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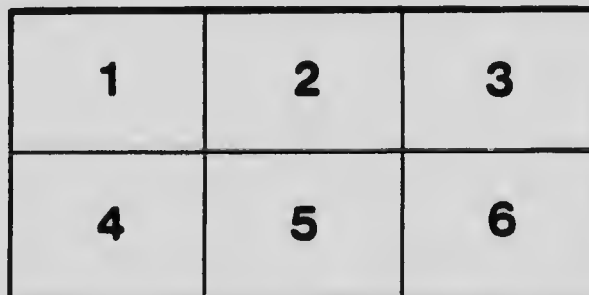
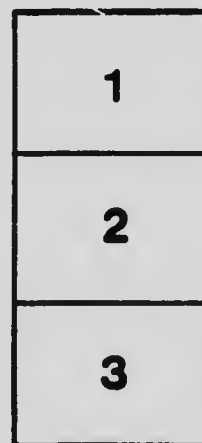
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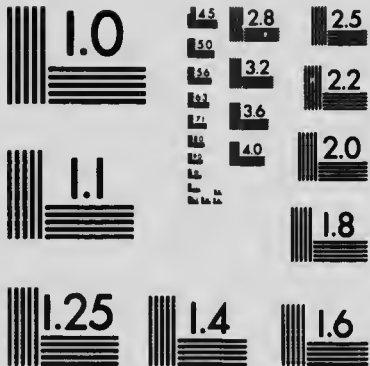
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Ontario Educational Association
 COLLEGE AND HIGH SCHOOL DEPARTMENT
 CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS
 1907



W. S. Milner, M.A.

Confidential

W. S. Milner

Chairman's Address.

FELLOW TEACHERS,—

A chapter in an old book upon which I have the happiness to lecture begins somewhat thus: "Granted that our laws must arrange for a public system of education, we must make no mistake as to educational aims or subjects, for there is to-day no agreement either upon the subjects to be taught or upon the end in view, whether it should be character, or 'culture,' or practical utility." Since Aristotle wrote this more than twenty-two centuries have gone by, the civilization of his people has so deeply influenced and moulded a world then unknown that it is hard to say what in it is not Greek at bottom, and yet he would be compelled to use the very same language to-day. Now this is an extraordinary thing. There is no other great practical activity of man of which this is equally true. However inevitable this strange disagreement has been, it is surely a profound weakness in the cause of education, and educators may justly and imperiously be summoned by the common sense of our people and the critical necessities of a young nation growing up under opportunities such as older peoples never had, to come to some agreement so deeply conceived and felt that they can defend it and urge the overpowering claims of their profession. In so great a field as ours, as in art and politics, there will always be radicals, but we should not all be radicals, and this is the disturbing feature that our craft presents to the lay mind. It is not merely our honor that is involved, or the support due to our work from the people that is imperilled. Think of the loss of force due to bewildered aims and conflicting effort. It is deplorable.

You will agree with me that coherency is not the first note in the educational parliament now filling these halls, and that it



is only a very earnest and very distinct appeal that will be heard. I wish to make two such distinct appeals. The first is for simplification. We have so "enriched," as we call it— "bedeviled," we should call it—our secondary programme of studies, that the load is insupportable, and the moment is surely come when one may appeal to the reason of the thing. Be it manual training or science or language, it is plain that there is no real limit to what may be added in subjects. Some choice must at last be made. Our educational ménn resembles nothing so much as some dream-picnic in "Alice in Wonderland." We wake up to find that bread and butter, pure water and fresh air, are after all the main things. And the boy—he is the same boy as he was two thousand years ago, with no more intellectual capacity. The more numerous the subjects the less he knows of each. But "the increasing demands made by modern life"—I may inquire later on what of truth there is in this phrase and make it the basis of my second appeal. Society no more demands some complex product to-day than it ever did.

My first appeal, then, is for simplification, and to make it distinct I will put a great and practical question: Cannot a programme be constructed which shall be uniform from the beginning to nearly the end of a High School course, for all pupils, whatever their destination may be, a lower grade of teaching, all departments of the University, scientific or literary, and which shall also afford a proper and effective training for the great body of pupils who go no further than the High School, or do not complete even the High School course?

Of course the immediate protest comes, "many boys of many minds," and it is argued from two points of view: (1) Work, not leisure, is our Western ideal. An endless variety of workers is required in this age of specialized effort. (2) The great secret in education is interest. Let us find the subject, says the profession, that interests the boy and we have the starting point. Let us find the teacher, says the parent, in the same spirit, who can interest the boy, and the subject does not matter. The first claim, that we need an endless variety of workers, may be disposed of by rigidly confining our attention to education as such—the making of the boy or man, not the worker. There is

really no such thing as education for vocation—there may be training for vocation. The former stops, the latter begins, at an indefinite point fixed by the character of the pupil or the necessities of life. The second point of view, that of interest, is well founded. We can obtain enough discipline in this world without going forth in search of it. Interest is the secret of all the good work that is done in the great world, and why not frankly admit it in the boy's world? But the argument as applied here rests on a fallacy. Take the parent's point of view, all depends on the teacher, not the subject. As professional men and women we know what the parent at least does not realize, that the great secret of our art lies in a personal power which shades off into something like hypnotism. The power of a Socrates or a Bowie is in essence one and the same thing—the difference lies in mental sanity. An idea may easily be too large for the man, and transform him into a faddist or a fanatic. Ultimately, then, the subject is more important than the teacher, and it is a serious and practical question for parents whether they should be so willing to allow the possible determining of a career to depend upon the teacher and not the subject. Their confidence rests upon a balanced and reasoned view of secondary education in particular which does not exist.

But take the teacher's point of view on this question of many interests, many subjects. The weakness of this position is very evident when we appeal to our experience. As a matter of fact we do not observe that with reasonably equal teaching pupils show a marked preference for individual subjects. How seldom, moreover, do you find the boy who knows what he is going to do, or wants to do. So it remains to the very last year of college life. Every college teacher knows the feeling of relief when he finds a man as he goes out knowing his work and eager to be at it. Given the right teacher, boys will study any subject with almost equal interest, and with equal indifference under the wrong one.

But there is something that can be foretold about a boy, at least from the outset of secondary training, that is, general aptitude. The President of Yale has recently developed this idea with great skill and insight in a paper that deserves the careful

consideration of teachers. It furnishes a principle of great importance. A thoughtful man may see pretty clearly from the start whether, to use President Hadley's terms, a boy is of the practical, literary, or administrative type. There is not so much cross-division in this as may at first appear. It is curious how the popular mind, much to our vexation at times, instinctively fixes upon this epithet "literary" as the characteristic of an Arts course in colleges. The epithet would doubtless remain if Arts included art as a liberal study. The question is one, then, of a natural bent towards fact; or forms and ideas; or affairs, leadership, management of boys or men. The first type, when educated, will give us, say, skilled mechanics at one end, manufacturers, engineers, physicians, scientists, further up the scale. The second will give us teachers, journalists, preachers, barristers. The last supplies the organizers in all lines of life. Let us grant in passing that the organizing type is comparatively rare, and that it receives the greater part of its actual development from that all-important education which boys and young men give themselves in their common life together.

Eager as we may be to dispute the details, let us admit the fruitfulness of the principle. For, as President Hadley says, it is not alone the teacher who recognizes this in the boy, the boy recognizes it in himself, and knows when a subject is taught from the point of view that suits him. Here is a clue to simplification. The same subject may be taught from different points of view, and most subjects may be conducted in such a way as to secure interest by appealing to aptitude.

But there is another side to the working out of this principle. Each type has the "defect of its quality," which, if education is nurture as well as "educing" of faculty, it is the business of the teacher to observe in each case and strive to remedy. We have won the pupil's interest, let us build him up and round him out. This is no mere platitude. It does not mean let us turn him, as we sometimes do, into something for which nature did not intend him; but let us follow the hint she gives and make good what she leaves incomplete. The practical boy will make a mere operative at one stage instead of a workman, a trader at another instead of a man of business, a callous physician instead

of a healer of men, a material and narrow experimenter instead of a true man of science. The literary type will become the bookish boy, the pedant man, the mere theorist, the sophist journalist, the sterile critic, the lover of art for art's sake. The administrative, managing type will produce the driving brute in business, the boss and wobbling politician, instead of the statesman and captain of industry.

What I am going to say now requires some hardihood, but you have placed me in a position in which it is my right and duty to state my serious conviction for what it is worth as a result of twenty-five years of work in schools of various types here and in the United States and in our University. When what may appear as a radical position is taken it is always of some value to know the general attitude of the speaker to the whole subject. My own is this: As I reflect upon our system, while I am conscious enough of grave defects in university education, the education of the common school, so far as it is illustrated by this city, appears to me wonderfully good. I accept it and believe in it, "frills" and all. But the secondary system seems to me cruelly mistaken from the standpoint of the teacher, the pupils and the public. I maintain, then, that if a number of really educated men with sons of their own in the schools—a very necessary qualification—met each other in thoughtful deliberation across a table, they could work out such a uniform secondary programme as I have postulated. In broad outline it might be something like this: English, simple mathematics, history, Latin, French, elementary science, with an option toward the close between Greek and German and further work in mathematics, more or less of each as might seem good for individual pupils. Our practical aim should be eventually to do away with "pass" matriculation. Such a curriculum at once removes all specialization in science. Many university men in science could go much further and remove it altogether, but with this I do not agree. I would completely remove the formal teaching of English grammar in any stage of the course and the more formal teaching of English literature, enlarging the meaning of English far beyond pure literature, and greatly enlarging the amount of reading. The process of simplification, however, should go much

beyond this. It should be recognized that some subjects are of such a nature that a prospective examination kills fruitful teaching in the germ. Again, the principle should be recognized that examination tests are necessary for some things which are of no educational value whatever. For example, a physician's knowledge of doses in toxicology is in itself valueless but absolutely necessary, and a percentage of accuracy is of no account. On these principles we should remove English literature and history from the list of examination requirements, while absolutely insisting upon spelling and composition, to be shown in other ways. Similarly a simple list of important dates is a necessary equipment for history, only let it not be called history. What we call training in English would then come largely out of training in other languages and in history, and a great fund of teaching power would be liberated for English reading and the genuine teaching of history. Greek or German would be valuable for either scientific or literary courses, Greek I seriously believe more so for both, but for my part I would not allow both.

The position of language study in secondary education is a matter of extreme importance, and I am convinced that the mental effect of it has never yet received the attention it requires. There is no doubt in my mind that Greek mental development would not have attained so wonderful a point if the Greeks had been obliged to study other languages. Their own language fortunately gave them sufficient language discipline. Now this is not our case. The real value of Latin in secondary schools is threefold—its value as introducing us to another civilization is secondary. First, it makes our own language live as nothing else can, and it is an unfortunate scientific pedantry that obscures this by a foreign pronunciation. Secondly, it furnishes the soundest analytical training in grammar. And lastly, it provides the best basis in language power for the acquisition of other languages. But we seem to have forgotten what the severity of this discipline is. Yet all teachers know in their daily experience that Latin and mathematics are the most stubborn and intractable material for their pupils; nothing calls for the same dogged and resolute effort. These educational redoubts are absolutely incapable of being rushed. Throughout the whole of

school and college nowhere is failure more pitiful and ineffective work more stultifying. Every year's delay in Latin is more and more serious. It means delay all along the line, and the result of our present system is to convert our colleges into schools of undisciplined philosophy and economics, and of elementary language teaching, this last probably the most futile use of these four years that can be devised by serious men. But do not let us deceive ourselves as to the mental effect of really successful study of Latin and mathematics in secondary work. They do produce a boy with a powerfully disciplined mind, of a type I venture to say more frequently found in Ontario schools than anywhere else on the continent. But such a training is in itself simply education *in vacuo*; fine and needful mechanical development, but not vital. The general language training in the school will, of course, do much more than this. It at least gives glimpses of new worlds, and develops taste and form, and, in a certain degree (though much less than supposed), expression. But after all this is not the ability to think, which gives power. The real citadel of our education is built in our own literature. It is to books in our own tongue that we must go for thoughts and the literature that really moves, and English in our schools, though vastly more sane than in years gone by, is still narrowly conceived both in quantity and breadth.

Now, in proportion as these suggestions destroy specialism in the schools they make the ordinary specialist too narrow for a teacher. Is there anything more self-evident than that the teaching efficiency of a school intimately depends upon the extent to which the teachers understand each other's work and function? What an increase of force would come from mere sympathy! But the ideal can never be reached until we have genuine community of aim and effort. We shall not cease to hope and work for the day when intellectual men working together will again enjoy the goodly fellowship of a common intellectual life; but a counsel for the present distress would be that in all schools every man should be required to teach something outside his own department in serious earnest, not as a stop-gap.

All this is education, not training for vocation. What of the great body of effort devoted to training teachers in our schools?

Is there any reason why at any stage, school or university, the education so far given should be the knowledge qualification for a certificate to teach, any more than to practice law or medicine? We go on the theory, in our training of teachers, that professional education consists in training to teach. No other profession takes this point of view. The truth is that the year of special training should be devoted mainly to deepening and widening actual knowledge. This is the great concern. How little can really be done in theory! What barren mockery is most of such work! I do not minimize the value of traditional experience, but it is a mere illusion to think that its value is high at this stage. Observation of actual teaching, friendly intercourse and discussion with one's teachers, when now the whole point of view is changed, are all that can really be had. The acquisition of fresh knowledge should engage the main energies of the teacher in training. If English grammar ever taught any one to speak correct English, or books on etiquette the graces of life, then lectures on methods may be supposed to make a teacher.

In the professional schools, then, men would be found at times studying the same subjects from different points of view, pedagogical or cultural; they would be earnestly endeavoring to systematize and fill up the gaps in their knowledge, and attaining such wider culture as should bind them together in community of intellectual outlook and educational aims. In the secondary schools we should have more homogeneous classes, fewer subjects and some sort of community of aim and culture in the staff. Heads of residential schools craftily look for athletic sympathies in combination with scholarship. What do you think the results would be for the subjects themselves if the English specialist could, as it were, be administered in strong solution to the teachers of science, mathematics, and manual training? Whether the programme of studies which I have hazarded resembles closely that upon which we should ultimately agree matters far less than that we should realise the need of simplification.

Let me turn back now to Aristotle, who helped me into my subject. He would say, first, that President Hadley's administrative, literary and practical types were but the stock classifi-

education of his own day, the time-honored ἡθός, πάθος, πράξις. But we should have to explain to him that administrative capacity was something that he had not contemplated, that in our modern world nothing was so sought after, that, given the proper amount of it, a modern man could have bought up Kallipolis for a museum. We should have to add that, while leisure as an end still faintly colored our education, the Western world no longer believed in leisure at all, but that work was the end in itself. We might so nobly express this ideal that he would reconsider his philosophy, for a greater mind there never was, and his leisure, we must not forget, was a high activity. But upon training for vocation he would heap unjust contempt. His amazement, however, would be great when we should have to confess to him that, while our polity had wholly adopted his view that education was a function of the state, there were but two places in our system where his great end of character was ever contemplated, our common and our residential schools; that this was not peculiar to education; that we had divided all life into water-tight compartments: that in politics, and especially art, the very utterance of the word "ethical" would produce what our physiologists would describe as a nervous chill.

Now the great philosopher lived at a time when the ancient sanctions upon which his society was built were fast vanishing, when men were everywhere questioning fundamentals. On all sides states were perishing from that strife between rich and poor which he himself considered the prime cause of the fall of states. Men had come to believe that after all the basis of society was simply the right of the stronger. What food for speculation would the scene on this continent present to his great intelligence! But when we told him that votes had been placed in the hands of all, his astonishment would be complete. For he would see at once that never in human history were material possessions so universal an end as with us, and he would see more clearly than we, that the very basis of possession was being swiftly and subtly undermined by sinister theory below and piratical practice above. In Burke's splendid words, the eyes of mankind are opened. The final trial of human society has come. Other polities may attain great age through traditions, through loyalties,

through force, but democracy has but one basis, the character of the people. Civic duty, leadership—these are its two pillars. Yet do we realize how faint is the sense of civic duty? How often one hears the remark in society that cultured people of all nationalities feel no national severance. There is something like this at the other extreme. A plumber working for me dropped the remark one day, "One's country will soon be where one happens to live." Great attitudes both when they are rooted in the human instinct, but that is far from their real significance. There is a culture that refines patriotism into a survival of the tribal spirit. But unless a man is a god or a beast, our same philosopher would say, he requires narrower loyalty—loyalty that goes deeper than that curiously un-English thing, flag-worship, which, so far as it contains the military spirit, is the accursed thing for this continent. In a great appeal which the President of the United States recently made at Harvard for public service, he complained of the negative criticism of college men on great issues of the day, but we have not yet produced even criticism. There is some strange sterility in our secondary and higher education. To our Province undoubtedly still belongs the moral and material primacy of the Dominion, but in how many fields are we searching helplessly for leaders. A great ideal is indeed being debated by our churches, but without great leadership. In various fields we organize, but we cannot animate the machines we construct. We have scholarship, scientific attainments, good preachers and corporation lawyers, and probably the most skilful teaching to be found on the continent, many men "decent not to fail," but no distinction. We know what distinction is, for we have produced it in great counsels and statesmen, and we knew they were great while yet we had them. But we appear at the moment to have got rid of individuality and leadership. I am not one that believes that this is the inherent weakness of democracy, and I shall not say that our educational system is wholly responsible, but I do maintain that if it were sound and animated with life, our Province would be in a different case. The truth is that the life has been organized out of our politics, and that education is fast dying by starvation in its lower grades, partly because we cannot show the people

what education really means. It would be only characteristic of our time if some reformer should arise to advocate the addition of civics and morality to the other grotesque features of our secondary programme. I have no such proposal to make. Neither books, nor buildings, nor fresh organization will revive us, but only living men.

Now, as it has been an inspiration here and there in the academic life of our neighbors, and will be equally so for our colleges, to look more closely at the tutorial system of Oxford and Cambridge, so it would be for our secondary teachers to get an intimate view of the life of our own best residential schools, to say nothing of those in England or the United States. I cannot say that I believe in these schools except as a limited necessity, but they contain in their best estate a most winning and powerful humanism, and I think of a way of illustrating in the concrete both appeals which I have ventured to make, for simplification and for character as an end.

Let us stand unnoticed, as it were, in some dark corner of a great English school—not an Uppingham or a Rugby, but Eton, which has none of their associations in the public mind. In 1845 there came to Eton a young graduate of twenty-two from King's College, Cambridge—one William Johnston—a brilliant classical scholar, a man marked out for a career. When the call came to him he was debating upon entering the bar. "I do distinctly feel," he says, "that if I have a gift it is the power of gaining influence over the minds of people more ignorant than myself, partly owing to my being able to enter into other peoples' interests. . . . I put the question on this ground: Is it not my vocation to teach boys? If so, must I not encounter all the temptations incident to that life with faith and courage? I answer in the affirmative." To have taken orders at the same time might have secured him a grateful retirement later in life, but he decided on remaining a layman. Not long after entering Eton we find him writing: "I am going into an abyss of drudgery; I must float upon the hope of success in perhaps one pupil out of fifty—the hope that before my time is out I may rejoice in having turned out of my pupil-room perhaps one brave soldier, or one wise historian, or one generous legislator, or one patient

missionary." A little later his journal reads: "My first-form boys are generally so idle, frivolous and undisciplined, and do so much harm to the young ones, that I get ill some days of sickness of heart; but then the place and the work provide remedies—sometimes an eager, open-eyed listener, sitting, as long as I like, to hear me read him poetry, or translate Greek and Latin verse to him; sometimes a piece of unexpected industry or good taste, sometimes a piece of good conduct—or rather of high-virtue—forgiveness, humility or the like. Last night I had a happy party of small boys receiving shocks and sparks from an electric machine, and though it all ended in breakages and a headache (not my head, but Scott's who operated), yet it was a successful affair. Indeed, we can make Eton a palace of art, science and nature, anything but a Christian church."

There was no narrowness in this man. We find him lamenting presently his weakness in mathematics and trying to make it good. In 1849 he is lecturing in the town on Hugh Miller's geological books; later on he is giving instruction to his smallest boys in elementary science. Still later he is striving to encourage the better teaching of French in Eton, and giving lessons in political economy to a voluntary class. In later years he presented the school with a fine equatorial telescope.

Quoting again from his diary. Sunday, February 7th (he had read three hours in the morning), 2 p.m. "My young boys gathered round the fire. I read them bits of Cowper, a good passage about the wickedness of ambitious kings, Alexander Selkirk and the Castaway, told them about Cowper and Huskisson; they filled in the dropped rhymes and were intelligent. They read to me some chapters of Nehemiah—the bit about Ezra telling the people not to weep, and then Saint Paul's parting with the elders of Ephesus . . . was sorry when they went, being chilly and dull; fell asleep. 7°. I formed my party of seven around the fire . . . a gentle set, not very clever, but sufficiently cultivated, with frivolity for the hour banished. They behaved so well that I was truly sorry to part with them. 8°. The room was filled with the next set, eleven . . ." Surely a strenuous Sunday. Let us dip into his next day, blue Monday, February 8th. "School very difficult because of the

coughing. . . . 5.15. The hardest lesson in the week—Cicero on the proofs of creative Providence. I had glanced at Whewell's Bridgewater treatise on astronomy, and had found the place in Bentley's lecture where he follows Cicero's argument against Lucretius . . . told them about Ptolemy, Copernicus, Newton, Laplace, etc. D. came to borrow a volume of Bentley. My pigeons go forth and bring back little sprays from the olive tree of truth, which it is so hard for an elderly man cumbered with vanity, mannerism and authority to approach. *Fiam lenior accedente senecta*. Ten hours work to-day, some of it fatiguing, but only because of the east wind."

One more day in part, February 9th, 12.40. "F. Wood (a pupil) and I went out, rife and tie, up the bank of the still cold river, taking it by turns to give Myrtle a canter, in which the dogs shared. . . . At Surley Corner was a regular picture—a barge laden with wood, with the slenderest thread of smoke at each end; one horse pulling it down stream, the poplars behind. Myrtle and her glowing young rider in the foreground. Galloped back in time to release the captive (a boy detained) who had done nine verses in Cassandra; alone for forty minutes, finished Latin prose work; then came S. Lyttleton with a bit of Greek prose done from Hooker, rather a good job. Then Hale for a gossip. Then I wrote a vicious letter to the Windsor paper about the unbearable filthiness of the college streets. 3.45. Small boys came for verses, etc. . . . and I read sundry bits of Greek and Latin and choice bits of Motley's Dutch Republic, though wishing to sleep." 7° (working with some boys on the history of Philip II.). "So they were introduced . . . to my favorite doctrine about chivalry—that it is a sentiment engendered by literature, and never fairly developed until the sixteenth century when men read the Bible and Plutarch. . . . 8°. . . . Then we got into a sublime passage, where Socrates says that Apollo has made him a philosopher, and quotes the story of Achilles telling his mother that he will avenge his friend even though she foretells that he must die. . . . I made them see that this was a wonderful thing for Socrates to say, that even then literature was a well-spring of noble thoughts; that the record of his words stirred Cicero, and he, through

Valerius Maximus, kept up some ideal of virtue in the middle ages; and that when they came to read Cicero himself in the fifteenth century they began to be more noble, and became still more noble in the days of 'Bras de Fer,' when they read not only Cicero, but Euripides, Plutarch and the Psalms."

Surely this picture of an obscure schoolmaster at work may be allowed to speak for itself. Here is a refined and highly educated man, busily striving to broaden his culture and educational outlook—and the finest culture that a college can give will still be incomplete—a centre of inspiration among his colleagues, a leader in the community, with active interests far beyond his actual work, with a passion for scholarship and literary form, but apparently unconscious of any other end of his office than the production of character. He filled a hard place, with a true Briton's spirit, that it was all in the day's work. Of course he was an unusual man, but it is simply an admitted fact that the English public school represents this attitude to education—that it stands for character, with some basis, no doubt, of class pride, some taint of paganism, but clean, noble, fair, capable of silent endurance, and able to subordinate self to a cause. I have no thought that I am a *vox clamantis in deserto*. There are here and there men who feel as I do, and I appeal with them for a different sort of secondary education for Ontario, a simpler and sounder programme, and a school of duty and citizenship. The country teachers, doctors, preachers, lawyers, business men, hold public opinion in their control. Great leaders do not come with observation, but when once a steady current sets out from our University of men in whom sound culture has not extinguished the "vision splendid," the strange apathy of Ontario will be broken, great voices will be heard, with far-reaching results in the Dominion.

