

BODY, SOUL AND SPIRIT

My title was chosen because it sums up the thoughts that have been troubling my mind for a long time past. What are we trying to do in education? What we have done, is quite clear. We have produced two distinct classes. We have first the public-school boy. He leaves school intellectually jaded, and usually hating the grind he has been through; the best of these know a great deal, but they are not fitted for life by the brainwork they have done, only by the moral training which has made them honourable and truthful and courageous. The public-school boy is still capable of almost anything in practical life, but not before he has had a few years to shake off the effects of school. In the second place we have the children from elementary schools, who have been brought up on a system wholly bookish. This has given to the men discontent with the work of their hands, to the women apparently dislike of any work which will not leave the evenings free. The system has certainly done more harm than good, and I think both sexes were better and happier fifty years ago. The result may not be wholly due to education; for at the same time the work of men has been so degraded, that for most of them it is mechanical and inhuman. The same is true of all women's work in factories, but it does not apply to domestic service; and for both sexes country life still offers a human existence, although not so full and happy as it was fifty years ago.

The crucial fact, on which all turns, is this : formerly, daily life used to educate children, and the school gave them only that which daily life could not give, the knowledge of what books can teach; now, daily life does nothing to educate in the towns, and much less in the country than it used to do, while the school still supplies only the bookish part. The village or small town used to be an image of the mighty world, where degrees might be seen, but no classes, for all mingled together in a human relation. Now the industrial system has created classes which do not mingle, and hence the less favoured classes are an easy prey for ignorant and unscrupulous demagogues, and each is ready to make civil war upon the community for his own supposed benefit. For all their bookish learning they are more ignorant than the plebeians of Rome who could neither read nor write; we might tell our plebeians the fable of the Belly and the Members, and they would still strike with the same blind infatuation.

Let me say before I go on, that I know their discontent is justified, but not for the reason they think. They think that they want higher wages and less work; but their wages are often what many schoolmasters would think almost affluence, for the miners can earn their £300 a year, and while they work seven hours a day, or a little more, I used to work eleven or twelve. What they really want is work which they can delight in doing, and this every craftsman used to have, before Arkwright and Watt invented their detestable machines. The machine is the enemy of true and happy life, that is, the enemy of real civilization. You will not think, I hope, that I am only another faddist. Whatever you think, that is the opinion forced upon me by all my experience and all the reasoning I can use upon it. It is either true, or false; and if it be true, and if we are to cure our discontent, only two alternatives remain for us - to do away with machines altogether, or to use machines instead of letting them use us.

Thus you see that education is bound up with the crucial question of the day. What are we to aim at? If we prepare for the life of today, we prepare for a diseased social condition and the education cannot be healthy. If we aim at a healthy and sound education, we do not prepare for life as it is. What life do we prepare for in that case? I believe that, if we educated children aright, they would themselves new model the social conditions ; but to do that the education must include all or most children, that is we must have power to apply this education to all or most. And we cannot convince anyone, except a few here and there, that a change of principle is wanted. No rich man ever comes forward to pay for an experiment in education. So we must just leave it, and do what little we can do.

Well then, if we are rightly to educate, we must educate body, soul, and spirit, not only the intellect : and the ideal we should aim at, I think, is family life in the community. No community can prosper unless it is bound up with strong social affection. The old village and country life had this, and degrees of wealth or importance did not interfere with it at all. In fact they seem to be indispensable to all sound and happy life, where all pretend to be equal, all fight for supremacy, and someone still gets it, but it does not follow that the best man gets it. In the old system, the degrees of superiority were fixed by tradition; not so that the man of commanding ability could not rise to his proper place, for that was easier than it is now, but so that the ordinary man was quiet and content to remain where he was born. Mutual respect and mutual help, where each man high and low had his duties and honour made him fulfil them, that was the old English life, which has been almost destroyed by the base ideals of the trader.

So in the family, the degrees were fixed by nature, and the little community held together in the same way as the larger one. This, we must have in the school, and the school must supply what home life has ceased to supply: wholesome discipline, and all that is needed for body, soul and spirit.

How did the old life educate the body? Partly by practical work, on the farm, in the house, in the garden; partly by roaming over the country side, and observing nature; partly by merry games and dances, stories and songs. What does the modern life do? Clothes are bought instead of being made in the house; food is bought and no longer grown; games are not played from a merry heart but as a science, if at all, for the town-bred boy prefers betting on them to playing them. The songs, the dances, the stories are all gone; we try to teach nature artificially, and teach a fraction of what the country boy learns by living.

How is the spirit served by the industrial system? Children do not now learn naturally respect for themselves by due respect to their betters - for we all have our betters, whatever politicians may say. They learn disobedience at home, defiance of those above them; dirt and vice are round them, sensational excitement is their recreation. They see their fathers not working with pride to do their job well, but ever fighting for shorter hours and more pay, and officially trained to do the least that will pass muster. If good work is still done, we owe that to the sturdy spirit of our race, which is not yet dead.

And how is the intellect served? The countryman, and the old-fashioned workman, worked with his brains, and he was a man of knowledge and wisdom. The machine worker is himself a machine, and he often spends his life in making millions of some small part of a finished article.

Compare, e.g., the old stage-coachman with the driver on the tube railway. In the one case, an open-air life, full of human society, depending for success on the wise care of animals, involving constant use of skill and judgment ; in the other, seven mechanical movements of one hand a million times repeated. In the mechanic's surroundings there is nothing to feed his mind ; the town stimulates, and yet his only food is the lying and slanderous party paper, trashy fiction, and the latest horror, the picture palace. His whole moral nature is thus being perverted. To take one point, he is prurient. There is only one way to give a healthy feeling in such matters, and that is, to live where he can see the process of birth before he is old enough to be curious about it ; that is, in a growing family and amongst animals. In the large towns, he is ignorant of facts until he becomes curious as to causes, and I am therefore convinced that true education is impossible in a large town.

You see how wide the problem is, and how complex. And politicians do not even see what it is. They are intent on curing symptoms by ever new laws. They want to make us sober and chaste by act of parliament, but that can only be done by true education.

First of all, I think we must provide that these elements shall not be separated as they are now. Of course the body needs its special exercises, violent some of them; but the body must be used in the intellectual work. With young children, bodily action must be constant, indeed there must be more body than mind ; speaking, moving, and acting, and the making of things, must take up most of the time ; gradually body will grow less important, and mind more, until at the end the mind does most. The same principle must apply to each separate study. But I want the bodily work to be directly useful in the intellectual work. To take an example ; the Boy Scouts are the greatest educational idea of the last hundred years, and it is hard to say whether the effect is greater physically or mentally. But there is no general plan in the things done. Now I want each of these to lead up to something in the intellectual scheme. Thus the boy may learn carpentry; do not make this an alternative to Latin verses, but let him use it in making models to illustrate history, or stage properties for his acting. Let him learn to weave and dye, and make himself costumes. Let him make pots for the plants in his school garden. Let him print and bind his school magazine. Of course he will do all these things and more with a zest, for the pleasure of doing them ; but to pleasure be will add mental training if these things are made to serve the intellectual work. So let his muscles be trained by the steps of the morris dance, rather than by meaningless exercises ; let his voice be trained in order to take part in school singing and acting, and let the acting be used to exhibit the plays he and his friends have composed together, and let these plays be upon the ancient legends, or the history of our race. I want a plan in all this, not incoherency.

The use of the body also implies more speech and less silent study of books ; it implies that mode of approach to foreign languages which we call the Direct Method. The same implies a new plan of the class-room; not a space filled with desks, but plenty of room for movement. And it implies a more rigorous training for us teachers, for it calls upon all a man's powers to the uttermost.

In special bodily exercises, we need , for older boys at least, some which shall stimulate courage and endurance, not only Rugby football - our great safeguard now against indulgent mothers - but boxing, and riding, with fencing too if possible for neatness and skill. But if you do not know it, you would be surprised to learn, how much for bodily health and grace is done by the practice of

our traditional dances. The revival of folk-dances and songs is one of the most hopeful signs of our day.

As the body, so the mind must be treated on a reasoned plan. Some studies are suited for young children, some are not. Constitutional history and Greek grammar are not suited for children of ten years old. Nature will usually guide us; I mean what the children do by themselves. Work should all along be play with a purpose.

Again: the number of subjects must be small at first, and never too great, and the time given to each, that is the length of the lesson and the number of lessons in the day, must be less in early years than later. Thus to take an example from most prep. schools, it is wrong to begin French, Latin, and Greek all in the same term at the age of ten. I have known it done, it is often done. And further, one subject should lead up to another, and kindred subjects should be taught in the same way.

But how about the character, - the soul? Are we to have lessons in morals and conduct? Now I believe that it is very useful to have a simple morality taught by rules, but this must have the sanction of religion; I think it is quite useless to try without. A child may learn to do well by imitation and precept, but we soon find that the child wants reasons for obeying the precept. Love for parent or teacher may do all that is wanted, but I think not often; I believe that we ought to base the precept on a belief in God and a divine law. Such a manual as the catechism is I believe both useful and necessary. But although all will need some day a reason to do well, it is true that the power to do well is given by the fostering of habits. The young child can be trained to cleanliness by habit, and this habit may be used later to guard him against vice. He may be trained to obedience, punctuality, honesty, duty, all by habit; and his intellect may be trained to attention by habit. All these habits react on the moral nature, and thus a true education makes the child morally good, or at least makes it easier to be good and harder to be bad. There are also employments which engage both body and mind, and react on the character directly; such as the care of growing plants and animals. I can see in the school of the future gardens, hencoops, even dairies, with great profit in every way.

I come now to my last point; the ideal to be aimed at for the child. I believe that it is not so much information the child wants as guidance, by check or stimulus, so as to give all its powers free play: the check and stimulus are used to train the faculties and bring them under power of the will; information, the material for use, must be supplied when it is wanted, not before, and then the child encouraged to use his powers upon this. Only thus can we avoid killing imagination, the best of these faculties, which in our schools now generally dies before the age of twelve. It is no doubt difficult to supply just the necessary guidance and no more; the teacher is too much in a hurry. and supplies too much, as a rule. But only so can he leave his pupils their individuality. If he does succeed, he has a class of happy and eager spirits, who do nearly all the work of the class, and he remains a happy spectator. At first the stimulus must be small but applied very often, for the child's attention is soon distracted; but the power of the will over the mind will grow, and the stimulus will be needed less and less, until the will is fully developed. We must regard the child as an individual, quite unlike all others, and try to help him to express himself in every possible way. Even in the class, if properly managed, there is no need for sameness; on the contrary, what I may call the group spirit is highly favourable to

self-expression in each member of the group by the peculiar stimulus which the group exerts on each; that which is seen at its strongest in crowds animated by some strong feeling. It is this, on which the public speaker lives, which we want to use. I will try to make my meaning clear by a comparison. The young child has in him imagination, but he does not know how to control it or how to use it. Our task is to give him power to control and to use it without putting it out. Like a fiery tongue it licks up the chips and shavings that come in its path, and transmutes them for a moment ; and when that fuel is done the flame goes on to more. But as it is easy to put out a tongue of flame, so it is easy to put out a child's imagination. A flame may be put out by too strong blowing, or by giving it nothing to burn , or by giving it too much to burn ; or it may be increased by gentle blowing, if fuel be provided, enough but not too much, until by blowing and feeding it becomes a fiery furnace, able to drive a great machine, or again to be concentrated in white heat upon one point as by a blow-pipe .

In a child's early years the great danger is over-feeding or over-blowing. Neglect is equally fatal in cities, where there is no natural fuel ; but in natural surroundings, neglect does not put out the flame, it only leaves the control to accident.

Following out this analogy, it is clear that in the early years the idea is most important, the form least important. The child willingly expresses its idea, but the idea is not always intelligible; and when it is intelligible it is not always expressed correctly or coherently. Mistakes and incoherence or incompleteness can be corrected after the idea has been expressed, but the child at this stage must be left free to express his idea in his own way first ; if the rules of expression be given first, so that his attention is fixed on these, gone is the idea like a dream phantom. The master cannot give either idea or expression , but the most he can do is to give a gentle stimulus, a light puff at the flame ; for example, by suggesting a title or a number of titles, which may call up ideas in the child's mind, often very far away from the title: such, for instance is the ballad *Hall* written by a boy of twelve, for which the stimulus was only the sound "*Hall*", meant by the master for a boy's name but suggesting by accident a thing.

The process then of expression is from the vague to the exact, and this takes time in the single boy; as he grows older, if he has been properly guided, he becomes more exact. The same is true, therefore, of the process of each course of study in a school so far as they depend on the child's idea. Even exact sciences like mathematics need to observe this, if they are to grow naturally and not to deaden the imagination ; there also observation and description must come before reasoning, concrete must come before abstract. and to build a bridge with a box of bricks may help one to understand mechanics .

The same also is true of the succession of studies in a school. Thus to take language work : English with Englishmen comes first of all, because there the idea is as little hampered as it can be by difficulties of form. When after a few years the child has learnt what form is, and has gained some control of his faculty of expression , a foreign language (say French) may profitably be learnt, in which form is more directly studied. But if French was begun (as it often is) before this partial control were gained , either the process in French must be what we have described for English, and therefore very slow ; or the form will speedily kill the idea and cause distaste, and the study will cease to be really profitable. But if the work in these two be carefully correlated, more attention may be paid to form in French without harm. Even then, however, the general principle laid down above must be followed.

Again after an interval the control, thus acquired and now greater grown, may be profitably

applied to Latin, in which the inflexions concentrate the attention upon form still more than in French. Here also the principle must be followed, but more attention may be given to form than could profitably be given if the learner were younger or untrained. To take an example ; telling a story for reproduction is a useful exercise, if the story be good ; but in English it soon becomes useless for purposes of study except as an exercise in memory, whilst in French it will hold its place longer, and longer still in Latin. On hearing a lesson of Latin, a visitor might think that the attention was almost wholly concentrated on form ; and yet this might be profitable if it were accompanied in the school course by the study of English in which the idea was still the most important thing. Yet even in Latin the divine flame must be still burning or Latin will indeed be a dead language. If, however, form be the chief matter from the beginning, still more if the form be everything, the fuel will quench the flame ; and nearly all the exercise books of Latin used by beginners in schools, are in their ideas silly and incoherent nonsense ; which alone is enough to show why Latin is not well learnt, and why it is so hated by those who have been forced thus to learn it.

W. H. D. ROUSE