
Middle Class Education.

WHAT TO AIM AT, AS WELL AS HOW TO AIM.

BY

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N hearing that a Commission was about to issue to inquire into the state of "Middle-Class Education," one's thoughts could not but revert to the previous Commissions for inquiring into the state of "Popular Education," and of our "Public Schools," and to the reports consequent upon them.

Searching and laborious as these inquiries were, and able as were the reports, it has always appeared to us, that they would have been much more effective and useful, had there been an introductory exposition of the purposes for which education is desirable. We will not say that these purposes were not perceived and admitted by the Commissioners; but, if they were, the avowal of them was repressed, and the reports might have been just what they were, had the Commissioners never bestowed a thought upon what we conceive to be the reason of our being at any pains about education at all.

Whether our attempts to improve the education of the children of the poorer classes have of late been too ambitious—whether we have not been doing actual mischief by "over-education" (whatever that term may mean)—whether we shall have accomplished all that is desirable, when we shall have secured for these children instruction in reading, writing, and arithmetic—whether in our public schools the time of the boy is not too exclusively devoted to the classics and mathematics—whether more importance should not be attached to the knowledge of some modern languages—whether a little attention should not be bestowed upon physical science—and whether the subjects taught, whatever they may be, are taught in the way best adapted to secure proficiency in the learners, are all matters which have been handled by the Commissioners, but, as we think, less effectively than they might have been, if examined and discussed throughout, with the aid of the light and guidance to be obtained by keeping constantly in view the purposes for which the work of education of any kind ought to be engaged in.

As regards the relative claims of the ancient and modern languages, it would be premature to discuss them till it has been settled whether the

study of objects and phenomena should precede and accompany the study of language, or follow after it. If objects and phenomena are to have precedence, modern languages might command a preference, in as much as they alone supply the names and explanations of the larger part of the objects and phenomena, which in these days principally engage our attention; and these languages are more immediately needful in the intercourse among nations. But if instruction in objects and phenomena is to be put aside, whether temporarily or for ever, for the study of language, we suspect that our preference would be bestowed upon the ancient languages, in as much as they are more difficult to learn, and are seldom learned so as to be conversed in, and hence scholars are less liable to suffer from a flow of words in advance of ideas. This is not to be despised as one of the collateral advantages of teaching ancient rather than modern languages. For the opportunity of accumulating stores of words irrespective of any ideas to be represented by them, is one of the greatest dangers to which the juvenile intellect can be exposed; as a facility in pouring them forth is one of the greatest impediments in the way of curing those who are afflicted with confusion or bewilderment of understanding.

In considering the question, how far the study of language should be allowed to precede the study of objects and phenomena, it will not be lost sight of that the objects and phenomena which are treated of in the books out of which the young are expected to acquire practice in reading, to learn construction of sentences, and to study models of style, are men, and their conduct, and manners. Narratives, histories, biographies, and poetry are made up of words denotative of the dispositions, attainments, and actions of men—which words are made more or less to imply approbation and disapprobation, whether upon grounds which will stand examination, is often a matter of contention among men of great experience. Boys may read and write, and construe and parse the phrases in which these words occur. Can they judge whether the words are appropriately used? Take such words as virtue, honour, prudence, liberty, despotism, perseverance, obstinacy, earnestness, bigotry, consistency, orthodoxy,

heresy, conversion, perversion, generosity, fidelity, parsimony, justice, and mercy; is it desirable that learners should be encouraged to deal freely in their youthful compositions with terms intended to express approbation and disapprobation, the grounds of which they may not only be incapable of understanding, but careless to inquire into?

There are teachers, men excellent in many respects, and accomplished scholars too, who seem to act upon the notion that inquirers, such as ourselves, who have never taken a part in school work, are not qualified to form or express a judgment upon what professional educators are doing. We cannot proclaim too loudly our dissent from this doctrine. Even if we are not competent to judge of the means by which the ends of education may best be attained, we are competent to judge what those ends are. Stated broadly, few people (teachers included) would hesitate to admit that they ought gladly to welcome any new arrangements, or modifications of existing arrangements, calculated to bring about an increase of well-being. Teachers who resist attempts to inquire into their proceedings, insist, by implication, that education in their hands is doing all that can be expected from it in behalf of the advancement of well-being. They tell us, that the distinguished promoters of education in the olden times were no less desirous than ourselves of improving society, and were well qualified for directing the work which they originated, and that it would ill become us to call in question that which has earned the approval, and even the veneration of all subsequent teachers, and of the scholars educated under them.

These objections, founded as they are upon the tacit assumption that the arrangements for education of olden times are so near perfection, as not to be susceptible of improvement—as not to warrant inquiry, lest inquiry should lead to change which should not be improvement,—suggest some rather startling comparisons and reflections. Can it be true, that the profession of educator, acknowledged to be one requiring attainments of the highest order, should have reached perfection at a time when all other professions were so far removed from it as later improvements have shown them to have been? People engaged in all professions and branches of business, educators included, are, we will say, contributing their services to the best of their ability towards the improvement of society. Their predecessors were aiding in the same work. In every department of industry, unless we except education, although the end sought for is, as heretofore, human well-being, the means by which it is sought are now very different.

We are not more anxious for artificial light than our ancestors were; but we are better provided with it, because we have substituted coal-gas for oil and tallow candles. In like manner, with no greater anxiety than before, for rapid and safe travelling, we have abandoned posting and fast coaches for the locomotive and the railway. With the same purposes as before, the semaphore has been made to give way to the electric telegraph, and we obtain the motive power to propel our ships across the ocean, not from the fickle and intractable wind, but from steam extracted from the very water which floats them.

The scholars, divines, and other educators of the people, do not rank themselves, as far as we have become acquainted with their sentiments, nor are they ranked by others, below the classes who have succeeded in providing us so much better than formerly with light, and locomotion, and intercommunication. According to them, and quite in conformity with our own views, the highest order of intelligence, and the highest order of moral excellence, ought to be found among those who are entrusted with the duty of forming the minds and characters of others. But surely it may reasonably be doubted whether the higher attainments of educators can have sprung into perfection at a time when the inferior attainments were still so incompletely developed. Why, then, should there be any backwardness among educators, we will not say, in admitting that the system and methods adopted and adhered to by them ought to be changed, but in allowing us to inquire whether they have attained perfection in their own most arduous vocation—that of bringing to bear with the greatest skill the highest knowledge, for the purpose of fitting the young to work out and enjoy well-being?

An inquiry into prevailing education, with a view to ascertain how far it is accomplishing all that can be expected from it, can be scarcely approached with much prospect of striking out anything of practical utility, unless it be preceded by a correct appreciation of the state of society, in which the education is actually at work. It may then be possible to form some estimate of the influence for good which education has hitherto exerted over the well-being thus far enjoyed, and of how much more it might be made to exercise in future, and to point out some of the changes by which this greater good is to be effected.

We will set out by proposing two questions, about the answers to which there can be no difference of opinion:—

1. Are the present inhabitants of this country, as compared with their predecessors, on the whole

better informed, and more capable of applying their knowledge so as to promote well-being, and hence in the enjoyment of a happier state of existence?

2. Is the present state of existence, chequered as we see it, with pleasure and pain, joy and sorrow, hope and fear, susceptible of improvement, that is, open to improvement through any exertions of which men themselves are capable?

We assume that there is a perfect unanimity upon the answers to these questions, and that the answers are in the affirmative; and in so doing, we are not forgetful that less than a century ago, the superiority of the savage to the civilized state was maintained with great vehemence by advocates of considerable ability, who had many adherents. But the remarkable increase of knowledge, and the still more remarkable increase of aptitude in applying knowledge to purposes of well-being in these latter days, have swept before them all predilections in favour of barbarism, and the ingenious sophisms on which they rested.

Unanimity begins to disappear when means are proposed for bringing about that improved state of existence which is admitted to be possible; and it is to the consideration of these means that we wish to invite attention. As, however, it is accepted as an established fact, that our present state of existence is an improvement upon the past, the knowledge, if obtainable, of the means by which that improvement was effected, may help us in our endeavours to learn how those who are disposed to engage in the work, may hope to bring about the further improvement agreed to be possible.

There can be little doubt, if proposals were widely circulated, inviting expositions of the means by which the inhabitants of Great Britain have acquired a so much more comfortable state of existence than that which was enjoyed by the inhabitants of this island previous to the invasion of the Romans, that the expositions tendered would vary greatly in many respects. And yet, we fancy, accordance or similarity in some respects would be traceable in them all. Not one would deny that the earth is made to produce greater crops, and to sustain greater numbers of sheep and cattle; that, with the assistance of wind, water, and steam, the raw products of the soil are worked up into a greater quantity and variety of fabrics adapted to give comfort, health, and pleasure; that our means of transport, locomotion, and communication are superior; our supplies of fuel, water, and light are more abundant; and that we are better provided with the means of preserving health, and of keeping off or mitigating the painful consequences of accidents and disease. As little would it be denied that modern supe-

riority in the matters named, and in many others is partly a consequence of the greater extent of our knowledge, of the continued accumulation of knowledge upon knowledge, and of the substitution of real knowledge for that which had been mistaken for it.

When from the possession of knowledge, we pass on to that of readiness or aptitude in applying it, doubts may be felt whether there has been any or much advance in that. It might be contended that the greatly increased produce of industry which we enjoy, is sufficiently accounted for by the increase of our knowledge, and that there is no justification for claiming more than the same readiness and aptitude in applying our increased knowledge, than were to be seen in the application of our lesser knowledge. We will defer awhile any attempt to decide between the supporters of these opposite views. Other investigations which we have to make, may help us to a right decision upon this question. We shall be satisfied for the present with the admission, which cannot be withheld, that knowledge, combined with the capacity of applying it in the production of the necessaries and comforts of life, is more advanced, and also more generally diffused, than it ever was at any former period; and to confirm the truth of this statement, we need but point to the greater abundance of wealth.

Wealth, however, is not well-being. It is only a means of well-being. But we must bear in mind that although it is only one among many means of well-being, it is an indispensable one, since well-being without wealth is impossible. Nevertheless, how far wealth will contribute to well-being must depend upon the manner in which it is used or consumed.

The terms in common use to denote many kinds of ill-conduct, such as profligacy, dissipation, debauchery, uncharitableness, and gambling, all point to the ill-conduct, not of individuals, devoid, but of individuals possessed of wealth. They indicate a belief that wealth, an indispensable element of well-being, may be converted into an instrument for the production of misery. Not only may a large income, which the heir to it could not have earned, and has not the capacity to use, help him to no well-being; it may hurry him into misery. Experience has shown us that increased wages in particular channels of industry, resulting from other causes than the increased attainments of workmen, have not assisted them to become better parents, or better conducted men in other respects. While, then, we accept wealth as an indispensable element in well-being, we ought not to forget that wealth

must be accompanied by the capacity to use it, if a state of well-being is to be enjoyed.

An inquiry into the causes of increased well-being really becomes, if we would avoid wild and unmeaning dissertation, an inquiry into the causes of increased wealth, and of increased capacity in using it so as to produce increased well-being. The number of the inhabitants of Great Britain is more than ten-fold what it was in the earlier period of its history, and its wealth is more than a hundred-fold. How has this change been brought about? What causes preceded it? We may be baffled in our attempts to trace the remoter causes, but we can only hope to get back to them through the proximate causes. Accordingly, we had better search for the proximate causes in the first instance. Among the antecedents and concomitants of this change, we see many that are acting as heretofore. The causes of change are not to be found in them. As far as we can learn, the island is not larger, the soil not more fertile, the powers of water, wind, steam, and electricity, are not greater, minerals not more abundant, nor are the various substances scattered over the land more susceptible of disintegration and recombination, so as, in the form of a gas, to suspend sensation, or, in the form of a microscope or telescope, to bring us acquainted with objects invisible to the naked eye. If, then, the elements and forces of nature which prevail around us are the same as heretofore, except as modified and directed by human agency, the cause of the difference observable in man's state of existence must be sought for in man himself.

And there it will not be sought in vain. For it cannot be doubted that the men of this generation have more knowledge, with the capacity of applying it in the production of wealth, than the men of any previous generation. The more we reflect upon the increased knowledge of modern times, with the capacity of using it for the purposes of production, the more satisfied shall we be that we have hit upon the principal, if not the only, cause of the marked difference between the present and past states of existence. Powerful as this cause is, we recognise it in its character of a proximate cause only, and one which invites us to continue our search into its cause or causes among the antecedents which our records of the past have preserved for us.

At this point attention ought to be steadily fixed upon what, at first sight, might be considered an insuperable impediment, if not to the progressive, at least to the rapid uprising of the human race in the scale of existence. It is needful not only that man should know more and more, but that the

old knowledge should be imparted to the ignorant new comers, who are destined, in an uninterrupted stream, to take the place of those already instructed. The children born among us, with our present advanced knowledge, are quite as ignorant as those born two thousand years ago. The causes which produce such very different men and women out of the children born among us now from those of former days, must be sought for in the external influences brought to bear upon the children. It would scarcely be contended by anybody, if our children were to be transplanted at birth to some distant land to be reared by savages, that they would grow up to be men and women capable of participating in the orderly and systematic work as now conducted under the direction of those who are most distinguished for knowledge and aptitude.

Our present improved state of well-being implies not only increase of knowledge and aptitude, but also opportunities for the ignorant and incapable continually pouring in upon us to become as intelligent and capable as those whom they are destined to replace. How far these opportunities are the result of contrivances specially intended to impart knowledge and aptitude, how far they present themselves undesignedly as inevitable consequences of past knowledge and aptitude, and how far the contrivances specially intended to impart knowledge and aptitude are adapted for their purposes, remain to be inquired into. The growth of knowledge, or the continual addition of new to old knowledge, is a subject which there will be more hope of our approaching successfully if we reserve it till we have inquired somewhat carefully into the opportunities which have been hitherto afforded to each generation to acquire the knowledge and aptitude of the preceding.

Go where we will, in every department of industry, we see proofs of the increased knowledge and aptitude of which we have spoken, and also proofs of the ignorance and ill-conduct more or less disturbing the operations, and diminishing and damaging the products, of industry. The young continually received into existing establishments, such as they are, while open to profit by the knowledge and aptitude, are exposed to suffer by the ignorance and ill-conduct with which they are brought into contact. Thus we have simultaneously before our eyes the increased knowledge and aptitude which have helped to make us what we are, and the ignorance and inaptitude lingering among us to prevent our becoming what we might be. These may be accepted as indications of the direction in which efforts ought to be made, still further to improve the improved state of existence which has been prepared for us by our predecessors.

The action of government must not be left unnoticed. It stands conspicuous among the proximate causes of well-being. The perfection with which it accomplishes its purposes may safely be attributed to the knowledge and aptitude prevailing among a people, but is a sufficiently peculiar manifestation of those qualities to deserve to be separately investigated.

Our government and institutions, improved as they have been, and more particularly of late years, are generally acknowledged to be intended to make us happier and better—to defend the well-being which we enjoy, and to encourage us in our efforts to increase it. They are not supposed to be perfect or unimprovable; but the parts susceptible of improvement by any process within the reach of our present capabilities, bear a small proportion to those which are well adapted for their purposes. As regards our internal relations, our intercourse with one another, they are contrived and directed with a view to restrain all individuals who will not, or can not, regulate their conduct in conformity with what society in general considers indispensable for its well-being. As regards our external relations, our intercourse with other nations, they are intended to promote freedom of communication and interchange of benefits.

A very slight acquaintance with modern history suffices to make known that a great change has come over us in our views of what ought to be the action of government in its bearing upon both our internal and our external relations. Restrictions upon freedom and compulsory service used to be the connection between the government and the governed. Now the prevailing feeling is, that the governed should be left unrestricted, except where interference is clearly called for by regard for the general well-being, and that the services of individuals are to be voluntary, not compulsory. A spirit of rapacity and extortion used to be the characteristic of our dealings with other nations; and ignorance directed this spirit, so as to lead it away from the very wealth which it sought to grasp. For we then thought to enrich ourselves by ruling the inhabitants of other lands, and monopolising their trade, unable to perceive that if they were allowed to rule themselves, and to conduct their industrial and commercial operations as was best for themselves, we should escape the expense and responsibility of governing them, and profit more in our trade with them.

Amplification upon these topics is unnecessary here. It does not admit of a doubt that if the changes which have taken place of late years in the spirit and character of our government and

institutions have not been caused, they have been rendered possible, by the increased knowledge of the people. And we can scarcely fail to be led to inquire whether every improvement of which our government and institutions are susceptible, may not be obtained through a wider diffusion of knowledge.

During the growth of our nation there have been noteworthy events which may have given the direction to our progress, such as it has been. The invasion and conquest of this island by the Romans, the triumph of William the Conqueror at Hastings, the expulsion of the Stuarts, the union of England and Scotland, and the subsequent union of them with Ireland, are such events. It is difficult to surmise what the state of society might be at this moment had events occurred of an opposite character to these. Again, stress is sometimes laid upon the influence of our insular position, of our climate, and of the varied mineral stores with which we are favoured. We notice these antecedents and concomitants of our present state of well-being rather than leave them unmentioned, lest it should be thought that we had overlooked them as agents which have acted and are acting in our favour. It is almost superfluous, however, to point out that these latter agents could only have been made to work in our favour through our own knowledge and our capacity in applying them. The sea affords facilities for invasion as well as for defence, and obstructs as well as promotes commercial intercourse.

Extend our inquiries as widely as we will, and resolve as we may to exclude from our thoughts nothing that can be supposed to bear upon our present and future states of well-being, two causes or agents stand out prominently from among all the rest: the state of our knowledge, and our aptitude in applying the knowledge which we have. And indissolubly united with these chief agents of well-being is the uninterrupted departure from among us of the instructed and the capable, and the arrival in their place of the ignorant and incapable, to be or not to be made, according as they are dealt with, instructed and capable.

If we could feel that our present state of well-being was all that we desire and expect, it would be unreasonable to attempt more than to conserve and perpetuate the machinery at work among us for the conversion of ignorant and incapable infants into instructed and capable adults. But our feelings are very different. We are everywhere in immediate contact with an amount of destitution and misery, which is most distressing to all, with the exception of that frivolous and unthinking crew who would be able, like Nero, to fiddle

while contemplating Rome in flames. Neither have we far to seek for causes of much of this destitution. Examples of dishonesty, drunkenness, extravagance, dissipation, incapacity, suspension of work occasioned by disagreements between employers and employed, and misuse of credit, both in giving and taking it, meet our eyes in the columns of the daily papers devoted to reports of our police, bankruptcy, and other courts of law. The culprits and their victims thus exposed to view bear but a small proportion to those who are partially excused and screened by their friends, but who, nevertheless, surely, though silently, slip out of the ranks of industry, and sink into dens of filth and corruption, or seek shelter from them in the poorhouse.

The more thoughtful members of society may not be all of one mind as to the best means of removing these causes of misery, but they are beginning to suspect that, whatever room there may be for difference of opinion in some respects, the means adopted must comprise contrivances for removing the ignorance more or less observable in those who bring suffering upon themselves.

Here we are brought back to the consideration of the means by which ignorance and prejudice, or ignorance disguised as knowledge, may be diminished in the future. To contend that many of the causes of misery above indicated do not originate in ignorance, but in evil passions and depraved dispositions, is to start an objection more plausible than valid. For all must admit that, to have right conduct and the disposition to act upon the right and avoid the wrong, the distinctions between right and wrong must be understood. But to understand these distinctions, and to be able to follow them in all their ramifications, and in their various directions and minutest forms, and to desire to seek for them, is what we mean by knowledge and fondness for learning. A community endowed with these qualifications will be preserved from destitution in its more aggravated form, and also from the temptations to misconduct which are inseparable from destitution; and the children growing up in it, will be trained as well as taught in circumstances most favourable, both for their dispositions and for their intelligence.

It seems idle to ask, looking at education from this point of view, when it should begin, or at what age it may be expected to prove most effective. As soon as external influences begin to operate in forming the disposition and in awakening the intelligence, so soon should efforts be made to direct those influences aright. At whatever age it may be found that those efforts have not been made, at that age, without a moment's delay, should efforts

be made, not merely for the future, but to compensate for the omissions of the past. The consideration of infant, day, evening, Sunday, and adult schools for all classes is embraced in this general description, and it is implied that the later the age at which the work is begun, the more difficult will it be found. There is no rivalry between infant, juvenile, and adult schools, extended even to universities, the latter being continuations of, not substitutes, for the education in the former. The best of university educations is possible only after the best of infant and juvenile teaching and training.

We cannot afford, on this occasion, to enter into the details of school arrangements, whether directed to the teaching or to the training of the young. We simply implore the Commissioners to direct the inquiry upon which they are about to enter, with a view to ascertain and to point out the means by which schools may assist in forming boys and girls into capable and well-conducted men and women, persuaded that those means are to be found if searched for in earnest.

Two opportunities have been lost; there is now a third. It will be sad, indeed, if, with the signs of progress in everything else, education is to stand apart untouched and unimproved by the increased powers which observation and experience have helped us to. There is little to encourage us in this tripartite division of education into upper, middle, and lower. But the middle plank is alone left to us, and we cling to it with the tenacity and hopefulness of a shipwrecked sailor. An inquiry into middle-class schools by men who know what to aim at, may do a service which their predecessors who inquired into the upper and lower left undone. All depends upon the end which the inquirers propose to themselves. We are anxious to learn, not merely whether middle-class education is efficient, or in what particulars it is deficient, but how far, whether effective or ineffective, it is directed to the improvement of society. If not so directed, its very inefficiency might be a merit.

Some years ago I happened to be among a numerous party dining together, previous to a visit of inspection to an evening school attached to a large industrial establishment in this metropolis. The conversation naturally turned upon subjects connected with education, and, as will happen, fortunately in these days, doubts were expressed whether the character of the education generally provided was as good as it might be. One of the guests grew warm and excited at some of the criticisms made upon what he evidently held to be above criticism. He was a thriving

merchant. He had three sons—one in his own business, one at a university, and the third in the army. He was the sublime of soaring middle-classness. The climax of his justification of education as it is, and for leaving it undisturbed, was that the classics were the best basis for the education of the upper classes, and the Bible for that of the lower. Another of the company, who had been a silent listener to the conversation, here asked diagonally across the table whether it was meant, in thus reserving the classics for the rich, and surrendering the Bible to the poor, to convey an impression of the respective merits of profane and sacred literature. This question, as may be supposed, caused no little confusion to a man who evidently spoke as if in authority. Of course, he meant nothing of the kind. In fact, he made us believe that he meant nothing at all.

Towards the close of the inspection which followed, our silent companion was requested to say a few words to the lads assembled; and in less than a quarter of an hour his simple unpretending talk, interspersed with questions, drew out from them an expression of their ways of thinking and feeling upon the duties which they had to perform; how they might injure or benefit their employers, and what effect would be produced upon themselves, according as they did the one or the other; what wages they received, and why they received neither more nor less, and how they hoped to receive more in future; what the use to them was of the school work in which they had been engaged, and why their employers had assisted them to it; whether it was easy for them to save out of their small wages, and if not, why they should make the attempt; how the large capital, by means of which they were employed, had been accumulated; and when people ought to begin to form a habit of making provision out of present earnings for future wants; whether the trust reposed in them ever offered temptations to do wrong; what effect the yielding to or resisting such temptations would have upon the comfort and prosperity of their employers, and what upon their own and upon the building up of the dispositions and character upon which their future happiness depended.

It was gratifying to hear the warm expression of thanks which, on the impulse of the moment, our admirer of classical and biblical education proffered to his troublesome interrogator. He seemed to feel for the time that something more might be done towards forming the intelligence and dispositions of the young than to cram them with words and phrases, whether extracted from the classics or from the Bible. It was sad to think

how transient the favourable impression made upon him was likely to be.

It might be said that an inquiry into schools would not be complete if, after an examination into the public schools and schools for the poor, those for the middle classes had been passed over. Let us hope that the future report upon middle-class schools will not leave the inquiry as incomplete as before. Our impression is that, if the inquiries already made had been conducted with a view to test the efficiency of schools as auxiliaries in qualifying the young to distinguish right from wrong, and in inspiring them with the feeling that their conduct, as well as their words, ought to be an expression of their convictions, the middle-class inquiry would be unnecessary. Up to a certain age, the teaching and training best for the children of the poor, is also best for the children of the rich. Beyond that age, the wealth of the parents determines the length of time for which the children can be detained from work to carry on further schooling. If, however, our own judgment in this matter were overruled, and we were driven to decide upon the merits of schools for the children of the poor and the children of the rich, by different standards, we should be disposed to judge somewhat in this way:—

Those schools for the children of the poorer classes are the best which are most successful in fitting them, and in preparing them to become fit to preserve themselves from destitution.

Those schools for the children of the richer classes are the best which are most successful in fitting them, and in preparing them to become fit to preserve themselves, in the expenditure of the wealth which they will have no occasion to earn, from frivolity, profligacy, and indifference to the sufferings and helplessness of others.

We will not express the opinion which we have formed of the merits of these two classes of schools, estimated by these two tests which, it must be admitted, are the very opposite of severe. The Commissioners who have inquired into them, have not favoured us with theirs. We trust that the Commissioners now about to inquire into middle-class schools, will not be equally reticent. These schools contain some children who will not be called upon to earn the means of subsistence among the many who will have partly, if not wholly, to do so. We hope the Commissioners will, at least, tell us how these schools stand the two very humble tests which we suggest should be applied to them, and if they come somewhat ignominiously out of the trial, what changes will enable them to stand similar tests more creditably in future.