

guidance in their early years. Would Goethe have been Goethe if, instead of his early home surroundings, with their comparative opulence, their refinement, their various striking personalities, and their carefully thought out plan of education, he had lighted, say, on the environment of a Chatterton? It is nothing less than a profound error to suppose that the plant of genius grows into fruitful maturity whether or no there are kindly influences of sun and rain to play upon it. One would rather say that in a sense that a boy or girl possessing the divine flame is more subject to the human forces of his surroundings than the ordinary child."

Hence the points I wish to maintain are that the duty of the school system, as regards the genius, is that the system shall be so elastic as to provide the training which will bring his special power to the highest state of excellence, and the duty of the schoolmaster is to detect the potential genius, that he may be brought within the proper influences. The strongest expressions on education that I know in our language have been framed to condemn want of elasticity in the curriculum. For instance, Mr. Ruskin warns us not to pour one kind of knowledge on one and all alike, like snow upon the Alps, and to be proud if here and there a river descends from their crests into the valleys, forgetting that we have made the loaded hills themselves barren for ever.

It is not to be expected that any one school, however large, should present all the variety needed. There must be some considerable range and scope in the studies of each school, but the whole provision that is required by the country can be made only by means of a distribution of subjects and aims. Different groups, grades, or classes of schools should take up different portions of the work, each group having its one specific aim.

When this arrangement is complete the claims of individuality may be met. No doubt Gray had reason to believe what he said of undetected potential merit in the lines we all learnt as children—

Full many a gem of purest ray serene  
The dark unfathomed caves of ocean  
bear;  
Full many a flower is born to blush un-  
seen,  
And waste its sweetness on the desert  
air.

But the merits of the gem and the flower will no longer be wasted when the search for them is made everywhere by the trained, skilled, and experienced educator.

This leads us to the personal and professional aspect of the case. For this work of selection and discovery the teacher himself must possess that faculty which a botanist or geologist uses when he recognises at a distance an unusual appearance, a natural object, a plant, for instance, not seen before—one that suggests new uses—one that requires for its healthy sustenance a particular habitat. I am inclined to think that a teacher's most essential qualification is the possession of this power. It has been my fate at times to try to help intending teachers who, in spite of all aids, have utterly failed from beginning to end. In nine of these cases out of ten the failure has arisen from inability to distinguish individual actions, individual conditions. Such men know when the whole class is listless, inattentive, disorderly, but what particular part in this condition is taken by A, B, or C, is never found out. Such a teacher may know there are some in his class who do not understand him, but whether M or N understands him he has not the slightest idea. They have been to him no individual existence. It is impossible that such should become successful teachers, for the power to see the individual in the