

wander at pleasure among the educational systems of the world, like a child strolling through a garden, and pick off a flower from one bush and some leaves from another, and then expect if we stick what we have gathered into the soil at home, we shall have a living plant. A national system of education is a living thing, the outcome of forgotten struggles and difficulties, and "of battles long ago." It has in it some of the secret workings of national life. It reflects, while it seeks to remedy, the failings of the national character. By instinct, it often lays special emphasis on those parts of training which the natural character particularly needs. Not less by instinct, it often shrinks from laying stress on points concerning which bitter dissensions have arisen in former periods of national history. But is it not likely that if we have endeavored, in a sympathetic spirit, to understand the real working of a foreign system of education, we shall in turn find ourselves better able to enter into the spirit and tradition of our national education, more sensitive to its unwritten ideals, quicker to catch the signs which mark its growing or fading influence, readier to mark the dangers which threaten it and the subtle workings of hurtful change? The practical value of studying, in a right spirit and with scholarly accuracy the working of foreign systems of education is that it will result in our being better fitted to study and to understand our own.

Yet, apart from this, though on a lower plane of importance, there are some points in foreign systems of education (administrative contrivances, methods of inspection, devices in teaching, etc.), which, even if they cannot be actually reproduced here, will at any rate suggest improvements in our own practice,

just as foreign visitors find in English schools many suggestions for the improvement of their own schools at home. I do not lay stress on this, though I do not wish to underrate its importance. But it is not the most important side of the benefit which we shall derive from the careful, intelligent and broad-minded study of foreign systems.

Perhaps many of those present are aware that an increasing number of Training College students, in their third year of training, are being sent to France and Germany in order to study the language of the country and also its methods of teaching and system of education. We have reason to know that the results of this experiment have been beneficial to the students concerned. I should like to see this privilege of the selected third-year students extended to a number of older and more experienced teachers, who, after several years of strenuous, successful work in their own schools, would thus enjoy a Sabbatical year of leisure for study, observation and reflection under the stimulating conditions of residence in a foreign country. Considerable numbers of American teachers enjoy such a privilege, and I feel confident that a similar arrangement would serve an excellent purpose in our own country also. An experienced teacher learns a good deal from visiting another school and watching another teacher at work. It would be an excellent thing if considerable numbers of our experienced teachers, both in secondary and in elementary schools, could be sent abroad and to America, in order to see and to judge, and then to tell us when they returned home whether some of the things which they had seen abroad were not an improvement on what is ordinarily done at home.