

An excellent report.

You can find more of the Austin type of teaching in England - but chiefly in public schools. Do you see why?

Report regarding Religion, English and History teaching and syllabuses in the "Devonport High School" and "Jutton Secondary School" (Plymouth).

1. Plato considers that education should be based on the three parts of human synthesis, i.e., "αἰσθητικόν, νοητικόν and βουλητικόν or διηλεκτικόν", meaning the body and its senses, the intellect and the soul or will by which moral character is evolved. Modern curricula do not seem to depart ~~away~~ from this distinction: they provide in the first place "moral and physical activities necessary to a proper social and individual life - religion, manners, the principles of moral and social behaviour and the care of health and bodily movement", and in the second place "the intellectual activities necessary for an understanding of the body of human civilisation and for an active participation in its process" ^{1/}

1. Education of the adolescent pp. 188-189.

2. Of these many subjects I have chosen Religion, English and History not only because they are capital subjects but also because I am ^{most?} ~~most~~ interested in them.

3. Religious instruction in English schools has been left mainly to the initiative and the particular interests of Headmasters. The Board of Education have recommended two syllabuses, namely, "the Cambridgeshire syllabus of Religious teaching for schools" and "the Syllabus of Religious instruction published by the Education Department of the County Council of the West Riding of Yorkshire". From ⁷ these ¹ syllabuses ² differ ^{do.} ⁵ not ⁴ much ⁶

⁸ ⁹ ¹⁰ those in "D.H.S." and "J.S.S.". They include the "Names of Old Testament, History of the Church, Passages for memorising, the Beatitudes, Christian motives, Christian standard in family, in work etc, the whole New testament and the ^{Praxes}, Prayers and Hymns". The course extends to the first five years of school attendance, that is, from 11 to 16.

4. Unfortunately I did not attend the teaching of this lesson in any class and so I am sorry to say that I cannot write anything about the teaching method.

But as regards the effectiveness of the work done in this field I was curious to ask some pupils of the higher forms, who assured me that they do not like the lesson, although it covers only one period a week. Consequently, one can say that at the morning prayers, in which the whole school take part and where hymns are sung, much hypocrisy must exist. Rousseau was right in saying, that "When a child says he believes in God, it is not God he believes in, but Peter or James who told him that there is something called God", (Emile, Book IV), and in another ^{place} locus: "Every child who believes in God is of necessity an idolater or at least he regards the Deity as a man, and when one's imagination has perceived God, it is very seldom that the understanding conceives him" (ibidem); and, we say, the adult people in secondary schools have already entered their time of reasoning. In my opinion, religious lessons must be blended with history lessons for the lower forms, 11 to 14, and free discussion must be allowed on religious dogmas for the higher forms, from 14 upwards: This discussion and ^{the} explanation of dogmas must be made in the light of social evolution, because religion

is an "epiphenomenon" of social life rather than a matter of revelation.

5. I attended the teaching of English in Denmark "D.H.S", forms Ia, VI and IVL and in "S.S.S", form IIIc.

I. In Ia, I was greatly impressed by the breathing and pronunciation exercises in a room with open windows.

These exercises are considered necessary ^{for} ~~in~~ English schools, ^{for} there has not yet been established a uniform language sense ^{in England} ~~in England~~. Dialectical differences play an important part as regards both pronunciation and vocabulary. In the Greek language there scarcely is a need for such exercises, as an almost full homogeneity in pronunciation has been secured, although more than four dialects exist and greatly differ (one from another).

II. I went to form VL anxious to see how a Shakespearean drama, "King Henry ~~the~~ V", was taught to boys of 15 or 16, but I was rather disappointed. The whole period was spent by the teacher, who stood on the platform, the book on the desk opened before him, and read quickly Act V paraphrasing only where he thought it necessary and explaining difficult

explaining

words. He did not dwell on exalting the good passages and on comparing the speeches of the persons in the drama, whose roles were portrayed in different manners. Nor did he distinguish the characters of the drama, the foundation stones of the dramatic building. Contrasts and similarities seemed ~~not~~ to draw the attention neither of the teacher nor of the pupils. I noticed that only two questions were put by pupils on difficult words and that generally they kept were ~~keeping~~ a passive attitude towards the lesson. I attribute this phenomenon to the fact that pupils are not given the opportunity of discussion on the essential characteristics of the play.

Pupils' interest was not alive; they followed the teacher's rapid reading ~~not quickly~~ not being able to keep their attention intense. I received the idea that the lesson could give nothing impressive or moving and I recalled the words of some French connoisseur who said that "La scholarité est d'abord le triomphe des auteurs et après leurs tombeaux". It is obvious that without arousing emotion we cannot ~~teach~~ ^{neither} drama nor poetry.

III. To attend reading exercises I visited form IV $\frac{1}{2}$, in

the same school, and I liked it very much, indeed. I was told that the textbook, *Lavengro*, by G. Borrow, was used as one of the books appertaining to the pupils' acquaintance ^{with} ~~of~~ works of English literature. Change in the pitch of voice, good interpretation of punctuation and alternative reading by pupils and teacher made a variety of work at which pupils were very ^{much} pleased, as one could see from their keen interest in asking ^{too} many questions on words, phrases and scenes ^{from} of the novel. It was not the same teacher who gave courses in this form. Teachers' personality, will for ever always ^{be of first importance?} have the first say in the teaching method. But even here the teacher omitted to point out the particular units of the text, their sequence and interconnection, which work would greatly aid composition writing; no remarks on style were made, although the lesson was a success.

IV. In "S.S.S", form IIIc, the teacher would write words on the blackboard to be read by all pupils together in a ^{loud} ~~living~~ voice, and so he trained them in pronunciation by ^{more effective} ~~fuller~~ means. He also gave the pupils written work to be done by them using their dictionaries in the

class and under his supervision. Pupils must be early accustomed to the use of dictionaries and books of reference. The teacher kindly gave me much information with regard to his work: Extracts of plays and poems from an anthology are memorised, plays ^{are} represented and novels are used for rapid reading and private study; grammar and figures of speech are taught to give a more accurate knowledge of the language and to ameliorate the style; use, also, is made of B.B.C. for pronunciation and other learning purposes.

The lesson was a suggestive one.

6. I. The teaching of history in England seems to yield to an ~~scathing~~ ^{wild} fanaticism for the father-land. In all schools I have already visited the syllabuses mainly deal with English history, ^{almost} without the general background of European and World history. Unimportant events of national history are magnified and, on the contrary, most important events of European and World history, without which English history cannot be explained and understood, are omitted ^{altogether} thoroughly or minimised. This may perhaps not be harmful for children

under 14 and it is a good feature of the history teaching that Local history is a main subject to learn at this age; in higher forms this process cannot give the would-be citizens a complete idea of ^{the} human society in which they will live. Otherwise Moreover, this exclusiveness tends to create a blind national pride, the fruits of which will some day not be so sweet to taste; and, if some idea were to be conveyed into the pupils' minds, it would be not only incomplete but also wrong, because there scarcely is a nation in the world that owes more to other nations than the English. Greeks, Romans, Normans, French people and nowadays Americans and Germans have exerted or are still exerting an important influence on the formation of the English civilisation. Nevertheless, we must not deny the fact that English people, like ancient Greeks, are wise enough to adopt ~~these~~ ^{such foreign} elements after they have long been tried and adapted to their character so that they become of real use to them.

My opinion, then, is that the syllabuses of History in English schools should omit many unnecessary

details of ~~the~~ English history and include more subjects of European and World histories related to the English and of much more historical and instructive significance. This, I saw, is done only in one of the five schools I have already visited: Mr. Austin, the specialist teacher of History in the "D. H. S.", writes in his syllabus that "English (history) which claims the prerogative share of the syllabus is considered as part of a larger whole"; and I saw that he meant it as we shall see later. This should be done in all history syllabuses of English secondary schools.

II. The ^{demonstration (exposition)} ~~giving of the~~ lesson in form I, α, in "D. H. S." had been well prepared. The pupils had previously read their textbook on Alfred the Great and during the exposition they were called upon by the teacher to put relative questions and this was done in the most appropriate manner. The pupils then had to copy notes from the blackboard into their note-books. Pictures illustrating the lesson were also shown to them. The lesson, generally, was a good one but it seemed to depend more upon the teacher's personality ~~to~~ than upon the method applied.

III. Mr. Chesterfield, the history master in "J. S. S.", very keen in his subject, teaching in form III-C, made ample use of maps and extracts of historical novels to clarify his lesson. He showed me a list, his own work, of more than 200 historical novels of his own choice which may now be found in the school library for use. He also assured me that his pupils enjoy history lessons and that he tries to arouse their zeal by helping them in ^{research} ~~research~~ work, the results of which are books written by pupils. I saw several of these books with titles such as "The history of the ship", "Some churches of South Devon", "Arms and armour", etc. This work, so useful, is made by a single pupil or by groups of pupils, who have to consult, and give a list, of, books used and illustrate their work either by drawing or by painting them themselves or by cuttings from newspapers and periodicals or even by attaching post-cards. Such work, according to Mr. Chesterfield's opinion, holds good for boys of the lower forms only, (I to IV) and I think that he is right. In higher forms speculation and discussion must be the ~~quintessence~~ ^{essence} of history teaching.

IV. In form Va of the same school the lesson is made in the form of a lecture: Pupils have their notebooks and take notes directly from the mouth of the teacher. There are no questions and answers as in the lower forms; all, teacher and pupils, look very busy; there is no time to waste. The pupils will in a short time proceed to their School Certificate examinations and the material they have to cover is too much and their textbook not sufficiently helpful. So they ^(the pupils) do their best not to lose even a single word coming out of the mouth of the lecturer. I saw pupils using shorthand in taking their notes. The rhythm of the school work has been greatly accelerated and a sense of mechanisation of the lesson struck my mind as I attended this graceless scene. One might ask: "Why is this?" The answer on the part of the pupils would be tragic: "Because too much material is to be covered in taking our School Certificate Examinations". I would never teach my pupils in this way regardless of whatever examinations they might sit. Why to sacrifice the joy of learning to such nasty aims?

V. In relation to the above paragraph I should think that most teachers in England follow the same way of teaching in the higher forms. I noticed it in all the 5 schools I visited and met only with one exception. This is Mr. Austin, who teaches English history "as part of a larger whole" (see above p. 7). Mr. Austin was the only teacher who introduced me to the class, form IVc, and gave them a short but very good speech on strangers visiting England. It was very impressive, instructive and delightful. I felt myself obliged to thank him. He was ^{lecturing?} teaching on George IV's reign. He dealt with the Greek revolution of 1821 as well as with the Catholic Association in England in 1823. The first had disturbed, he went on, Europe, namely, Turkey, Russia, Austria, France and England; the second had shaken England alone; but both facts were explained and illustrated in the most instructive manner: The general background was illuminated by his eloquence and accurate knowledge and important details were not neglected. Questions, maps, notes etc. were ^{properly used.} in full swing. Such lessons are really worth seeing.

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OF HISTORY.

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Dear Mr. Xioutas

This is an interesting essay, and I am glad to have seen your work. You are mastering the English idiom very well and your treatment contains some stimulating comparisons and ideas. You are getting well acquainted with the spirit of a critical phase in English historical development.

Yours sincerely

David Douglas
