

What is Education?

BY GARTH GODFREY.

It is reported that when Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes was asked how to educate he replied: "Educate your grandmother." His was only another way of saying: "A man well-born is half educated."

It is undoubtedly true that a love of learning, like a love of vice, may be transmitted from parent to child; and those who are born in an atmosphere of books and study will, as a rule, take to reading as naturally as a duck takes to water;— while those who are born where oaths and drunkenness and quarreling and all kinds of vice rule and reign, are as a rule graduated in crime before they reach what are called 'years of responsibility.' Yet this utilitarian age is waking up to the fact that very much which is called education is so defective as to seem almost useless to its possessor and to the world.

The college graduates who have never been educated into the necessary art of making a living;— and the men who have risen from dirt, poverty and ignorance to fame and fortune are constantly quoted in proof of the belief that men, no less than poets, are 'born not made.' And yet while we must acknowledge that greatness may neglect or ignore ordinary methods of education and still achieve the prizes of life we must not ignore the fact that a properly cultivated mind is one that will do any work well.

Horace Greeley said that the educated son will make a better farmer than the uneducated father; as the educated daughter will bake and brew more skillfully and satisfactorily than the uneducated mother.

Wendell Phillips says: "The best education in the world is that got by struggling to make a living."

It is equally true that the best way to develop a man's muscle is to use his muscle rather than do his work by machinery; yet no argument is necessary to prove the use and value of machinery.

So while a struggle to make a liv-

ing may be the best education in the world it is a very costly one.

A certain sharper who was going into business with a man said: "My partner has capital and I have experience; after awhile I shall have the capital and he — will have the experience."

The value of experience is that it acquaints us with facts, and equips us with a knowledge of our resources. It holds us to the sanity of common sense and teaches us the market value of pearls and pebbles. We cannot however, always afford to wait for the slow, stern logic of events, and before investing our entire fortune in painted glass, which we mistake for fine jewels,— we should find it cheaper to go to a lapidary and find the precise value of the property offered. Education proper is that which redeems us from the necessity of bitter and humiliating experience. Of course no education can wholly do this. Whatever our advantages we must sooner or later drain the unpleasing dregs of self-knowledge; yet we may drink this cup on lofty heights of noble achievements or in the valley and shadow of utter failure.

No man expects success as general of an army, without a knowledge of military tactics; yet how much more unreasonable is it to expect success in the world's great battle of business without a knowledge of the was governing true success;— or the mental training necessary to take advantage of those laws by conforming to them!

A great deal has been said about "the cant of culture" and the "self-made men" who have held positions of trust and honor without the aid of books or colleges;— yet these things prove only that power is not confined to books and colleges; just as the feats of a pedestrian prove that a man may get over a great deal of ground without availing himself of either horse or steam-power.

Neither because we have railroads

and horses, do we argue that a cripple on horse-back is better than an athletic pedestrian.

The object of education is not simply to provide a man with rules that will obviate the necessity for using his own mind;— it is rather to draw out his mind, so that he can make rules for himself as well as take advantage of those which others have made. To educate is not merely to instruct to pile up knowledge. It is both to call out and to build up the powers of the mind, to inspire effort, to awaken enthusiasm and to develop intellectual power and moral force.

The great charm of Pestalozzi's system of education was said to be that he aimed not so much to convey information, as to create a thirst for knowledge and to enlarge the capacity for receiving it.

Mr. Emerson has told us that "the world is not wanting in examples of greatness so much as in sensibility to see them,"—so it is not wanting in educational influences, so much as it is in the power to recognize those influences and take advantage of them.

Whatever influences the mind or heart contributes to education;—and as both good and evil influences are ever at work, nature is quite often thwarted by false education as she is assisted by wise methods.

It is the complaint of the most thoughtful educators of the day that "intellectual education is out of all proportion to moral education."

A false estimate seems to have been too frequently made in regard to the respective values of mental and moral education. The former having been classed among substantial possessions, that may be converted into dollars and cents,— and the latter relegated to the realm of sentiment, or the province of dogma or creed, too elastic or accidental, for accurate weight or measure; or too narrow and blind to enter into voluntary thought or feeling: hence it is that even intellectual education falls short of its highest results because unassisted and unenlightened by moral education.

Vain and thrice vain to one born