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WHAT IS THE MATTER?

LOUDER each year grows the murmur of dissatisfaction on the part of parents with the education given their children. Not a springtime has passed, during the last five years, that the letters which have come to this office from dissatisfied parents have failed to show a steady increase. And that there is a wider dissatisfaction, as yet unexpressed, admits of no question. On every hand the signs are evident of a widely growing distrust of the effectiveness of the present educational system in this country.



What
Has She
Gained?

EXCEPT IN A VERY FEW INSTANCES the parents frankly say that they do not know why they are dissatisfied: the instinctive feeling of dissatisfaction is there, but the causes, they admit, elude them. Here and there a more keen and discerning parent tries to probe the seat of the trouble, and when he or she does the question is invariably asked, in substance, before the letter closes: "Are we not leaving the moral ethics out of our educational curriculum?" And when the case discussed is that of a daughter the thought is always expressed: "Our daughter has come back to us mentally broadened, but, somehow, we feel a loss in the emotional qualities."

"Is it," ask these parents, "that the rich possibilities of emotional life—the training of the will through ethical ideas—are not deemed worth while by our colleges?" Another form of questioning comes in this way: "We see, of course, that our daughter's mind is keener, the head work is stronger and more logical, there are evidences of mental training, but they all lead to the scientific, and absolutely away from the practical. And our daughter's lines in life are not headed toward the scientific." And after all, when we read these letters collectively we see that they all point to one expression: that the head of the girl has been trained, if not at the expense of the heart, then without the heart. "This would be all right," says one father's recent letter, "all very pretty if my daughter were going to be an astronomer, or to write Greek theses, or to be a professor in physics and chemistry; but she is going to be a wife and a mother, and what has she gained in the development of her natural womanly self by her four years of study? For the life of me I can't see it—and I am a college man."



A Question
That Will
be Asked

JUST WHERE THIS WIDESPREAD AWAKENING will lead it is difficult at this writing to say. But one thing is certain: scores—yes, hundreds—of parents are growing dissatisfied, and it will not be long before the dissatisfaction will make itself heard in no uncertain tone. And when the dissatisfaction takes form and reaches expression we shall be mistaken if it be not a definite pronouncement against the growing tendency of the almost entirely scientific character of our educational curriculum, and the gradual disappearance of the distinctly and avowedly moral and ethical element. And that this latter element is growing more and more conspicuous by its absence each year, in the curriculum of the average college, none can deny who has at all watched what we call educational progress. The reason given by our colleges and preparatory schools is, of course, that with the tremendous increase in the resources of the world's knowledge the standards are compelled to be higher. And there is no gainsaying the fact that the sum of knowledge has increased tremendously. The world of knowledge has unquestionably more to offer its students than ever before. But on the heels of this fact will come the hard, common-sense question: "Will the acquirement of this additional knowledge make for the type of man and woman that this country stands most in need of?" And that will not be an easy question to answer in the affirmative, if, indeed, it can be so answered at all. For it is not at all unlikely that the real answer to that question will be found in the negative.



The Head
or
The Heart?

FOR NO MATTER HOW MUCH WE MAY ADMIRE a clear, well-informed mind the aim of all education is not the training of the mind, if it leaves out of calculation the development of the emotional self. It is, indeed, a grave question whether our schools and colleges have not, in their desire to keep pace with the accumulating knowledge of the world, made of the ethical training a merely nominal article in their educational creed rather than a working principle in their educational practice. We are not prepared to say that our educators have done this. But it looks so. It is beginning to look distinctly as if too great a regard for the intellectual life has crowded

out a recognition of the ethical and moral life. To be clear of thought and accurate of expression is desirable in any man or woman, but it is no less desirable that warmth of feeling and sympathy of heart should exist. And if we are educating the head either at the expense of the heart, or without a due regard for the relation of the heart, the sooner we know it the better, and the sooner we stop it the better. We are already cutting a sorry enough figure before the nations of the world as being the one nation which has the only great school system without a vestige of a definite and formal instruction in religion in it. We may say that France has not. True, but in place of religious instruction when she stopped it she substituted one of the most thorough systems of moral instruction that the world has ever seen, and which she is today working with might and main to make the dominating note in her educational system. We in America are practically without either: we have neither the religious nor the moral note in our school system.

To say that the desire for education has become an obsession in America is not stating the case too strongly. And, as in the case of all good desires that get away from their true anchorage, it is, indeed, a question whether we have not got away from the correct angle in this whole matter. Are we not confusing the word education as meaning something that comes entirely out of and from books, instead of a drawing out and an unfolding of all those powers of head, heart and body that will best help not only to develop the understanding, but also to train the temper, cultivate taste, and form good habits and good manners?



Before Us
and Almost
Upon Us

THE QUESTION IS A TREMENDOUS ONE: no doubt of that, but it will have to be threshed out, and that soon. Already it is coming to the surface, and before long the American educational system in all its ramifications, from its workings in the public school to those in the university, will be one of the uppermost questions that will be engrossing us. It is before us and almost upon us. This is undeniably the century of the child, and everything appertaining to the training of the young is to be dominant in the public thought for some years to come. This magazine has felt the question as impending, and has for the last few years, and particularly during the last year, been quietly but thoroughly making its inquiries and investigations to see in what way it could crystallize for the parent the thought that lies misty in his or her mind. Naturally our thoughts have turned more toward the girls' college, and recently all our investigations have been turned in that direction. We are slowly but surely finding out some things and bringing them to the surface, and before long we hope to give them to our readers. What the results of these years of investigation will point to it is not possible as yet to say definitely, but that there is something wrong in the curriculum and conduct of the modern girls' college is already pretty clear. Moreover, it points very strongly in exactly the direction sensed by the parents: the absence of the human element in our educational practice. There has been a little too much of the turning up of the nose by the collegiate principal and trustee in the direction of the emotional life and the practical duties of the modern woman. It has become too much the practice to think of the college girl as the professional woman of the future, and not as the wife and the mother. Domestic science courses have either been looked down upon or viewed with indifference, or instituted under pressure and conducted in a half-hearted manner, while Herbart's great formula that the chief business of education is the ethical revelation of the universe has either been lost sight of entirely in some of our girls' colleges, or has been dwarfed into insignificance in others.



Decision
Rests With
the Parents

THIS IS AS IT SEEMS NOW at this stage of our investigations: our impressions may be lessened or may be deepened when the final conclusions are drawn. Our readers shall have these conclusions as they finally are. They will, at least, have the assurance that they will be conscientiously drawn from the facts, and by such authorities as can scarcely be questioned. For this magazine realizes only too well that in dealing with this question we are approaching the dominant question of the near future, and whoever speaks on it must speak with the word of authority.

But the time has come when every parent must begin to think seriously of how his or her child is being educated, and then decide whether the standards are right or wrong. And we fear the decision will be that they are wrong.