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1921.

627TH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING,  
HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOM B, THE CENTRAL HALL,  
WESTMINSTER, S.W., ON MONDAY, MARCH 7TH, 1921,  
AT 4.30 P.M.

PROFESSOR H. LANGHORNE ORCHARD, M.A., B.Sc., IN THE  
CHAIR.

The Minutes of the previous Meeting were read, confirmed, and signed, and the CHAIRMAN called on the Rev. H. Costley White, M.A., Headmaster of Westminster School, to read his paper on "Public School Education."

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*PUBLIC SCHOOL EDUCATION.* By the Rev. H. COSTLEY  
WHITE, M.A., Headmaster of Westminster School.

ARE the Public Schools wanted? The particular irritant which set me upon examining this question in your company this afternoon was a remark made in a little book by Mr. William Paine. "Our public schools to-day," he says, "do not hold up any great ideal to the youth that passes through them. They have no great ideal to offer." And again, in stronger terms—"What if, in the absence of any commanding ideal, the training we are giving public school boys undoes them utterly before they have time to declare themselves for what they are?" I do not know the author of the book himself, or with what credentials he enters the lists of those who chasten our professional pride. All that I know of him is gathered from the autobiographical portions of his book, *The Aristocracy of Comradship*, which he was kind enough to send to me. From these pages I learn that he has a happy gift of literary style, a fresh and optimistic outlook on life, a large sympathy with "the people," and that he was not himself at a public school. But criticism, whatever its source, is generally a wholesome thing. Nor are schoolmasters wont to be defrauded of their share in it. Indeed, it is not many years since an ingenious author dedicated one of his works

To the most criticised,  
The least advertised,  
The most poorly paid  
And the most richly rewarded  
Profession in the world—The Schoolmaster.

No institution is so perfect but that it can wisely profit by healthy and vigorous criticism. And the public schools themselves make no pretension to any measure of perfection. They are very conscious of the many defects they have, and reiteration almost persuades them of the existence of many others that they have not. It is the recognised privilege of the Englishman to grumble at what he loves, and in the public schools, with which he readily finds fault, he yet feels an affectionate pride. This sentiment perhaps cannot, certainly need not, give an account of itself; for the dissatisfaction reasoned and often reasonable grounds can be alleged. The public schools are not in the forefront of any educational or intellectual movement. It is not in them that educational experiment finds a warm welcome or a congenial atmosphere. The few bold spirits who, from time to time, make ventures in untrodden paths are generally left to languish through the opposition or the neglect sometimes of colleagues, sometimes of parents, not often of the boys themselves, seldom, it is only fair to add, of headmasters. Not that the public school by any means shuts its ears or its doors to new ideas, new methods, or the admission of new subjects, as I hope to show presently; but it cautiously waits, as a rule, until the necessary experiment and verification have been made elsewhere. Future historians will hardly take note of any pioneer work within the public schools since Arnold's day. The main contributions to the science of education have come from outside—from the psychologists, with their increasing and perhaps sometimes precipitate activities, from the students of the wide and comprehensive sciences of sociology and economics, from the lecture halls of scientific historians, from the world of art and music, from the medical profession, and from the publications of the educational philosopher. Certainly the last 70 years have not been devoid of great schoolmasters, some few of whom I venture to think will be entitled to rank also as great men. But their greatness has lain rather in their administrative powers, or in their force of character and personality, or in their scholarship, than in any originality of educational idea. Moreover, if in the list of eminent and honourable names associated with the invention or development of a new educational system there is no name of a public school master, there are understandable reasons for the omission. The headmaster of a public school is not the irresponsible owner of his domain. He is the trustee of an inheritance and its traditions, *hereditas non sine sacris*.

Further, in a staff numbering anything from 20 to 50 masters, by whom the actual work is carried on, he has with him a proportion and often a majority of senior men. Men who have worked on certain lines for 20, 30 and even 40 years—capital teachers as many of them are, wise counsellors, devoted to the interests of their boys—nevertheless have neither inclination nor ability to change their method or their outlook. These form the senate of the scholastic State. And in educational politics as in other spheres it is the habit if not the function of a senate to modify the enthusiasms of a fresher blood. A third explanation of the staidness of our educational gait lies in this : a public school deals with pupils for some four or five years only at a critical age, thirteen to eighteen, when the great majority of parents are unwilling to submit their children to the hazard of experiment. With young children novel methods are freely tried ; young men of eighteen and upwards have freedom of choice largely in their own hands. It is at these two periods that new movements can more readily be attempted, as the history of education in the last two decades shows ; the public school must deal more gently and more cautiously with the more awkward age. A parent is at least as potent as a headmaster in determining the nature of a boy's education. And a parent's choice, in which the mother's influence is rightly predominant, is guided by a caution which may perhaps be not far removed from the virtue of prudence.

From what has been said let us recognise and admit the truth. The public schools are not the growth of to-day or yesterday. Like States and individuals they have their history ; their present and their future are conditioned by their past. You cannot exhibit the full-blown blossom of modernised ideas unless you start and man a completely new school. There was once a parable of new wine and old bottles ; it is only if you pour slowly and pour wine from which the youthful exuberance is refined away, and do not try to fill too full, that the skins will hold. A public school may be progressive, it may grow in grace, it cannot be as though it had never been. Thus also it comes about that we are blamed by one set of people on the ground that we perpetuate class distinctions which are no longer desired, and there are others by whom this same characteristic, perhaps more fancied than real, is accounted one of our scanty merits, and for whom it provides a sufficient motive, whether implicit or avowed, for submitting their sons to the mercy of an institution

in which on other grounds they secretly cherish but little faith. But why, in the face of so much demerit, are the public schools more overcrowded than they have been at any time in their history? If the verdict against them on so many charges be one of at any rate limited condemnation, the sentence seems to have been pronounced by a strangely Gilbertian court. Several contributory causes are at work, some of them of a temporary character due to the unusual conditions of the last six years. What the increase in population has been since 1911 we must await the census returns next month to know. But whereas there will doubtless prove to have been at least a normal decennial growth, in spite of certain obvious counter-conditions, the normal provision of school accommodation throughout the country for public elementary and public secondary education, which was required in order to keep pace with a growing population, has not been made. Hence the overflow from public elementary schools has swelled the numbers of the public secondary schools. These in turn have passed on their surplus to the grammar schools and smaller public schools, and by a continuation of the process of pressure as it were from below the great public schools have expanded to their utmost limits. Together with this movement, which is a merely arithmetical one, there has developed in the country a real interest and belief in education. This is a happy awakening in our national life. The experiences of the war have brought home the reflection that education is power—power to live a fuller and nobler life—to thousands who in former days were indifferent or sceptical. Nor, I think, should we overlook the influence in the last few years exercised upon the popular imagination and understanding by the fact that for the first time in our annals the administration of public education is in the hands not of a politician, but of a practised educationist. At the same time many of those who valued scholastic training and wished to provide it for their sons in the best form that lay open to them have had unprecedented financial opportunity to gratify their wish. But this is not all. Public school education has been throughout the war, and still is, one of the few commodities that can be purchased at a cost considerably below the current standard of prices, in some cases indeed at a figure below its cost price. We are officially informed that prices a few weeks ago were 176 per cent. above the pre-war rate—a computation which perhaps included the cost of many things that nobody

buys ! If public schools had yielded to the desire to raise their fees to meet this figure in any great degree, it would now be costing you about £500 a year to send your son to Eton, and over £300 to send him to Westminster. Unanimously the schools have refused to take that view of their duty in a time of national strain. School fees have been raised only to a degree that would enable schools to live. The average increase, as far as I have been able to gauge it, is not more than from 30 to 40 per cent. Schoolmasters have not sought to shift the rest of the burden on to other people's shoulders, but to bear it themselves. Schoolmastering is essentially a pastoral office, the obligations of which are understood and for the most part cheerfully accepted by those who enter upon it. But the labourer is not unworthy of his hire ; and in spite of the cynic's remark in Mr. Mallock's *New Republic* that £60 a year is too much to give to your Curate and too little to give to your cook, there is another point of view. School fees as they stand are a large sum for parents to pay ; they are a small sum for schools to receive. And what is the result ? In mercantile terms the parents have been able to purchase education, since the price has not been allowed extravagantly to soar above their means, and in the educational labour market there are no unemployed.

But all these considerations are secondary. There is a profounder and more permanent cause of the continued existence and stability of the public schools. They would not be sought after unless they met, I will not dare to say satisfied, a real demand. There must be something in their educational and social system—for under these two heads the criticisms of them may most conveniently be discussed—which is worth having and which a modern democracy desires to have. What is this elusive something ? To take these two things in the reverse order, ὕστερον πρότερον Ὀμηρικῶς :—

Consider first the position of the public schools as a social institution. Human beings associated in a State develop their institutions to give effect to their aspirations and ideas, some good, some bad ; the institutions of any period are an index and an expression of the national character which has given them birth ; and in turn they react upon the national character. Hence in the history of education one sees, for example, in ancient Athens the establishment and the reaction of an elaborate system of private day-schools aiming at a high degree of culture, quick wits, wide knowledge and critical taste, with

fees varying according to the social and pecuniary position of the parents and the caprice or necessity of the teacher. At Sparta, on the other hand, the aim was not the cultivation of the intellect, but of the physical courage and the moral character of a citizen soldier. Here was established the public boarding school, supported by the State, with prefects or monitors, housemasters, and a headmaster who was attended by a body of floggers. In this Spartan system the mind was neglected in favour of the body and of a modicum of specially selected moral qualities, among which the qualities of responsibility and honesty found no place. Here, in these two city States of antiquity we see contrasted the germs of two groups of features which, in our own system, are reproduced no longer in isolation or in antagonism, but in harmonious combination.

But not to pursue further this fascinating theme, which would take us too far afield, let us ask what, in England, is a public school. Strictly speaking, of course, it is not a public school at all, but just the opposite. It is an institution controlled not by any public authority but by a body of trustees or governors privately appointed under its particular deed or charter or other instrument. Hence in America its counterpart—Grotton, or St. Paul's—is more properly called a private school; the public school is the State school. Historically, however, the public school in England took its title, in days before the establishment of national education by law, from its distinction from the old local or grammar school. A public school drew its clientele from any part of the country far or near, and it took resident pupils either as scholars on its foundation or as commoners boarding under supervision authorised by itself. It served the locality, but was not merely a local school; it served the public at large, but was not limited by any public control. The system has grown apace in the course of five centuries, and particularly in the nineteenth century ancient foundations have been confirmed and enlarged, old local or grammar schools have been extended, refounded, re-endowed, new foundations have been established by royal benefactors, by the generosity of individuals and guilds, by the enterprise of masters and the public spirit of friends, until in 1920 on the roll of the Headmasters' Conference, which in a sense represents the public schools to-day, there stand the names of no less than 125 schools.

In these schools there are being educated some 43,000 boys. In the face of these figures, is that really a tenable view which

is held and is expressed that the public schools are not schools for the public, but are an aristocratic preserve? I doubt if it was ever so. Certainly in the records of Westminster I find Ben Jonson, the son of a bricklayer, in the sixteenth century, and in the seventeenth, Henry Stubb, an impecunious mother's son, sitting side by side with their fellows without question asked. And I suspect that the annals of other old foundations reveal the same tale. But in the present day, strictly interpreted, the argument must invite us to assume that the 700 members of the Upper House have been so lavishly endowed by Providence as to have 60 sons apiece, all of an age to be at school together in a single year! It were hardly possible even in a eugenic paradise. But divesting the matter of any element of absurdity, let us interpret the term aristocracy in a far wider sense; let us take a smaller selection of the public schools; subtract from our 125 schools the 50 which in some form or another are in receipt of public monetary grants from the Board of Education; or take a narrower limit still, and consider the argument in respect only of those 55 schools which are entitled to membership of the Public Schools Club—even at that you are required in a single year to produce a supply of nearly 19,000 boys between the ages of 13 and 18, who are supposed to be drawn from the high-born families of the country, from stocks of ancient lineage. Even this supposition is "a thing imagination boggles at." The argument cannot, I think, be maintained either by fancy or by fact. It is not a small and exclusive section of the people that is served by the public schools; it is not one class but several. Directly, the education of the schools is shared in by the various grades of the upper and middle classes from whom the 43,000 pupils come; indirectly and in progressive stages by the whole community. For what is the process? Is it not this? The traditional and characteristic inheritance which the public schools preserve is a certain social culture, a refinement of manners, speech, mind, character and taste—qualities which form the distinctive equipment of the educated man. Such qualities are acquired in part by hereditary transmission combined with early home influences; in part, but to a lesser degree, by teaching; in part, and to the greatest degree, by constant and intimate contact with those who already possess them. It is this flower of social culture that for one short stage in its development is nourished by the public schools. It is a thing recognised as in itself desirable. It is for this reason that public school

education is desired. According to the measure in which these qualities are possessed, nature and environment conspire to differentiate individual from individual and, as individuals are multiplied, class from class. In any community there are also other powerful forces at work differentiating individuals and combining them in classes. But one of the most powerful of such forces is the possession or the lack of this social culture of which we speak. Now if I am right in believing that the public schools have this estimable gift to give—if it be true, as the witness of the figures attests, that their influence is reaching over a wide and ever widening area—it follows that, instead of perpetuating class distinctions, the public schools constitute a potent agency for dissolving them.

Education, however, costs money ; but what is worth having is worth paying for. It is worth while for the State and the municipality to pay for public education because the national character depends upon it. The recently increased expenditure upon improved salaries and the provision of pensions for teachers is an economy, because it ensures that children shall be taught by better teachers. Similarly, it is worth while to bear the burden of educating boys in public schools, both because to share in the individuality and character of a public school is a valuable thing, and because, if the more cultured classes suffer diminution of their culture, other classes must in measure suffer with them. It is worth while to submit, not cheerfully perhaps, but with resignation, to recent increases of fees, because if a generous Board of Education has granted pensions and improved emoluments to the masters employed under its authority, the least the public schools could do was to make for their staffs provision as good as that of the Board, and perhaps a little better.

I now come to the educational aspect of our subject. Education is not identical with instruction. To educate means to develop the capacities of the mind for work and for enjoyment. Mere ability, however great—mechanical, scientific, linguistic, even literary—is a different thing from an educated mind. Education involves beyond instruction the additional force of inspiration. A recent writer has happily illustrated the meaning of this. “The difference between instruction and inspiration,” he says, “seems to lie in this ; that by instruction a man can learn how to handle the normal and expected, but only inspiration will enable him to deal with what is abnormal and unexpected,

and specially with the most abnormal and unexpected of all things—his fellow man.”\* I think that the real test, therefore, of the worth of public school education is this ; not whether it produces instructed boys, but whether it produces boys capable of dealing with their fellow men as leaders, companions, followers, in industry, in government, and in the various relations of life. What a boy knows is less important than what he is. But we are not entitled on that account to neglect his equipment on the side of knowledge. The common cavil that our boys leave us knowing nothing after four years of effort is no doubt to be taken as an Englishman’s form of pleasantry. But what the public schools neither do nor set out to do is to equip more than a few of their pupils with a fund of specialised knowledge, and these few only after the general groundwork has been adequately laid. It is in this, I think, that, at their present stage, they have attempted to strike the balance between two principles, the old and the new. The old principle insisted that a boy should be forced to learn a number of things because his masters thought them good for him ; the newer principle declares that a boy should only learn what his inclination suggests. The public school desires that all boys should learn certain things up to a point at which he has on the one hand acquired a fund of general knowledge—resources upon which he can draw and which he can enlarge as the circumstances of life may require—and on the other hand has both the experience and the data upon which to base his choice of further study in one selected direction. It is at this stage that the abler boy develops into the scholar, taking either Classics or History or Modern Languages or Science or Mathematics as his special sphere.

But what is, and what should be, the nature of the preliminary training before that point, which the future scholar shares with the rest of his schoolfellows, the great majority, whose abilities will never make scholars of them or take them much beyond that limit ? The prevailing tendency is to make this preliminary training one from which the classics are excluded. My own belief is that a general training which includes a modified study of the classics is the wiser course. May I quote some lines that I penned a few months ago in support of this belief ?

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\* *A Study of Silent Minds*, by K. E. Kirk. (Student Christian Movement.)

“ If a man takes the lid off his mind and looks in he can inspect its furniture. The equipment is roughly of three kinds, designed for the understanding respectively of God, of man, and of the physical universe. The first is provided by training in religion, the second by training in the humanities, and the third by training in mathematics and science. All three are equally essential and interdependent. Up to the middle of the Victorian Age the third kind of training was not recognised as generally necessary to educational salvation ; the world of science was as yet being only explored by a few pioneers. To-day popular imagination endows scientific education with universal and almost exclusive sacramental grace. The humanities are losing caste, and particularly that part of them which is the foundation of the whole structure—the study of the classics. If it be allowed, from what has been said, that the humanities form an indispensable, though not the sole medium of education, it is worth while to consider, even with the baldest brevity, the integral part that must still be played in modern education by the study of Latin and Greek.

“ These two are called dead languages ; nevertheless they are a speaking parable of the survival of the spirit. For though their body be dead, in the sense that they are no longer spoken tongues, it is not too much to say that they are the creative and sustaining force of the best of contemporary Western thought, and the parents, still fruitful, of modern tongues. Living languages—Arabic, Chinese, Russian, German—stand in less living relation than they to English thought and speech. Philosophy, history, law, poetry, art, spring from the culture of Greece and Rome and are learned best when the learning is imbibed from the original source. What the ancients thought, said and did has a direct bearing on present-day problems, social, political and theological, and often suggests the way of enlightenment. The classics are therefore of immediate practical value to modern life. That this view is by no means merely the prejudice of schoolmasters or University tutors may readily be seen by those who will do themselves and the nation the service of reading the pamphlet on this subject issued by the Government. *Reconstruction Problems*, No. 21, published by His Majesty’s Stationery Office. Price 2d.

“ It is not denied that something of the classical mind can be possessed through translations. But a man is only too conscious that he is not really at his best in second-hand clothes. More-

over, that method misses the real training of the mind, the intellectual gymnastic, which comes from the patient study and gradual mastery of the languages themselves. Humanistic training without Latin and Greek is like what, I suppose, scientific training would be without mathematics.

“ At the public schools during the past thirty years the modern side has grown apace, while the classical side in many, not all, schools has dwindled. But we are coming (should I say, have come ?) to realise that the hard line of cleavage between the two has had its day. Classical-side boys should and do learn science, and modern-side boys are regaining at least a grudging respect for Latin, if not for Greek. Education at school should be comprehensive until the stage is reached where specialisation begins—whether in classics, science, history, mathematics, or modern languages—and the more classics a boy has done in the earlier stages, the better he will prove to be in his special subject later, whatever be the line of special study he adopts. Setting aside the few really clever boys, who will naturally come to the top in any department, I think that most schoolmasters will agree that the classical-side boy is the boy of better calibre and the classical side produces the better boy. He will generally beat the ‘modern-sider’ on the latter’s own ground—in French, in English, in History, at any stage in his school career ; and in the later stages, if you give him a few months to make up leeway, in science and mathematics too. In the United States this observation, which is with me only an impression from experience, has actually been verified from statistics. These show that on every basis of comparison the classically trained students in the institutions from which the figures are drawn exhibit a superiority over the others *in non-classical subjects*, which is ‘striking even to those whose faith in the classics is most profound.’

“ In the past the study of Latin and Greek grew distasteful, not only perhaps because many parents failed to realise its true value, but because the treatment was made too intensive at the lower stages for the average boy. It is for those only who at the later stages specialise in classics that the intensive culture should be reserved, entailing hard composition, critical examination of difficulties in grammar, syntax and style and the more searching study of antiquities. For the general classes it is possible soon to learn to translate and appreciate an author without any great ‘drudgery’ in the minutiae of the language.

An alert exercise of the faculties is required, and the powers of accuracy, judgment and imagination are sharpened by unavoidable practice."

But, after all, what subjects a boy takes or what he rejects is a question of relatively small moment. What really matters is the kind of boy he is. Is he made by his public school life, or is he marred? It is as a school of character that the public school must stand or fall. To help each boy to become something like what God would have him be—all else is subordinated to this great aim. To this end I think it may fairly be said that many public schoolmasters do their best to acquaint themselves with the most helpful suggestions of modern thought and to utilise them on their boys' behalf. They endeavour to make his lessons interesting to him because lack of interest breeds inattention, inattention idleness, and the various ills of which it is chief mistress. They realise the wisdom of enlisting his interest in music and in art, and create opportunities for the cultivation of these pursuits in order that the emotional and artistic sides of his nature may have free and healthy play, and his impulses may be diverted from harmful modes of expression.

They encourage games and bodily exercise of all sorts because it is recognised that the glow of a well-breathed body promotes an active mind and begets clean thoughts. Psychology is leading them to a more sympathetic understanding of the soul of the boy; explaining when and why to make allowances for moral or mental weaknesses and what remedial measures to employ. A newer understanding of the principles of punishment has introduced other methods to dispute the prerogative with that which once alone was understood. We are learning the grounds for being more patient with stupidity, and we are learning more and more to respect each boy as a person rather than as one impersonal and undifferentiated unit in a mass. Nor, I am sure, is any question more deeply pondered by the schoolmaster than that of the religious training of the school. There is essentially a spiritual basis to all our work. The lesson in divinity is a religious lesson; the sermon and the confirmation class are an integral part of the life of the place. Few subjects are debated by masters and their friends and by old boys in conferences and in discussions so keenly and so constantly as how to bring home the power of religion to a boy's heart. The help and advice of men of deepest spiritual experience is sought from

outside and generously placed at our disposal. We doubtless fail; but the ideal is there before us, and it is no shame to fail in the attainment of a great ideal. The only shame were not to try.

With these forces at work I think that after all the public schools do try to aim at a well-defined and honourable goal. They try to send out into life, and into the liberty which comes of a disciplined character, a body not of highly educated men, but of men who are capable of serving God and the community in many capacities; men whose tastes on the whole are refined, who help to preserve the higher things of life because they have learned themselves to value them, and who by their moderation and the respect which it earns exercise a steadying influence in the State.

#### DISCUSSION.

PROFESSOR H. LANGHORNE ORCHARD (in the Chair) had much pleasure in asking the audience to express their thanks to the author of the Paper for the interesting and lucid manner in which he had brought before them the difficulties besetting a public school-master's work, and the public benefits by which that work is attended. The public school teaches children not their private duty only, but also that which they owe to the public. The public school fits the boy (or the girl) for *public* service, and for taking useful place in the life of the community. The thing to be specially aimed at is not acquisition of knowledge so much as acquisition of character and healthy development of mental faculties. A good digestion and assimilation is preferable to food aggregation, be the food never so excellent.

*Education* is better than mere instruction, and the author rightly affirms their distinction. The young mind must not be treated as a lumber room, nor even as a granary. It is a field, with qualities and potencies to nourish, develop and fructify the seed. By leading the learner to help himself, education tends to successful co-operation between teacher and pupil, unto public advantage. But education must be religious education, based on the fundamental Bible truths of *Christianity*—God's revelation of Love in the personal Saviour.

Increased knowledge and ability, unsafeguarded by right *character*, render their possessor increasingly dangerous and mischievous to the unfortunate community of which he is a part.

[A hearty vote of thanks to the author was passed with acclamation.]

Mr. W. E. LESLIE said : There appears to be a tendency in the public school system to regard ethics from the standpoint of æsthetics, to treat morals as a department of manners. Conduct is often motivated rather by considerations of "good form" than moral imperatives. To this defect of motive must be added defects of the code. For example, although "the dignity of labour" receives at least lip service, there is little recognition of the duty of labour, except, paradoxically, for those for whom it is a necessity. The obligation to serve in return for the benefits derived from the social order is often ignored or even repudiated. If there are but 150 public schools (as stated by the author), then either they are not alone in passing on our cultural inheritance, and in training men to be "leaders, companions and followers," or we are confining these inestimable privileges to a small plutocratic minority of our three to four million boys—and that in days when such training is more necessary than at any period in our history.

Lieut.-Col. HOPE BIDDULPH said : Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask the author of the admirable paper we have heard read this afternoon an elementary question on the subject of instruction. Many of us no doubt remember instructors who, though possessed of the highest mental and scholastic qualifications, were yet unable, so to speak, to lower their minds to the level of their pupils, and so failed to impart the desired instruction to them. My question then is, Are teachers instructed in the art of teaching during their own educational career, and is there any recognized training for this ?

Another point I would mention is one that will perhaps be thought out of place for a public school, as it is generally supposed to have been undertaken at an earlier stage of the pupil's training.

I refer to handwriting, orthography, punctuation and style, regarding which, when I sat for examinations many years ago, a notice used to head the examination papers to the effect that

marks would be apportioned for these essentials. I think the average public school boy is often lamentably deficient in all of these, and that more attention should be paid to them at this stage of his training.

Mr. W. HOSTE, B.A., said: Mr. White in his valuable paper has disarmed criticism by welcoming it. But I do not think the serious critics are from the ranks of the public schools—that is, from those who know them best—but from without. Perhaps the criticism that the public schools are an “aristocratic preserve” is aimed chiefly at a few, such as Eton, Harrow or Winchester, but would not “pluto-eratic” be more correct even in these cases? Such schools are full, not of aristocrats, but of very ordinary boys, whose parents can afford the price. Probably most of those who inveigh against the inequalities of life would not mind being able to “afford the price,” even at the risk of perpetuating those inequalities. As has been said, “£5,000 a year and a seat in the Cabinet would cure most Socialists.”

A public school in the technical sense means an “atmosphere” and a tradition, which cannot be manufactured, but must grow. You might start a hundred institutions and label them “public schools,” but you could not command the real thing. One sentence in the paper struck me especially. I think I quote it correctly: “Parents are unwilling to submit their children to the hazard of experiment.” I had, what I considered, the great advantage of being seven years at Clifton, under the late Bishop of Hereford, John Percival. He was of the Broad School, and probably not out of sympathy, to a moderate degree, with the Higher Critical Movement, but I never heard one doubt raised by him as to the authenticity of any part of the Holy Scriptures, either in sermon or divinity class. Nor do I ever remember a hint from his lips of the existence even of those redoubtable personages, J and E, or of that legendary fragment P. His anxiety was not to show how “up-to-date” he was by raising doubtful questions, but to put the fear of God into our souls. In contrast with him, one of the under-masters, who conveyed to us boys no impression whatever of true religious conviction, used to spend the Divinity hour spinning into our innocent heads the theories of Kuenen, Ewald, Welhausen. His great *forte* was the Psalms—not their contents, however, nor their message to us boys, but who wrote them, or rather who did not write

them. The only thing he seemed sure of was that the Psalms usually ascribed to David were not by David. We boys sat there wondering what he was driving at. Now we know.

Last week a young relative of my own was interviewed by a headmaster as to his fitness for a post of under-master. "I want you to teach the Bible," he said, "but I don't want any of the new-fangled notions." I think that headmaster had gauged the feeling of the average parent.

Mr. SIDNEY COLLETT said he had noticed that towards the end of the lecture the lecturer had spoken of "spiritual instruction" given, and of "sermons preached" at the public schools. But the question he wished to ask was, Did what might be called the religious teaching merely consist in "instruction" by the masters and sermons, or was the definite study of the Bible as the Word of God one of the regular and definite subjects in the curriculum of the schools? He asked this question because he believed this was the great need, not only in our public schools, but in all schools.

Lieut.-Col. M. A. ALVES said: Referring to a remark made by a previous speaker, I am fairly well convinced that in regard to the faults in the great public school system of education, the Universities are chiefly to blame. The great majority of teachers in these schools come from one of the Universities, and carry on the traditions learned there.

As an illustration of the mind of one University: I have a young relative at Oxford. He went there shortly after the war broke out, joined the Officers Training Corps, and some months later the Territorials, with whom he served until the armistice, when he returned to his college.

Those who had left temporarily for service were permitted to have their stay on return shortened. My relative told me that he had two subjects to get up to qualify for his degree; one compulsory, one permissive; the former Philosophy, the latter History.

I looked into one or two of the philosophical works to be studied. Much of the stuff was most blatant rubbish; and what was not was expressed in such a verbose and confused manner that it was a task of some difficulty to understand what the writer meant. Yet this was the compulsory subject.

History has been described—and rightly, I think—as the only true philosophy, whose great lessons are for all time ; yet th's really important branch of learning was made only permissive ! This shows the mind of our oldest and most “distingué” University !

It is for the public school masters to put pressure on the Universities, and, if possible, to compel them to change their plans.

I am an old man, and speak of some forty years ago. If I have not been at a public school myself, I have met many who have ; and whilst I have found their manners very good, I could not say the same of their morals, which were conventional, or of their general intelligence, which was commonplace.

As to morals, a man might bilk his tradesman, but he must not cheat at cards.

I remember once in India making a whole mess-table impotently furious when, in answer to a remark that officers as a whole were honourable men, I answered to the effect that if they were so they would look on it as dishonourable to cheat in horseflesh as at the card-table.

Referring to the remark of another speaker, that the great classical scholars were the greatest successes in after life, I would say that this seems to be putting the cart before the horse. Brilliancy in classics connotes a prompt and retentive memory, a sign of natural physical vigour—the true cause, humanly, of success.

#### AUTHOR'S REPLY.

Mr. COSTLEY WHITE, in his reply, thanked the speakers for their generous and kindly criticism, with most of which he agreed. Though a teacher's best training was gained in the school of practical experience, he said that he always encouraged a young master to take a course of preparation afforded by the admirable Training Colleges now established at the Universities. In the Divinity lesson the first and last principle must be to find out what was the message which God was sending to all of us here and now through the lips of the Biblical writers of the past ages.