

CT 172

A

NEGLECTED VIEW OF EDUCATION.

A Lecture

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TO THE READER.

The following Lecture is published by the desire of many who heard it delivered.

As it aims at a *practical* rather than a *controversial* object, it has been thought that the friends of Education might wish to promote its distribution.

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NEGLECTED VIEW OF EDUCATION.

THE subject of education, like some other and greater questions debated by our law-makers, has two aspects—a political and a philosophical aspect. The first of these has to do simply with the right of the tax-payers, in claiming certain concessions from Parliament for the intellectual and moral good of the population. The latter of these aspects, concerns the far-reaching social issues of the educational measure. And the result of our agitation of this question will be at least unsatisfactory, unless the political boon we seek is understood in its philosophical bearings. But it is to be feared, that many who are fighting in the van as well as in the rear of the movement for national education, and who have a clear enough comprehension of the subject politically, are still far from realizing its application philosophically. The struggle of the dominant Church to keep the control of the people's education in its own hands, for sectarian purposes, has compelled the friends of the National Education League to narrow their discussion of the question, in and out of the legislature, to one point. In order to carry the enemy's barriers, they have been forced to concentrate their efforts mainly upon obtaining a just Education Act, and an impartial working of that Act in school districts. It has been found so necessary for the Liberal party, till recently, to limit their exertions to checking the tendency of the Government to apply the revenue of the country to the teaching of the dogmas of conflicting sects, that our views of what education is in its full and broad

acceptation, may have been obscured in the dust and din of the contest. We have had to work so hard in placing education, as supplied at the national expense, on a purely *secular* basis—the only basis on which we can equitably take our stand in requiring the appropriation of Treasury or local funds, for the education of the children of the masses,—that we have been apt to lose sight of many other aspects of the matter, if possible, much more momentous. The rank and file of education orators, on the platform, in the pulpit, and in the senate, would have us believe that, if we can but put children through the process of learning to read, write, and cypher, and give them some smattering of history, literature, and science, with perhaps, an appreciable theological tincture mingled—vice, pauperism, and crime, the inhumanities and dishonesties festering in commerce, brutal excesses, and parental ignorance, would die out, and give place to a millennium. Nor is it wonderful that such sanguine though vague expectations should be indulged. It would be ungrateful and wrong to doubt that sound school and college instruction, universally diffused, would be a great step towards such a consummation. We may congratulate ourselves, that a beginning has been made—as it must be made somewhere—in the elevation of our countrymen, even though for the present the movement is not, and does not aim at, all some of us could wish. If we might compare the child to the bee, *elementary* education gives the wings by which it is to fly from flower to flower in the bowers of knowledge, and extract the honey of truth. Primary school training supplies the tools, without which the youth cannot cut his way to a noble self-development. But we must not forget that the highest culture we can get from books and seminaries of learning, goes no further than putting these tools in our hands. Our *use* of them comes later; and the fact which so commonly

escapes notice, even in the best informed communities, is, that it is not the man who has acquired stores of varied knowledge and experience of the arts that is educated; but he, and only he, who employs these things in rounding off his whole being and character—filling up the gaps, and paring down the overgrowths. Education proper, the adjustment, discipline and proportionate development of our physical, intellectual, and moral nature only begins, if it take place at all, after we leave school; and if the result of classes, tutors, study, and thought, in whatever direction—be not to mould, refine, balance, and strengthen, every part of us, as the exigencies of our organisation may require,—our education is almost an empty name, though we may leave our *alma mater* with “blushing honours thick upon us.” This, though the most vital view of the question is the one, I venture to assert, least enforced in our families and Educational Institutions, whether primary or advanced, whether secular or religious. And hence the monstrous illusion in which multitudes of all classes grow up, that if they have only gained fair proficiency in the recognised branches of instruction, have passed examinations creditably, have learned to use language with grace and perspicacity, and to feel at home in the proprieties of fashionable society, or have mastered the details of their profession, they are educated. And the mischiefs bred by this shallow and pitiable conceit are past reckoning. We are *not* educated—in any adequate sense—unless our training leave in the mind a sacred deposit of principles, clear, and independently thought out; unless those principles settle down into cherished and practical convictions, and unless those convictions prove their reality in the correct management of our health, the honest, fearless, and unbiassed use of our reason, yielding us the courage of our opinions, and the earnest culture of all beautiful, tender, unselfish, and brave sentiments;—

unless our appetites, passions, and desires, are duly moderated in a manner befitting our relation to ourselves, to the laws of the universe, and to humanity. The person who comes nearest to this ideal is alone entitled to be called a highly-educated man. The one who falls most below this standard—be he ever so quick-witted—diligent in intellectual, or even in certain moral or religious pursuits, is the least educated. I grant that an intelligent rake is more interesting and tolerable than an ignorant and vulgar one, that it is less offensive to be swindled by a clever and agreeable knave, than by one who is gross as well as mean and tricky; that selfishness is not so odious in one of graceful manners and generous speech, and whose ambition soars to intellectual and social honours, as in one in whom this vice is reckless and undisguised. But what we want to feel more deeply and to teach more frequently, is that the commonly received opinion as to the nature and ends of human training is pernicious to society, and offers a formidable hindrance to the real progress of mankind. If the chief object of rational existence were simply to multiply adepts in scholarship, mechanics, military tactics, agriculture, or commerce, and to perpetuate races of lop-sided minds with one or two faculties disciplined, and the rest left unheeded, presenting intellectual and moral malformations—then the ruling ideas of education might continue to be indulged, but if the grand aim of life should be to discipline each power that it may fulfil to the utmost its appropriate functions, within lawful limits, and in subjection to the laws of truth and harmony, then the time has arrived for reform in our conceptions and methods of culture.

There are three conditions possible for human beings in respect to education. There are individuals whose nature is like a garden, so walled-up and over-hung with dense vapours, that the sun cannot

penetrate; their minds are covered with the weeds of folly and the rubbish of superstition, and grow only what is rank and unwholesome. There are others whose nature is like a garden, in which the plants in one plot get little care and hardly any sun, while those in another section have plenty of both. There is another class, not the most numerous, however, whose nature is like a garden well cultivated, the flowers and fruits springing up in genial soil presenting a southern aspect—not an inch of ground hid from the fostering light, and air, and warmth. A moment's reflection will, doubtless, recal to you instances of these several types of mind and character. Those utterly shut out from the light of knowledge, and growing up in moral wastes, are to be found chiefly, but not exclusively, in the lower strata of society—in the abodes of squalor, improvidence and ignorance. Natures in the second condition, I have pictured, half in the light and half in the shade, form the majority, and may be met with in all ranks, from the highest to the lowest. But it must be confessed that it is rare to find persons in any sphere of life, of whom it can be said that they come up to the terms of the third condition, and have faithfully striven to make the most of themselves in all respects. Perhaps it is most common to meet with those who answer to the homely metaphor of the Prophet: "Ephraim is like a cake not turned"—baked—almost burned on one side and raw on the other; with some parts of their organisation excessively developed and the rest dwarfed; no obligation being solemnly and intelligently felt by them to till and keep the whole ground. To regard the elements that are popularly understood to constitute the most liberal training of a lady or a gentleman as exhaustive of what the education of a mind ought to be, is to profane this most sacred of all subjects, and encourage a painful error. Who has not known or read of men that have mastered the most

subtle problems of life, and distinguished themselves by profound insight into the workings of the human mind, that have allowed other regions in their nature to remain conspicuously uncultivated. There is no more striking illustration of this contrariety of mental tendencies than Lord Bacon. But for the undeniable testimony of history, it would appear incredible that the author of the 'Counsels, Civil and Moral,' and of the immortal treatise, 'The Novum Organon,' could be guilty of such execrable baseness towards his benefactor, Essex, and that the same man should write 'The Advancement of Learning,' and lend himself, as Attorney-General, to a crafty and bigoted King, to foment the persecution of Roman Catholic priests, and justify the Protestant burning of heretics; file informations against those who gave utterance to free opinions, and degrade himself to the uttermost by sharing complicity with the King in hushing up a royal crime in relation to Somerset too disgusting to specify. To judge the natures, as a whole, of some eminent authors within living memory by what they wrote, and wrote so beautifully, one would fancy that no lives could be purer, no dispositions more lovely, no hearts more responsive to appeals of suffering and want, no consciences more delicately strung than theirs; and yet in some cases—happily not in all—when we come to know their inner life, we have found them almost the reverse of all this. Their memories were enriched with the choicest symbols of everything noble and good, and their imaginations ran wild with ideal luxuriance, while those faculties and powers that were not among the forces that produced their literary reputation, were sometimes left a prey to weakness and neglect. There is no rule without its exceptions; but as a rule it may be said, so little has the ideal of education now under our consideration been acted upon, that the very fact that a man is singularly strong in one direction, may

be taken as an index that he is singularly weak in another. If he have severely trained the logical faculty, he is almost sure to have slighted the cultivation of common sense, or that delicate sensibility which a chastened and refined imagination promotes. If he be distinguished by a susceptible emotional nature, and devoted to moralism or philanthropy, he will probably not be found remarkably vigorous intellectually; and how often it has happened that men who have attained high distinction in a profession requiring very great mental acuteness, have left themselves specially open to attack in their appetites or passions.

I have heard from those competent to express an opinion, that so often have they been disappointed by marked contradictions—not necessarily grave moral inconsistencies—in distinguished political, and even in religious, leaders, that their early enthusiasm in seeking the private acquaintance of such persons had received a considerable check. I have been told that in proportion as men's lives are consecrated to supporting a public relation, or a relation purely to the public, their capacity for the cultivation of intense, constant, and self-sacrificing private friendship seems to diminish. If carried away by their public function, those sentiments which befit the attitude they constantly sustain to the public are so stimulated, that without special watchfulness, the feelings and bearing belonging to the quiet devotion of a private relationship are apt to decay. I have heard of an instance of this sort, in which consciousness of aptitude to sway the masses on political and social questions has led to these results. In public the man's enunciation of great and liberal principles was so fervent and kindling to the sympathies of his vast audiences, that the poorest person might be tempted to approach him under the impression that his manner would be warm and attractive, while, as a matter

of fact, in private he was found to be haughty, cold, reserved, and repellent, and his ambition to be great as a public character seemed to eat away those delicate, genial, unaffected private virtues which alone make a man beloved and sought after by his friends. To so sad an extent have I known this discrepancy between strong public sentiments and weak private ones to extend, that a certain person who once lavished many thousands of pounds upon public charities, knowingly left respectable and deserving relations on the brink of want. In like manner are people apt to be imposed upon by the fiction that, because a man is solely occupied with preaching high moral and religious truths, he is necessarily among the best exemplars of his own teaching. But through neglect of educating the *whole* man, the most eloquent in preaching may be the most indifferent in practice.

There is another class that may be adduced, as a warning example of this same perverted view of education. I refer to a considerable number of languid youths of both sexes who are supposed largely to inhabit the "West-end" in the season, whose leisure hangs heavily on their hands, and who, for want of useful occupation, receive as a god-send the announcement of the last three-volumed novel to transport them for some hours to an elysium of fancy—a mischievous substitute for the stern realities of the work-a-day life. My remarks refer not to the *use* but the *abuse* of novel-reading; and I am only concerned at present in showing the evil effects of its abuse in freezing up sympathy with actual distress, while the vacant-minded reader is being dissolved in tears over the imaginary scenes of sorrow depicted by the novelist. That excessive novel-reading may quicken sympathy and strengthen sensibility of the morbid sentimental kind is true; but it is also true that it at the same time tends to weaken practical benevolence

and may end in quenching it altogether. Sentimentalism of any kind is always whimsical and visionary unless it be under the direction of judgment and reason, which always pre-supposes the harmonious culture of all the faculties and susceptibilities of our nature. "There is a law of our mental mechanism pointed out by Bishop Butler that from our very faculty of habits, *passive impressions* by being repeated grow weaker, and *practical habits* are formed and strengthened by repeated acts. Benevolence is worthless which does not proceed to action. But the frequent repetition of that species of emotion which fiction stimulates tends to prevent practical benevolence, because it is out of proportion to corresponding action; it is like that frequent going over of virtue in our own minds, which, as Butler says, so far from being auxiliary to it may be obstructive of it. As long as the balance is maintained between the stimulus given to imagination with the consequent emotions on the one hand, and our practical habits which those emotions are chiefly designed to form and strengthen on the other, so long the stimulus of the imagination will not stand in the way of benevolence but aid it. And therefore if we will read a novel extra, now and then, about some unfortunate hero or heroine, we ought to impose upon ourselves the corrective of an extra ten-pound note to some poor unfortunate family, who only want substantial help to enable them permanently to help themselves. To maintain a balance between the emotions and the will, and thus give effect to true educational principles, we should keep a sort of debtor and creditor account of sentimental indulgence and practical benevolence."*

Another common instance of defective education, in the broad sense, is the devotee of religious excitement

* The 'Greyson Letters,' p. 177.

whose religion, in effect, becomes a bar to enlightened morality. The religious or devotional faculty in some people is *forced* like a hot-house plant into unnatural growth, and comes out in the rankest forms of fanaticism. Their brains become suffused and sodden with the fantastic drapery and musical spells of High-churchism or with unctuous Evangelicalism. They act on the Sunday as if the only things worth living for were singing hymns and offering extatic prayers or listening to revivalist extravagancies. Yet contact with *many* of that class in every-day life proves that the sentimental sanctities of their church have no more influence in aiding the development in them of homely human virtues than the study of poetry would have in improving the ability of an engineer to construct machinery; the culture of honour and justice in their business, of wise and amiable tempers in their families, and of usefulness to their fellow citizens, hardly costs them a thought. Jacob is not the only person who took undue advantage of a brother, and then lost himself in dreams of a ladder reaching up to heaven, with angels going up and down upon it. How often do we find that individuals of the intensely devotional type have zeal without tenderness, energy without repose, care for what they deem truth, without charity towards those whom they account heretical, driving by this incongruous compound of good and evil many honest seeking souls into scepticism and despair.

Perhaps even we advanced rationalists are not without our special temptations to overlook, in some respects, the manifold bearings of a whole-minded culture. We have fought our way, point by point, out of the Egyptian bondage of miserable dogmas into intellectual light and freedom, and may we not sometimes be in danger of resting in the peace and satisfaction of an intellectual victory, and omit the minute application of the exalted principles we have

attained to the shaping and governing of all the constituent parts of our nature? While orthodoxy may combine with intellectual feebleness does it necessarily follow that theological liberalism is always associated with moral courage, scrupulous conscientiousness and self-denying kindness? Nothing is more remarkable in the higher Greek schools than the practical turn given to the philosophy taught. Plato, Socrates, and others were not mere theorists. "Know thyself" expressed the condition of entrance upon studies of the Academy. Their attainments in philosophy were first applied in making themselves and their disciples morally better, and still the perfection of an educated manhood consists in the highest and freest possible intellectual inquiry combined with a correspondingly exact application of the knowledge gained to all the faculties and powers in their various grades and relations.

A great diplomatist is said to have defined language as the art of concealing thought, and certainly one of the anomalies of our civilization is that we sometimes call things that are very absurd by very fine names. Thus we honour with the name of education a very crude and imperfectly-developed state of mind and character; and, in saying as much, I use not *hyperbole*; I mean no play upon words. Education is *educe*ment, development—*harmonious development*—and the thoroughly-educated man is not the scholar or even the gentleman, commonly so-called, but he who has the most fully and harmoniously-developed powers of mind and the most fully and harmoniously-developed powers of body; and the time will come when the existing fallacy, almost universally *practised*, if not taught, on this subject will be looked back upon as a relic of a rudimentary and transition state of human culture; when training will formally and positively aim at securing physical, intellectual, and moral balance; when predominating tendencies will be harnessed

and guided; when the man naturally inclined to animalism will be systematically brought under the counter forces of reason and conscience; when the man of hard logic will be carefully brought into sympathy with the cause of human weal and trained in the sentiments of pure and unselfish social affections, in the tender experiences of sweet family life, and in the refinements of natural and artistic beauty; when the man of weak moral purpose will snatch a fair share of the time he now excessively gives to trade, social ambitions, or the duties of some profession, to the building up of the waste places of his mind, and cease the error of thinking his moral defects inevitable, or imagining that his virtues can in any degree pass as an atonement for his imperfections.

Having dwelt on the meaning of true education as distinguished from false, allow me for a moment or two to try to show how this art of educating the whole nature may be successfully carried out. The three grand essentials of an efficient education are the *best teachers*, the *most suitable text-books*, and the *strictest application of what we learn, to the elevation of physical, intellectual, and moral life*. If one of this trinity of requisites be wanting, the business of educating is spoilt, and our time and money as good as wasted. The development of the mind is just as much under the direction of law as the growth of the plant. It is sad to read the Report of Official School Inspectors, and to see how very few out of the millions of children in our schools indicate even a superficial acquaintance with the subjects they profess. Of course, there will always be differences of attainment owing to different degrees of talent and application. But if only justice were done to the three essentials I have named, no child of average ability could miss getting a competent idea of the branches he was taught, or fail to realise their bearing on the culture of his mind.

There *are* teachers here and there thoroughly enlightened, able, and consecrated, having a worthy and comprehensive idea of their work, but they are not numerous, and this is not to be wondered at. For owing to the wretched feudalistic cant, out of which the nation is now but slowly passing, a schoolmaster used to be looked down upon as belonging to a fifth-rate social position; and, consequently, till lately, only fifth-rate men could be induced to become candidates for the office. It was only self-denying devotion to the work, or dire pecuniary necessity, that formerly induced persons to take up the profession of a teacher; and it was not likely that a crop of efficient teachers could be raised under conditions so chilling. Public opinion is still a long way from offering encouragements that would tempt men of philosophical understanding and culture into this greatest of all human offices. Why is it that the sons of our noblemen, squires, and even of our merchants are mostly drafted to the bar or into the church or into commerce, and that we hardly hear of youths belonging to these classes becoming working schoolmasters? * Why would so many parents rather that their sons earned a mere pittance in any of the professions than get a fair living as a schoolmaster? The post of a schoolmaster has not been deemed respectable enough. It will be very different by-and-bye, when English men and English women have cast that fictitious god of so-called respectability to the moles and the bats and risen to the purer sphere, in which the truly highest realities will be duly appreciated, and the really highest functions adequately honoured and remunerated. The day will come when the training of youth in scientific and philosophical principles will

* Of course the Head-mastership of our great and ancient endowed schools are not referred to here. The honours and emoluments of such positions have never been deemed, amongst us, incompatible with the highest talent, scholarship, and even family influence.

be viewed in so exalted a light that the most powerful and cultured minds of both sexes in the kingdom will gladly enlist in this service, and when the profession of a teacher will rank, as it deserves to do, the noblest and most honourable of all.

But the use of the best text-books is equally indispensable. In this respect, too, matters are improving, but we have still a good deal to learn, and not till the nation rises to a full realisation of the nature of the work to be done can we be expected to have text-books that will fitly correspond with the end we have in view.

I speak it with sorrow, but with grave deliberation, in the language of an eloquent writer*—“the rock upon which all our hopes of rescuing the mass of our countrymen from ignorance and barbarism, are in danger of being dashed, consists in the unreasoning and indiscriminate veneration in which the Bible is popularly held among us as a central educational book. Impelled by that veneration, we hesitate not—I refer to Englishmen generally,—to degrade our children’s view of Deity by familiarising them with a literature in which He is represented as feeble, treacherous, implacable, and unjust; and confound at once their intelligence and moral sense, by compelling them to regard that literature as altogether divine and infallible. This notion is ingrained by priestcraft in the minds of the multitude and even of their Parliamentary representatives, that morality,—except when based upon the contents of the Bible,—is not only defective but mischievous. And yet it cannot be too distinctly asserted—if we sincerely desire our children to have an education really consisting in the development of intelligence and conscience,—that it is absolutely impossible to give from the Bible instructions in the principles of morality

* Mr. Edward Maitland.

and religion suitable to children. There is an absolute and irreconcilable antagonism between what is called Biblical theology and correct principles of religion and morality. Bearing in mind the fundamental fact in human nature, that man's view of Deity inevitably reacts upon himself, tending to form him in the image of his own ideal—it is evident that to familiarise children with the imperfect morality, the coarse manners and expressions, the rude fables, and the unworthy conceptions of Deity, appertaining to a people low in culture—such as were the Israelites—and to confound their minds and consciences at the most impressible period of life, by telling them that such narratives and representations are all divinely inspired and infallibly true—is to utterly stultify ourselves and the whole of the principles by which we profess to be actuated in giving them an education at all. Did we find any others than ourselves, any South Sea savages for example, putting into the hands of their children, books containing coarse and impure stories, detailing the morbid anatomy of the most execrable vices, extolling deeds prompted by a spirit of the lowest selfishness, exulting in fraud, rapine, and murder, and justifying whatever is most disgraceful to humanity, by representing it as prompted or approved by their Deity, and so making Him altogether such a one as themselves—surely we should say that they must be savages of the lowest and most degraded type, and sad proofs of the utter depravity of human nature. Palpable to the eyes of all are the hideous tales of Lot and his daughters; Judah and Tamar; the massacre of Shechemites; the Levite of Ephraim; David and Bathsheba; Amnon and his sister, and whole chapters of Leviticus and the Prophets. That such things should be in a book freely given to children to read, and that they should be expected, notwithstanding, to grow up pure and uncontaminated in mind and habit,

is one of those anomalies in the British character which makes it a hopeless puzzle to the world. Who can say that much of the viciousness at present prevalent among us is not attributable to early curiosity being aroused and stimulated by the obscenities of the Old Testament."

And if we turn from the Old Testament to the New, mingled with the unquestionably precious gems of moral teaching, we have hopeless contradictions in the narratives and precepts of the Gospels, and false and degrading doctrines in the epistles, which may safely be credited with a vast amount of prevailing intellectual confusion, sectarian fanaticism, and low morality. Teachers should be required both by School Boards and parents, to hold back the knowledge of the Bible from the pupils till their latest stage of training, and when the objectionable portions are taught, the pupils should be made to understand that these represent only the imperfect notions of a semi-barbarous age and people, and as having no *special* claim upon their reverence. And the passages of the Bible that harmonise with natural morality, should be presented as the outcome—not of any supernatural revelation—but of the ordinary moral instincts of higher humanity.

We want the rising generation to cultivate freely the art of thinking for themselves, to sift out the precious from the vile in their investigation of truth, to be always certain that the premises they reason from are based on provable *facts*, and to draw their conclusions logically from these premises; and not from sentiment or passive submission to traditional or conventional authority, to be blinded or awed into the surrender of their individual judgments; and books on history, science, art, and the philosophy of morals, having a tendency to develop correct and independent thought, should from the first be put in their hands. We want them to be of delicate, pure, and

elevated feeling, and the right method of disciplining this part of their nature is nowhere better set forth than in that admirable book by Charles Bray, on the 'Education of the Feelings.' We want their imaginations to be filled with images of unsullied beauty, and the most vigilant care should be taken that a selection should be made of works of poetry and fiction, pre-eminently Shakspeare and Goethe, free from all maudlin and spurious ideas of life and duty.

We want their memories to be strong, and choice passages of intellectual and moral value should be stored early *verbatim* in their minds, the full force of which will be interpreted in the progress of their experience. We want their powers of observation to be acute, and nothing is better adapted for this purpose than a thorough acquaintance with the prominent facts in the history of ancient and modern nations, the classifications of objects in geography, botany, geology, chemistry, and astronomy. We want their control of their physical functions, their appetites and passions to be strict and intelligent, and a knowledge of physiology and the laws of health should be judiciously instilled. When this view of education has taken the place of the narrow and insipid trifling to which education has been subordinated by fashion and sectarianism, in this and other countries; when we have learned to view the claims of education, in short, not in relation to sect, creed, and social station, but in relation to the natural requirements of the mind and the life of humanity, our class-books, like our teachers, will be wonderfully in advance of anything ever previously known. Unfortunately the illusion usually held out to youth as the prime incentive to diligence in culture is the qualification which education is supposed to give for money-getting and social distinction. But, with a heightening standard of life in its objects

and aims erected in our schools and our families, this degrading fallacy, too, must eventually disappear.*

So much, then, is clear. The best teachers will not avail without suitable methods. But the last requisite is by no means the least important, viz., the rigid *practice* of what is learnt theoretically. A glaring defect here sadly impairs our success, especially as regards the *moral* training of the people. The seed must not only be good and must not only be sown in prepared soil; it must also be dug about and helped forward in its growth by the varied *practical* experience of what is taught. This is not wholly overlooked in some of the branches of intellectual education. It is only the practice of reading and writing that can test our knowledge of the rules of grammar. It is only the working out of numerical and geometrical problems that can prove our mastery of arithmetic and geometry. The measure of our acquaintance with the laws of musical harmony can be best ascertained by exercise on some musical instrument. How, then, can we hope for children to become thoroughly trained in morals unless opportunities are *systematically* afforded them for the practice of the principles and laws of virtue? This is not the view acted upon by orthodox churches. I was lately thrown into the company of a self-made religious man—a type of a large class—who deprecated the higher quality of secular education now sought to be given to the children of the masses. He believed that its result would be to make them dissatisfied with their position in life, and tempt them into dishonest schemes, in order to raise themselves in the social scale; and as for their moral improvement, he held that that could alone be attained by what he termed “*the grace of God.*” I told him *that*

* Nothing could be more true and seasonable than the remarks of Lord Derby on this point in his Rectoral address before the Edinburgh University.

was a phrase I could not understand, and one which belonged to a bygone age of ignorance and superstition, at which he expressed himself "sorry for me." The old Evangelical notion was—and it is not yet extinct—that at conversion the soul receives some mystic essence from Heaven that transmutes its whole texture supernaturally, so that a new nature is imparted, which *involuntarily* manifests itself in successful aspirations after an almost perfect moral life, just as an acid and a carbonate combined dissolve and effervesce in water and change the taste of the liquid. But, in point of fact, is this radical transformation by "grace" ever seen in daily life? Having had special opportunities of studying the interior life of the religious world for a quarter of a century, I solemnly declare that I have never once seen the alleged moral transformation answering to the theory. Look narrowly into the lives of the vast majority confirmed by bishops, or admitted to partake of "the Lord's Supper" in Nonconformist communions as "children of God" and "heirs of grace," and say if those, as a rule, who profess to be "saved" and "sanctified" by "grace," are the characters that, as a whole, approach the noblest moral *ideals*. While churches multiply and increase, are justice and truth and honour and self-denying generosity among their adherents increasing? Are there fewer instances of vexation among employers or of eye-service among the employed? Nearly all those who serve in our families have passed through Sunday-schools, and in many cases are "communicants." Are they, as a class, becoming more faithful in their duties, more truthful in their speech, and more honest in their conduct? The doctrine of "sanctifying grace" has more frequently than not proved a barrier to the growth of simple, unaffected natural virtues. So lulled are many religious minds into delusion by the imagined power of *grace*, that ordinary and

sound morality is despised by church members as a product of "the flesh." And the effect of this deadly error upon multitudes of orthodox teachers who believe it, is to make them feel it to be almost a presumption to try to implant virtue in the child's mind by rule and system, while they believe that there is a mass of inherited depravity in every soul which can only be overcome by some mysterious and irresistible inworking of "the third Person of the Trinity" in the mind.

In the school system of the future there will be scientific arrangements for the discipline of the powers and dispositions of the children. As a basis of operations, the predominating tendencies of the child's mind will be duly ascertained by *indices*, craniological and physiognomical, his more marked inherited idiosyncracies will be carefully inquired about and kept in view at all times by the teacher, for his guidance in dealing with the child's faculties, and the training will be adapted accordingly. The unsympathetic selfishly-disposed child will have special circumstances planned for his special benefit and adapted to his moral wants. He will be guided to study the lives of the unselfish and morally heroic, and, in company with his teacher, he will be brought in contact with scenes of misfortune, want, pain, and sickness, at intervals, for protracted periods—scenes from which he would tend constitutionally to recoil—that his spirit may become habitually penetrated by the sympathy which such spectacles are calculated to inspire. The same child will have selected for him the companionship of the most refined, sensitive, and disinterested of his school-fellows; and such a train of influence, shaped and brought to bear upon his weak points continuously, could not fail to greatly modify the outcome of his natural tendencies. So will each moral imperfection be dealt with, with all the care with which a surgeon watches and

operates upon a wound, till it be healed. The hard-headed youth, in whom the imaginative element is defective, will be specially exercised in the power of discriminating the merits of æsthetic compositions, —varied forms of beauty in pictures, statuary, music, and healthy works of fiction, in addition to the *pabulum* supplied for the proper training of his stronger faculties. The pupil who may have inherited deficient sentiments of honour, truthfulness, and justice, will be suddenly and from time to time placed by his masters in circumstances calculated to thrust habitually, yet tenderly, but prominently, his moral defects upon his attention, till a sense of shame and disgust at his faults will induce in time efforts to subdue them. And so with the subjugation of all other innate crooked propensities.

In spite of the abuse of the system of penance and confession in the Roman Catholic Church, which we are bound to deprecate, there is, nevertheless, at the root of that corrupt system a principle which might, under the direction of a sound philosophy of education, be employed with advantage in general training. The extreme of morbid and microscopic analysis of moral faults is doubtless bad; but the opposite extreme of leaving the *moral* culture of the rising generation, as at present, to the vague inculcation of maxims and precepts, is equally to be avoided. The dispositions of each pupil's mind should be mapped out, and each weakness minutely particularised and dealt with in detail. Under such a well-defined method, who can tell the transcendant improvement that, in half a century, might be worked in civilised nations!