

## Character Building in Education

A Forceful Argument in favor of Making the Moral Education of the American Youth of Equal Importance to the Intensely Practical and Scientific Education Governing Our Present Educational System

By Edward O. Sisson

(Continued from the March issue)

### III

WE MUST next ask after the causes which have led to this comparative neglect of the moral aim in education.

Without pretending to anything like a complete comprehension of the question, we venture to point out some forces that have contributed to the present situation. The first of these has already been hinted at: the place formerly belonging to moral training is now occupied by intellectual work. Moral education has not been deliberately rejected nor recklessly thrown away; it has been crowded out. The intellectual content of the curriculum has grown to such vast proportions that it has usurped almost the whole attention and energy of the school. Consider the increase and expansion which have taken place in recent times, and are still in full tide of advance in every field of human knowledge. Who can grasp the contrast between our own day and the time of the Attic philosophers, with respect to the mere quantity of knowledge in the possession of the race? Davidson tells us that Aristotle probably knew all that was worth knowing in his day! Socrates turned his attention first to natural science, or rather to nature; but he found nothing worth knowing there,—all was uncertainty, guesswork, disorder, contradiction. Consider the brevity and simplicity of the history possessed by the Greeks; they knew less of their own race and of their predecessors than we know, and the great part of what we know as history was not yet enacted, let alone recorded. Their literature, priceless in quality, was beautifully small in quantity, so that one man might easily be familiarly acquainted with all of it.

As for Natural Science, since its birth in the seventeenth century, it seems to increase in a sort of geometrical ratio, without any sign of pause or retardation. Moreover, as has been implied on a previous page, modern man has created a new and vast field of knowledge in the form of his own achievements in art, industry, and especially in social and political life.

It would seem that from the earliest times men have hoped that the progress of knowledge would render easy the task of comprehending the universe, but the opposite is the fact; the world was never so hard to understand. Science has banished, not mysteries, but many illusions and superstitions that served for easy solutions; it rarely solves one problem without laying bare two harder ones. We are confronted with a sort of Frankenstein monster of intellectual complexity, so that one almost wonders whether the spirit of man shall prove equal to

the task set before it by its own ceaseless and cumulative creation.

But this sort of catalogue of contrasts is tiresome to the reader, and not complimentary to his intelligence; let him rather survey for himself the field of human knowledge and see how in every part the older world possessed a mere fragment of what we possess today. Intellectually, we drag an ever-lengthening chain; and these accessions to our knowledge, indispensable though they are to the upward movement of the race, are yet a veritable load upon our backs.

Now, the school is the special organ of society for the intellectual part of education. Not that the school is to neglect the moral aim, but its work is peculiarly on the side of intellect, and it is to accomplish its moral ends largely through thought and knowledge. Hence the school has been driven to the front in the task of mastering the intellectual content of modern times, and has unconsciously become engrossed and absorbed in this intellectual task. As the task has grown with the years, and as the demands upon the school have become heavier and more insistent, the school has never been forced to drop other lines of effort one by one, and bend every energy upon this. To bring the matter down to actual school-room work, how many a teacher is so put to it to "cover the ground" of the course of study that she has little time or strength for any attention to the bearing which knowledge has upon life, or to the incul-

An Electric Range  
installed in your home at  
terms to suit your  
convenience

Northwestern Electric Co.  
Light—Power—Heat  
Washington at Tenth

Atwater 4000

MILK, CREAM,  
BUTTER, EGGS,  
COTTAGE CHEESE

Portland-Damascus Milk Co.  
Cornell & Brook Sts, Portland Ore.



The place to trade

STAPLES  
The Jeweler

266 Morrison Street

Haakon Glasoe

WATCHMAKER

Reliable Repairing of European and  
American Watches a Specialty  
412 EAST BURNSIDE STREET Oregon  
Near Grand Ave. Portland,

## OPPORTUNITY

Some people wish for it;  
Some wait for it;  
Some hope it will be thrust upon them.  
But the people who make the most of opportunity  
command it,  
And they usually have a savings bank book handy.

Open a savings account NOW

The Northwestern National Bank

Portland Oregon

Member Federal Reserve System

Place Your Orders With The Western American Advertisers—and Tell Them Why