

(Written for the Canadian Illustrated News.)

COMING HOME ACROSS THE SEA.

She comes from sunny Southern climes,
Whose limpid waves late kissed her keel,
Where faintly wafted o'er the limes
The spicy breezes steal.

She comes from sunny Southern skies,
The spicy odours in her sails
Yet linger: stuffs of Tyrian dyes
Are in her costly bales.

From slumb'rous Southern lotos-lands
She brings the weary wanderers home,
From seas that melt on golden sands
Across the ruder Northern foam.

So plough through yielding waves thy way,
The good God speed thee, noble bark,
And grant thee favouring gales by day,
And guide thee safely through the dark:

For full a hundred human eyes
Are strained to catch a glimpse of thee,
To greet thy pennons as they rise
Up from the valleys of the sea.

The shrine of human hopes and fears—
The type and sign of human fate—
The power that on the ocean rears
The might of many a martial state.

Fast homeward wing thy joyous way
Beyond the sunset into dark,
Till o'er the ocean breaks the day,
The good God speed thee, noble bark.

MARTIN J. GRIFFIN.

(Written for the Canadian Illustrated News.)

THE SCHOOLS AND SCHOOLMASTERS OF CHARLES DICKENS.

II.

"CRAMMING AND UTILITARIAN SCHOOL SYSTEMS."

In "Dombey and Son" Dickens presents us with a powerful sketch of the "cramming" system and its evils.

The purse-proud and arrogant Mr. Dombey selects for his motherless son and heir, at the early age of six years, a first-rate classical academy at Brighton. The reasons for this choice are—1st, That it was very expensive; 2ndly, That it was very select; 3rdly, That it had had several boys in Greek at the same age.

"Now, Mrs. Pipchin," says the wealthy London merchant, "instead of being behind his peers, my son, my son ought to be before them, far before them."

And so poor little Paul was taken away from the gentle companionship of his sister Florence, and was entrusted to the charge of Dr. Blimber, who promised to "take him in hand" immediately. A young gentleman "taken in hand" by Dr. Blimber was pretty sure of "a tight squeeze," for the Doctor only undertook the charge of ten young gentlemen, and it was the delight and business of his life to gorge the unhappy ten with "a supply of learning for a hundred at the lowest estimate." In fact, Dr. Blimber's establishment was a great hot-house in which there was a forcing apparatus incessantly at work—all the boys blew before their time—mental green peas at Christmas, intellectual asparagus all the year round, mathematical gooseberries from mere sprouts of green bushes, and every description of Greek and Latin vegetables from the driest twigs of boys. Nature was of no consequence at all. The Doctor made a "young gentleman" *à la patern, somehow or other*; "but the forcing system was attended with its usual disadvantages." One young gentleman who had "gone through" everything, suddenly left off "blowing," and remained in the establishment "a mere stalk." "People did say that the Doctor had rather overdone it with young 'Toots,' for "when he began to have whiskers he left off having brains." Under the forcing system "the young gentlemen were full of carking anxieties. They knew no rest from the pursuit of stony-hearted verbs, savage noun substantives, inflexible, syntactic passages and ghosts of exercises that appeared to them in their dreams." In three weeks, under this treatment, a young gentleman took leave of his spirits, and in three months had all the cares of the world on his head; and at the end of the first year had arrived at the conclusion that all the fancies of the poets, and all the lessons of the sages "were a mere collection of words and grammar, and had no other meaning in the world;" but he went on blow, blow, blowing in the Doctor's hot-house all the time, and took his wintry growth home to his relations and friends in due course.

On such a training little Paul enters very timidly. "How is my little friend?" says the great Doctor Blimber. "How, is, my, lit, tie, friend, repeats the great clock in the hall!"

Mrs. Blimber, "who though not learned herself pretends to be so," and says "if she could have known Cicero she could have died contented," surveys the "little friend" with admiration, and exclaims to Mr. Dombey that she envies his dear son!

"Like a bee, sir! about to plunge into a garden of the choicest flowers! and sip the sweets for the first time! Virgil, Horace, Ovid, Terence, Plautus, Cicero! What a world of honey have we here!"

Mr. Dombey takes his leave. "You are free on Saturdays and Sundays, you know," and "you'll try and learn a good deal here, and be a clever man, won't you?" "I'll try," returned the child wearily.

"And there, with an aching void in his young heart, (after parting with his darling Florence) and all outside so cold, and bare, and strange, Paul sat as if he had taken life unfurnished and the upholsterers were never coming!" The following morning he commences "his studies." "Now, Dombey," says Miss Blimber, "I am going out for a constitutional, and while I am gone, that is in the interval between this and breakfast, I wish you to read over what I have marked in these books and to tell me if you quite understand them." They were more than he could carry, even with his chin resting on the top book, and comprised:

A little English;
A great deal of Latin;
Names of things;
Declensions, Exercises, Rules;

A trifle of Orthography;
A glance at Ancient History;
A wink or two at Modern ditto;
A few Tables;
2 or 3 Weights and Measures;
and,

A little general information.

"When poor Paul had spelt out No. 2 he found he had no idea of No. 1—fragments of which intruded themselves into Nos. 3 and 4—so that whether

20 Romuluses made a Remus;

or,

Hic, Hec, Hoc, was Troy weight;

or,

A Verb always agreed with an Ancient Briton;

or,

3 times 4 was Taurus, a bull,

were open questions with him. So he has to take them seriatim and commence with subject A, followed immediately by subject B; then C, "and even D before dinner." But it was hard work after dinner. "He felt drowsy and ill, and so did the other young gentlemen; but the studies went round like a mighty wheel, and the 'young gentlemen' were stretched upon it."

"Oh Saturdays! Oh happy Saturdays, when Florence always came at noon. Those Saturdays were Sabbaths for at least two little Christians, and did the holy Sabbath work of strengthening and knitting up a brother's and sister's love!"

The mid-summer vacation comes at last and Miss Blimber calls Paul into her room:

"Dombey, I am going to send home your analysis."

"Thank you, ma'am," returned Paul.

"You know what I mean, do you, Dombey?" inquired Miss Blimber, looking hard through the spectacles.

"No, ma'am," said Paul.

"Analysis, as opposed to synthesis, is thus defined by Walker: The resolution of an object, whether of the senses or of the intellect into its first elements. Now you know what analysis is, Dombey."

"Analysis of the character of P. Dombey:

"Natural capacity extremely good; general disposition to study in the same ratio. Thus, taking eight as our standard and highest number, I find these qualities in Dombey stated each at 6½."

"Miss Blimber paused to see how Dombey received this news.

"Being undecided whether 6½ meant

26 15s 0 d; or,

6½; or,

6 ft. 3in.; or,

½ past 6; or,

6 something elses

(that he hadn't yet learnt) with 3 something elses over.

"Paul rubbed his little hands and looked straight at Miss Blimber, who thus proceeded:

"Violence, - - - - - 2

"Selfishness, - - - - - 2

"Inclination to low company, 7

"Gentlemanly demeanour, - - - - - 4

"It may be generally observed of Dombey that his abilities and inclinations are good, and that he has made as much progress as, under the circumstances, could have been expected. But it is to be lamented that his character and conduct are often unlike other young gentlemen of his age and social position."

"But he could not change his nature or re-write the analysis; so they all agreed that Dombey was old-fashioned."

The fact was that Paul wanted to love and to be loved. He liked to shake hands, to keep company; to beg off a boy who had got into any scrape; or to do a kindness to anybody. Bye-and-bye Paul faints, and the Apothecary says:

"I think, Doctor Blimber, you may release this young gentleman from his books just now."

"Our little friend," observed Doctor Blimber, "has never complained."

"Oh, no!" replied the Apothecary, "he was not likely to complain!"

And soon his sister comes and takes him home, and he gathers up every shred that belongs to him and bids good-bye to everybody, and the little hot-house plant having over-blossomed goes home to die!

In a more recent work: viz., "Hard Times," Dickens again addresses himself to the Exposure of False Education: viz. An Education of the Intellect, with a repression of all moral and sympathetic perceptions.

A hard man was Mr. Gradgrind, the Banker, and a hard idea had he of education; but he was possessed with an educational idea, put it into a system and worked it out."

This school had none of the ameliorations of the Brighton Academy; no classic lore; no bright sea expanse; no well-laid table, garnished with talks about Cicero.

"The scene was a plain, bare, monotonous vault of a schoolroom.

"The speaker was a square man, with obstinate carriage, square coat, square legs, square shoulders, square neckcloth, all helping on the emphasis," and the emphasis was assisted, also, by the speaker's hair, which "bristled on the sides of his bald head like a plantation of firs, as if to keep the wind from its shining surface, full of knobs, as if the head had scarcely warehouse room for all the hard and quietly-shaped facts stored therein." And this was the burthen of the speech:

"Now what I want is Facts. Teach these boys and girls NOTHING BUT FACTS. Nothing else will ever be of any service to them. Stick to Facts, Sir! In this life we want nothing but Facts, Sir! Nothing but Facts."

Poor Sissy Jupe was taken, by great favour, into this school, and she had a great and loving heart, and very few facts, being the abandoned child of a father who "belongs to the horse-riding and calls her Sissy;" and poor Sissy cannot entertain facts even under the systematic teaching of Mr. McChonk-child, the master of the Model School.

"Now," says the master, "National prosperity! This schoolroom is a nation, and in it are fifty millions of money. Girl No. 20—Isn't this a prosperous nation, and ain't you a thriving girl?"

Sissy said she didn't know. She'd like to know who'd got the money, and whether any of it was hers.

And that was all wrong, he said; so he tried her again and said:

"A town had one million of inhabitants and only twenty-

five were starved to death every year. Was that a small proportion?"

And she said she thought it didn't matter much to those who were starved whether the others were a million or a million million!

And he said he would try her just once more:

"In a given time, one hundred thousand persons went to sea on long voyages, and only five hundred were drowned or burnt to death. What is the percentage?"

"I said," says the sobbing Sissy, "that it was nothing to the relations and friends of the people who were killed, and I shall never learn!" And she never did, but she was a good and true woman for all that!

Gradgrind had made it his boast that he had brought up his own children on these principles, and when his son robs the bank, and Bitzer—his favourite pupil—turns informer, he reaps some bitter fruits of his heartless system.

"If a thunderbolt had fallen upon me," said the father, "it would have shocked me less than this!"

"I don't see why," grumbled the son, "so many people employed in situations of trust, so many people out of so many will be dishonest. I have heard you talk hundreds of times about *Laws*. How can I help *Laws*? You have comforted others with such things, father. Comfort yourself!"

And so also when the disconsolate father wishes to offer a bribe to the informer to get this ungrateful and hardened son out of the country, having maintained the principle that everything is a simple question of money, and that every man "has his price," he is met with a callous calculation on the part of Bitzer, "that it is not safe to compound a felony," and that it is "all a question of self-interest." "I was made in the cheapest market, and have to dispose of myself in the dearest. But that comes right, you know, sir!"

In the end Mr. Gradgrind revises his Facts, and tries to make them subservient to the laws of "Faith, Hope, and Charity!"

In these two great pictures Dickens teaches us that we can not (for the ends of a private and selfish ambition) raise young saplings to a forced knowledge, without endangering both life, sanity, and happiness. Nor can we establish useful systems of State Education apart from the higher culture of moral principles and human sympathies.

E.

Miscellaneous.

Paris consumes no less than three millions of oranges from the 20th December to the 10th January, at a penny apiece. The very poorest woman buys one for a New Year's Gift for her child.

Duelling is not to be countenanced hereafter by the Italian Government. Certain participants in recent duels have been imprisoned or exiled, and the Government has announced its determination to put an end to the practice.

An English chemist has "struck it" in Alsace, where, at the depth of 150 feet, he has found petroleum of a reddish colour, and far superior to that of America. The first workings have been established at Schattweil, in the forest of Haguenau.

It is proposed in London to utilize the tramways in the very early hours of the morning, when there is no passenger traffic. The design is to run on the lines suitable scavenger lorries or waggons, by which the dirt and refuse of the London streets should be carried away to a distance.

A pleasant "band of brothers" have just been arrested in Paris. They called themselves *Biquitards Assommeurs*, and numbered seventeen pseudo-combated soldiers, "who had all lost their legs at Solferino." They used to frequent the more lonely thoroughfares and solicit alms. While the charitable searched his pockets for a stray copper, the *Biquitard* would drop behind, slip off his wooden leg, and hitting his benefactor on the head, stun him, and then make off with the contents of his victim's pockets, this time on his own two legs.

"Joste," the name of the woman who figured conspicuously in Jim Fisk's career in New York, is "one more unfortunate" added to the list of those whom ruin stare in the face. An exchange paper says of her:—A gentleman recently arrived from Paris says that the notorious Josephine Mansfield appeared in that city some weeks ago. She had about \$37,000 in money. This she deposited in the Banking house of Bowles Bros. When the failure of that house was announced, she wrung her hands in grief and declared that she was ruined. It is not probable that she will recover a cent of her money.

The zeal of the Government (British) for examination induced them recently, says the *Court Journal*, to have all the mental servants of a certain department examined in reading, writing, and arithmetic. A poor girl, who was merely a housemaid, but who was a great favourite with all lady visitors and a capital servant, remonstrated against the order. She was willing to give any proof, she said, of her efficiency in her duties, which nobody denied; but reading, writing, and arithmetic, she owned were not much in her way. However, she had to present herself, and, as might be expected, she broke down. A day or two ago she received notice that she had been reported as insufficiently qualified for her situation, and must therefore regard herself as dismissed. To have plucked a housemaid is a new achievement of our Government.

An interesting discovery has, it is stated, been made lately by an Italian. He has hit upon a method by which nerves may be tuned like harp-strings, and brought into harmony with each other. His theory is that nervous systems, like musical instruments, are all liable to change of tone, and this change is of little importance if all the nerves change together, as by attention to diet and temperature the evil may be corrected *en masse*, but when, owing to accident or uneven wear, the general harmony of the nerves is destroyed, a disconnected action is the result, and a special mode of treatment is required, of which he professes to possess the key. He calls himself a "nerve-tuner," and contracts to keep nerves in order by the month or year. There seems to be no reason why people should not take lessons in "nerve-tuning," and like violin performers, acquire themselves the tuning art. Some nerves, like fiddles, want tuning each time they are used, and if every man and woman could screw up his or her nerve fibres as they become relaxed, the world would be saved a vast amount of trouble, for it cannot be denied that the principal sufferers from nervous disorders are not those who immediately labour under them, but their friends and acquaintances.—*Pull Mall Gazette*.

Unpleasant hints of a fresh "difficulty" brewing in the East come to us through the medium of the *Overland China Mail*, acting as the exponent of the *Courier*; and these shadows of coming events are none the more welcome that they leave us in grave doubt of the strict legality of the position which this country is urged to take up in the dispute. Our apprehensions on this point are certainly not removed by the style of argument adopted by the defenders of British policy, and especially