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WILL THE BRITISH EMPIRE STAND?

"Gibbon says that one of the causes of the downfall of Greece was the hostility of the people of Athens to outside nations. Their social state, or, in other words, their civilization, had become inert, aggressive, provocative of retaliation. The same must be recorded of all other ancient and some modern nations. Now, in our great British Empire, the greatest the world has ever acknowledged, with her dependencies extending to every part of the globe, her hand directing through her commerce every movement of finance, the writing is on the wall indicating trouble created from within. In the pre-eminent position of this great Empire will be challenged. It will not be the fleets and armies of other nations that will strike the first blow. It will be by what Maine calls the law stopping civilization. We see daily the accounts published of the treatment of our own and the subjects of other Asiatic nations by sections of our colonial Empire. As this was the cause of the downfall of Greece, it may be the beginning of the downfall of our Empire. Should the pernicious doctrines and theoretical fads of a large and increasing body of members of the British Empire succeed, legislation may be carried by them in the Parliament of Great Britain, and the overthrow of our vast Empire may follow. As the barbarians from without overthrew Rome, the barbarians from within may do the same for Great Britain. We have only to look at what is going on in India, where our commerce, our science, our able government have controlled for good a mighty Empire. We see the apostles of unrest busy, and I cannot overlook the fact, as I believe it, that these agitators are upheld in their beliefs by the pernicious utterings and the unbridled licence of a section of the press."—Mr. J. Currie-Elles, in the Joseph Fisher commerce lecture.

raw cotton is one of Great Britain's greatest importations for manufacturing purposes, for which she is largely dependent upon America, it would be the irony of fate if in the future America should buy her cotton from Africa, where she formerly seized her slaves for the cultivation of the cotton fields of her Southern States. Such is one result of the domination by war, the subsequent extension of commerce, and the consequent rise of civilization in Africa, hitherto known as the Dark Continent, under the British flag."

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TEACHER AND PUPIL.

The Noblest Profession.

"The profession of teaching is surely one of the noblest, yet it has never been honored as it deserves." It was by uttering these words that Mr. G. H. Reid at once won his way to the hearts of his audience in an address before the Sydney Teachers' Training College a few days ago. "In public esteem," continued Mr. Reid, "the teaching profession comes a long way after the other learned professions, but it really stands higher than any other secular profession in the world. To those to whom adventure, or speculation, or wealth, is the goal of highest desires, the profession of teacher offers no inducement. Its rewards never rise above a moderate level, if they ever rise to a fair level. The most distinguished services can never hope for the payment they deserve. If the teachers have in their own hearts the love of knowledge for its own sake, the love of teaching for its own sake, the love of children for their own sake, they are to be envied above all other workers. If, on the other hand, they have not these qualities, they are above all other workers the most to be pitied. My first and last and best advice is that they should cherish the love of knowledge, the love of teaching, and the love of children. If they do, there may be one—and only one—field of human effort, more full of happiness and usefulness than that upon which they have entered. If education consisted only in the power to read well, and count well, and write grammatically, teaching would be easy enough; but the task of instruction rises far above that, and reaches forward into the domain of reasoning and understanding, guidance, and sympathy. Every child's mind, as every child's body, is a problem of health or unsoundness, safety or danger. If the school is to attain its highest point of usefulness, there must be a real, living bond of sympathy, love, and respect, between teachers and scholars. This vital, indispensable need of a public school cannot be supplied by any book. The only possible way of testing this quality of the teacher is by the results in actual teaching. As to the human soul, you must remember that in every human tenement that lives there is a mysterious and sovereign inhabitant which has at least one of the attributes of the Almighty, because it is alike beyond analysis and perception. If one small fraction of the time devoted by men of science to the investigation of the properties of matter had been devoted to the investigation of the properties of the mind, education problems would have been materially simplified."

Tasmanian Minister of Education.

Mr. W. B. Propsting, Minister of Education in Tasmania, is on a visit to Adelaide, and while here will take the opportunity of inspecting a number of State schools, as well as the continuation and observation schools. He states that the medical inspection of Tasmania, instituted since Mr. Neale took charge as Director of Education, has been followed by excellent results. The professional side of the work is under the direction of Dr. Elkington. Dr. Gertrude Halley is the regular school doctor, whose work is to visit all country schools, deliver lectures to students in the Training College, and give advice to parents whose children may require medical attention. Already defects have been detected in a number of scholars, and as a rule the parents have been most grateful for the inspection. In Hobart Dr. Clarke inspects the city schools, and in Launceston Dr. Hogg has charge of the work.

Complaints in Victoria.

Correspondence in the Melbourne press shows that a great deal of unrest exists among teachers concerning the administration of the service. Numerous complaints are voiced, and the question of classification occupies a prominent place. In connection with this matter the Director of Education (Mr. F. Tate) recently laid stress on the fact that the teachers had representation on the board, who classified on the inspectors' reports, and if the teacher were dissatisfied, he had the right of appeal. One correspondent points out that even if a teacher did appeal his position would be decidedly invidious, as he could only give the classifiers his own opinion of himself. He also remarks that it is quite a common thing for teachers to be doing efficient work, and obtaining reports on their work in their school registers, which are good enough to make public, yet there is no advance for them, for it is on the "record" that they are classified, and chiefly on the "numerical estimate" attached to each, which is a percentage in figures. If this percentage is not high enough all the rest goes for nothing. He adds that he has been for 10 years under an inspector who will not give him higher marks than 80 per cent., yet in every record the inspector says—"Does good work." "School in very good working order." "Faithfully does his duty in every respect," and so on. Another correspondent makes charges of a personal character, and says that these and other complaints should be fully and publicly investigated by a Royal Commission. He blames Mr. Tate for the grave discontent that exists on the subject of promotion, as well as respecting teachers' residences, and about the programme. As to teachers' pay, he says that Mr. Tate accepted the details without demur, and he ought not to have done so.

Teachers of the Lower Grades.

The teachers in the lower grades of the Education service are looking forward anxiously to the revision of the regulations foreshadowed in the speech of the Treasurer at the opening of the continuation school. The higher-paid positions being relatively rare, and being filled mainly by comparatively young men, promoted by Mr. Hartley, the prospects of the young men of to-day are not to be compared with those of 20 years ago. When the 1903 regulations were introduced with the avowed object of blocking promotion, the small-salaried teachers felt their case to be a very hard one. Some of these followed Inspector Neale to Tasmania, and are now earning salaries which are the envy of their fellows, who remained in this State. A country teacher has an arduous task in keeping himself and his school abreast of the times, and it is to be hoped that the proposed new regulations will offer a better inducement to the man who is striving to do this. It is generally believed that when the Acting Minister of Education spoke at the continuation school he had in mind the possibility of improving the lot of teachers in the lower grades of the service.

Cleansing Scottish Schools.

Recently the expert advisers of the Scotch Education Department prepared directions for the efficient cleansing of schools throughout Scotland. It is pointed out that the principal sources of dirt in schools are the following:—"Shoes fouled by the dirt of the roads and streets; clothing fouled by dust or dried organic secretions; scales shed from the skin of the body and scalp; dried organic secretions from the skin, mouth, nose, &c.; dust accumulating in hair and clothing; organic dust roused from floors by the movements of the children; cast hairs; woollen, linen, or cotton fibres; organic material blown from foul accumulations outside the school; soot and other inorganic dust particles." In school children are continually on the move, so that the dust in the building is kept in perpetual circulation. Accordingly, to secure a clean and wholesome atmosphere in a school it is essential that all organic dirt should be systematically and periodically destroyed and removed. This, the Scottish experts say, can be done by moist cleaning, such as ordinary wet scouring with soap and soda, but for the cleansing of all greasy surfaces, that is, desks, seats, tables, floors, and all objects exposed to contact of the bare hands or skin, active scouring with soap or some similar solvent is essential. The experts say that every schoolroom should be completely cleansed by moist cleaning and disinfection at least once a year. Some rooms, particularly infant rooms, may require such thorough cleaning several times a year. Offices should be sprayed with disinfectants as often as is necessary to keep them free from offensive odors. Every school should have a cleansing register. In this should be entered the nature of the periodic cleanings, the date when each room is cleaned, and generally such information as will guide any inspector of the department, or medical officer, or school board member, or school visitor, or other authorised person in judging whether the cleansing of the school is systematically and efficiently attended to.

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WHAT COMMERCE IS DOING FOR EGYPT.

In the course of the Joseph Fisher lecture on the influence of commerce on civilization, at Victoria Hall on Thursday evening, Mr. J. Currie-Elles paid a warm tribute to Lord Cromer and his work in Egypt. He said:—"In ancient days the sway of Egypt extended from the equator to the Mediterranean, and from the Red Sea to the Atlantic. The interior of this great country of Africa, the regions of Darfur and Kordofan, and the districts known as Lybia to the Romans, at one time civilized by them, and developed to such an extent as to warrant their being called the granary of Rome, are now being, after the strenuous ordeal of war, peacefully opened up by the sway of Britain throwing her influence and protection over Egypt. The lost civilizations of the ancient tribes and kingdoms in the Soudan and Nigeria are being revived under the energy of British commerce. In these lost and defunct kingdoms in the region of Nigeria and around Lake Chad evidences of a forward commercial organization and a high state of civilization are now being laid bare to the world. In Nigeria have been found advanced scientific methods of treating ores, of saltworks and the recovery of salt from the earth and from the waters, and also of languages made intelligent by an alphabet. All these were no doubt derived through Egypt from Arabia, but they survive, and are being fostered and exploited by the British Empire under her newly acquired protectorate, Nigeria. On the British has fallen, even here, the mantle of all previous nations, and what has lain dormant and unproductive for centuries is now being developed by our Empire. Population is being increased owing to the suppression of the slave trade, and what was once called the granary of Rome may in time to come be called the granary of Britain. From our Eastern African port, Mombassa, by the Uganda Railway, to the sources of the Nile, the country is being opened up to the cultivation of cotton and other tropical products; and as