

true love of a man are those not dependent on an unseemly display of her person. And if a woman does not win the true love of a man, she had better a thousand times remain single.

### The Importance of Good Schools

In his valuable book, *Collapses in Adult Life*, Father Hull enumerates a list of degeneracies, as lamentable as they are common, which infect the very atmosphere in which we live and have our being, and make for the ruin of many who left school with a good record and a high ideal. These are:

1. Disorderly family life, resulting in a general lowering of the family tone.
2. Quarrelling and ill-temper in the family.
3. Gossiping and scandalmongering.
4. The drink habit and its consequent miseries.
5. Trifling with temptations against the Sixth Commandment.
6. Licentiousness in thought, word, or deed.
7. Loss of integrity in office work, and dishonest scheming.
8. Gradual neglect of prayer, Mass, and the sacraments, with indifference or practical loss of religion.

Such degeneracies are brought about by

1. The inherent proneness of human nature to evil.
2. The lowering tendency of a worldly environment.
3. The contagion of an atmosphere of indifference, and the lack of care for religion and morality. This contagion works
  - (a) through the idea that religion does not matter as long as a man leads a "good life";
  - (b) through the general reception of the principle that strict honesty and truthfulness are obstacles for a man who wants to get on;
  - (c) through the positive evil example of others;
  - (d) through yielding easily to temptations until bad habits are formed.

It is a matter of common experience that against these factors many young people strive in vain to maintain their ideals of virtue and manhood and quickly fall to the level of those who have either lost already or never possessed such ideals. Teachers and parents know too well how often boys and girls leaving school with pure and clean hearts are swept into the maelstrom and lost. As Father Hull says:

"So many children are brought up in our schools with the greatest care: instructed and trained and disciplined for years; and yet when they leave school and begin to face the realities of adult life, we find them turning out a sad disappointment. Pupils who at school were exemplary in discipline, pious in sentiment, and regular and devout in religious exercises, are frequently turning out a failure: some dropping off in their practice, neglecting Mass and the Sacraments and even their Easter duties; others even losing their faith and becoming either indifferents or agnostics or unbelievers."

It is an arduous problem. Environment, the worldly, anti-Catholic atmosphere of the press, of the public, of the greater part of English literature, have all their evil influence; mixed marriages and bad companions are still more demoralising in the effects. But why do so many succumb? No doubt the answer that man is prone to evil and has inherited original sin and its consequences explains a good deal, but it does not explain why so much care and labor should end in so much apparent failure: we should be prepared for a fair percentage of failures as a result of original sin, but we are not prepared for so many falls as we have to admit. Now, mark well the following words of Father Hull:

"We can only explain it by *want of grit, want of backbone, or want of character*. The school education has put no end of religious and moral education into their heads, and been accompanied by no end of pious practices. But somehow or other the teaching has never penetrated into their innermost minds, so as to take permanent hold therein."

So the question comes to this: Are our schools all doing the best they might do to *fortify* the young man or woman, to build up character in such a manner that internal weakness will be largely repaired and external dangers minimised? All who have had any wide experience of teaching and of the tone of different schools ought to recognise that there is a teaching that will do this, and a teaching that will not, just as there are schools that habitually turn out boys and girls who usually make good, and others that turn out too large a proportion of failures. Speaking from a fairly extensive knowledge we venture to say that the Irish Christian Brothers, the Marists, and the Holy Ghost Fathers have a high reputation for the tone and character of their boys, even in past academic years. We merely select these as examples: of others we might well say the same. Nobody can deny, again, that there are also schools that do not turn out boys who stand up to the enemy quite so sturdily, and we have heard that teachers themselves confess as much. What is done in one school ought to be possible in others; and there is no school that can not be vastly improved. So that the way of remedy seems to be reorganisation where necessary, and in other cases further attention and care towards the end of fortifying youth and forming character on hard, wear-and-tear lines. Boys and girls must be educated to realise that their lives ought to be dominated by principles: and true education consists in the grasp of principles by the intellect and the application of them by the will: it comprehends therefore *Knowledge* and *Volition*.

As regards *knowledge*: it is true to say that no Catholic school is fulfilling its mission unless it puts Christian education first and foremost. Better teach children the Christian Doctrine than win prizes and scholarships for secular learning and neglect religious teaching. The teaching of religion ought to be first. It, and it alone, is essential. The Catechism is not enough. Secondary schools ought to provide a course of higher religious instruction such as will give children a logical and co-ordinated knowledge of the truths of their faith. We consider that it would be a disgrace for any secondary Catholic school to send out into a pagan world children who are unable to answer the ordinary objections brought against the Catholic Church, and who are like dumb beasts when asked to give a reason for their belief. Moreover, parents who have the true education of their children at heart ought to compel the teachers to provide such instruction. In every secondary Catholic school some approved manual, such for instance as the course we are following in the *Tablet* at present, ought to be made a class book. We wonder how many Catholic teachers ever read our weekly page of instructions for the children. We wonder how many of them even know as much as this elementary course contains.

The character is not formed on intellect alone. The will must be trained to act promptly on right principles. The authority of law must be established beyond question: a high conception of duty must be engendered at all costs. Not to do what one likes, or to omit doing what one does not like, but to do what is right and to omit what is wrong: in a word to obey God's Law and to do what duty calls upon us to do, must be the constant aim: it ought to come as a matter of course to all: and it will if good habits, or virtues, are formed rightly and solidly. Virtue means established good habits and virtue, and not superficial and emotional piety must be the basis of character. Routine practice of pious exercises, sentimental devotions and ephemeral fervor are useless without the real solid foundation of stern virtue which will go on doing what is right however hard it be and however dreary it may seem. Once teachers get at the knack of grounding children in virtue of this kind, accompanied with proper instruction, the right tone will follow and the school will be fulfilling its duty. And it is true to say that a Catholic school that fails in this respect is not worth supporting.

In proportion as ye have been sparing in your own chastisement, will God spare you.—St. Pacian.

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