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INTRODUCTION

There must be in the world many parents who, like the present author, have young children whom they are anxious to educate as well as possible, but reluctant to expose to the evils of most existing educational institutions. The difficulties of such parents are not soluble by any effort on the part of isolated individuals. It is, of course, possible to bring up children at home by means of governesses and tutors, but this plan deprives them of the companionship which their nature craves, and without which some essential elements of education must be lacking. Moreover, it is extremely bad for a boy or girl to be made to feel 'odd' and different from other boys and girls; this feeling, when traced to parents as its cause, is almost certain to rouse resentment against them, leading to a love of all that they most dislike. The conscientious parent may be driven by these considerations to send his boys and girls to schools in which he sees grave defects, merely because no existing schools seem to him satisfactory – or, if any are satisfactory, they are not in his neighbourhood. Thus the cause of educational reform is forced upon conscientious parents, not only for the good of the community, but also for the good of their own children. If the parents are well-to-do, it is not necessary to the solution of their private problem that *all* schools should be good, but only that there should be some good school geographically available. But for wage-earning parents nothing suffices except reform in the elementary schools. As one parent will object to the reforms which another parent desires, nothing will serve except an energetic educational propaganda, which is not likely to prove effective until long after the reformer's children are grown up. Thus from love for our own children we are driven, step by step, into the wider sphere of politics and philosophy.

From this wider sphere I desire, in the following pages, to remain aloof as far as possible. The greater part of what I have to say will not be dependent upon the views that I may happen to hold as regards the major controversies of our age. But *complete* independence in this regard is impossible. The education we desire for our children must depend upon our ideals of human character, and our hopes as to the part they are to play in the community. A pacifist will not desire for his children the education which seems good to a militarist; the educational outlook of a communist will not be the same as that of an individualist. To come to a more fundamental cleavage; there can be no agreement between those who regard education as a means of instilling certain definite beliefs, and those who think that it should produce the power of independent judgement. Where such issues are relevant, it would be idle to shirk them. At the same time, there is a considerable body of new knowledge in psychology and pedagogy which is independent of these ultimate questions, and has an intimate bearing on education. Already it has produced very important results, but a great deal remains to be done before its teachings have been fully assimilated. This is especially true of the first five years of life; these have been found to have an importance far greater than that formerly attributed to them, which involves a corresponding increase in the educational importance of parents. My aim and purpose, wherever possible, will be to avoid controversial issues. Polemical writing is necessary in some spheres, but in addressing parents one may assume a sincere desire for the welfare of their offspring, and this alone, in conjunction with modern knowledge, suffices to decide a very large number of educational problems. What I have to say is the outcome of perplexities in regard to my own children; it is therefore not remote or theoretical, and may, I hope, help to clarify the thoughts of other parents faced with a like perplexity, whether in the way of agreement with my conclusions or the opposite. The opinions of parents are immensely important, because, for lack of expert knowledge, parents are too often a drag upon the best educationists. If parents desire a good education for their children, there will, I am convinced, be no lack of teachers willing and able to give it.

I propose, in what follows, to consider first the aims of education: the kind of individuals, and the

kind of community, that we may reasonably hope to see produced by education applied to raw material of the present quality. I ignore the question of the improvement of the breed, whether by eugenics or by any other process, natural or artificial, since this is essentially outside the problems of education. But I attach great weight to modern psychological discoveries which tend to show that character is determined by early education to a much greater extent than was thought by the most enthusiastic educationists of former generations. I distinguish between education of character and education in knowledge, which may be called instruction in the strict sense. The distinction is useful, though not ultimate: some virtues are required in a pupil who is to become instructed, and much knowledge is required for the successful practice of many important virtues. For purposes of discussion, however, instruction can be kept apart from education of character. I shall deal first with education of character, because it is especially important in early years; but I shall carry it through to adolescence, and deal, under this head, with the important question of sex-education. Finally, I shall discuss intellectual education, its aims, its curriculum, and its possibilities, from the first lessons in reading and writing to the end of the university years. The further education which men and women derive from life and the world I shall regard as lying outside my scope; but to make men and women capable of learning from experience should be one of the aims which early education should keep most prominently in view.

Part I

Educational Ideals

POSTULATES OF MODERN EDUCATIONAL THEORY

In reading even the best treatises on education written in former times, one becomes aware of certain changes that have come over educational theory. The two great reformers of educational theory before the nineteenth century were Locke and Rousseau. Both deserved their reputation, for both repudiated many errors which were widespread when they wrote. But neither went as far in his own direction as almost all modern educationists go. Both, for example, belong to the tendency which led to liberalism and democracy; yet both consider only the education of an aristocratic boy, to which one man's whole time is devoted. However excellent might be the results of such a system, no man with a modern outlook would give it serious consideration, because it is arithmetically impossible for every child to absorb the whole time of an adult tutor. The system is therefore one which can only be employed by a privileged caste; in a just world, its existence would be impossible. The modern man, though he may seek special advantages for his own children in practice, does not consider the theoretical problem solved except by some method of education which could be open to all, or at least to all whose capacities render them capable of profiting by it. I do not mean that the well-to-do should, here and now, forgo educational opportunities which, in the existing world, are not open to all. To do that would be to sacrifice civilisation to justice. What I do mean is that the educational system we must aim at producing in the future is one which gives to every boy and girl an opportunity for the best that exists. The ideal system of education must be democratic, although that ideal is not immediately attainable. This, I think, would, nowadays, be pretty generally conceded. In this sense, I shall keep democracy in view. Whatever I shall advocate will be capable of being universal, though the individual should not meantime sacrifice his children to the badness of what is common, if he has the intelligence and the opportunity to secure something better. Even this very attenuated form of democratic principle is absent from the treatises of Locke and Rousseau. Although the latter was a disbeliever in aristocracy, he never perceived the implications of his disbelief where education was concerned.

This matter of democracy and education is one as to which clarity is important. It would be disastrous to insist upon a dead level of uniformity. Some boys and girls are cleverer than others, and can derive more benefit from higher education. Some teachers have been trained or have more native aptitude than others, but it is impossible that everybody should be taught by the few best teachers. Even if the highest education were desirable for all, which I doubt, it is impossible that all should have it at present, and therefore a crude application of democratic principles might lead to the conclusion that none should have it. Such a view, if adopted, would be fatal to scientific progress, and would make the general level of education a hundred years hence needlessly low. Progress should not be sacrificed to a mechanical equality at the present moment; we must approach educational democracy carefully, so as to destroy in the process as little as possible of the valuable products that happen to have been associated with social injustice.

But we cannot regard a method of education as satisfactory if it is one which could not possibly be universal. The children of rich people often have, in addition to their mother, a nurse, a nurserymaid, and a share in the other domestic servants; this involves an amount of attention which could never, in any social system, be given to all children. It is very doubtful whether carefully tended children really gain by being made unnecessarily parasitic, but in any case no impartial person can recommend

special advantages for the few, except for special reasons, such as feeble-mindedness or genius. The wise parent, at the present day, is likely to choose, if he can, some method of education for his children which is not in fact universal, and for the sake of experiment it is desirable that parents should have the opportunity of trying new methods. But they ought to be such as could be made universal, if found to produce good results, not such as must from their very nature be confined to a privileged few. Fortunately, some of the best elements in modern educational theory and practice have had an extremely democratic origin; for example, Madame Montessori's work began with nursery schools in slums. In higher education exceptional opportunity for exceptional ability is indispensable but otherwise there is no reason why any child should suffer from the adoption of systems which might be adopted by all.

There is another modern tendency in education, which is connected with democracy, but perhaps somewhat more open to question – I mean the tendency to make education useful rather than ornamental. The connection of the ornamental with aristocracy has been set forth searchingly in Veblen's *Theory of the Leisure Class*,¹ but it is only the educational aspect of this connection that concerns us. In male education, the matter is bound up with the controversy between a classical and a 'modern' education; in the education of girls, it is part of the conflict between the ideal of the 'gentlewoman', and the desire to train girls to be self-supporting. But the whole educational problem where women are concerned, has been distorted by the desire for sex equality: there has been an attempt to acquire the same education as that given to boys, even where it was by no means good in itself. Consequently women educators have aimed at giving to their girls such 'useless' knowledge as is given to boys of the same class, and have been bitter opponents of the notion that some part of female education should be a technical training for motherhood. These cross-currents make the tendency that I am considering in some respects less definite where women are concerned, though the decay of the ideal of the 'fine lady' is one of the most noteworthy examples of the tendency. In order to avoid confusing the issue, I shall for the moment confine myself to male education.

Many separate controversies, in all of which other questions arise, are in part dependent upon our present question. Should boys learn mainly classics or mainly science? Among other considerations, one is that the classics are ornamental and science is useful. Should education as soon as possible become technical instruction for some trade or profession? Again the controversy between the useful and the ornamental is relevant, though not decisive. Should children be taught to enunciate correctly and to have pleasant manners, or are these merely relics of aristocracy? Is appreciation of art a thing of any value except in the artist? Should spelling be phonetic? All these and many other controversies are argued in part in terms of the controversy between the useful and the ornamental.

Nevertheless, I believe the whole controversy to be unreal. As soon as the terms are defined, it melts away. If we interpret 'useful' broadly and 'ornamental' narrowly, the one side has it; in the contrary interpretations, the other side has it. In the widest and most correct sense of the word, an activity is 'useful' when it has good results. And these results must be 'good' in some other sense than merely 'useful', or else we have no true definition. We cannot say that a useful activity is one which has useful results. The essence of what is 'useful' is that it ministers to some result which is not merely useful. Sometimes a long chain of results is necessary before the final result is reached which can be called simply 'good'. A plough is useful because it breaks up the ground. But breaking up the ground is not good on its own account; it is in turn merely useful because it enables seed to be sown. This is useful because it produces grain, which is useful because it produces bread, which is useful because it preserves life. But life must be capable of some intrinsic value: if life were merely useful a means to other life, it would not be useful at all. Life may be good or bad according to circumstances; it may therefore also be useful, when it is a means to good life. Somewhere we must get beyond the chain of successive utilities, and find a peg from which the chain is to hang; if not,

there is no real usefulness in any link of the chain. When 'useful' is defined in this way, there can be no question whether education should be useful. Of course it should, since the process of educating is a means to an end, not an end in itself. But that is not quite what the advocates of utility in education have in mind. What they are urging is that the *result* of education should be useful: put crudely, they would say that an educated man is a man who knows how to make machines. If we ask what is the use of machines, the answer is ultimately that they produce necessities and comforts for the body – food, clothing, houses, etc. Thus we find that the advocate of utility, in the sense in which his view is questionable, is a man who attaches intrinsic value only to physical satisfactions: the 'useful', for him, is that which helps us to gratify the needs and desires of the body. When this is what is really meant, the advocate of utility is certainly in the wrong if he is enunciating an ultimate philosophy, though in a world where many people are starving he may be right as a politician, since the satisfaction of physical needs may be at the moment more urgent than anything else.

Much the same sort of dissection is necessary in considering the other side of this controversy. To call the other side 'ornamental' is, of course, to concede a point to the advocate of utility, since 'ornament' is understood to be more or less trivial. The epithet 'ornamental' is quite justified as applied to the traditional conception of a 'gentleman' or a 'lady'. The eighteenth-century gentleman spoke with a refined accent, quoted the classics on appropriate occasions, dressed in the fashion, understood punctilio, and knew when a duel would advance his reputation. There is a man in *The Rape of the Lock*, who was

of amber snuff-box justly vain,
And the nice conduct of a clouded cane.

His education had been ornamental in the narrowest sense, and in our age few of us are rich enough to be content with his accomplishments. The ideal of an 'ornamental' education in the old sense is aristocratic: it presupposes a class with plenty of money and no need to work. Fine gentlemen and fine ladies are charming to contemplate in history; their memoirs and their country houses give us a certain kind of pleasure which we no longer provide for our posterity. But their excellences, even when real, were by no means, supreme, and they were an incredibly expensive product; Hogarth's *Giorgio Lane* gives a vivid idea of the price that was paid for them. No one nowadays would advocate an ornamental education in this narrow sense.

But that is not the real issue. The real issue is: should we, in education, aim at filling the mind with knowledge which has direct practical utility, or should we try to give our pupils mental possessions which are good on their own account? It is useful to know that there are twelve inches in a foot, and three feet in a yard, but this knowledge has no intrinsic value; to those who live where the metric system is in use it is utterly worthless. To appreciate *Hamlet*, on the other hand, will not be much use in practical life, except in those rare cases where a man is called upon to kill his uncle; but it gives a man a mental possession which he would be sorry to be without, and makes him in some sense a more excellent human being. It is this latter sort of knowledge that is preferred by the man who argues that utility is not the sole aim of education.

There appear to be three different substantial issues wrapped up in the debate between advocates of a utilitarian education and their opponents. There is first a form of the debate between aristocrats and democrats, the former holding that the privileged class should be taught to employ its leisure in ways that are agreeable to itself, while the subordinate class should be taught to employ its labour in ways that are useful to others. The opposition of the democrats to this view tends to be somewhat confused: they dislike the teaching of what is useless to the aristocrat, and at the same time argue that the wage-earner's education should not be confined to what is useful. Thus we find a democratic opposition to

the old-fashioned classical education in the public schools, combined with a democratic demand that working men should have opportunities for learning Latin and Greek. This attitude, even though it may imply some lack of theoretical clarity, is on the whole right in practice. The democrat does not wish to divide the community into two sections, one useful and one ornamental; he will therefore give more merely useful knowledge to the hitherto merely ornamental classes, and more merely delightful knowledge to the hitherto merely useful classes. But democracy, *per se*, does not decide the proportions in which these ingredients should be mixed.

The second issue is between men who aim only at material goods and men who care for mental delights. Most modern well-to-do Englishmen and Americans, if they were transported by magic into the age of Elizabeth, would wish themselves back in the modern world. The society of Shakespeare and Raleigh and Sir Philip Sydney, the exquisite music, the beauty of architecture, would not console them for the absence of bathrooms, tea and coffee, motor-cars, and other material comforts of which that age was ignorant. Such men, except in so far as they are influenced by conservative tradition, tend to think that the main purpose of education is to increase the number and variety of commodities produced. They may include medicine and hygiene, but they will not feel any enthusiasm for literature or art or philosophy. Undoubtedly such men have provided a great part of the driving force for the attack upon the classical curriculum established at the Renaissance.

I do not think it would be fair to meet this attitude by the mere assertion that mental goods are of more value than such as are purely physical. I believe this assertion to be true, but not the whole truth. For, while physical goods have no very high value, physical evils may be so bad as to outweigh a great deal of mental excellence. Starvation and disease, and the ever-present fear of them, have overshadowed the lives of the great majority of mankind since foresight first became possible. Most birds die of starvation, but they are happy when food is abundant, because they do not think about the future. Peasants who have survived a famine will be perpetually haunted by memory and apprehension.

Men are willing to toil long hours for a pittance rather than die, while animals prefer to snatch pleasure when it is available, even if death is the penalty. It has thus come about that most men have put up with a life almost wholly devoid of pleasure, because on any other terms life would be brief. For the first time in history, it is now possible, owing to the industrial revolution and its by-products, to create a world where everybody shall have a reasonable chance of happiness. Physical evil can, if we choose, be reduced to very small proportions. It would be possible, by organisation and science, to feed and house the whole population of the world, not luxuriously, but sufficiently to prevent great suffering. It would be possible to combat disease, and to make chronic ill-health very rare. It would be possible to prevent the increase of population from outrunning improvements in the food supply. The great terrors which have darkened the sub-conscious mind of the race, bringing cruelty, oppression, and war in their train, could be so much diminished as to be no longer important. All this is of such immeasurable value to human life that we dare not oppose the sort of education which will tend to bring it about. In such an education, applied science will have to be the chief ingredient. Without physics and physiology and psychology, we cannot build the new world. We can build it without Latin and Greek, without Dante and Shakespeare, without Bach and Mozart. That is the great argument in favour of a utilitarian education. I have stated it strongly, because I feel it strongly. Nevertheless, there is another side to the question. What will be the good of the conquest of leisure and health, if no one remembers how to use them? The war against physical evil, like every other war, must not be conducted with such fury as to render men incapable of the arts of peace. What the world possesses of ultimate good must not be allowed to perish in the struggle against evil.

This brings me to the third issue involved in our controversy. Is it true that only useless knowledge is intrinsically valuable? Is it true that any intrinsically valuable knowledge is useless? For my part, I

spent in youth a considerable proportion of my time upon Latin and Greek, which I now consider to have been almost completely wasted. Classical knowledge afforded me no help whatever in any of the problems with which I was concerned in later life. Like ninety-nine per cent of those who are taught the classics, I never acquired sufficient proficiency to read them for pleasure. I learned such things as the genitive of 'supellex', which I have never been able to forget. This knowledge has no more intrinsic value than the knowledge that there are three feet to a yard, and its utility, to me, has been strictly confined to affording me the present illustration. On the other hand, what I learned of mathematics and science has been not only of immense utility, but also of great intrinsic value, as affording subjects of contemplation and reflection, and touch-stones of truth in a deceitful world. This is, of course, in part a personal idiosyncrasy; but I am sure that a capacity to profit by the classics is a still rarer idiosyncrasy among modern men. France and Germany also have valuable literatures; their languages are easily learnt, and are useful in many practical ways. The case for French and German, as against Latin and Greek, is therefore overwhelming. Without belittling the importance of the sort of knowledge which has no immediate practical utility, I think we may fairly demand that, except in the education of specialists, such knowledge shall be given in ways that do not demand an immense expenditure of time and energy on technical apparatus such as grammar. The sum of human knowledge and the complexity of human problems are perpetually increasing; therefore every generation must overhaul its educational methods if time is to be found for what is new. We must preserve the balance by means of compromises. The humanistic elements in education must remain, but they must be sufficiently simplified to leave room for the other elements without which the new world rendered possible by science can never be created.

I do not wish to suggest that the humanistic elements in education are less important than the utilitarian elements. To know something of great literature, something of world history, something of music and painting and architecture, is essential if the life of imagination is to be fully developed. And it is only through imagination that men become aware of what the world might be; without it, 'progress' would become mechanical and trivial. But science, also, can stimulate the imagination. When I was a boy, astronomy and geology did more for me in this respect than the literatures of England, France and Germany, many of whose masterpieces I read under compulsion, without the faintest interest. This is a personal matter; one boy or girl will derive stimulus from one source, another from another. What I suggest is that, where a difficult technique is indispensable to the mastering of a subject, it is better, except in training specialists, that the subject should be useful. In the time of the Renaissance, there was little great literature in modern languages; now there is a great deal. Much of the value of the Greek tradition can be conveyed to people who do not know Greek; and as for the Latin tradition, its value is not really very great. I should, therefore, where boys and girls without special aptitudes are concerned, supply the humanistic elements of education in ways not involving a great apparatus of learning; the difficult part of education, in the later years, I should, as a rule, confine to mathematics and science. But I should make exceptions wherever a strong bent or special ability pointed in other directions. Cast-iron rules are above all things to be avoided.

So far, we have been considering what sort of knowledge should be imparted. I come now to a different set of problems, concerned partly with methods of teaching, partly with moral education and the training of character. Here we are no longer concerned with politics, but with psychology and ethics. Psychology was, until fairly lately, a merely academic study, with very little application to practical affairs. This is all changed now. We have, for instance, industrial psychology, clinical psychology, educational psychology, all of the greatest practical importance. We may hope and expect that the influence of psychology upon our institutions will rapidly increase in the near future. In education, at any rate, its effect has already been great and beneficent.

Let us take first the question of 'discipline'. The old idea of discipline was simple. A child or boy

was ordered to do something he disliked, or abstain from something he liked. When he disobeyed he suffered physical chastisement, or, in extreme cases, solitary confinement on bread and water. Read, for example, the chapter in *The Fairchild Family*, about how little Henry was taught Latin. He was told that he could never hope to become a clergyman unless he learned that language, but in spite of this argument the little boy did not apply himself to his book as earnestly as his father desired. So he was shut up in an attic, given only bread and water, and forbidden to speak to his sisters, who were told that he was in disgrace, and they must have nothing to do with him. Nevertheless, one of them brought him some food. The footman told on her, and she got into trouble, too. After a certain period in prison, the boy, we are told, began to love Latin, and worked assiduously ever after. Contrast with this Chehov's story about his uncle who tried to teach a kitten to catch mice. He brought a mouse into the room where the kitten was, but the kitten's hunting instinct was not yet developed, and it paid no attention to the mouse. So he beat it. The next day the same process was repeated, and the next, and the next. At last the Professor became persuaded that it was a stupid kitten, and quite unteachable. In later life, though otherwise normal, it could never see a mouse without sweating in terror and running away. 'Like the kitten', Chehov concludes, 'I had the honour of being taught Latin by my uncle.' These two stories illustrate the old discipline and the modern revolt against it.

But the modern educationist does not simply eschew discipline; he secures it by new methods. On this subject, those who have not studied the new methods are apt to have mistaken ideas. I had always understood that Madame Montessori dispensed with discipline, and I had wondered how she managed a roomful of children. On reading her own account of her methods, I found that discipline still held an important place, and that there was no attempt to dispense with it. On sending my little boy of three to spend his mornings in a Montessori school, I found that he quickly became a more disciplined human being, and that he cheerfully acquiesced in the rules of the school. But he had no feeling whatever of external compulsion: the rules were like the rules of a game, and were obeyed as a means of enjoyment. The old idea was that children could not possibly *wish* to learn, and could only be compelled to learn by terror. It has been found that this was entirely due to lack of skill in pedagogy. By dividing what has to be learnt – for instance, reading and writing – into suitable stages, every stage can be made agreeable to the average child. And when children are doing what they like, there is, of course, no reason for external discipline. A few simple rules – no child must interfere with another child, no child must have more than one sort of apparatus at a time – are easily apprehended, and felt to be reasonable, so that there is no difficulty in getting them observed. The child thus acquires self-discipline, which consists partly of good habits, partly of the realisation, in concrete instances, that it is sometimes worth while to resist an impulse for the sake of some ultimate gain. Everybody has always known that it is easy to obtain this self-discipline in games, but no one had supposed that the acquisition of knowledge could be made sufficiently interesting to bring the same motives into operation. We now know that this is possible, and it will come to be done, not only in the education of infants, but at all stages. I do not pretend that it is easy. The pedagogical discoveries involved have required genius, but the teachers who are to apply them do not require genius. They require only the right sort of training, together with a degree of sympathy and patience which is by no means unusual. The fundamental idea is simple: that the right discipline consists, not in external compulsion, but in habits of mind which lead spontaneously to desirable rather than undesirable activities. What is astonishing is the great success in finding technical methods of embodying this idea in education. For this, Madame Montessori deserves the highest praise.

The change in educational methods has been very much influenced by the decay of the belief in original sin. The traditional view, now nearly extinct, was that we are all born Children of Wrath, with a nature full of wickedness; before there can be any good in us we have to become Children of Grace, a process much accelerated by frequent castigation. Most moderns can hardly believe how much this

theory influenced the education of our fathers and grandfathers. Two quotations from the life of Dr Arnold by Dean Stanley will show that they are mistaken. Dean Stanley was Dr Arnold's favourite pupil, the good boy Arthur in *Tom Brown's School Days*. He was a cousin of the present writer, who was shown over Westminster Abbey by him as a boy. Dr Arnold was the great reformer of our public schools which are viewed as one of the glories of England, and are still conducted largely according to his principles. In discussing Dr Arnold, therefore, we are dealing, not with something belonging to the remote past, but with something which to this day is efficacious in moulding upper-class Englishmen. Dr Arnold diminished flogging, retaining it only for the younger boys, and confining it, so his biographer tells us, to 'moral offences, such as lying, drinking, and habitual idleness'. But when a liberal journal suggested that flogging was a degrading punishment, which ought to be abolished altogether, he was amazingly indignant. He replied in print:

'I know well of what feeling this is the expression; it originates in that proud notion of personal independence which is neither reasonable nor Christian, but essentially barbarian. It visited Europe with all the curses of the age of chivalry, and is threatening us now with those of Jacobinism ... At an age when it is almost impossible to find a true manly sense of the degradation of guilt or faults, where is the wisdom of encouraging a fantastic sense of the degradation of personal correction? What can be more false, or more adverse to the simplicity, sobriety and humbleness of mind, which are the best ornament of youth, and the best promise of a noble manhood.'

The pupils of his disciples, not unnaturally, believe in flogging natives of India when they are deficient in 'humbleness of mind'.

There is another passage, already quoted in part by Mr Strachey in *Eminent Victorians*, but so apt that I cannot forbear to quote it again. Dr Arnold was away on holiday, enjoying the beauties of the Lake of Como. The form his enjoyment took is recorded in a letter to his wife, as follows:

'It is almost awful to look at the overwhelming beauty around me, and then think of moral evil; it seems as if heaven and hell, instead of being separated by a great gulf from one another, were absolutely on each other's confines, and indeed not far from every one of us. Might the sense of moral evil be as strong in me as my delight in external beauty, for in a deep sense of moral evil, more perhaps than in anything else, abides a saving knowledge of God! It is not so much to admire moral good; that we may do, and yet not be ourselves conformed to it; but if we really do abhor that which is evil, nor the persons in whom evil resides, but the evil which dwelleth in them, and much more manifestly and certainly to our own knowledge, in our own hearts – this is to have the feeling of God and of Christ, and to have our Spirit in sympathy with the Spirit of God. Alas! how easy to see this and say it – how hard to do it and to feel it! Who is sufficient for these things? No one, but he who feels and really laments his own insufficiency. God bless you, my dearest wife, and our beloved children, now and evermore, through Christ Jesus.'

It is pathetic to see this naturally kindly gentleman lashing himself into a mood of sadism, in which he can flog little boys without compunction, and all under the impression that he is conforming to the religion of Love. It is pathetic when we consider the deluded individual; but it is tragic when we think of the generations of cruelty that he put into the world by creating an atmosphere of abhorrence of 'moral evil', which, it will be remembered, includes habitual idleness in children. I shudder when I think of the wars, the tortures, the oppressions, of which upright men have been guilty, under the

impression that they were righteously castigating 'moral evil'. Mercifully, educators no longer regard little children as limbs of Satan. There is still too much of this view in dealings with adults, particularly in the punishment of crime; but in the nursery and the school it has almost disappeared.

There is an opposite error to Dr Arnold's, far less pernicious, but still scientifically an error, and that is the belief that children are naturally virtuous, and are only corrupted by the spectacle of their elders' vices. This view is traditionally associated with Rousseau; perhaps he held it in the abstract, but when one reads *Emile* one finds that the pupil stood in need of much moral training before he became the paragon that the system was designed to produce. The fact is that children are not naturally either 'good' or 'bad'. They are born with only reflexes and a few instincts; out of these, by the action of the environment, habits are produced, which may be either healthy or morbid. Which they are to be depends chiefly upon the wisdom of mothers or nurses, the child's nature being, at first almost incredibly malleable. In the immense majority of children there is the raw material of a good citizen, and also the raw material of a criminal. Scientific psychology shows that flogging on weekdays and sermons on Sundays do not constitute the ideal technique for the production of virtue. But it is not to be inferred that there is no technique for this purpose. It is difficult to resist Samuel Butler's view that the educators of former times took a pleasure in torturing children; otherwise it is hard to see how they can have persisted so long in inflicting useless misery. It is not difficult to make a healthy child happy, and most children will be healthy if their minds and bodies are properly tended. Happiness in childhood is absolutely necessary to the production of the best type of human being. Habitual idleness, which Dr Arnold regarded as a form of 'moral evil', will not exist if the child is made to feel that its education is teaching it something worth knowing.² But if the knowledge imparted is worthless, and those who impart it appear as cruel tyrants, the child will naturally behave like Chehov's kitten. The spontaneous wish to learn, which every normal child possesses, as shown in its efforts to walk and talk, should be the driving-force in education. The substitution of this driving-force for the rod is one of the great advances of our time.

This brings me to the last point which I wish to notice in this preliminary survey of modern tendencies – I mean the greater attention paid to infancy. This is closely connected with the change in our ideas as to the training of character. The old idea was that virtue depends essentially upon *will*: we were supposed to be full of bad desires, which we controlled by an abstract faculty of volition. It was apparently regarded as impossible to root out bad desires: all we could do was to control them. The situation was exactly analogous to that of the criminal and the police. No one supposed that a society without would-be criminals was possible; the most that could be done was to have such an efficient police force that most people would be afraid to commit crimes, and the few exceptions would be caught and punished. The modern psychological criminologist is not content with this view; he believes that the impulse to crime could, in most cases, be prevented from developing by suitable education. And what applies to society applies also to the individual. Children, especially, wish to be liked by their elders and their companions; they have, as a rule, impulses which can be developed in good or bad directions according to the situations in which they find themselves. Moreover, they are an age at which the formation of new habits is still easy; and good habits can make a great part of virtue almost automatic. On the other hand, the older type of virtue, which left bad desires rampant, and merely used will-power to check their manifestations, has been found to afford a far from satisfactory method of controlling bad conduct. The bad desires, like a river which has been dammed, find some other outlet which has escaped the watchful eye of the will. The man who, in youth, would have liked to murder his father, finds satisfaction later on in flogging his own son, under the impression that he is chastising 'moral evil'. Theories which justify cruelty almost always have their source in some desire diverted by the will from its natural channel, driven underground, and at last emerging unrecognised as hatred of sin or something equally respectable. The control of bad desires

by the will, therefore, though necessary on occasion, is inadequate as a technique of virtue.

These considerations bring us to the province of psychoanalysis. There is much in the detail of psycho-analysis which I find fantastic, and not supported by adequate evidence. But the general method appears to me very important, and essential to the creation of right methods of moral training. The importance which many psycho-analysts attach to early infancy appears to me exaggerated; they sometimes talk as if character were irrevocably fixed by the time a child is three years old. This, I am sure, is not the case. But the fault is a fault on the right side. Infant psychology was neglected in the past; indeed, the intellectualist methods in vogue made it almost impossible. Take such a matter as sleep. All mothers wish their children to sleep, because it is both healthy and convenient when they do. They had developed a certain technique: rocking the cradle and singing lullabies. It was left for males, who investigated the matter scientifically, to discover that this technique is ideally wrong, for though it is likely to succeed on any given day, it creates bad habits. Every child loves to be made a fuss of, because its sense of self-importance is gratified. If it finds that by not sleeping it secures attention, it will soon learn to adopt this method. The result is equally damaging to health and character. The great thing here is the formation of habit: the association of the cot with sleep. If this association has been adequately produced the child will not lie awake unless it is ill or in pain. But the production of the association requires a certain amount of discipline; it is not to be achieved by mere indulgence, since that causes pleasurable associations with lying awake. Similar considerations apply to the formation of other good and bad habits. This whole study is still in its infancy, but its importance is already very great, and almost sure to become greater. It is clear that education of character must begin at birth, and requires a reversal of much of the practice of nurses and ignorant mothers. It is also clear that definite instruction can begin earlier than was formerly thought, because it can be made pleasant and no strain upon the infant's powers of attention. In both these respects educational theory has been radically transformed in recent years, with beneficent effects which are likely to become more and more evident as the years go by. Accordingly I shall begin, in what follows, with a fairly detailed consideration of the training of character in infancy, before discussing the instruction to be given in later years.

Footnotes

1 London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd.

2 Probably many of Dr Arnold's pupils suffered from adenoids, for which no medical man would prescribe flogging, although they cause habitual idleness.

THE AIMS OF EDUCATION

Before considering how to educate, it is well to be clear as to the sort of result which we wish to achieve. Dr Arnold wanted 'humbleness of mind', a quality not possessed by Aristotle's 'magnanimous man'. Neitzche's ideal is not that of Christianity. No more is Kant's: for while Christ enjoins love, Kant teaches that no action of which love is the motive can be truly virtuous. And even people who agree as to the ingredients of a good character may differ as to their relative importance. One man will emphasise courage, another learning, another kindness, and another rectitude. One man, like the elder Brutus, will put duty to the State above family affection; another, like Confucious will put family affection first. All these divergences will produce differences as to education. We must have some concept of the kind of person we wish to produce, before we can have any definite opinion as to the education which we consider best.

Of course, an educator may be foolish, in the sense that he produces results other than those at which he was aiming. Uriah Heep was the outcome of lessons in humility at a Charity School, which had had an effect quite different from what was intended. But in the main the ablest educators have been fairly successful. Take as examples the Chinese literati, the modern Japanese, the Jesuits, Dr Arnold, and the men who direct the policy of the American public schools. All these, in their various ways, have been highly successful. The results aimed at in the different cases were utterly different, but in the main the results were achieved. It may be worth while to spend a few moments on these different systems, before attempting to decide what we should ourselves regard as the aims which education should have in view.

Traditional Chinese education was, in some respects, very similar to that of Athens in its best days. Athenian boys were made to learn Homer by heart from beginning to end; Chinese boys were made to learn the Confucian classics with similar thoroughness. Athenians were taught a kind of reverence for the gods which consisted in outward observances, and placed no barrier in the way of free intellectual speculation. Similarly, the Chinese were taught certain rites connected with ancestorworship, but were by no means obliged to have the beliefs which the rites would seem to imply. An easy and elegant scepticism was the attitude expected of an educated adult: anything might be discussed, but it was a trifle vulgar to reach very positive conclusions. Opinions should be such as could be discussed pleasantly at dinner, not such as men would fight for. Carlyle calls Plato 'a lordly Athenian gentleman, very much at his ease in Zion'. This characteristic of being 'at his ease in Zion' is also found in Chinese sages, and is, as a rule, absent from the sages produced by Christian civilisations, except when, like Goethe, they have deeply imbibed the spirit of Hellenism. The Athenians and the Chinese alike wished to enjoy life, and had a conception of enjoyment which was refined by an exquisite sense of beauty.

There were, however, great differences between the two civilisations, owing to the fact that, broad speaking, the Greeks were energetic and the Chinese were lazy. The Greeks devoted their energies to art and science and mutual extermination, in all of which they achieved unprecedented success. Politics and patriotism afforded practical outlets for Greek energy: when a politician was ousted, he led a band of exiles to attack his native city. When a Chinese official was disgraced, he retired to the hills and wrote poems on the pleasures of country life. Accordingly, the Greek civilisation destroyed itself, but the Chinese civilisation could only be destroyed from without. These differences, however seem not wholly attributable to education, since Confucianism in Japan never produced the indolent cultured scepticism which characterised the Chinese literati, except in the Kyoto nobility, who forme

a kind of Faubourg Saint Germain.

Chinese education produced stability and art; it failed to produce progress or science. Perhaps this may be taken as what is to be expected of scepticism. Passionate beliefs produce either progress or disaster, not stability. Science, even when it attacks traditional beliefs, has beliefs of its own, and can scarcely flourish in an atmosphere of literary scepticism. In a pugnacious world which has been unified by modern inventions, energy is needed for national self-preservation. And without science, democracy is impossible: the Chinese civilisation was confined to the small percentage of educated men, and the Greek civilisation was based on slavery. For these reasons, the traditional education of China is not suited to the modern world, and has been abandoned by the Chinese themselves. Cultivated eighteenth century gentlemen, who in some respects resembled Chinese literati, have become impossible for the same reasons.

Modern Japan affords the clearest illustration of a tendency which is prominent among all the Great Powers – the tendency to make national greatness the supreme purpose of education. The aim of Japanese education is to produce citizens who shall be devoted to the State through the training of their passions, and useful to it through the knowledge they have acquired. I cannot sufficiently praise the skill with which this double purpose has been pursued. Ever since the advent of Commodore Perry's squadron, the Japanese have been in a situation in which self-preservation was very difficult; their success affords a justification of their methods, unless we are to hold that self-preservation itself may be culpable. But only a desperate situation could have justified their educational methods, which would have been culpable in any nation not in imminent peril. The Shinto religion, which must not be called in question even by university professors, involves history which is just as dubious as Genesis; the Dayton trial pales into insignificance beside the theological tyranny in Japan. There is an equal ethical tyranny; nationalism, filial piety, Mikado-worship, etc., must not be called in question, and therefore many kinds of progress are scarcely possible. The great danger of a cast-iron system of this sort is that it may provoke revolution as the sole method of progress. This danger is real, though not immediate, and is largely caused by the educational system.

We have thus in modern Japan a defect opposite to that of ancient China. Whereas the Chinese literati were too sceptical and lazy, the products of Japanese education are likely to be too dogmatic and energetic. Neither acquiescence in scepticism nor acquiescence in dogma is what education should produce. What it should produce is a belief that knowledge is attainable in a measure, though with difficulty; that much of what passes for knowledge at any given time is likely to be more or less mistaken, but that the mistakes can be rectified by care and industry. In acting upon our beliefs, we should be very cautious where a small error would mean disaster; nevertheless it is upon our beliefs that we must act. This state of mind is rather difficult: it requires a high degree of intellectual culture without emotional atrophy. But though difficult, it is not impossible; it is in fact the scientific temper. Knowledge, like other good things, is difficult, but not impossible; the dogmatist forgets the difficulty, the sceptic denies the possibility. Both are mistaken, and their errors, when widespread, produce social disaster.

The Jesuits, like the modern Japanese, made the mistake of subordinating education to the welfare of an institution – in their case, the Catholic Church. They were not concerned primarily with the good of the particular pupil, but with making him a means to the good of the Church. If we accept their theology, we cannot blame them: to save souls from hell is more important than any merely terrestrial concern, and is only achieved by the Catholic Church. But those who do not accept this dogma will judge Jesuit education by its results. These results, it is true, were sometimes quite as undesired as Uriah Heep: Voltaire was a product of Jesuit methods. But on the whole, and for a long time, the intended results were achieved: the counter-reformation, and the collapse of Protestantism in France, must be largely attributed to Jesuit efforts. To achieve these ends, they made art sentimental, thought

superficial, and morals loose; in the end, the French Revolution was needed to sweep away the harm that they had done. In education, their crime was that they were not actuated by love of their pupils, but by ulterior ends.

Dr Arnold's system, which has remained in force in English public schools to the present day, had another defect, namely that it was aristocratic. The aim was to train men for positions of authority and power, whether at home or in distant parts of the empire. An aristocracy, if it is to survive, needs certain virtues: these were imparted at school. The product was to be energetic, stoical, physically fit, possessed of certain unalterable beliefs, with high standards of rectitude, and convinced that it had an important mission in the world. To a surprising extent, these results were achieved. Intellect was sacrificed to them, because intellect might produce doubt. Sympathy was sacrificed, because it might interfere with governing 'inferior' races or classes. Kindliness was sacrificed for the sake of toughness; imagination, for the sake of firmness. In an unchanging world, the result might have been a permanent aristocracy, possessing the merits and defects of the Spartans. But aristocracy is out of date, and subject populations will no longer obey even the most wise and virtuous rulers. The rulers are driven into brutality, and brutality further encourages revolt. The complexity of the modern world increasingly requires intelligence, and Dr Arnold sacrificed intelligence to 'virtue'. The battle of Waterloo may have been won on the playing fields of Eton, but the British Empire is being lost there. The modern world needs a different type, with more imaginative sympathy, more intellectual suppleness, less belief in bull-dog courage and more belief in technical knowledge. The administrator of the future must be the servant of free citizens, not the benevolent ruler of admiring subjects. The aristocratic tradition embedded in British higher education is its bane. Perhaps this tradition can be eliminated gradually; perhaps the older educational institutions will be found incapable of adapting themselves. As to that, I do not venture an opinion.

The American public schools achieve successfully a task never before attempted on a large scale: the task of transforming a heterogeneous selection of mankind into a homogeneous nation. This is done so ably, and is on the whole such a beneficent work, that on the balance great praise is due to those who accomplish it. But America, like Japan, is placed in a peculiar situation, and what the special circumstances justify is not necessarily an ideal to be followed everywhere and always. America has had certain advantages and certain difficulties. Among the advantages were: a higher standard of wealth; freedom from the danger of defeat in war; comparative absence of cramping traditions inherited from the Middle Ages. Immigrants found in America a generally diffused sentiment of democracy and an advanced stage of industrial technique. These, I think, are the two chief reasons why almost all of them came to admire America more than their native countries. But actual immigrants, as a rule, retain a dual patriotism; in European struggles they continue to take passionately the side of the nation to which they originally belonged. Their children, on the contrary, lose all loyalty to the country from which their parents have come, and become merely and simply Americans. The attitude of the parents is attributable to the general merits of America; that of the children is very largely determined by their school education. It is only the contribution of the school that concerns us.

In so far as the school can rely upon the genuine merits of America, there is no need to associate the teaching of American patriotism with the inculcation of false standards. But where the old world is superior to the new, it becomes necessary to instil a contempt for genuine excellences. The intellectual level in Western Europe and the artistic level in Eastern Europe are, on the whole, higher than in America. Throughout Western Europe, except in Spain and Portugal, there is less theological superstition than in America. In almost all European countries the individual is less subject to herd domination than in America: his inner freedom is greater even where his political freedom is less. In these respects, the American public schools do harm. The harm is essential to the teaching of an

exclusive American patriotism. The harm, as with the Japanese and the Jesuits, comes from regarding the pupils as means to an end, not as ends in themselves. The teacher should love his children better than his State or his Church; otherwise he is not an ideal teacher.

When I say that pupils should be regarded as ends, not as means, I may be met by the retort that, after all, everybody is more important as a means than as an end. What a man is as an end perishes when he dies; what he produces as a means continues to the end of time. We cannot deny this, but we can deny the consequences deduced from it. A man's importance as a means may be for good or evil; the remote effects of human actions are so uncertain that a wise man will tend to dismiss them from his calculations. Broadly speaking, good men have good effects, and bad men bad effects. This, of course, is not an invariable law of nature. A bad man may murder a tyrant, because he has committed crimes which the tyrant intends to punish; the effects of his act may be good, though he and his act are bad. Nevertheless, as a broad general rule, a community of men and women who are intrinsically excellent will have better effects than one composed of people who are ignorant and malevolent. Apart from such considerations, children and young people feel instinctively the difference between those who genuinely wish them well and those who regard them merely as a raw material for some scheme. Neither character nor intelligence will develop as well or as freely where the teacher is deficient in love; and love of this kind consists essentially in *feeling* the child as an end. We all have this feeling about ourselves: we desire good things for ourselves without first demanding a proof that some great purpose will be furthered by our obtaining them. Every ordinarily affectionate parent feels the same sort of thing about his or her children. Parents want their children to grow, to be strong and healthy, to do well at school, and so on, in just the same way in which they want things for themselves; no effort of self-denial and no abstract principle of justice is involved in taking trouble about such matters. The parental instinct is not always strictly confined to one's own children. In its diffused form, it must exist in anyone who is to be a good teacher of little boys and girls. As the pupils grow older, it grows less important. But only those who possess it can be trusted to draw up schemes of education. Those who regard it as one of the purposes of male education to produce men willing to kill and be killed for frivolous reasons are clearly deficient in diffused parental feeling; yet they control education in all civilised countries except Denmark and China.

But it is not enough that the educator should love the young; it is necessary also that he should have a right conception of human excellence. Cats teach their kittens to catch mice and play with them; militarists do likewise with the human young. The cat loves the kitten, but not the mouse; the militarist may love his own son, but not the sons of his country's enemies. Even those who love all mankind may err through a wrong conception of the good life. I shall try, therefore, before going any further, to give an idea of what I consider excellent in men and women, quite without regard to practicality, or to the educational methods by which it might be brought into being. Such a picture will help us afterwards, when we come to consider the details of education; we shall know the direction in which we wish to move.

We must first make a distinction: some qualities are desirable in a certain proportion of mankind, others are desirable universally. We want artists, but we also want men of science. We want great administrators, but we also want ploughmen and millers and bakers. The qualities which produce a man of great eminence in some one direction are often such as might be undesirable if they were universal. Shelley describes the day's work of a poet as follows:

He will watch from dawn to gloom
The lake-reflected sun illumine
The yellow-bees in the ivy bloom
Nor heed nor see what things they be.

These habits are praiseworthy in a poet, but not – shall we say – in a postman. We cannot therefore frame our education with a view to giving every one the temperament of a poet. But some characteristics are universally desirable, and it is these alone that I shall consider at this stage.

I make no distinction whatever between male and female excellence. A certain amount of occupational training is desirable for a woman who is to have the care of babies, but that only involves the same sort of difference as there is between a farmer and a miller. It is in no degree fundamental, and does not demand consideration at our present level.

I will take four characteristics which seem to me jointly to form the basis of an ideal character; vitality, courage, sensitiveness and intelligence. I do not suggest that this list is complete, but I think it carries us a good way. Moreover, I firmly believe that, by proper physical, emotional and intellectual care of the young, these qualities could all be made very common. I shall consider each in turn.

Vitality is rather a physiological than a mental characteristic; it is presumably always present when there is perfect health, but it tends to ebb with advancing years, and gradually dwindles to nothing in old age. In vigorous children it quickly rises to a maximum before they reach school age, and then tends to be diminished by education. Where it exists, there is pleasure in feeling alive, quite apart from any specific pleasant circumstances. It heightens pleasures and diminishes pains. It makes it easy to take an interest in whatever occurs, and thus promotes objectivity, which is an essential of sanity. Human beings are prone to become absorbed in themselves, unable to be interested in what they see and hear or in anything outside their own skins. This is a great misfortune to themselves, since it entails at best boredom and at worst melancholia; it is also a fatal barrier to usefulness, except in very exceptional cases. Vitality promotes interest in the outside world; it also promotes the power of hard work. Moreover, it is a safeguard against envy, because it makes one's own existence pleasant. As envy is one of the great sources of human misery, this is a very important merit in vitality. Many bad qualities are of course compatible with vitality – for example, those of a healthy tiger. And many of the best qualities are compatible with its absence: Newton and Locke, for example, had very little. Both these men, however, had irritabilities and envies from which better health would have set them free. Probably the whole of Newton's controversy with Leibniz, which ruined English mathematics for over a hundred years, would have been avoided if Newton had been robust and able to enjoy ordinary pleasures. In spite of its limitations, therefore, I reckon vitality among the qualities which it is important that all men should possess.

Courage – the second quality on our list – has several forms, and all of them are complex. Absence of fear is one thing, and the power of controlling fear is another. And absence of fear, in turn, is one thing when the fear is rational, another when it is irrational. Absence of irrational fear is clearly good, so is the power of controlling fear. But absence of rational fear is a matter as to which debate is possible. However, I shall postpone this question until I have said something about the other forms of courage.

Irrational fear plays an extraordinarily large part in the instinctive emotional life of most people. In its pathological forms, as persecution mania, anxiety complex, or what not, it is treated by alienists. But in milder forms it is common among those who are considered sane. It may be a general feeling that there are dangers about, more correctly termed 'anxiety', or a specific dread of things that are not dangerous, such as mice or spiders.¹ It used to be supposed that many fears were instinctive, but this is now questioned by most investigators. There are apparently a few instinctive fears – for instance, of loud noises – but the great majority arise either from experience or suggestion. Fear of the dark, for example, seems to be entirely due to suggestion. Vertebrates, there is reason to think, do not usually feel instinctive fear of their natural enemies, but catch this emotion from their elders. When human beings bring them up by hand, many fears usual among the species are found to be absent. But fear is

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