

EDUCATION—BROAD OR LIMITED?

Education is today a popular cry if not a popular craze, and a looker on would almost conclude that the fact of human ability to acquire is to many an altogether new idea. Susceptibility is now about universally admitted, although the lines and boundaries thereof may be but little comprehended or understood.

There is everywhere more or less of a prearranged routine or course in schools which is pursued irrespective of individual taste or drift. As to the primaries, reading, spelling, writing and arithmetic, these are desirable and should be universal, for in this age at least, of books, newspapers and correspondence, every one should read, and none should be left without ability to attend to their own personal accounts and affairs. Yet with the first dawn of manifestation of special drift or pursuit, that it would seem should be especially encouraged, drawn out or developed, if it run in the line of business, a business training should be the prominent thing. If mechanic, science (general or particular), art or law, the same course would surely give the best results. The tendency being natural would have the aid of interest, or affection perchance, which is a great ingredient of acquisition or progress.

We have seen much effort thrown away and time lost in studies, because the pupil had no heart in them. We have also seen great success, which owed little to the teacher, he or she having surrendered control of the pupil's individuality. It has been considered quite the thing (as an illustration) with some to decree that music should be part of a daughter's education, and probably a fair share of mechanical excellence would be attained. But every observant listener could feel that there was no soul there, no love or warmth for the theme, or enjoyment of its harmonies whatever, and when release has come from the restraint or discipline of home, the music has become of no value, although its culture cost a great amount of time and money. So, many of the studies taken in school fail to command that intensity of interest which should characterize a student, and when his term or terms are closed, there remains but a smattering of this, that or the other, without thorough understanding, profundity or claim to being considered an expert in any direction.

Many weeks or months are spent again over things which do not affect nor are they likely to be of any value in the ordinary or expected career of life; if they have been useful as discipline (mental or otherwise) this is all that can be claimed. But their practical uses have no foothold outside the portals of the school. To this it might be objected that no one can tell what a person's avocation may become. This is true in part only, for it is often determined by accident or simply circumstances, rather than by individual force which marks out for itself a course and pursues it spite of all opposition.

The manifest advantage of private tuition is recognized in older communities, though from present appearances this is a privilege which will never be realized save by the few. At

the same time it will be adopted more or less in every advancing institution. The personal supervision and personal sympathy of the teacher with the pupil will be an increasing feature in connection with the scientific platform of coming education.

The vexed question of religious instruction should be easily settled by such a union as that of the United States. The religious sentiment is an integral part of every man's organization, however different in its strength or its manifestation. The bulwarks of honor and virtue are so intimately blended with this sentiment that provision should exist in schools for at least its partial cultivation. "Unless Christianity as a Divine revelation is untrue, the supernatural should not be ignored in education." The simple reading of the Bible could work no more injury here than it does in conservative England, where forms of faith are as numerous as with us. And no skeptic, if ever so conscientious, could surely dream of evil coming to his family from the reading of the Scriptures. "Advocates of secular or non-religious education say, that religion should be taught at home or by the minister. But this is only an evasion and a mockery. Children are tired when they return from school, and workers (who are the masses of man) are weary when they come home. Leaving out the Sabbath school and probably but few children would learn the nature or the duties of religion by listening to sermons usually beyond their understanding."

The above is from a Catholic source, and the old church has always been strenuous as to the blending of religious with secular education. Indeed, another authority said that, "if general secular education should be established it would introduce an era of atheism, revolution, anarchy and moral chaos," the idea being that "the state or the majority represented is not the depository of moral or religious truth and right, and where it holds absolute sway in the schools," it falls in inculcating the sublime virtues of faith, hope and charity. It gives "as a substitute for the first, human loyalty, for the second, the promise of worldly advancement; and for the latter, which includes the love of God and cherishes all men for Christ's sake, a spurious philanthropy," and a spirit of illiberal liberalism which sees this life only and overlooks or ignores the life to come.

Furthermore it seems that the fundamental qualification of one appointed or allowed to teach should be a knowledge of humanity, its origin, the purpose of earthly existence, and at least some glimmering of the future. How can one who knows little of the attributes, and powers, and functions, little of the capacity and use of these as found in human nature, fit that nature for its evident mission and best development? Men exact this knowledge in every other department of life. It is not usual to employ a carpenter to make a pair of shoes, to employ a tailor for the shoeing of a horse, an ignorant for a position on the press, or a novice to lead in any kind of business. But this policy is often set at naught by educators. There are not always selected because of their

judgment and familiarity with the element or material they are expected to handle. To them the science of human nature is "as a book that is sealed;" and the manipulation thereof to the best advantage cannot be expected, for it has not been studied.

It used to be said of a local educator that "he made scholars, but his school was a veritable pandemonium." The lessons were learned from the text books provided, with the supervision added, but the quietude, order, discipline, now deemed essential, found no place there. If a fact (and we would not dispute it) it must have been personal magnetism which drew the love of the pupils and their desire to enjoy the love of their teacher (for he was lovable) which made learning a success and source of joy.

What the contrast between that success and the success of the present might show, cannot at present be ascertained. But the principal must have been "apt to teach," and the taught must have been under an influence which is not everywhere made manifest. Probably he knew "the secret of his power," and was susceptible to that spirit which the world agrees to ignore, and would exclude from the precincts of every school where their mental toil is spent in part in vain.

The common idea of graduation is a faulty one. The examination should be made by disinterested experts, and every graduate should be disabused as to the coherent value of that graduation. It was never meant originally (or now perhaps) to carry the idea that education was rounded and complete. Rather it simply inferred a certain familiarity with the tools or instruments by which the education should be continued in such directions as opportunity or necessity might require. And a state institution at least should call up for review those thus honored, and have them demonstrate at intervals (annually or otherwise) the practical results of the award in the calling where they had been applied. If some system of recognition, based on the use of the earlier routine and training, could be established of a pecuniary or honorary character, these later examinations would add more to the luster and glory of the school, college or university from whence the diploma was issued, than all the gatherings of a purely social character which are common among students in connection with most institutions of learning. The pride felt today by teachers, faculty and principals, would rest upon a more congratulatory foundation, and the state or religious body founding such institutions, could point with added force to demonstrated results; to a cultivated, progressive, intelligent, earnest, influential element moving amid the general population, who would constitute the best advertisement, and help to justify before querulous taxpayers the vast advantages of mental, moral, religious and industrial training, to the state and to the skeptical world at large.

BANNOCK STAKE CONFERENCE

The quarterly conference of Bannock Stake was held at Rexburg, Idaho, Saturday and Sunday, September