopkins University last February. After giving due credit to the classical course prescribed by all the Continental universities, he asks, is it not possible to find in the study of English literature as good an educating force and at the same time, many more of those practical elements of culture which would be available for every-day life? Let me quote the eulogium which he pronounces on our much neglected literature:—

"It cannot be doubted that English literature is beyond all comparison the amplest, most various, and most splendid literature which the world has seen; and it is enough to say of the English language that it is the language of that literature. Greek literature compares with English literature as Homer compares with Shakespeare, that is, as infantile with adult civilization. It may further be said of the English language that it is the native tongue of nations which are pre-eminent in the world by force of character, enterprise, and wealth, and whose political and social institutions have a higher moral interest and greater promise than any which mankind has hitherto invented."

From this he argues—and who will say the contention is not a sound one—that English literature should occupy a higher place than it does in the liberal education of the English-speaking people. Let us now apply this principle of utility to the formation of the curriculum for our public schools. And first we would say—the useful should supersede the ornamental, and, secondly, the practical should supersede the theoretical. In discussing these two propositions it must be borne in mind that in an ordinary public school the teacher's time is divided among a great many classes. The amount of attention which he is capable of giving to each subject is necessarily very limited. The average rural school contains from 10 to 13 classes at least. How important is it then that no part of the teacher's time should be frittered away in idle embellishment to the neglect of the substantial and the necessary. It must also be remembered that the school term of the average scholar is very short. Only two per cent. of our pupils ever enter the Fifth Reader. It may fairly be presumed that the majority of

the half million attending our public schools leave before reaching fifteen years of age. Are we doing them justice, or are we doing justice to those who bear the burdens of taxation, if we fail to consider this circumstance?

Then what are the requisites of a public school curriculum? (1.) Every pupil should be taught to read intelligently the literature of the day—not merely to *know the words*, but to understand their meaning, and to give to each word its proper force and vocal significance. (2.) To write neatly and legibly, in proper form, an ordinary business letter. (3.) To spell correctly, not, of course, all the words in the dictionary, but at least such words as are of common use in commercial circles and in every day conversation. (4.) To make such calculations in arithmetic, rapidly and accurately, as might be required in the daily business of the merchant, the farmer, or the artisan. (5.) To know the history of his own country minutely, and such general historical facts as may be said to have exercised a wide influence in shaping the destinies of other nations. (6.) To have such acknowledge of places as would localize his knowledge of the history, climate, productions, and races of other countries. (7.) To be so trained in the art of composition as to be able to express clearly, either on paper or orally, the knowledge he possesses. (8.) To be able to delineate pictorially what cannot be as well expressed in words.

Now it may be said that there is nothing new in such a curriculum—that it is now in force in all the public schools of the Province. I admit there is little that is new in outline. There is much, I think, involved that is new in detail. For instance, while in every school our pupils are taught to read, that is to name a certain number of words in the order in which they occur, how few are taught to read with expression and force. How few read with any appreciation of the author's sentiments—how few are able to express in their own words the sense of the author. Besides, the teacher utterly fails in doing his work properly while teaching his pupils how to read, if he fails to excite in them a love for reading. And it is here, perhaps more than anywhere else, that we must look for national results from public school education. It is not what the pupil gets in school that makes the course valuable to him, it is what it inspires. He may get here and there a few scraps of knowledge coupled with a somewhat rugged discipline, all useful in their way, but if to knowledge and discipline could be added the inspiration for further acquisitions—if like the first shilling earned by Astor, which made him a millionaire, his school work could be made the inclination to steady, plodding effort for more information; then, and only then, might we say that the teacher has done his work well. To teach a child how to read as I have indicated, is to give him the key-note not only to all the treasures of science, but to the literature described by Prof. Elliot as "The completest, most various, and most splendid the world has ever seen."

But reading is not only the key to literature, but also to history. By what species of national depreciation has it arisen that Canadian history is virtually excluded from our public schools? We study the history of Greece and Rome, of England and France, and yet we have failed so far to give a place even to the history of Canada on our examination papers. Apart altogether from the duty we owe to ourselves as a people, I think the study of history should occupy a higher place than it does in the school curriculum. As Prof. Elliot says:—

"If any study is liberal and liberalizing, it is the modern study of history—the study of the passions, opinions, beliefs, art, laws, and institutions of different races or communities, and of the joys, sufferings, conflicts, and achievements of mankind. Philology and polite literature arrogate the title of the 'humanities'; but what study can so justly claim that honorable title as the study which deals with the actual experience on this earth of social or progressive man? What kind of knowledge can be so useful to a legislator, administrator, publicist, philanthropist, or philosopher as a well-ordered knowledge of history? If the humanity or liberality of a study depends upon its power to enlarge the intellectual and moral interests of the student, quicken his sympathies, impel him to the side of truth and virtue, and make him loathe falsehood and vice, no study can be more humane or liberal than history. These being the just claims of history in general, the history of the community and nation to which we belong has a still more pressing claim upon our attention. That study shows the young the springs of public honor and dishonor; sets before them the national feelings, weaknesses, and sins; warns them against future dangers by exhibiting the losses and sufferings of the past; enshrines in their hearts the national heroes; and strengthens in them the precious love of country."

But it is not what this curriculum would include as much as what, rationally carried out, it would eliminate, I wish to consider. For instance, in the study of Arithmetic, how much pain would be spared the pupil, and how much useless anxiety the teacher, if only what is useful were taught. Of what use are alligation, circulating decimals, single and double position, and "duodecimals" to the ordinary citizen? It may be said that mental disciplines got in this way. So it may be got by a Chinese puzzle, but should Chinese puzzles be put upon the programme? Give your pupils discipline in doing a greater amount of work if you like, but let it be work that is of practical value. The man who trained his son to work by compelling him to wheel stones from one part