

January 27, 2009 Meeting ---- Volume 6 page 333-348 and Volume I – both Prefaces

May I quote, with apologies to the writer, a letter signed "A Working Man," written in answer to one of mine which was honoured by being reprinted in The Times Weekly Edition ? (It is good, by the way, that such a journal should be in the hands of working men). My correspondent "thanks Heaven that there are still a few (333) persons left in this country who regard education as somewhat different from the means of keeping a shop. " We may all thank Heaven that there are working men who value knowledge for its own sake and hate to have it presented to them as a means of getting on.

The fact is, Letters make a universal appeal because they respond to certain innate affinities: young Tennysons, DeQuinceys, and the like, are, as we all know, inordinate readers, but these are capable of foraging on their own account; it is for the average, the dull and the backward boy I would lay urgent claim to a literary education; the minds of such as these respond to this and to no other appeal, and they turn out perfectly intelligent person, open to knowledge by many avenues. For working men whose intelligence is in excess of their education, Letters are the accessible vehicle of knowledge; having learned the elements of reading, writing, and summing, it is unnecessary to trouble them with any other "beggerly elements"; their natural intelligence and mature minds make them capable of dealing with difficulties as they occur; and for further elucidation every working men's club should have an encyclopaedia. Some men naturally take to learning, and will struggle manfully with their Latin grammar, and Cicero, Their Euclid and trigonometry. Happy they! But the general conclusion remains, that for men and women of all ages, all classes, and all complexions of mind, Letters are an imperative and daily requirement to satisfy that universal mind-hunger, the neglect of which gives rise to emotional disturbances, and, as a consequence, to evils that dismay us.

VI Knowledge in Literary Form

I have so far urged that knowledge is necessary to men and that, in the initial stages, it must be conveyed through (334) a literary medium, whether it be knowledge of physics or of Letters, because there would seem to be some inherent quality in mind which prepares it to respond to this form of appeal and no other. I say in the initial stages, because possibly, when the mind becomes conversant with knowledge of a given type, it unconsciously translates the driest formulae into living speech; perhaps it is for some such reason that mathematics seem to fall outside this rule of literary presentation; mathematics, like music, is a speech in itself, a speech irrefragibly logical, of exquisite clarity, meeting the requirements of mind.

To consider Letters as the staple of education is no new thing; nor is the suggestion new that to turn a young person into a library is to educate him. But here we are brought to a stand; the mind demands method, orderly presentation, as inevitably as it demands knowledge; and it may be that our educational misadventures are due to the fact that we have allowed ourselves to take up any haphazard ordering that is recommended with sufficient pertinacity.

But no one can live without a philosophy which points out the order, means and end of effort, intellectual or other; to fail in discovering this is to fall into melancholia, or more active madness: so we go about picking up a maxim here, a motto there, an idea elsewhere, and make a patchwork of the whole which we call our principles; beggarly fragments enough we piece together to cover our nakedness and a hundred phrases which one may hear any day betray lives founded upon an ignoble philosophy. No doubt people are better

than their words, better than their own thoughts; we speak of ourselves as "finite beings," but is there any limit to the generosity and nobility of almost any person? The hastily spoken "It is the rule at sea," that distressed us a while ago, what a vista does it disclose of chivalric tenderness, (335) entire self-sacrifice! Human nature has not failed--what has failed us is philosophy, and that applied philosophy which is called education. Philosophy, all the philosophies, old and new, land us on the horns of a dilemma; either we do well by ourselves and seek our own perfection of nature or condition, or we do well by others to our own loss or deterioration. If there is a mean, philosophy does not declare it.

There are things of which we have desperate need: we want a new scale of values: I suppose we all felt when, in those days before the War, we read how several millionaires went down in the "Titanic" disaster, not only that their millions did not matter, but that they did not matter to them; that possibly they felt themselves well quit of an incessant fatigue. We want more life: there is not life enough for our living; we have no great engrossing interests; we hasten from one engagement to another and glance furtively at the clock to see how time, life, is getting on; we triumph if a week seems to have passed quickly; who knows but that the approach of an inevitable end might find us glad to get it all over? We want hope: we busy ourselves excitedly about some object of desire, but the pleasure we get is in effort, not in attainment; and we read, before the War, of the number of suicides among Continental schoolboys, for instance, with secret understanding; what is there to live for? We want to be governed: servants like to receive their "orders"; soldiers and schoolboys enjoy discipline; there is satisfaction in stringent Court etiquette; the fact of being "under orders" adds dignity to character. When we revolt it is only that we may transfer our allegiance. We want a new start: we are sick of ourselves and of knowing in advance how we shall believe and how we shall feel on all occasions; the change we half-unconsciously desire is to other aims, other ways of looking at things. We feel that we are more than there (336) is room for; other conditions might give us room; we don't know; any way, we are uneasy. These are two or three of the secret matters that oppress us, and we are in need of a philosophy which shall deal with such things of the spirit. We believe we should be able to rise to its demands, however exigent, for the failure is not in us or in human nature so much as in our limited knowledge of conditions.

The cry of decadence is dispiriting, but is it well-founded? The beautiful little gowns that have come down as heirlooms would not fit the "divinely tall" daughters of many a house where they are treasured. We have become frank, truthful, kind; our conscientiousness and our charity are morbid; we cannot rest in our beds for a disproportionate anxiety for the well-being of everybody; we even exceed the generous hazard, that, peradventure for a good man one might be found to die; almost any man will risk his life for the perishing without question of good or bad; and we expect no less from firemen, doctors, life-boatmen, parsons, the general public. And what a comment on the splendid magnanimity of men does the War afford!

An annoying inquiry concerning risks at sea almost resulted in a ruling that no one should let himself be saved so long as others were in danger; it is preposterous, but is what human nature expects of itself. No, we are not decadent on the whole, and our uneasiness is perhaps caused by growing pains. We may be poor things, but we are ready to break forth into singing should the chance open to us of a full life of passionate devotion. Now, all our exigent demands are met by words written in a Book, and by the manifestations of a Person; and we are waiting for a Christianity such as the world has not yet known. Hitherto, Christ has existed for our uses; but what if a time were coming when we, also, should taste the "orientall fragrancie" of, "My Master!" So it (337) shall be when the shout of

a King is among us, and are there not premonitions? But these things come not by prayer and fasting, by good works and self-denial, alone; there is something prior to all these upon which our Master insists with distressful urgency, "Why will ye not know? Why will ye not understand?"

My excuse for touching upon our most intimate concerns is that this matter, too, belongs to the domain of Letters; if we propose to seek knowledge we must proceed in an orderly way, recognising that the principal knowledge is of most importance; the present writer writes and the reader reads, because we are all moved by the spirit of our time; these things are our secret pre-occupation, for we have come out of a long alienation as persons wearied with trifles," and are ready and anxious for a new age. We know the way, and we know where to find our rule of the road; but we must bring a new zeal and a new method to our studies; we may no longer dip here and there or read a perfunctory chapter with a view to find some word of counsel or comfort for our use. We are engaged in the study of, in noting the development of, that consummate philosophy which meets every occasion of our lives, all demands of tile intellect, every uneasiness of the soul.

The arrogance which pronounces judgment upon the written "Word" upon so slight an acquaintance as would hardly enable us to cover a sheet or two of paper with sayings of the Master, which confines the Divine teaching to the great Sermon, of which we are able to rehearse some half-dozen sentences, is as absurd as it is blameworthy. Let us give at least as profound attention to the teaching of Christ as the disciples of Plato, say, gave to his words of wisdom. Let us observe, notebook in hand, the orderly and progressive sequence, the penetrating quality, the irresistible appeal, the unique content of the Divine teaching; (for this purpose it might be well (338) to use some one of the approximately chronological arrangements of the Gospel History in the words of the text). Let us read, not for our profiting, though that will come, but for love of that knowledge which is better than thousands of gold and silver. By and by we perceive that this knowledge is the chief thing in life; the meaning of Christ's saying, "Behold, I make all things new," dawns upon us; we get new ideas as to the relative worth of things; new vigour, new joy, new hope are ours.

If we believe that knowledge is the principal thing, that knowledge is tri-partite, and that the fundamental knowledge is the knowledge of God, we shall bring up our children as students of Divinity and shall pursue our own life-long studies in the same school. Then we shall find that the weekly sermons for which we are prepared are as bread to the hungry; and we shall perhaps understand how enormous is the demand we make upon the clergy for living, original thought It is only as we are initiated that science and "Nature" come to our aid in this chief pursuit; then, they "their great Original proclaim"; but while we are ignorant of the principal knowledge they remain dumb. Literature and history have always great matters. to speak of or suggest, because they deal with states or phases of moral government and. moral anarchy, and tacitly indicate to us the sole key to all this unintelligible world; and literature not only reveals to us the deepest things of the human spirit, but it is profitable also "for example of life and instruction in manners."

We are at the parting of the ways; our latest educational authority, one who knows and loves little children, would away with all tales and histories that appeal to the imagination; let children learn by means of things, is her mandate; and the charm and tenderness with which it is delivered may well blind us to its desolating character. We recognise Rousseau, of course, and his Emile , that (339) self-sufficient person who should know nothing of the past, should see no visions, allow no authority. But human nature in children is stronger than the eighteenth century philosopher and the theories which he continues to inform.

Whoever has told a fairy tale to a child has been made aware of that natural appetency for letters to which it is our business to minister. Are we not able to believe that words are more than meat, and, so believing, shall we not rise up and insist that children shall have a liberal diet of the spirit? Rousseau, in spite of false analogies, fallacious arguments, was able to summon fashionable mothers and men of the world throughout Europe to the great task of education, because his eloquence convinced them that this was their assigned work and a work capable of achievement; and we who perhaps see with clearer eyes should do well to cherish this legacy the conviction that the education of the succeeding generation is the chief business of every age.

Nevertheless, though we are ourselves emerging from the slough of materialism, we are willing to plunge children into its heavy ways through the agency of a "practical" and "useful" education; but children have their rights, and among these is the freedom of the city of mind. Let them use things, know things, learn through things, by all means; but the more they know Letters the better they will be able, with due instruction, to handle things. I do not hesitate to say that the whole of a child's instruction should be conveyed through the best literary medium available. His history books should be written with the lucidity, concentration, personal conviction, directness, and admirable simplicity which characterizes a work of literary calibre. So should his geography books; the so-called scientific method of teaching geography now in vogue is calculated to place a child in a somewhat priggish relation to Mother Earth; it is impossible, too, that the human intelligence should (340) assimilate the sentences one meets with in many books for children, but the memory retains them and the child is put in the false attitude of one who offers pseudo-knowledge. Most of the geography books, for example, require to be translated into terms of literature before they can be apprehended. Great confidence is placed in diagrammatic and pictorial representation, and it is true that children enjoy diagrams and understand them as they enjoy and understand puzzles; but there is apt to be in their minds a great gulf between the diagram and the fact it illustrates. We trust much to pictures, lantern slides, cinematograph displays; but without labour there is no profit, and probably the pictures which remain with us are those which we have first conceived through the medium of words; pictures may help us to correct our notions, but the imagination does not work upon a visual presentation; we lay the phrases of a description on our palette and make our own pictures; (works of art belong to another category). We recollect how Dr. Arnold was uneasy until he got details enough to form a mental picture of a place new to him. So it is with children and all persons of original mind: a map to put the place in position, and then, all about it, is what we want.

Readings in literature, whether of prose or poetry, should generally illustrate the historical period studied; but selections should be avoided; children should read the whole book or the whole poem to which they are introduced. Here we are confronted by a serious difficulty. Plato, we know, determined that the poets in his "Republic" should be well looked after lest they should write matter to corrupt the morals of youth; aware of what happened in Europe when the flood-gates of knowledge were opened, Erasmus was anxiously solicitous on this score, and it is a little surprising to find that here, Rossetti was on the side of the angels. Will the publishers, who, since Friedrich Perthes discovered their educational mission, have done so much for the world, help us in this matter also? They must excise with a most sparing hand, always under the guidance of a jealous scholar; but what an ease of conscience it would be to teachers if they could throw open the world of books to their scholars without fear of the mental and moral smudge left by a single prurient passage! Many, too, who have taken out their freedom in the republic of letters would be well content to keep complete library editions in costly bindings in their proper

place, while handy volumes in daily use might be left about without uneasiness.

The Old Testament itself after such a (very guarded) process would be more available for the reading of children; and few persons would feel that Shakespeare's plays suffered from the removal of obscenities here and there. In this regard we cherish a too superstitious piety. In another matter, let that great "remedial thinker," Dr. Arnold, advise us:--"Adjust your proposed amount of reading to your time and inclination; but whether that amount be large or small let it be varied in its kind and widely varied. If I have a confident opinion on any one point connected with the improvement of the human mind it is on this." Here we get support for a varied and liberal curriculum; and, as a matter of fact, we find that the pupil who studies a number of subjects knows them as well as he who studies a few knows those few.

Children should read books, not about books and about authors; this sort of reading may be left for the spare hours of the dilettante. Their reading should be carefully ordered, for the most part in historical sequence; they should read to know, whether it be Robinson Crusoe or Huxley's Physiography ; their knowledge should be tested, not by questions, but by the oral (and occasionally (342) the written) reproduction of a passage after one reading; all further processes that we concern ourselves about in teaching, the mind performs for itself; and, lastly, this sort of reading should be the chief business in the class room.

We are at a crucial moment in the history of English education. John Bull is ruminating. He says, "I have laboured at the higher education of women; let them back to the cooking-pot and distaff and learn the science (!) of domestic economy. I have tried for these forty years to educate the children of the people. What is the result? Strikes and swelled head! Let them have 'prentice schools and learn what will be their business in life!" John Bull is wrong. In so far as we have failed it is that we have offered the pedantry, the mere verbiage, of knowledge in lieu of knowledge itself; and it is time for all who do not hold knowledge in contempt to be up and doing; there is time yet to save England and to make of her a greater nation, more worthy of her opportunities. But the country of our love will not stand still; if we let the people sink into the mire of a material education our doom is sealed; eyes now living will see us take even a third-rate place among the nations, for it is knowledge that exalteth a nation, because out of duly-ordered knowledge proceedeth righteousness and prosperity ensueth.

"Think clear, feel deep, bear fruit well," says our once familiar mentor, Matthew Arnold, and his monition exactly meets our needs.

Vol 6 pg 343 Supplementary -- Too Wide a Mesh -- "The wide world dreaming on things to come" is concentrating on a luminous figure of education which it beholds, dimly, emerging from a cloudy horizon. This gracious presence is to change the world, to give to all men wide possibilities, other thoughts, aims: but, alas, this Education which is to be open to all promises no more on a nearer view than to make Opportunity universal--that is, in spiritual things, he may take who has the power and he may keep who can.

The net is cast wide no doubt and brings in a mighty haul but the meshes are so wide that it will only retain big fishes. Now this is the history of education since the world was and is no new thing. The medeival schools of castle or abbey, the Renaissance schools, the very schools of China, have all been conducted upon this plan. Education is for him who wants it and can take it but is no universal boon like the air we breathe or the sunshine we revel in.

We are a little sorry for the effect of this limitation upon the 'working classes': only a small percentage of the children of these are 'big' enough to be retained in the examination net which, to do it justice, explores all waters. A few of the pass men may do big things and fill big posts, but for the rest, a large percentage is, in practice, illiterate except for the spelling out of a local 'rag' for football and parish news.

But is the mischief confined to what we call the 'working classes'? Is it not a fact that in most schools (344) the full force of instruction is turned on upon a few boys who are likely to distinguish themselves? While for the rest of the school teaching is duly given no doubt but the boys find they may take it or leave it as the humour takes them.

We were all fascinated a while ago by the story of a pair of charming 'Twins'; these went through the usual preparatory school education and then passed on to a great Public School where they remained until they were nineteen; that is, they had ten or twelve good years among most excellent opportunities. As they were attractive boys we may take it that their masters were not at any rate unwilling to teach them. Their record should have been quite a good one, and, though it is the fashion to sneer a little at Public Schools, we know that these have turned out and do turn out the best and most intellectual men the country has occasion for. Therefore what happened in the case of these 'Twins' does not cast any reflection upon Public Schools but solely upon the system of the Big Mesh. Here are some of the things we read in that delightful biography:--

"While in hospital after a smash at polo R-- wrote to F--:--'I enjoyed it immensely. What lucky people we are taking an interest in so many things!'"

Surely here was material for a schoolmaster to work upon! Again, we read:--

"They never ceased to wonder at the magnificence of the world and they carried a divine innocence into soldiering and travel and sport and business and, not least,--into the shadows of the Great War."

And this 'wonder' of theirs was the note that marked them at school. Again, what material for their instructors!

But," we read, "at X-- they showed little interest in books and, later, were wont to lament to each other that 'They had left school wholly uneducated .'" (The italics are ours.) (345)

Their kindly biographer and dear friend goes on to say:--

"But they learnt other things,--the gift of leadership, for instance, and the power of getting alongside all varieties of human nature."

But was not this nature rather than nurture, school nurture at any rate, for these gifts seem to have been a family inheritance? Born in 1880, they left school in 1899, when there follows a delightful record for the one brother of successful and adventurous sport while "R-- was soon absorbed in the city . . . and beginning to lament his want of education." "F--, while in Egypt was greatly impressed by Lord Cromer and writes to R--, 'he is quite the biggest man we have! . . . to hear him talk is worth hearing.'"

The two brothers correspond constantly and R-- takes the part of mentor to his brother. He advises him to learn The Times leaders by heart to improve his style,--"because they are very good English." Again, "I will send you out next mail a very good book, Science and Education , by Professor Huxley which I have marked in several places, the sort of book you

can read over again." R-- "had discovered that he was very badly educated and was determined to remedy this defect:--'It don't matter . . . I do believe not having learned at X-- so long as one does so now.'"

See the fine loyalty of the young man; his failures were not to be put down to his school! If the schools take credit for any one thing it is that they show their pupils 'how to learn'; but do they? We are told that R-- set to work at a queer assortment of books and writes to F--:

"Anyone can improve his memory: the best way is by learning by heart--no matter what--and then when you think you know it, say it or write it. After two or three days you are sure to forget it again and then instead of looking at the book 'strain your mind' and try to remember it. Above all things always keep your mind employed. One great man (I forget which) used to see a number on a door, say 69, and tried to remember all that had happened in the years ending in 69. (346)

Or, see a horse and remember how many you have seen that day. Asquith always learns things by heart, he never wastes a minute; as soon as he has nothing to do he picks up some book. He reads till 1-30 every night. When driving to the Temple next morning he thinks over what he has read. Result: he has a marvellous memory and knows everything."

Think of the Herculean labours the poor fellow set for both himself and his brother! They ran an intellectual race across a ploughed field after heavy rain and the marvel is that they made way at all. Yet these two brothers had sufficient intellectual zeal to have made them great men as Ambassadors, Governors of Dominions, Statesmen, what not; whereas so far as things of the mind go, they spent their days in a hopeless struggle, alert for any indication which might help them to make up lee-way, and all because, according to their own confession, they 'had learned nothing at school.' Here are further indications of R--'s labours in the field of knowledge:

"I am reading Rosebery's Napoleon and will send it to you. What a wonder he was! Never spent a moment of his life without learning something . . . I enclose an essay from Bacon's book. Learn it by heart if you can. I have and think it a clinker. I have also finished Life of Macaulay . I have always wondered how our great politicians and literary chaps live. I also send you a Shakespeare. I learnt Antony's harangue to the Romans after Caesar's death; I am also trying to learn a little about electricity and railroad organization, so have my time filled up. Pickwick Papers I also send to you. I have always avoided this sort of books but Dickens' works are miles funnier than the rotten novels one sees . . . I have learnt one thing by my reading and my conversation with Professors,-- you and I go at a subject all wrong ."

These, letters are pathetic documents and, that they are reassuring also, let us be thankful. They do go to prove that the desire of knowledge is inextinguishable whatever schools do or leave undone; but have these nothing to answer for when a pursuit which should yield (347) ever recurring refreshment becomes dogged labour over heavy roads with little pleasure in progress?

Here, again, is another evidence of the limitations attending an utter absence of education. A cultivated sense of humour is a great factor in a joyous life, but these young men are without it. Perhaps the youth addicted to sports usually fails to appreciate delicate nonsense; sports are too strenuous to admit of a subtler, more airy kind of play and we read:

R-- heard Mr. Balfour and Lord Reny praising Alice in Wonderland . Deeply impressed he bought the book as soon as he returned to London and read it earnestly. To his horror he saw no sense in it. Then it struck him that it might be meant as nonsense and he had another try, then he concluded that it was rather funny but he remained disappointed."

We need not follow the career of these interesting men further. Both fell early before they were forty. Their fine qualities and their personal fascination remained with them to the end, as did also, alas, their invincible ignorance. They laboured indefatigably, but, as R-- remarked,--"You and I go at a subject all wrong!"

The schools must tell us why men who attained mediocre successes and the personal favour due to charming manners and sweet natures were yet somewhat depressed and disappointed on account of the ignorance which they made blind and futile--efforts to correct; but they never got so far as to learn that knowledge is delightful because one likes it ; and that no effort at self-education can do anything until one has found out this supreme delightfulness of knowledge.

It must be noted that this failure of a great school to fulfil its purpose occurred twenty years ago, and that no educational body has made more well-considered and enlightened advances than have the Headmasters of the great Public Schools. Probably that delightful group (348) of Eton boys in Coningsby has always been and is to-day typical, there is a certain knightly character in the fine bearing and intelligent countenances of the Head Boys one comes across there which speaks well for their intellectual activity. The question is whether more might not be done with the average boy.

The function of the schools is no doubt to feed their scholars on knowledge until they have created in them a healthy appetite which they will go on satisfying for themselves day by day throughout life. We must give up the farce of teaching young people how to learn, which is just as felicitous a labour and just as necessary as to teach a child the motions of eating without offering him food; and studies which are pursued with a view to improve the mind must in future take a back seat

The multitudinous things that every person wants to know must be made accessible in the schoolroom, not by diagrams, digests, and abstract principles; but boys and girls, like 'Kit's little brother,' must learn 'what oysters is' by supping on oysters. There is absolutely no avenue to knowledge but knowledge itself, and the schools must begin, not by qualifying the mind to deal with knowledge, but by affording all the best books containing all the sorts of knowledge which these 'Twins,' like everyone else, wanted to know. We have to face two difficulties. We do not believe in children as intellectual persons nor in knowledge as requisite and necessary for intellectual life. It is a pity that education is conducted in camera save for the examination lists which shew how the best pupils in a school have acquitted themselves, the half-dozen or dozen best in a big school. Finely conscientious as teachers are they can hardly fail to give undue importance to their group of candidates for examination and a school of four or five hundred stand or falls by a dozen head boys.

Volume I -- Home Education -- Preface to the 'Home Education' Series

The educational outlook is rather misty and depressing both at home and abroad. That science should be a staple of education, that the teaching of Latin, of modern languages, of mathematics, must be reformed, that nature and handicrafts should be pressed into service for the training of the eye and hand, that boys and girls must learn to write English and therefore must know something of history and literature; and, on the other hand, that education must be made more technical and utilitarian--these, and such as these, are the cries of expedience with which we take the field. But we have no unifying principle, no definite aim; in fact, no philosophy of education. As a stream can rise no higher than its source, so it is probable that no educational effort can rise above the whole scheme of thought which gives it birth; and perhaps this is the reason of all the fallings from us, vanishings, failures, and disappointments which mark our educational records.

Those of us, who have spent many years in pursuing the benign and elusive vision of Education, perceive **(2)** her approaches are regulated by a law, and that this law has yet to be evoked. We can discern its outlines, but no more. We know that it is pervasive; there is no part of a child's home life or school work which the law does not penetrate. It is illuminating, too, showing the value, or lack of value, of a thousand systems and expedients. It is not only a light, but a measure, providing a standard whereby all things, small and great, belonging to educational work must be tested. The law is liberal, taking in whatsoever things are true, honest, and of good report, and offering no limitation or hindrance save where excess should injure. And the path indicated by the law is continuous and progressive, with no transition stage from the cradle to the grave, except that maturity takes up the regular self direction to which immaturity has been trained. We shall doubtless find, when we apprehend the law, that certain German thinkers--Kant, Herbart, Lotze, Froebel--are justified; that, as they say!, it is necessary to believe in God; that, therefore, the knowledge of God is the principal knowledge, and the chief end of education. By one more character shall we be able to recognise this perfect law of educational liberty when it shall be made evident. It has been said that "The best idea which we can form of absolute truth is that it is viable to meet every condition by which it can be tested." This we shall expect of our law--that it shall meet every test of experiment and every test of rational investigation.

Not having received the tables of our law, **(3)** we fall back upon Froebel or upon Herbart; or, if we belong to another School, upon Locke or Spencer; but we are not satisfied. A discontent, is it a divine discontent? Is upon us; and assuredly we should hail a workable, effectual philosophy of education as a deliverance from much perplexity. Before this great deliverance comes to us it is probable that many tentative efforts will be put forth, having more or less of the characters of a philosophy; notably, having a central idea, a body of thought with various members working in vital harmony.

Such a theory of education, which need not be careful to call itself a system of psychology, must be in harmony with the thought movements of the age; must regard education, not as a shut off compartment, but as being as much a part of life as birth or growth, marriage or work; and it must leave the pupil attached to the world at many points of contact. It is true that educationalists are already eager to establish such contact in several directions, but their efforts rest upon an axiom here and an idea there, and there is no broad unifying basis of thought to support the whole.

Fools rush in where angels fear to tread; and the hope that there may be tentative efforts towards a philosophy of education, and that all of them will bring us nearer to the *magnum opus*, encourages me to launch one such attempt. The central thought, or rather body of thought, upon **(4)** which I found, is the somewhat obvious fact that the child is a *person* with all the possibilities and powers included in personality. Some of members which develop from this nucleus have been exploited from time to time by educational thinkers, and exist vaguely in the general common sense, a notion here, another there. One thesis, which is, perhaps, new, that *Education is the Science of Relations*, appears to me to solve the question of curricula, as showing that the object of education is to put a child in living touch as much as may be of the life of Nature and of thought. Add to this one or two keys to self knowledge, and the educated youth goes forth with some idea of self management, with some pursuits, and many vital interests. My excuse for venturing to offer a solution, however tentative and passing, to the problem of education is twofold. For between thirty and forty years I have laboured without pause to establish a working and philosophic theory of education; and in the next place, each article of the educational faith I offer has been arrived at by inductive processes; and has, I think, been verified by a long and wide series of experiments. It is, however, with sincere diffidence that I venture to offer the results of this long labour; because I know that in this field there are many labourers far more able and expert than I--the angels who fear to tread, so precarious is the footing!

But, if only pour *encourager les autres*, I append a short synopsis of education theory advanced **(5)** in the volumes of the Home Education Series. The treatment is not methodic, but incidental; here a little, there a little, as seemed to me most likely to meet the occasions of parents and teachers. I should add that in the course of a number of years the various essays have been prepared for the use of the Parents National Education Union in the hope that that Society might witness for a more or less coherent body of educational thought.

"The consequence of truth is great; therefore the judgment of it must not be negligent."

WHICHCOTE

1. Children are born *persons*.
2. They are not born either good or bad, but with possibilities for either good or evil.
3. The principles of authority on the one hand and obedience on the other, are natural, necessary and fundamental; but
4. These principles are limited by the respect due to the personality of children, which must not be encroached upon, whether by fear or love, suggestion or influence, or undue play upon any one natural desire.
5. Therefore we are limited to three educational instruments--the atmosphere of environment, the discipline of habit, and the presentation of living ideas.
6. By the saying, EDUCATION IS AN ATMOSPHERE, it is not meant that a child should be isolated in what may be called a 'child environment,' **(6)** especially adapted and prepared; but that we should take into account the educational value of his natural home atmosphere, both as regards persons and things, and should let him live freely among his proper conditions. It stultifies a child to bring down his world to a 'child's' level.

7. By EDUCATION IS A DISCIPLINE, is meant the discipline of habits formed definitely and thoughtfully, whether habits of mind or body. Physiologists tell us of the adaptation of brain structure to habitual lines of thought--*i.e.* to our habits.

8. In the saying that EDUCATION IS A LIFE, the need of intellectual and moral as well as of physical sustenance is implied. The mind feeds on ideas, and therefore children should have a generous curriculum.

9. But the mind is not a receptacle into which ideas must be dropped, each idea adding to an 'apperception mass' of its like, the theory upon which the Herbartian doctrine of interest rests.

10. On the contrary, a child's mind is no mere *sac* to hold ideas; but is rather, if the figure may be allowed, a spiritual *organism*, with an appetite for all knowledge. This is its proper diet, with which it is prepared to deal, and which it can digest and assimilate as the body does foodstuffs.

11. This difference is not a verbal quibble. The Herbartian doctrine lays the stress of education--the preparation of knowledge in enticing morsels, presented in due order--upon the teacher. Children (**7**) taught upon this principle are in danger of receiving much teaching with little knowledge; and the teacher's axiom is, 'What a child learns matters less than how he learns it.'

12. But, believing that the normal child has powers of mind that fit him to deal with all knowledge proper to him, we must give him a full and generous curriculum; taking care, only, that the knowledge offered to him is vital--that is, the facts are not presented without their informing ideas. Out of this conception comes the principle that,

13. EDUCATION IS THE SCIENCE OF RELATIONS; that is, that a child has natural relations with a vast number of things and thoughts: so we must train him upon physical exercises, nature, handicrafts, science and art, and upon *many living* books; for we know that our business is, not to teach him all about anything, but to help him make valid, as many as may be of--

'Those first born affinities,
That fit our new existence to existing things.'

14. There are also two secrets of moral and intellectual self management which should be offered to children; these we may call the Way of the Will and the Way of the Reason.

15. *The Way of the Will.* --Children should be taught--

(a) To distinguish between 'I want' and 'I will.'

(b) That the way to will effectively is to turn our thoughts (**8**) from that which we desire but do not will.

(c) That the best way to turn our thoughts is to think of or do some quite different thing, entertaining or interesting.

(d) That, after a little rest in this way, the will returns to its work with new vigour. (This adjunct of the will is familiar to us as *diversion*, whose office is to ease us for a time from will effort, that we may 'will' again with added power. The use of suggestion--even self suggestion--as an aid to the will, is to be deprecated, as tending to stultify and stereotype character. It would seem that spontaneity is a condition of development, and that human nature needs the discipline of failure as well as of success.)

16. *The Way of the Reason.* --We should teach children, too, not to 'lean' (too confidently) 'unto their own understanding,' because of the function of reason is, to give logical demonstration (a) of mathematical truth; and (b) of an initial idea, accepted by the will. In the former case reason is, perhaps, an infallible guide, but in the second it is not always a safe one, for whether that initial idea be right or wrong, reason will confirm it by irrefragable proofs.

17. Therefore children should be taught, as they become mature enough to understand such teaching that the chief responsibility which rests on them as persons is the acceptance or rejection of initial ideas. **(9)**

To help them in this choice we should give them principles of conduct and a wide range of the knowledge fitted for them.

These three principles (15, 16 and 17) should save children from some of the loose thinking and heedless action which cause most of us to live at a lower level than we need.

18. We should allow no separation to grow up between the intellectual and 'spiritual' life of children; but should teach them that the divine Spirit has constant access to their spirits, and is their continual helper in all the interests, duties and joys of life.

The 'Home Education' Series is so called from the title of the first volume, and not as dealing, wholly or principally with 'Home' as opposed to 'School' education.

Preface to the Fourth Edition

My attempt in the following volume is to suggest to parents and teachers *a method of education resting upon a basis of natural law*; and to touch, in this connection, upon a mother's duties to her children. In venturing to speak on this latter subject, I do so with the sincerest deference to mothers, believing that, in the words of a wise teacher of men, "the woman receives from the Spirit of God Himself the intuitions into the child's character, the capacity of appreciating its strength and its weakness, the faculty of calling forth the one and sustaining the other, in which lies the mystery of education, apart from which all its rules and measures are utterly vain and ineffectual." But just in proportion as a mother has this peculiar insight as regards her own children she will, I think, feel her need of a knowledge of the general principles of education, founded upon the nature and the needs of all children. And this knowledge of the *science of education*, not the best of mothers will get from above, seeing that we do not often receive as a gift that which we have the means of getting by our own efforts.

I venture to hope that teachers of young children, **(11)** also, may find this volume of use. This period of a child's life between his sixth and his ninth year should be used to lay the basis of a liberal education, and of the *habit* of reading for instruction. During these years

the child should enter upon the domain of knowledge, in a good many directions, in a reposeful, *consecutive* way, which is not to be attained through the somewhat exciting medium of oral lessons. I hope that teachers may find the approach (from a new standpoint), to the hackneyed "subjects of instruction" proper for little children at any rate interesting and stimulating; and possibly the methods which this fresh standpoint indicates may prove suggestive and helpful.

The particular object of this volume, as a member of the 'Home Education' Series, is to show the bearing of the physiology of habit upon education; why certain physical, intellectual, and moral habits are a valuable asset to a child, and what may be done towards the formation of such habits. I beg to acknowledge my indebtedness to Dr Carpenter's *Mental Physiology* for valuable teaching on the subject of habits contained in some two or three chapters of that work. Also, I would renew my grateful thanks to those medical friends who have given careful and able revision to such parts of the work as rest upon a physiological basis.

I should add that some twenty years ago (1885) the greater part of this volume was delivered as 'Lectures to Ladies,' in which form the papers were originally published (1886) under the title which is still retained. **(12)**

Lectures VII. and VIII. and the Appendix of the original volume have been transferred from this to other volumes of the Series. The whole has been very carefully revised, and much new matter introduced, especially in Part V., 'Lessons as Instruments of Education,' which now offers a fairly complete introduction to methods of teaching subjects fit for children between the ages of six and nine.

The rest of the volume attempts to deal with the whole of education from infancy until the ninth year of life.

C. M. MASON
Scale How, Ambleside 1905