

Question of Higher Education.

There are few subjects which, in our time, have been worn more thoroughly threadbare than that of education. Unless it be for the behoof of what has been aptly called the "everlasting rising generation," this matter might be allowed to rest. Accepted theories have not been so thoroughly worked as to warrant, one would think, the demand just yet for the trial of new ones—as a matter of fact, we know that there are a great many old-fashioned Conservative sort of folk who are disposed to let well-enough alone,—and even where they see defects, to rather bear the ills they have than to fly to those they know not of. But this is scarcely the spirit of the age. "Progress" is the watchword of the time. Whether it be backward or forward, or up or down, there must be movement; better to go anywhere than to stand still, and—as the inevitable consequence is supposed to be—be run over. Higher education must not be an exception to this rule. In the general mobilization of everything else this must not, of all things, remain immobile.

Time was when the distinction between a liberal and a professional education was pretty clear. That sort of intellectual training which aimed simply at the full and harmonious development of the faculties of the student was never confounded with that which is specially designed to fit a man for earning his bread. Indeed, it was thought that the farther the "pot-boiling," or as the Germans call it, the "bread-and-butter" idea was kept from the mind of the student engaged in the pursuit of a liberal education, and the more thoroughly he was trained to love study for its own sake, and for the sake of the consciousness of freedom and strength which it imported, the better. Then it was no objection to Latin or Greek that, in all probability, the person learning them would make very little direct use of them after he left College; or to logic, metaphysics, and the higher mathematics, that he was not likely to adopt a profession which would call these branches of knowledge directly into requisition. Then, if the precocious and impatient youngster objected to the lessons which he was required to learn, that he did not see the use of them, it was deemed sufficient answer that what he knew not then he would know in after years. And it must be admitted that, in this way, some excellent scholars were made, and—which is still more important—some excellent characters were formed.

But, it appears, a more excellent theory has been discovered, and all this is to be changed, or to give place to something better, Latin and Greek if they are not to be altogether discarded are at least to be relegated to the region of the options. Metaphysics is to give place to the physical sciences. In a word, what have heretofore been grouped under the general head of liberal studies, if they are to be retained at all, are to have a subordinate position assigned to them, and education is to be made, in the more materialistic and matter-of-fact sense of the terms, "practical and useful." In the process of effecting this change, an entirely new method of instruction is to be called into requisition. The "object-lesson" is to perform a conspicuous part. Not only are the academy and the Porch to be used as heretofore, but the "grove" and even places less congenial to the feelings of the student are to be brought into prominence as places of instruction. The editor of the *Popular Science Monthly* who is a leader in this reform, or rather, perhaps, this agitation for reform, suggests some measures which probably will appear to many to seem rather radical and even startling innovations. We may mention a few of these.

As a first instalment of what he would like to see introduced into our institutions of learning, he thinks great good both immediate and prospective would result if, for example, the college buildings of the Michigan University, at Ann Arbor, were adapted as an object-lesson; and if after this was mastered, the water-supply and sewage system of the town were treated in the same way. After perfecting themselves in these preliminary lessons, he would have the students systematically extend their studies to the schoolhouse, the poorhouse, and the gaol, with a view to understanding the scientific principles involved in their hygiene, and the sanitary conditions and arrangements. Of course he would not have them to end there, but, as we may take for granted, extend their investigations to everything else, either immediately or remotely connected with human welfare. If an object-lesson should be made of the water supply, why not of the food supply? What people eat is

quite as important as what they drink. To investigate, with sufficient thoroughness to be of any value to the student in after life, all the sources from which the commissariat of a single city is supplied, opens a pretty wide field, furnishing material for several object-lessons. Then, while man continues to be a clothes-wearing animal, and especially while he continues to be so largely dependent upon clothes, both for his respectability and comfort, there does not seem to be any good reason why the "science of clothes" should not receive its full share of attention.

It may be an evidence of weakness on our part, but we confess, the vastness of the curriculum suggested by Prof. Youmans, in the article referred to, rather appalls us. To say nothing of the mistaken notion of education, which, as we conceive, underlies the whole of this theory, if the mind is to be made a catch-all, which is to be crammed with all sorts of "practical" knowledge, which a gross materialistic utilitarianism may judge to be "useful," and if this be the proper work of schools and colleges, one can scarcely see where the school-days of the coming generation are to end. In fact, if the work is to be done thoroughly, it appears to stretch out, popularly speaking, almost to infinity. Besides, when one thinks of it, to say nothing of the grotesque situations which it suggests, the carrying out of this comprehensive course of instruction would, as it appears to us, be attended with considerable inconvenience.

Think of Dr. McCaul, with his noble staff of co-labourers, for example, leading a few hundred students in a subterranean exploration of the city of Toronto, in order to induct them into the scientific mysteries involved in the sewage system of our good city,—or taking them down for a month to Governor Green's Castle to form a scientific and practical acquaintance with its dietetic hygiene, sanitary, and disciplinary arrangements, and then to have every other institution existing among us subjected to the same process. We hope our educational authorities will make haste slowly in adopting so radical a programme.

Love's Young Dream.

One of the most romantic affairs ever before heard of in this section of the country, says a correspondent at Marion, Ind., first took place here about two weeks ago, and which terminated last night. The substance of the case is as follows: About three miles in the country lives a well-to-do farmer named Fauster, who has in his family a daughter named Sarah D., aged just 14, who is small in stature for her age, and is merely a child. Another old farmer named Pritchett is a close neighbour, who has a son just 13 years of age, who is dubbed Morton. About two weeks ago these two children planned an elopement, and succeeded in leaving their paternal roof safely. After leaving their homes they walked to Wabash, a distance of twenty miles, where they took the train for White Pigeon, Mich. After arriving there they were united in marriage by the proper persons. The pair then roamed over several towns in the state on their wedding trip, until their finances became short, when they returned home last week and told their respective parents of their adventure. The father of the girl became indignant and brought the girl to the town last Saturday, before Squire Timothy, where a warrant was issued charging Morton Pritchett's father with abduction. The case was tried yesterday, when he was acquitted, the girl acknowledging she persuaded the youth to elope with her, and furnished part of the money, the cost of the whole trip being \$10.25. While on the trip and after they were married neither occupied the same bed, and no change of clothing was taken along for the occasion. After the trial each returned to their respective homes, where they still remain. The father of the girl will immediately institute proceedings to have the marriage set aside, the plea to be that she was not old enough. The affair has caused considerable interest, and every one who is acquainted with the particulars has taken an interest in the case. During the trial several funny incidents were told by each, which the jammed court room relished with pleasure. The end is not yet, as bad blood is brewing between the two parents.

The senior Greek professor, in his lecture to the juniors the other day, speaking of the marriage of Venus and Vulcan, remarked that "the handsomest women generally marry the homeliest men," adding grimly: "There's encouragement for a good many of you."

The Use and Abuse of Fiction.

What was said in a former article on the use and the abuse of the theatre, is equally true of the use and abuse of fiction. Indeed these are but different forms of the same thing. What dramatic representation is to the eye, works of fiction are to the imagination. Both are ideal representations of truth, and all that can be said either for or against the one may be said with equal truthfulness for or against the other. From a very early age, mankind have been in the habit of clothing their thoughts, and embodying the truths which they would impart to each other, in the form of fables, allegories, parables, and other forms of ideal representations. Indeed, in the early ages of the world, when books were few, or did not exist at all, the bulk of the wit and wisdom that had been preserved from the past, as well as that which was the product of contemporary genius, was wrapped up in such forms as these. The stories which were told at the fire-side; the songs that were sung, and the ballads and "Sagas," which were recited on their festive occasions, were of this sort. Even philosophy and religion were taught in this way. And not a little of the most precious truth that we possess to-day has found its way to us in fictitious forms. Every one knows that the relics of the Hebrew prophets, which came down to our time, abound in three poetic creations. Even the Divine Teacher himself did not shrink from using the parable as an instrument of instruction, and as a means of preserving the truth in the memory of his hearers.

In view of these facts it is worse than useless to assail fiction as such. Like every other sort of literature, beyond question much of it is bad, and of this we may take occasion to say something at another time. But in saying this, we are only affirming of fiction what may be affirmed, with equal truthfulness, of every other sort of writing. Even into the very best histories the fictitious element enters largely. And this is true of not a few of the biographies which are most widely circulated, and that have the largest number of readers. It is this element, supplied by the imagination of the author, which makes the events, and personages which a writer describes live in the mind of the reader; it is this which gives vividness and reality to a narrative which unenlivened by it would be so hopelessly dull and stupid, that it would not only be drudgery to read it, but it would make no distinct or lasting impression on the mind of the reader. Take all that is imaginary, dramatic, and practical, from the writing of Macaulay and what would the residuum be worth? Why even the Sabbath-school libraries, furnished by the churches of Christendom, and read by children, are very largely stories which are purely the creations of the imagination. The reason of this is, as the caterers for these libraries tell us, that experience has convinced them, that this is the only sort of books that they can get the bulk of the children and young people to read.

We cannot say that we are altogether pleased with this. One of the abuses of fiction we judge to be the putting it in exciting forms, and in large quantities, into the hands of children or very young persons. There are other faculties which ought to be developed before the imagination. And where the habit is formed early of reading fiction to the exclusion of works which appeal more directly to the understanding and judgment, and call for the exercise of the memory, they induce a careless and hurried mode of reading, which permanently unfits the mind for the sober pursuit of knowledge. Besides, to many young persons, especially to girls of a nervous and excitable temperament, such reading begun early and pursued intemperately, as it is almost sure to be—unless prevented by outside restraint—by keeping the brain in an abnormal and unhealthy state of excitement at a time when quietness is a most essential condition of healthy development—leads to the most disastrous consequences, both physical and mental. Every intelligent physician of large practice, especially such as have made nervous and mental disease a special study, would bear testimony to the truth of this observation. Fiction is to the mind what sweetmeats, relishes and stimulants are to the palate,—taken in limited quantities, along with plain and less exciting food, it may do good; adopted as a diet to live on, it can only work mischief. A literary friend, a hard student, being asked what he had been reading lately, replied, in our hearing, "I have spent the last few days reading

novels. I like occasionally to spend a few days in this way; I find it has an effect upon the mind very much like that which a little good whiskey has upon the body." We have never forgotten the comparison, or the impression which it conveyed, that whatever advantage might be derived from this sort of reading, especially by nervous and excitable young people, was secured at the risk of some evil; and that it ought not to be indulged in therefore without careful limitation and self-restraint.

Some Turkish Intrigues.

Perhaps the most striking fact to a stranger in the little interest Turkish women seem to inspire among the gallant population of Constantinople. But such strangers are, perhaps, unaware of the danger of a word, or even a look; a prolonged gaze into the carriage of *grande dame* *Turque* may provoke the ire of an attendant eunuch, and cause him to va at right angles the heavy whip with which he is often provided; but the greatest danger lies in the treacherous encouragement of the *grande dame* herself. Some years ago a M. B., a young Frenchman of this town, became enamored of one of these veiled Junos, whose soft glance seemed to reveal a reciprocal passion. Day after day he awaited her carriage at a corner of the principal thoroughfare, and, day after day the bewitching eyes drew him irresistibly to his doom. Still, no words were exchanged. M. B.—became more and more infatuated, and in spite of the warnings of his friends he determined to carry on the intrigue to the end, whatever that might be. Patiently he bided his time and his opportunity, nor were they long in presenting themselves. He was rewarded one day by seeing a tiny jeweled hand drop a billet from the carriage window, which fluttered all unnoticed to his feet. Seizing the paper, the enraptured Frenchman hurriedly deciphered the few words therein inscribed. The lady proposed a meeting for that same evening in the obscure corner of a large cemetery. B., who had patiently borne the quizzing of his friends, now informed them of the progress of his adventure. He was again warned against pursuing it further; but he laughed at the idea of danger, and, accompanied by a friend, repaired to the rendezvous at the appointed hour. He was presently accosted by a rabble servant, exceedingly well dressed, who politely invited him to follow. The two friends turned into a deserted street and arrived at a small door which led through a covered yard to a second entrance. This their guide unlocked, and made a sign for M. B.—'s friend to retire. All was silence and darkness around; the servant's black eyes seemed to gleam with malice; and, moved by an undefined fear, the friend again implored M. B.—to return. "B. h!" retorted this gentleman, "it's too late; besides, what is there to fear when things are managed so easily?" The door closed upon the audacious Frenchman, but the fears of his friends were prophetic—he was never seen by them again. Many attempts were made to learn his fate, and large bribes were freely given for this object. A hint was received that he had been conveyed beyond the frontier, but all traces of him were lost, and no further clue was ever obtained as to his disappearance. One or two such adventures are enough to damp the ardor of the boldest Lovelaces, and, unfortunately, other examples have not been wanting.—*Temple Bar.*

There is never so sweet as after a long struggle; strength is never so strong as through trial; joy is a more blessed thing after sorrow; and the fair dawning of sunny days could never come if we had no night.

A North Carolina man planned to frighten his wife by a sham attempt at suicide. He was to very gently hang himself, and a friend was to cut him down; but the friend was not prompt, and the plotter was choked to death.

"Do you want to kill the child?" exclaimed a gentleman as he saw a boy tip the baby out of its carriage on the walk. "No, not quite," replied the boy; "but if I can get him to howl loud enough, mother will take care of him while I go and wade in the ditch with Johnnie Erner!"

Dr. Hastings, of Boston, in speaking of religious joy, and of singing as being the natural expression of that joy, remarked that some congregations had so little of it that they had to hire people to do their singing. "Why," says he "I would as soon think of hiring a man to eat my breakfast."