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Dicken's work in field of  
education.

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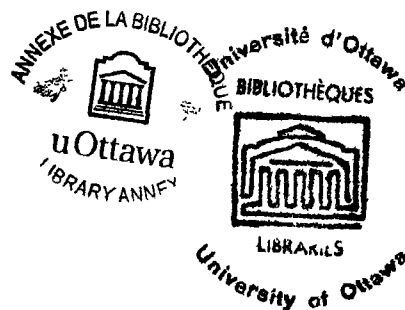
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(DICKENS' WORK IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION)

Much has been written in praise of Dickens, but perhaps no living man can do him justice. He had a golden pen and he used it to spread feelings of charity and Christian brotherhood of love and sympathy for his suffering fellowmen, and his voice was probably the most powerful in the nineteenth century for the amelioration of social conditions. He brought untold joy and happiness to millions of hearts by raising their hopes and their spirits. In every part of the English-speaking world, and wherever his novels were translated he spread good will and brotherly sympathy and love. He employed fiction in its highest and most ennobling work, the bettering of social conditions and the destruction of social abuses. No man has ever so successfully combined great fiction with effective social reform. We might speak at great length of the many phases of social betterment which Dickens proposed. He attacked every form of abuse and injustice which he discovered in the England he loved. He exposed the insanitary conditions of the slums; he pleaded for prison reform, for abolition of public execution, for revision of the penal code; and he criticized the slowness of justice in the civil law courts.

But there was one reform which seemed dearer to his heart than any other, and that was educational reform. It is no exaggeration to say that this was the field in which he did his greatest work. With our present highly organized and efficient system of education, it is almost impossible for us to understand the indifference of the English nineteenth-century public to this very important question. There were no

laws forcing children to attend schools, and in fact the schools which did exist had no protection or official support. The members of the government did not recognize the necessity for universal education even among the very poor. The result was that the schools were comparatively few and those that did exist were very often a reproach to humanity. Anyone was able to set up a school anywhere, and there were no public inspectors to ascertain whether or not such schools were conducted efficiently. The result was that the number of cheap private schools conducted with the utmost lack of efficiency was very great. A large portion of the English population received not even the rudiments of an education, and as many more received instruction under masters so unfitted for their profession that they derived little benefit from their schooling. Dickens pleaded for an organized system of education in every part of England and for good schools and efficient school teachers. In the second place he would extend the benefits of education to every child, even though he be the son of the very poorest labourer. Moreover, he thought that such an education should be compulsory. Dickens exposed the many abuses which were tolerated in the schools throughout England, and he indicated what he considered were the proper methods of teaching children.

We purpose to outline Dickens' work in the field of education by indicating first of all his reasons for desiring an organized system of education throughout the entire country. Then we shall speak of his criticism of that system of education, so common in certain circles, which would abolish imagination and all higher feelings and lights of the soul in favour of reason and cold fact. And finally, we hope to indicate what he considered were the proper and most effective methods to be employed by both parents and teachers in the instruction of children.

It must be remembered that Dickens was a novelist and a writer. He was not a teacher and so had very little to say about the actual methods which should be employed by teachers in teaching reading, geography or some other specific branch of study. On the contrary, he was concerned only with the general attitude and disposition of teachers towards their young charges. He had a great sympathy for children, which came out of the lonely and neglected years of his own childhood. He realized the injustice to the child of the attitude of indifference for its welfare which was so prevalent. He was one of the first men of his time to recognize the immense benefit which would come from universal education, not only to the individual but to the country as a whole.

Time and again he spoke to the English people in "Household Words", urging upon them the necessity of educating young children. He lamented the deficiency of the commonest rudiments of education which existed among the humbler classes as compared to people of the same rank in other countries. He pointed out that England stood lowest among European countries in this respect. Her schools had no official support; her teachers were responsible to no one for their competency or moral conduct. It was next to impossible for the children of the poor to enjoy the fruits of an education, whereas in France and Belgium it was not only a privilege offered to every child but was also compulsory. Only one child in every fourteen received an education in England, whereas in France and Belgium the proportion was one child in every two and one-quarter of the population.

Many times Dickens brought to the public attention schools founded by enterprising individuals, in which the most neglected waifs were taken off the streets and changed into intelligent and useful citizens. He

described schools in which habits of decency and order led young people from the road of crime to honest industry and self respect. He eulogized those teachers who gave their time and energies to bringing forth self-respecting citizens out of the worst of human material.

There was a real necessity for giving the English people such accounts of schools in which neglected children from the slums and even from the prisons were taught reading, writing, Christian doctrines, as well as a trade or industry. For universal education was by no means popular. Many people sneered at the very idea - "Teach paupers to read! What next?" Reading was considered a premium for business and writing a temptation to forgery. Education was sure to lead a poor man to the gallows. For some reason or other many leading figures feared the results of universal education. They were afraid that the poor would no longer be satisfied with their lot and would rise in revolt. They felt that the labourer would not continue to submit to the hardships of his state in life.

Dickens believed that such an attitude was insupportable and entirely unjustifiable, in fact. He believed that even a small amount of learning would lighten and brighten the life of the labouring man. To a working man caviar and other delicacies may not be half so satisfying to his stomach as roast beef, but it is not so in the field of the intellect. A man's hands may be roughened and calloused with hard labour but he can still appreciate the finest works of art and literature without becoming a poor<sup>er</sup> working man. Education will enrich him and make him happier. He will live a fuller and a wiser life for it is the faculties of intellect and will that raise him above brute animals. Dickens spoke on many occasions of the thousands of immortal creatures who were condemned without alternative or choice to tread, not the primrose way to the everlasting bonfire, but a

road of jagged flints and stones laid by ignorance. In one of his discourses in which he explained the advantages to be gained from education, Dickens told his readers that a little learning enabled the shepherd's boy to gaze at the stars with Ferguson; it permitted the poor man to walk the streets with Crabbe; the shoemaker to have Bloemfield in his garret; the ploughman to follow his team with Burns. Dickens saw that the English people had quickly become an industrial race, and in this he found another reason for furthering education. Amid the incessant hum of machinery and the dull routine of a monotonous job, the mind of the working man had to be fed with a knowledge which would refresh, soothe and lift him in spirit away from the drudgery; otherwise he could not stand the strain. Industrialism had quickened the need for education.

We remember Ruskin had much the same idea when he urged that the people be permitted to have more beauty and artistry in their lives. There was something so impersonal and inhuman about work in a factory in the midst of so much machinery. There was no sense of personal accomplishment, as a tailor might find in a suit of clothes he had just completed. The mind and soul needed some escape from the dreary gloom of the factory. And it was for all these reasons that Dickens too, believed that the working man should be given the comfort and advantages of an education.

Dickens succeeded in arousing the indifferent English public by his exposal of the criminal records of the young people of England. His plea for universal education was prompted in no small measure by his conviction that ignorance was breeding criminals. Children grew up in the slums of London and other large cities amid filth and dirt, hunger and extreme poverty. Many of them had no parents or relatives to care for them. They slept in alleys and on the streets, for they had no other place to go. They

were half starved, and in cold weather, half frozen. Though England's wealth had increased beyond the hopes of even her most ambitious manufacturers and merchants, ~~there was~~ no one to care for the wretched orphans who were herded in her great cities. These children lived in ignorance, and as may well be expected, the only industry or trade they ever learned was the art of thieving. It is small wonder that they stole, for they had or knew of no other method of keeping alive. By exposing the miserable condition of these children Dickens aroused the English people to a recognition of the injustice that their indifference was causing.

Our reformer did not hesitate to set before a complacent people the most startling statistics, which no doubt were as surprising to the people of his day as they are to us. In "Household Words" on April twenty-second, eighteen hundred and forty-eight, he published the following statistics: Out of forty-one thousand men taken into custody for crime, eleven thousand one hundred had no trade, occupation or training of any kind. Out of twenty thousand five hundred women, seventeen thousand one hundred had no trade. Of this last mentioned number, nine thousand could neither read nor write; eleven thousand could only read, or read and write imperfectly, and only fourteen could read and write well. The proportion of total ignorance among men was thirteen thousand. Only one hundred and fifty out of the whole forty one thousand could read and write well. The rest of the thirteen thousand had no more knowledge than enabled them to blunder over a book like a little child. This, stated Dickens, was what was called education in England. The term was woefully misused.

On another occasion Dickens speaks of a child six years of age who had been twice as many times in prison as years had passed over his head. These children Dickens referred to as the eggs from which *goat* birds are hatched, and he added, "If you wish to check that dreadful brood

you must take the young and innocent and have them reared by Christian hands."

In the six criminal prisons of London there were confined in 1816 one thousand three hundred and fifty-seven lads and three hundred and twenty-six girls under twenty years of age. This included one thousand and seventeen boys and two hundred and sixty-four under seventeen; and seven hundred and eighty-eight boys and one hundred and sixty-nine girls for felonies alone. Many of the boys were condemned to long prison terms for only a small offence or for no offence at all. Very often they were put in with hardened criminals whose company confirmed them in crime. At the expiration of the term they were flogged and released without a penny to make a new start in life. The next day they were back again.

Dickens believed that a very large amount of juvenile crime would be prevented by instruction and education. He pointed out that since the boys and girls knew no trade and had no means of earning their living, they naturally took the only course open to them, which was pilfering and thieving. They knew of nothing but misery, hunger, dirt and crime. It was little wonder they grew up a menace and a reproach to good English people everywhere.

When Dickens had gained the hearing of a very large portion of the English people through his very humorous Pickwick Papers, he risked his fame and popularity by a new and startling innovation in the history of the novel. He wrote a book about the adventures of a poor little workhouse orphan, the lowest and most neglected bit of humanity. The story, set in the midst of London slum life and crime, had for its chief purpose the abolition of neglect and ignorance among the children of the poor. Oliver

Twist, a pathetic little figure, survives a precarious existence in the workhouse only to fall into the hands of Fagin who is engaged in the not uncommon business of training young people to become thieves. If the benevolent public had no regard for such waifs, there were always men who were willing to take them in and teach them the only trade they knew. No reader of *Oliver Twist* could help feeling the necessity of taking those children from amidst such intolerable conditions and teaching them the rudiments of Christian education.

In the same novel Dickens depicts the Artful Dodger, a boy, cunning, callous, villainous, daring, a man while he was yet a boy. And therein lies the pathos of it: a boy possessed of intellectual sharpness and ingenuity who, had he been allowed the proper training, would have become a fine and resolute citizen. We are reminded of the old saying, "The greater the sinner, the greater the saint."

And then Dickens introduces Nancy, a young girl who has never known a friend except among the scum of society. She would be pretty had her beauty not been marred by excessive drinking and by abuse received at the hands of ruffians. And yet she is not incapable of goodness and kindness. When Rose Maylie tries to rescue her from her sordid life, she tells her that it is too late, but that if someone had befriended her years before, things might have been different.

The duty of the English people was made manifestly clear by Dickens. They had to form an organized system of schools to take these young people off the streets and rescue them from a living death. They had to do it for their country's sake; they had to do it for justice's sake.

To urge the need of universal education, Dickens employed all

the powers of his resourceful pen. He spared not his trusty sword of satire and he always knew just where to locate the vulnerable spot in the enemy. He has very often been called "the lord of tears and laughter" and indeed, perhaps no writer ever deserved the title so well. But herein lay the power of his genius in bringing about reform. When he could make his readers laugh and cry, he could lead them to become indignant with him over social abuses. He won their sympathy and their confidence, and then they supported him in his campaign for justice.

If anyone should wonder why educational reform was dearer to Dickens' heart than any other reform, the answer is to be found in the unhappy days of his childhood when he was neglected and suffered from lack of education. The story of his childhood is well known to most of us. His father, the original of the immortal Micawber was a good-hearted, but very impecunious man, who, after several years of struggle with debt, finally succumbed and departed with his family to the Marshalsea Prison. At the age of nine or ten, when he should have been at school, young Charles was placed in a blacking factory at a wage of a few pence per week. The secret agony of his sensitive soul in being placed among such companions as Nick Walker and Mealy Potatoes rankled in his breast all the years of his manhood. Even as a boy he understood the injustice of a social system which permitted children to work in factories while their young minds were thirsting for knowledge in the same manner as plants thirst for water. Concerning this period of his life he wrote:

"It is wonderful to me that even after my descent into the poor drudge I had been since we came to London no one had compassion enough on me - a child of singular abilities, quick, eager, delicate, and soon hurt, bodily and mentally, to suggest that something might have been spared, as it certainly might have been, to place me at any common school."

Again he writes:

"No words can express the secret agony of my soul as I sank into this companionship and felt my early hopes of growing up to be a learned and distinguished man, crushed in my breast. The deep remembrance I had of the sense of being utterly neglected and hopeless; of the shame I felt in my position; of the misery it was to my young heart to believe that day by day what I had learned and thought and delighted in, and raised my fancy and emulation up by, was passing away from me never to be brought back, cannot be written. My whole nature was so penetrated with the grief and humiliation of such considerations, that even now, famous and caressed and happy, I often forget in my dreams that I have a dear wife and children, even that I am a man; and wander back to that time of my life."

It is true that Dickens never forgot his early battles with neglect, poverty and ignorance, and that one of the greatest purposes of his life was to rescue other children from the same unhappy condition. When his eloquent pen pleaded so sincerely with his fellow Englishmen, urging to organize a universal system of education, he remembered with exceeding clarity the period of his young life when he wandered through the streets of London, his whole soul longing to be taught.

We know that Dickens was finally rescued from this state of neglect and sent to school. We know too that he suffered greatly even at school from the harsh and exceedingly inefficient methods of education employed by his teachers. Later on we shall have occasion to mention the reforms he desired to bring about in educational methods. It should be remembered that his teachings on such matters of reform were prompted in no small degree by his early experiences at the hands of incompetent and brutal

teachers.

When we considered the inestimable work Dickens has done to reform abuses in the field of education, we can scarcely regret these years of misfortune which he suffered, since they were the source of his zeal for reform. Without them it is doubtful whether he would ever have reached the same measure of just indignation that caused him to denounce the neglect of a people to provide schools for their children.

Dickens believed that education was the great hope of any country for a happy and prosperous future. Education, he argued, was the beginning of all good in man, and consequently the State should not overlook the opportunity it afforded of bringing up a race of good, useful and industrious citizens. Dickens did not believe that education should stop at reading and writing, with perhaps some knowledge of geography and history; it should include likewise the acquiring of a useful trade which would equip the student with the means of earning a living for himself and of becoming an independent member of society. He foresaw a happy future for England's men and women when even the lowest and the poorest would have the opportunity of sharing in the benefits of education. And he did everything in his power to hasten that day.

Dickens had another reason for urging the State to organize an official system of education throughout the land. This reason lay in the fact that the number of inefficient schools was very large. Anyone was free to set up a school, regardless of his academic ability or moral character. The result was that an increasing number of individuals who had proved themselves useless in any other profession opened schools. The abuses which were administered in these schools were nameless. The masters were ignorant, except

in the art of flogging. Dickens introduced many schools in his novels, which were intended to arouse the parents of England, and in turn, its statesmen, to a recognition of their duties towards abolishing such institutions. He himself, as we have indicated already, had suffered from the cruelty of an unkind master during his childhood. He tells us also that as a boy he had heard accounts of other boys who had been brutally injured by physical punishment and deformed for life. These stories had made a great impression on his mind and this is one of the reasons he described in horrible detail the school conducted by Mr. and Mrs. Squeers. It is almost unbelievable that parents could be so negligent or indifferent to the welfare of their child as to entrust him to the care of a couple so ruthless as these two worthies. Sometimes parents brought a charge against a doctor for distorting a limb instead of healing it, but who, says Dickens, can ever repay the damage done to young minds by incompetent and cruel masters? Dickens' vivid portrayal of such masters was successful in greatly reducing their number even within the space of a few years.

To limit the number of unsuitable teachers, Dickens urged the necessity of normal schools in which those wishing to enter the profession might receive instruction in the proper methods.

It is difficult to estimate the immense service Dickens did for the people of England in the field of education. He was not alone in his campaign for better teachers and better schools, but it is no exaggeration to say that he was the leading figure of his day among the reformers. This, no doubt, is because in his position as novelist he reached a much larger section of the public than another reformer might hope to do. It is not easy to give an adequate picture of his work in educational reform and of

the extent to which he was successful. In this brief discussion we purpose to divide our study into two main divisions. The first of these deals with his criticism of that system of education which endeavoured to abolish from schools all appeal to the imagination, to the fancy, to the affections and feelings of the child, and substituted solely an appeal to reason. The remainder of the discussion will have to do with what he considered to be the most effective methods of education.

THE FALLACY OF UTILITARIAN EDUCATORS

"In a utilitarian age, of all other times, it is a matter of grave importance that fairy tales should be respected. Everyone knows that a nation without fancy, without some romance never did, never can, never will hold a place under the sun. To preserve their usefulness they must be as much preserved in their simplicity and purity as if they were actual fact. Whosoever alters them is guilty of an act of presumption and appropriating to himself what does not belong to him." (Household Words)

The age of Dickens was an industrial age; it was an age of great expansion in trade and commerce; an age of startling progress in science; new and hitherto unthought-of inventions came into being. England was proud; she was Mistress of the seas; she ruled a hundred million people. Her merchants were the best business men in the world and she was proud of it. Blinded by great material wealth and possessions, there were many men in England who forgot that man had a heart and a soul as well as a mind. They believed that there could be no joy nor truth nor satisfaction except in the possession of facts. To men of reason there was nothing of great importance in life but facts. Educators began to tell the people of England that their children should be taught only facts. Any appeal to the imagination and fancy of the child, any appeal to its sensibility, to its feelings and affections should be entirely abolished. In other words, only its mind should be developed. This system or theory of education, a direct result of the utilitarian atmosphere of the century, was determinedly opposed by Dickens who spent much time and effort in its destruction. He believed that the development of the imagination and fancy of the child as well as the schooling of its affec-

tions was of just as much importance as the informing of its mind. He held that imagination was the fountain head of human happiness and pleasure as well as the source of every other kindly feeling in the breast of man. In Household Words we find him writing these words concerning the benefits accruing to the young children from the reading of fairy tales:

"It would be hard to estimate the amount of gentleness and mercy that made its way among us through these slight channels. Forbearance, courtesy, consideration for the poor and aged, kind treatment of animals, the love of nature, abhorrence of tyranny and brute force, many such good things have been first nourished in the child's heart by this powerful aid. It has greatly helped to keep us ever young, by preserving through our worldly ways, one slender track not overgrown with weeds, where we may walk with children, sharing their delights."

So important did Dickens consider the cultivating of imagination as part of the education of children, that he wrote a novel, "Hard Times", which is largely devoted to the refutation of the theories advocating the education of the mind only. In this novel Dickens introduces to us a certain Mr. Gradgrind, a typical exponent of the utilitarian theory of education. He is a man of fact and calculation, a man of realities, who carries a rule and a pair of scales and will weigh out any parcel of human nature which you present to him. If you tell him there are some things in human nature which defy calculation by a rule and a pair of scales, he will laugh at you. This man has a school which is conducted according to his principles. He has five children of his own who also are models of the new educational system. Dickens describes Mr. Gradgrind as a galvanising apparatus which storms away tender young imaginations and substitutes a volley of facts. He makes his pupils adults before they are ever children.

Modern educators tell us that childhood is a time for play, for communion with the elves and the fairies in the land of make-believe. It is a period of preparation during which the tender mind of the young child, too timid and innocent to grasp the stern realities of the world about it, lives in a world of its own making. Now and then it comes in contact with the real world, but always it withdraws again into its haven of fancy for it finds the outside world too chilling for its young faculties. This period during which the child is gradually becoming accustomed to the world of realities is as necessary to its proper development as sunshine and water are to a young plant. Educators of the present day are placing more and more stress on the importance of play in the child's development.

What modern educators are teaching to-day was first taught by Dickens in the last century. In a utilitarian and materialistic age, he urged the importance of the development of the imagination. He saw that unless the child was permitted to enjoy this period of its life its growth would be unnatural. Just as a plant which is deprived of a certain chemical substance during the early stages of its growth will be unhealthy and stunted, so a child which is deprived of food for its imagination will be dull and stupid. This is the very truth Dickens wished to make universally known -- that the development of the imagination and of the affections of the heart are an absolutely necessary part of any system of education. In "Hard Times" Dickens launches a satire against the ineffectiveness and absurdity of the utilitarian methods of education; and then he shows us the deplorable results which are brought about in the lives of the pupils by their strict adherence to the principles they have been taught.

Dickens opens this novel with a memorable chapter which summarises so thoroughly the educational principles which he wanted to destroy

that we are tempted to quote it here in its entirety. Mr. Gradgrind is speaking to the school master, Mr. M'Choakumchild.

"Now, what I want is Facts. Teach these boys and girls nothing but Facts. Facts alone are wanted in life. Plant nothing else and root out everything else. You can only form the minds of reasoning animals upon Facts; nothing else will ever be of any service to them. This is the principle on which I bring up my own children and this is the principle on which I bring up these children. Stick to Facts, sir!"

The scene was a plain, bare, monotonous vault of a school-room and the speaker's square forefinger emphasized his observations by underscoring every sentence with a line on the schoolmaster's sleeve. The emphasis was helped by the speaker's square wall of a forehead which had his eyebrows for its base, while his eyes found commodious cellarage in two dark caves overshadowed by the wall. The emphasis was helped by the speaker's mouth which was wide, thin, and hard set. The emphasis was helped by the speaker's voice which was inflexible, dry and dictatorial. The emphasis was helped by the speaker's hair which bristled on the skirts of his bald head, a plantation of firs to keep the wind from its shining surface, all covered with knobs like the crust of a plum pie, as if the head had scarcely warehouse room for the hard facts stored inside. The speaker's obstinate carriage, square coat, square legs, square shoulders, nay, his very neckcloth, trained to take him by the throat with an unaccommodating grasp, like a stubborn fact, as it was -- all helped the emphasis.

'In this life, we want nothing but Facts, sir; nothing but Facts!'

'The speaker and the schoolmaster and the third grown person present all backed a little and swept with their eyes the inclined plane of little vessels then and there arranged in order, ready to have imperial gallons of facts poured into them until they were full to the brim.'

Mr. M'Choakumchild, the schoolmaster, has been well trained for his position as a teacher of facts. There is no more imaginative nonsense about him than there is about Mr. Gradgrind. He has been taught all branches of science -- orthography, etymology, syntax, prosody, algebra; he has taken the bloom off French, German, Latin and Greek; he knows the histories of all the peoples who have ever lived on earth, as well as the productions, manners and customs of all countries under the sun. These and more are the facts he is prepared to pour into the minds of his young pupils. A well-informed teacher, one might call him, but Dickens does not seem satisfied, for he exclaims, "If he had only learnt a little less, how infinitely better he might have taught much more".

Everything about the school is consistent with the new principles. Even the pupils are distinguished by numbers. Sissy Jupe, girl number twenty, is the daughter of a horsebreaker attached to a travelling circus. She is a pretty child, bright and above the average in qualities of mind and heart. Upon learning that her father is a horsebreaker, the master cautions her that she must never mention that objectionable calling at the school. Mr. Gradgrind objects to her being called Sissy for it is not a name and therefore inconsistent with fact. He then asks her to define a horse. The child who has been friendly with horses from her very early childhood is unable to comply with his request. Bitzer, however, having more experience in the school of fact, replies without hesitation:

"Quadruped. Graminivorous. Forty teeth, namely, twenty-four grinders, four eye-teeth and twelve incisive. Sheds coat in the spring in marshy countries, sheds hoofs too. Hoofs hard, but requiring to be shod with iron. Age known by marks in mouth."

"Now girl number twenty", says Mr. Gradgrind, "You know what a horse is."

But somehow, the reader feels that girl number twenty is not any wiser in regard to a horse than she was before. Sissy has affectionately patted her father's horses probably before she could talk, and one feels that in spite of her failure to define a horse she has a far deeper understanding of the essential nature of a horse than has Bitzer. This is but Dickens' first proof that a mere repetition of facts alone cannot inform the mind. The imagination is necessary to assimilate the facts and form a mental picture. But Mr. Gradgrind does not see this and he is quite delighted with Bitzer, a brilliant product of his school.

The second lesson is conducted by a visiting politician, a mighty man at cutting and drying, whose ambition in life is to force people to be men and women of fact and of nothing but fact. The purpose of his lesson is to prove that good taste is synonymous with fact. This is the new discovery. No longer will practical men and women have representations of horses on their wallpaper because horses never walk on walls. Similarly they will never have flowers on their carpets for no one ever walks on flowers in fact. Sissy has the misfortune to say that she likes flowers in carpets because they are so pretty and gay. The gentleman is quite horrified with this lack of taste. As Sissy has made the still greater mistake of using the word "fancy", he sternly counsels her that she must never fancy or wonder about anything. Men and women have to be governed by facts alone. That is why taste is improper unless it is in perfect harmony with facts. The new and wiser generation will not decorate their crockery with lively representations of birds or butterflies, for birds and butterflies never perch on crockery. All such decorations will be replaced by combinations of mathematical figures in primary colours.

And so ends the first lesson on taste. Perhaps it never occurred to the gentleman that by removing the creations and combinations of the

imagination he was taking away all the beauty and pleasantness in everyday life, and substituting only drabness and uniformity. Certainly he never would have admitted that by banishing those little bits of colour and beauty he was only making this life unbearable. But Dickens makes this amply clear in the later chapters of his book, when he shows the deplorable results of the so-called practical education in the lives of Lucy and Tom Gradgrind.

As the reader looks upon Mr. M'Choakumchild, he feels that he is lacking something which is essential to a successful teacher. We begin to wonder how anyone so filled with dull unimaginative facts will ever inspire his pupils with that zeal for knowledge which is a necessary prerequisite for learning. It is the imagination which makes the facts interesting, gives them spice and human interest. Later on, Dickens tells us that Sissy was very slow in the acquisition of dates unless there was some pitiful incident connected with them. But no such appeal to the imagination or to the feelings had a place in the Gradgrind philosophy. Mr. M'Choakumchild's methods were as cold and stony as the facts he imparted, and he soon made his pupils just as cold and dry. No wonder Dickens calls his method of teaching "Murdering the Innocents", for in destroying the imagination he certainly was destroying all that was kind, generous, beautiful and hopeful in their young hearts.

Dickens gives us a more detailed picture of Mr. Gradgrind's methods. From their tenderest years he ushered to the classroom the five little Gradgrinds. Like an ugly ogre he took childhood by the hair and dragged it into a dreary statistical den. For how could his classroom be anything but dreary when he had banished from it poetry and song and lore. Every attempt was made to keep out of their young lives anything which might stimulate their imagination. Nursery rhymes or fairy tales never brought a song to the heart or a smile to the lips of these children. No little Gradgrind ever recited "Twinkle,

twinkle, little star, how I wonder what you are". There was no need to wonder, for at the age of five, they had dissected the Great Bear and Charles' Wain. No little Gradgrind had ever heard of the cow with the crumpled horn, who tossed the dog, who worried the cat, who killed the rat who ate the malt, for they could tell you that the cow was a graminivorous ruminating quadruped with several stomachs. Surely there was nothing the little Gradgrinds lacked, for the whole circle of the sciences had been opened to them as soon as they could talk. According to the Gradgrind philosophy, it was preposterous to suppose that children could desire anything more than these children received. As we shall see later, Dickens shows that their childhood was most unhappy. Although they had at the tips of their fingers the most admirable quantity of facts, still they were discontented, unsatisfied and heavy with the weight of their knowledge. We shall see too, that their education failed to prepare them for the battle of life and that they faltered miserably when confronted with difficulties.

As Mr. Gradgrind directs his steps homeward from his model school, he secretly rejoices at the success of his experiments. On the outskirts of the town, he comes upon a circus advertisement announcing to the public, in gay and gaudy colours, that the most entertaining wonders can be found within the tents. Miss Josephine Gleary is at that moment doing her graceful equestrian Tyrolean flower act. She is to be followed by Signor Jupe who will elucidate the diverting accomplishments of his highly trained dog, Merrylegs. Mr. Gradgrind would hurry by did he not see a group of children peeking through the cracks of the wall to catch but a glimpse of the wonders within. He stops to scatter the urchins and preserve them from the misfortune of seeing anything so incongruous with facts as a Tyrolean flower act, and what does his unbelieving eyes see but his own mathematic Thomas and his metallurgical Louisa trying with all their might to see the show. Mr. Gradgrind tries to find an explanation

for this unseemly behaviour as he leads his two erring children home. Blinded by his own principles, he does not find an answer to his problem. He cannot understand why children who, from their earliest years have been taught all branches of study, could desire anything so frivolous as amusement.

Dickens, however, leaves no doubt as to what he believes is the answer to this dilemma. He would tell Mr. Gradgrind that the human mind, and especially the mind of the child, requires relaxation from strenuous study. The harder the child studies, the greater is the need for rest from serious tasks. The imagination has to be nourished in proportion as the intellect is fed with knowledge. We see the result of Mr. Gradgrind's methods in the two young people. They have none of the youthful spirits and enthusiasm which usually characterize children of teen age. They are sullen and whereas Louisa shows more boldness, Tom gives himself up to be taken home like a machine. Louisa is a pretty girl of about sixteen; Tom is younger by a year or two. The sight of Louisa is pitiful, for struggling through the dissatisfaction in her fact, there is now and then a sudden eager uncertain expression which is the light of a starved imagination, still alive after years of repression. Dickens likens these flashes to the changes which come to the face of a blind person groping his way. Louisa offers but one excuse to her father -

"I was tired, father. I have been tired for a long time."

"Tired? Of what?", asks the astonished father.

"I don't know of what - of everything, I think."

Louisa is tired for she has never been taught anything which could arouse her enthusiasm. Facts have no interest for a child unless they contain some appeal to the imagination or the feelings. There is nothing in her young life which ever arouses her enthusiasm or gives her pleasure. Her father believes that only the acquiring of knowledge can produce complete

happiness. He holds that man, being a reasoning creature, needs nothing but facts to make him useful and happy. Too late does he discover that there is a philosophy of the heart as well as of the mind, and that if the heart is neglected, the creature is neither happy nor strong nor hopeful. If a master scorns and represses every youthful feeling in his pupil every ardent desire of the heart, he will produce a girl or boy who has no motive in life, no ambition, no desire to live. A student's head may be stored with facts, but he will never accomplish anything worthwhile unless he uses his imagination to apply his knowledge to concrete cases. Moreover, it is from the heart that there springs all higher motives and aspirations. A creature without a heart is bound to be ruthless and self-centered. Louisa and Tom have been taught to smother every charitable impulse, every desire for innocent amusement. They have been forced to consider only facts, quite apart from all sentiment or human interest. One of the results of this is Louisa's unfortunate marriage which she enters into with no consideration of her own feelings. In the case of Tom, he becomes a selfish whelp, a gambler, so ruthless that he does not hesitate to use his sister as a tool.

If the new education were a success, then we might expect its models to be brighter and more intelligent than the average child. This is not the case with Louisa and Tom. They are both possessed of a quantity of facts quite out of the ordinary for children of their age and yet we do not feel that they are nearly as well educated as the ordinary student. For of what use is education unless it makes a child practical, useful and enthusiastic? Louisa and Tom are not practical for they do not know how to use their knowledge. They are not enthusiastic, for the acquisition of so many facts has crushed them. They long for a happiness they have never known. Tom's sole ambition is to be away from the "jaundiced jail" which he calls his home. So long taught to

stifle every flare of his imagination, every prompting of his heart, he only awaits the day when he may give himself entirely to the pursuit of pleasure. And so his youthful spirits which have never found an outlet in innocent tales of romance and adventure, later on spend themselves in gambling and theft. A pitiful result indeed!

However, to go back to the day on which Mr. Gradgrind catches his two children gazing at a circus, we find that he and his good friend Mr. Bounderby, have come to the conclusion that the little daughter of Signor Jupe is responsible for the children 's strange conduct. It is decided that so dangerous an influence must be removed from the school. The two men go to town to inform Signor Jupe that his daughter can no longer be permitted to attend school. But they are informed that Signor Jupe has run away and left his daughter to the mercy of friends. Mr. Gradgrind takes Sissy into his home. He is not swayed by any gentle feeling towards the child, but he thinks that it will be interesting to change the imaginative child into a creature of facts. She will be a rare subject on which to show the effectiveness of his methods.

Sissy is a very delightful child and her spontaneous happy disposition is quite a contrast to that of the cold impassionate Louisa. Dickens weaves the circumstances of his story in such a way as to make the reader feel that the haphazard training which Sissy has received has fitted her for life far more effectively than have all the facts of science stored up by Louisa. He makes us feel that reason and facts are very unimportant unless they are supported by imagination, fancy, affection and all the hundred and one graces which lighten life's troublesome highway.

One of the circumstances in which Dickens shows this to be true

is the scene in which Sissy discovers that her father has left her. She instinctively trusts that he will return. She believes he has gone away for her sake. Mr. Bounderby urges her to look upon the facts of the case: "her father has deserted her and will never return to her." The entire circus band who are assembled around the room are very degenerate in facts and refuse to be impressed by Mr. Bounderby's cold reasoning. More than one of them expresses his dislike of words so cold and unkind. These people have very little education; only a few of them can write and cipher, and not one of them has the slightest knowledge of statistics or political economy. And yet, in such a situation as this, the Masters of fact are rendered quite insignificant beside them. There are women among the group and the whole company shows a remarkable gentleness and childishness which seems far nobler than all the learning of our proud rationalists. Their great pity for Sissy, and the kind manner in which they try to comfort her appear to be of far greater worth than any enunciation of facts by Mr. Bounderby. Reasoning and cold calculation have long ago dried up all the natural springs of human sympathy and they are quite powerless to cope with this situation. But these people, poor, unlearned entertainers, so much despised by men of fact, put them to shame this night. The reader cannot help feeling that these men and women are far more genuinely sincere and happy in their chosen calling than are the two men who stand aside in silent disdain.

Here at least, simple affection and charity is very much more important than cold reasoning. We are glad that Sissy is loyal to her father, and that she trusts he will return to her. We admire her more for her implicit trust in her parent than if she had taken Mr. Bounderby's advice and looked only upon the facts of the case.

We are naturally very much interested in the progress of Mr.

Gradgrind's experiment with Sissy. Here again Dickens shows that insofar as she absorbs the philosophy of the new school, she is less human and less delightful, and insofar as she remains her original self and keeps all the noble ideals of fancy which her father has taught her, she is happier and more useful. Fortunately for the child, she does remain remarkably simple and natural despite all the cramming she is subjected to. Quite unwittingly the girl speaks such words of sound wisdom that Mr. M'Choakumchild is put to shame though he is the last one to know it.

Dickens did not agree with the Gradgrinds of England in their belief that all human dealings could be reduced to mere mathematical problems. The intellect, he argued, was powerless without the heart. It is only by love and affection for fellowman that one can solve the problems that confront the human race. There is not a novel in which Dickens does not teach his readers the great doctrine of fraternity and brotherhood. Consequently, this new philosophy which cultivates the intellect without stooping to the cultivation of the heart is fundamentally wrong.

In "Hard Times" we are given several examples to prove that facts, figures and statistics alone cannot give the answer to social and economic problems. Mr. M'Choakumchild requests Sissy to suppose that the classroom is a nation; then if this nation has fifty millions of money, does she consider she is in a prosperous nation and does she think she herself is in a thriving state? Sissy replies with more wisdom than she realizes that she would have to know first of all who has the money and how much of it she possesses. This is not the answer Mr. M'Choakumchild wants and Sissy feels very much discouraged.

The next problem is this: In a given time one hundred thousand persons went to sea on long voyages and only five hundred of them were drowned

or burned to death. What is the percentage? With no intention of being impudent, Sissy replies that she thinks that would be nothing to the relatives and friends of those who are killed.

The exasperated teacher gives her another problem. He asks her what is the proportion if only twenty people starve to death in the streets of a state of a million inhabitants. She replies that she thinks it is just as hard on those who starved to death whether there are a million or a million million inhabitants.

By attempting to reduce these problems to a mere question of arithmetic, the teacher is losing sight of the really important issue involved. The child, who is schooled not in the domain of the intellect only but also in the domain of the heart, sees only suffering humanity. In her childish way she is much wiser than her teacher, for she realizes that statistics and averages are not so important as human issues. The reader cannot help feeling that the child is right in refusing to look upon all matters with the eye of reason alone. In these three simple problems Dickens has shown the deficiency of an educational theory which refuses to give the heart its proper place in human problems.

Dickens continues his criticism of the new principles of the rational educators. Not only are these men endeavouring to instil their theories into the minds of children but they are also attempting to educate the adult population in the same way. The scene is Coketown, a town which is both gloomy and dirty from the smoke that continually pours out from its tall black chimneys. The plight of the adult population is analogous to the plight of its children. The men of fact have built the houses of Coketown according to their taste. It makes no difference whether it is a church, a hospital, a jail or a private home,

it is a brick building erected in accordance with the strictest mathematical lines. Each building is identical with its neighbour. No stroke of individuality mars the symmetry of the whole. The entire town speaks Fact to the visitor. Even the sign posts are uniformly painted in severe black and white. No nonsense, such as a bed of flowers, a fountain, or a bit of bright paint, disgraces the town. Truly it is an accomplishment of Taste. There is no doubt that the inhabitants are very happy and progressive in such an atmosphere.

But Dickens soon shows that such is not the case. Somehow the people resent the drabness and uniformity of their surroundings. They refuse to become men and women of fact. They persist in wondering about human cares and troubles, human fears and joys, and especially about the destiny of common working people. They are provided with a library which is filled with any number of scientific and mathematical treatises. But these people prefer reading Defoe to Euclid and Goldsmith to Cocker. What is worse, they go home after fifteen hours of hard manual labour and read fairy tales. It is a constant source of worry to Mr. Gradgrind that they like music and dancing and even a holiday now and then. Our author gives us the real reason why these new principles will never effectively solve the problem of the working man. The reason is this: that the grown man, just as much as the child, requires relaxation and recreation. No human being, whether he be child or adult can become happy without the exercise of both his heart and his fancy. Dickens tells us that because the English people work harder than any other people under the sun, he believes they should have more play. The Gradgrinds would banish all recreation, for they consider the desire for amusement can be conquered by constant application of the intellect to serious studies. Dickens points out that recreation is an essential part of the daily life of every man, and very important to his well being. The more monotonous and mechanical is his

work, the greater need has he for something that will make his life bright and gay. Music, dancing, poetry and imaginative tales are the balm that rest tired minds, that give new hope and joy to sad hearts. The imagination permits man to look beyond the narrow confines of his dull existence and inspires him with new hope and confidence in the future. Far from producing the happy state which the new educators hope for, their new principles succeed only in making the lives of men and children miserable and wretched.

Mr. Gradgrind intends that Louisa will be the shining example of the happy results produced by strict application of his principles. At the age of twenty, Louisa can truthfully state that she has never dreamed a child's dream, she has never had a child's heart, experienced a child's fear or a child's gaiety. From her earliest years she has been taught to regard only facts. She has never wondered, she has never cherished a fancy, she has never had any of the finer feelings of the heart. She is the embodiment of dispassionate reasoning. And so, one night shortly after she has attained the age of twenty years, her proud father calls her into his statistical den and asks her to consider a proposal of marriage from Mr. Bounderby. The latter is a rough, course, boastful man for whom Louisa entertains no kindly regard. However, since she has been taught to disregard as wholly unimportant any feelings of sentiment or affection, it is quite beside the point to consider whether or not she entertains any love for the man she marries. Her father tells her with pride that she comes to the consideration of this proposal with a preparation not normally accorded to young ladies. She is not impulsive or romantic and Mr. Bounderby is too sensible a man to approach her on any grounds but reason. Her father agrees that there is some slight disparity in age, as Mr. Bounderby is about twice her age, but statistics prove that such a disparity is no barrier at all, since a large proportion of the marriages in England and Wales are between

couples of unequal age, and in three-quarters of these cases, the elder of the contracting parties is the bridegroom. Similiar results had been found in India, China and among the Calmuchs. For one moment Louisa has the impulse to throw herself into the arms of her father and tell him of all the unhappy years of her childhood and how she has always longed for something more than cold facts. However, her education is against any expression of feeling and her father's unbending matter-of-fact manner freezes her once more, and she accepts the proposal of marriage from one whom she loathes.

Looking at the tall chimneys of Coketown, she tells her father that there appears to be nothing but languid and monotonous smoke and yet when night comes, fire bursts out. Mr. Gradgrind did not see the relevancy of this statement until long after when this prophetic remark is fulfilled in Louisa's own life.

Dickens' next step in his criticism of the new education is to show the disastrous results brought about by a marriage entered into purely on the grounds of reason. He shows that a marriage must be based on the mutual love and esteem of the contracting parties. Contrary to the belief of Mr. Gradgrind, the sentiments of the heart are far more permanent, more enduring, than reason. Mr. Gradgrind thought the intellect and the reason were omnipotent; he discovers that the heart is far stronger.

It is not stated how long Louisa was married to Mr. Bounderby, when James Harthouse comes into her life. By insinuous methods he gains her confidence and her love. When he tries to induce her to run away with him, she flees to her father's house.

It is a stormy night when she again stands before her father in his study. He might have been proving that the Good Samaritan was a poor

Economist when Louisa, so defiant, so dishevelled and so despairing, enters the room. In the conversation that ensues, she reproaches him for removing from her life all the inappreciable things which make life worthwhile. She tells him that her heart is but a great wilderness whereas it could have blossomed with love and affection. Despite all the repression of her childhood, there lingered in her soul sensibilities and affections which defy the power of man to reduce to mere mathematical calculation. She gives him the reason for her unhappiness and her weakness in the hour of temptation: her education has robbed her of the immaterial part of her life, her refuge from what is sordid and bad in the things about her. If she had been permitted to use her imagination and fancy, she would have been far wiser, more contented and more innocent in every respect. She continues to speak to him of her unhappy childhood, and of how she ever longed and thirsted for some consolation outside the region of facts and figures. When her life became too real and dark she possessed no fancy and noble sentiments to cherish and fall back on. Her knowledge has made her incredulous disbelieving and dispirited. Bereft of hope and ennobling ambition, she has ever considered the battle of life unworthy of the pain and trouble of a contest. When she was married she soon realized that statistics and general laws do not insure the future happiness of the couple and that marriage has to be based on something far deeper, of which her education gave her no knowledge.

The father has been so proud of the result of his educational principles. When he hears the pride of his heart telling him that his philosophy is powerless to save her, his world breaks about him. Her reproach strikes home to him:

"Now, father, you have brought me to this. Save me by some other means."

With these words she sinks unconscious to the floor.

Mr. Gradgrind's contrition is sincere. He believed that he was teaching his children very well when he suppressed all their <sup>other</sup> faculties and developed only their intellect. Having heard the miserable confession of his favourite child, he loses all his self-assurance. He admits that, regardless of what he has thought up to this time, there is a wisdom of the Heart as well as a wisdom of the Head. He realizes that the head is not all-sufficient as he has supposed it to be. It is with gladness that he admits that the younger members of the family, under the influence of Sissy, have had a more moderate training. Though they have been crammed with facts, yet they have known what it is to feel affection and gentleness. Mr. Gradgrind distrusts himself too much to endeavour to bring happiness into Louisa's life by any means of his own. He entrusts her to Sissy, the girl who has remained imaginative and affectionate despite all his teachings. It is Sissy who calms the turbulent mind of Louisa and brings to it serenity, peace and kindness. Sissy's affectionate heart is like a haven of rest which would shelter Louisa against all the unhappiness that she has experienced during her lifetime and lead her to a happy and useful future.

We now come to witness the results brought about in Tom's later life as a consequence of his early training. We have already seen Tom's unhappy and sullen disposition. Mr. Harthouse calls Tom a "whelp" and this one word sums up exactly the kind of man Tom has become. It is expressive of Tom's disposition, of his actions and his attitude towards life. Once free from the parental roof, he takes revenge for all the repression of his childhood. The training he received has not given him any of the higher motives in life. His sole purpose is to satisfy his great craving for pleasure. Consequently he becomes a gambler and falls heavily into debt. He used his sister Louisa as a

means of obtaining more money. Finally when Louisa' generosity is exhausted he robs the Bank in which he is employed and contrives that the blame should fall on a poor honest workman, Stephen Blackpool.

When it is discovered that Tom is the one who stole the money from the Bank, he flees and is befriended by Mr. Sleary, the entertainer whom Mr. Gradgrind had once so much despised. It is a miserable sight that greets Mr. Gradgrind's eyes when he again beholds his son, now cowering with shame and fear. His father says to him:

"If a thunderbolt had fallen on me it would have shocked me less than this!"

"I don't see why", grumbled the son.

"So many people are employed in situations of trust; so many people out of so many will be dishonest. I have heard you talk a hundred times of its being a law. How can I help laws? You have comforted others with wuch things, father. Comfort yourself!"

For the second time, Mr. Gradgrind finds that his principles are a poor consolation in grief. It is significant that his son should reproach him in much the same manner as his daughter has done. But this is not the last blow which he is to receive. Bitzer, the pupil who had once made his master proud by learning so thoroughly his lessons of calculation and facts, appears upon the scene just in time to prevent Tom's escape. He, too, shows that his education has done him no tender violence. No pleadings will deter him from his purpose of taking Tom back to pay the full price of his crime. Mr. Gradgrind pleads in vain, appealing to thos gentler feelings usually found in the breast of man. He forgets that his own utilitarian principles drove all such charitable emotions from Bitzer's heart long years ago.

"Bitzer", said Mr. Gradgrind, broken down and miserably submissive to him, "have you a heart?"

"The circulation, sir", returned Bitzer, smiling at the oddity of the question, "couldn't be carried on without one. No man, sir, acquainted with the facts established by Harvey relating to the circulation of the blood, can doubt I have a heart."

"Is it accessible", cried Mr. Gradgrind, "to any compassionate influence?"

"It is accessible to Reason, sir", returns the excellent young man. "And to nothing else."

During the conversation which ensues the wretched father makes another appeal.

"Bitzer", said Mr. Gradgrind, stretching out his hands as though he would have said, 'See how miserable I am!' "Bitzer, I have but one chance to soften you. You were many years at my school. If, in remembrance of the pains bestowed upon you there, you can persuade yourself in any degree to disregard your present interest and release my son, I entreat and pray you to give him the benefit of that remembrance."

"I really wonder, sir", rejoined the old pupil in an argumentative manner, "to find you taking a position so untenable. My schooling was paid for; it was a bargain, and when I came away, the bargain ended."

With a sickening heart, Mr. Gradgrind recalls that it was a fundamental principle of his philosophy that everything had to be paid for. Nobody was every on any account to give anybody anhtying or render help without purchase. Gratitude was to be abolished and the virtues springing from it were to have no place in the world. Every inch of the existence of mankind from birth to death was to be a bargain across a counter. And if man didn't get to Heaven that way, it was not a politico-enonomical place and he had no

business there anyway. Reason has once more betrayed its once ardent defender. But when all seems lost, Mr. Sleary, who, we may be thankful, never came under the influence of the utilitarian philosophy, out of the goodness of his heart, arranges a successful escape for Tom.

Dickens tells us that from this day forward, Mr. Gradgrind is a far wiser man. He bends his hitherto unflexible theories and realizes that it profits little to learn only general laws when there are individual cases to be considered. He makes his facts and figures subservient to the principles of Faith, Hope and Charity. Louisa regains her peace of mind and a happiness she has been robbed of. Tom dies repentant in a distant country. Sissy continues to cherish in the simple and eternal principles her father has taught her and in later years she teaches them to her own children, believing them to be their most precious treasure and inheritance.

Though "Hard Times" is Dicken's greatest satire on utilitarian education, it is not by any means the only novel in which he emphasizes the importance of the imagination. In "Bleak House" he gives a picture of the Smallweeds who have for several generations banished all levities including story books, fairy tales, and whose offspring are almost the equal of the little Gradgrinds in the knowledge of facts.

"The Smallweeds had strengthened themselves in the practical character, discarded all amusements, discountenanced all story books, fairy tales and fables and banished all levities whatsoever. Hence the gratifying fact that it has had no child born to it, and that the complete little men and women it has produced have been observed to bear a likeness to old monkeys with something depressing on their minds.

Mr. Smallweed's grandfather is in a helpless condition as to his lower and nearly so as to his upper limbs; but his mind is unimpaired. It holds.

as well as it ever held, the first four rules of arithmetic, and a certain small collection of the hardest facts. In respect of ideality, reverence, wonder, and other such phrenological attributes, it is no worse off than it used to be. Everything that Mr. Smallweed's grandfather ever put away in his mind was a grub at first, and is a grub at last. In all his life he has never bred a single butterfly."

If Dickens were living to-day, he probably would be tempted to criticize the present fad for Quiz Programs. The Gradgrinds and the Smallweeds would make excellent Quiz Kids, but such an admirable quantity of detached facts and data does not necessarily cause one to become wiser. It has been suggested by a critic of our times that we are laying too much stress on general knowledge tests and forgetting what constitutes true wisdom. Unless our mass of facts is assimilated we might as well be ignorant of them.

The Gradgrinds find their studies very tedious. Memorizing statistics and data is a very dull and monotonous task. "Love and fancy are the stems on which we may graft knowledge readily", says Dickens. Any system of education which does not inspire a response from the hearts and the imagination of the pupils is doomed to failure. Memory is not a single faculty, and our reformer believes there is as much of feeling in it as there is of intellect. Sissy cannot remember dates unless there is some pitiful event connected with them.

In "David Copperfield" Dickens shows the great influence fiction had on David's life. Under the influence of his cruel stepfather the boy becomes dull and stupid, but he has one consolation which saves him from complete despair. He eagerly reads the books in his father's library, among which are such well known books as Robinson Crusoe, Roderick Random, Tom Jones, Vicar of Wakefield and many others. When the boy receives no sympathy or kindness from his harsh guardians he retires to his father's room and there loses himself in a world of

make-believe. For days at a time he imagines himself to be Tom Jones, a child's Tom Jones, and a harmless creature. At other times he becomes a famous Captain of some stately ship. But he keeps such fancies to himself for he knows his stepfather would have no patience with anything like this.

We know that a large part of the story of David Copperfield is borrowed from Dickens' own boyhood days. He tells us that he remembers hearing other boys shouting and playing out-of-doors, while he was deep in one of his father's precious books of fiction. There is no doubt that young Charles received much of his inspiration for his later work as a novelist from reading the best fiction of his day.

Imagination played a very large part in the education of Jemmy Lirriper. This boy, though an orphan, had the kind of free and happy childhood which Dickens would give to every child. The Major and Jemmy made locomotives out of parasols, broken iron pots and cotton reels. They played games of make-believe and the Major far outdid Jemmy by his serious and believing ways. This is indeed the companionship that our education considered should exist between a little boy and his guardian. The two kindly old folks who cared for Jemmy with such sentiments of pride and joy gave him every opportunity for cultivating his imagination. Mrs. Lirriper describes one of their games:

"The miles and miles that me and the Major have travelled with Jemmy in the dusk between the lights are not to be calculated, Jemmy driving on the coach box, which is the Major's brass-bound writing desk on the table, me inside in the easy chair, and the Major Guard up behind with a brown paper horn doing it really wonderful. I do assure you, my dear, that sometimes when I have taken a few winks in my place inside the coach and have come half awake by the flashing light of the fire and have heard the precious pet driving and the Major blowing up behind to have the change of horses ready when we got to the Inn, I

have believed we were on the old North Road that my poor Lirriper knew so well."

Such scenes as these were frequent in the Lirriper household when the Major and Mrs. Lirriper would join Jemmy in his games of make-believe just as though it was the most important thing they ever had to do. And Dickens considered that it really was just about the most important thing they could ever do for the boy.

There is a great contrast between the shining face of Jemmy and the sullen face of Tom Gradgrind. And we may be sure that Jemmy made a much greater success of his life than did Tom.

The boys of Doctor Blimber's school never became well educated; their lessons were too monotonous and dull. When Paul was confused and fatigued with hours of struggling with mathematics and Greek declensions, he told Miss Blimber he thought he would do better if he might speak now and then to Glubb. The latter was an old man who took a liking to the quaint child and used to tell him tales about the creatures of the sea. But Miss Blimber, the paragon of crisp practicality, was quite shocked that Paul had an affection for anyone so unclassical. She forbade him ever to speak again of Glubb or his fairy tales. If Paul had been permitted to play a little more, he would have lived and become a man. But it was the endless routine of puzzling over Latin verbs and ancient history that killed the child. No games, no respite of any kind ever relieved the grind of the classroom. There was no "imaginative nonsense" about Mr. Feeder, B.A., or about Doctor Blimber, who believed in "keeping his pupils at it". Never were there more inhuman and dull teachers and never were there more wearisome and monotonous lessons. Doctor Blimber and his assistants were like machines forever forcing their pupils to memorize new facts. We shall have occasion to mention later on how the fruits of their pupils' efforts were immature and of poor flavour.

In Household Words, Dickens has summed up in one sentence the essence of his teaching:

"God gave not fancy to the child that man might stamp its blossoms down into the loose soil of the intellect."

Because fancy is a God-given faculty, it must be permitted to blossom. Our reformer seems to suggest that its development is just as important to the happiness of the individual as is that of the intellect. As a matter of fact, the development of the intellect depends on the cultivation of both the fancy and the feelings. Esther, of "Bleak House", said:

"My comprehension is quickened when my affection is."

Lizzie Hexam, though she had never learned to read, found her library in the hollow down by the flare, where she imagined all the wondrous tales she might have read in books.

Dickens tells us that one of his purposes in writing "Household Words" is to keep alive the imagination of both young and old. In the first edition he gives the purpose of his publication:

"No mere utilitarian spirit, no iron binding of the mind to grim realities will give a harsh tone to "Household Words". In the bosoms of the young and old, of the well-to-do and of the poor, we would tenderly cherish that light of Fancy which is inherent in the human breast; which, according to its nature burns with an inspiring flame, or sinks into a sullen glare, but which (or woe betide the day!) can never be extinguished. To show to all, that in all familiar things, even in those which are repellant on the surface, there is Romance enough if we will find it out, to teach the hardest workers at this whirling wheel of toil, that their lot is not necessarily a moody, brutal fact, excluded from the sympathies and graces of imagination; to bring the greater and the lesser in degree

together upon that wide field and mutually dispose them to a better acquaintance and a kinder understanding - is one main object of our Household Words."

One might say with truth that this was not only the main object of Household Words but likewise the purpose of much of his greatest work. When all is weighed in the balance, perhaps the greatest thing that can be said in praise of Dickens is that he saved England from the worst evils of utilitarian educators.

DICKENS AND FROEBEL

Dickens' own deep love for children fitted him particularly well for his work as an educational reformer. It may be said that his heart rather than his head dictated to him the proper methods of training young children. However, we know that he gave a great deal of time and study to the problems of education. The master from whom he borrowed many of his principles is the great German educator, Froebel. This famous teacher was born some twenty or thirty years before Dickens and had done much of his great work before Dickens rose to fame. He had already established kindergartens in most of the large cities of Germany and other continental countries when, under his influence, the Baroness Van Bulow founded the first English kindergartens in London. On this occasion, Dickens published in Household Words an article in support of the new primary schools. This article, which is an appreciation of the educational principles of Froebel, is considered to be one of the most comprehensive papers ever written on the subject. Our author is pleading with English teachers to consider attentively the principles of one who has done so much in the field of education. Dickens begins his article by explaining the reasons for Froebel's early interest in education and he completes his discussion by summarizing the basic principles of his philosophy. Froebel, he tells us, was a very sensitive child, too keenly aware of the discord created in human lives by violent quarrels and harsh feelings. At the same time, he was extremely appreciative of the beauties of nature and of architecture. He lost his mother in his infancy, and the absence of a mother's sympathy left a great void in his heart. His lonely childhood was made even more disagreeable by the fact that his father, who was a minister, used to take his small son with him when he visited the homes of the parish. The purpose of these visits was more than often to settle some family dispute or violent quarrel. This was particularly painful to the sensitive peace-loving boy and he longed to help people to live together in harmony and

affection. This desire became the passion of his life. He began to wonder what was the cause of so much discord and cruelty in the world; why there were so many cruel fathers, angry quarrelling husbands, and irritable wives. And he came to the belief that the answer to this question lay in the early training of these people. He remembered his own neglected childhood and how the natural nimbleness of his mind and the early promptings of his affectionate heart had been stifled by lack of understanding and sympathy. These men and women around him had, like himself, been stunned, repressed and knocked about in their childhood. How could they, who had never known sympathy and kindness, develop into a happy and peace-loving people? Their first baby impulses of thought and affection had been twisted and gnarled by harsh parents and teachers. He began to see that these methods of restraint and punishment were doing untold harm to the child and consequently to the grown man, and even to society itself. Childhood is a time for normal growth and development, and therefore, all joyful spontaneous impulses and native energies should not stifled and repressed. On the contrary, they should be developed and directed into proper channels so as to bring about the well-being of the future man.

Fully convinced of the correctness of his deductions, Froebel set about to devote all the energies of his indomitable will towards the establishment of schools in which children would receive proper and sympathetic training and in which natural ability and talent would be given every opportunity for development. He was fully aware that his ideas were foreign to the majority of teachers and parents and that as a result he would have to face an unsympathetic and even hostile world. The prevalent belief was that repression and punishment were the only real methods of training children. It was at the expense of great personal sacrifice that he accomplished the ambition of his life. But no expense was too great for such a goal. Nothing could and nothing did stop him until he had won a happy childhood and proper primary schools for children all

over Germany and even in foreign countries. His efforts were crowned with great success, for within a surprisingly short time, he had established kindergartens in almost all the larger cities of the continent.

There is a particular significance in the word kindergarten, for it means infant garden. The child is compared to a young plant or tree; the early stages of its growth are the most important; if it does not receive proper nourishment and space it will become stunted, dwarfed and gnarled. The child's mind and soul, like the buds of a tender young plant require a wholesome atmosphere and gentle care. Unless the plant is handled carefully, it will become bent and deformed. In much the same way, the child's soul requires the utmost sympathy and understanding or else it will become irredeemably bruised. A child cannot grow up under harsh treatment without showing the results of the abuse in its mature years. And if a plant requires such care, how much more attention should be bestowed upon a human soul made in the image of its Creator. Both Dickens and Froebel had a keen appreciation of the real worth of the child by reason of its divine origin, and both men felt a great love for all little ones.

What Froebel did for the children of his country, Dickens endeavoured to accomplish for the children of England. But Dickens was not a teacher. He was a novelist, and so the medium of his reform is his vivid presentation of scenes drawn from real life. His novels are filled with lovely little children whose early years are made unhappy by sincere, perhaps, but harsh adults. Then he gives us pictures of other children who are reared in love and affection by wise and kindly parents and who grow up to be a credit to those who prepared them for the battle of life.

Though not a teacher, Dickens took a very keen interest in the kindergartens of London and spent many hours within their walls, observing the

methods employed by teachers and the response of the children. It is in no small degree the result of Dickens' writings that the kindergarten system flourished in England, and that such schools were conducted by individuals convinced of the importance of training the child through kindness and patient care.

Our novelist holds much in common with Froebel. As is the case of Froebel the inspiration for his work as an educational reformer also sprang from the unhappy circumstances of his boyhood. Both were sensitive children and suffered greatly from lack of sympathy. We have already mentioned that young Charles, though he was an unusually bright child, was sent to work in a blacking factory at an age when he should have been at school. Moreover, he suffered at the hands of a cruel master; consequently he grew up with the earnest desire of abolishing abuse from the schools and of sparing other boys the suffering he had undergone. Like Froebel, he was a religious and God-fearing man and longed for the time when men might live together in harmony and brotherly love. To accomplish this he saw that the seeds of love must be planted at a very early age, and moreover, before the child can be expected to learn this great lesson of charity he must see a daily example of it in the lives of his parents and teachers. In other words, a child cannot grow up to be a charitable and peace-loving man if he has never seen these virtues in practice.

His appreciation of the real worth of the child by reason of its divine origin is the basis of Dickens' teaching; and his reason for denying the doctrine of child depravity which had so thoroughly captured the minds of the people at that time. He believed and taught that the child was not wholly bad as some theorists held; neither as a result of original sin was it wholly good as the followers of Rousseau claimed. On the contrary, it had both good and bad tendencies, and the purpose of education is to develop the one and check the other.

This doctrine of child depravity led teachers to believe that the child had to be checked at every turn. The other extreme of this theory considered that the child should be permitted to develop like a young animal without discipline, or moral restraint. Our reformer saw a happy medium between these two false conceptions of the nature of the child. The child should have a happy and free childhood with every opportunity of perfecting its talents and natural abilities, but at the same time he should have wise and careful guidance so that this development would not run into harmful channels. Unfortunately, too many teachers in their zeal to repress the bad in the child's nature, went so far as to distort the good as well. We shall have occasion to mention the false doctrine of depravity at another point in our discussion.

Dickens was one of the first to emphasize the importance of the teacher's task. He raised the status not only of the schoolmaster, but of the teaching profession itself. He pointed out that the teacher is entrusted with the most important task that God ever gave to man. The architect has the privilege and the talent of bringing form into lifeless clay and marble. The teacher is shaping and forging the powers and faculties of God's masterpiece, the plastic soul of a child. It is a creature of immortal destiny which has to be trained. The teacher guides, directs, but does not deny the child the right to use his native spirits. Up to this time no one had regarded the training of children as a task requiring any particular skill or earnest endeavour. They scoffed at the idea of studying theories of education. When Miss Murdstone was asked whether she was really sure she understood David, she replied that she did not pretend to be very profound, but she did lay claim to common sense and would be very much ashamed of herself if she did not understand any child. Our reformer believed that the teacher had to study the behaviour and disposition of the child before he could capably direct its activities. Each little one has

its own individual personality, its own abilities and its own faults. The task of training the child is not by any means a simple one, and requires the teacher's greatest and sincerest efforts.

Alfred Noyes is right in saying that Dickens saw in every child the image of the Divine Child. The child itself and not knowledge must become the centre of educational efforts. The training and guiding of the child's many faculties, intellectual and moral, is even more important than the acquisition of knowledge. It is of paramount importance that school masters be individuals of refinement and high moral qualities whose very association with their pupils will be an uplifting influence. Just as he saw in every little one the image of the Christ Child, so he believed that the model of all teachers is the Divine Teacher.

Our reformer realized the need for treating the child with kindness and sympathetic understanding. He pointed out that the child craves love and affection. "The child's heart was not made full to the brim of love that men might pour its love away and bruise instead of kiss the trusting innocent", he said on one occasion. In *Oliver Twist* he introduced several incidents to show the injustice and pity of a little boy growing up, neglected and starved, longing for a sympathetic friend, and never hearing a kind word spoken to him. Children require more sympathy in their tender years for they have not got the armour of adulthood to shelter them from the blows and buffets of the world. There is something very touching in the scene in which little Oliver is led off from the farm by Mr. Bumble. He has never known a kind word while there, yet at the moment of his departure, he bursts into tears at leaving his wretched companions who are the only friends he has in the whole world.

Later on when abuse forces Oliver to run away from Mr. Sowerberry

he passes the farm where he sees his little friend Dick weeding the gardens. The boys are glad to see each other, for many times have they been beaten, starved and locked up in the cellar together. Oliver tells him that he is running away, but that he will come back later for his friend. The pale child replies he overheard the doctors state that he is dying, and he believes so himself, for he dreams so much of Heaven and Angels and kind faces that he never sees when he is awake. The poor child is longing for love and happiness which he has never known on earth. When the boys part, the sick child stands on the gate and flings his little arms about Oliver's neck.

"Kiss me", he cried. "Good bye dear! God bless you".

The blessing is from a child's lips, but it is the first Oliver has ever heard invoked upon his head, and through all the struggles and sufferings and troubles of life, he never once forgets it.

There were other teachers who though incapable of deliberate unkindness towards children, yet had thoroughly false notions of how to train them. Among these was Mrs. Pipchin, the child queller. She is a typical example of those stern individuals who do not believe in giving the child any freedom. She keeps an infantile establishment and enjoys quite a reputation for her scientific methods. Her appearance is a decided advantage to her in that it is enough to subdue any child. Dickens describes her as a marvelous, ill-favoured, ill-conditioned old lady of a stooping figure with a mottled face like black marble, a hooked nose and a hard grey eye. She has a reputation for firmness which is not unfounded, since even the wildest of her charges go away tamed. Her methods of discipline are remarkable. For instance, she sweetens their dispositions by giving them everything they don't like and nothing that they do like. She feeds their young minds on the most startling and improving stories of naughty children who are finished off by bear and hungry lions. It is part of her system that a child's mind is not to be allowed to expand like a young flower, but is to be

opened by force like an oyster. Miss Pankey, a mild blue-eyed baby, is afraid to sleep in the dark alone, and so Mrs. Pipchin drives her upstairs by herself and makes her sleep in the remotest room. By her every action she endeavours to stamp out every spark of childish fancy and joy and makes the youngsters' lives generally miserable.

Well-intentioned child quellers were not uncommon in Dickens' day. They forbade the child the free use of his energies, the right to be happy and enjoy his play. This attitude was entirely contradictory to the Froebelian theories which Dickens endeavoured to popularize. It might be well to point out that Dickens has taught his greatest lessons on education through the medium of satire. His graphic pictures of improper methods of education are very often more suggestive of the proper methods than even his constructive illustrations of good schools. However, he has introduced several teachers imbued with the true principles of training children. One of these is Phoebe.

It was probably from the many visits to the kindergartens that he was inspired to write the charming sketch of Phoebe, a young girl who though crippled, kept a day school for young children. It would seem that Phoebe's affliction which prevented her from walking had, if anything, made her more cheerful and gay and thoughtful of others. It is just such a kind, noble creature that Dickens invariably chooses to portray the ideal school mistress. A visitor to the school addresses Phoebe:

"You are fond of children and learned in the new system of teaching them", said Mr. Jackson.

"Very fond of them", replied Phoebe, "but I know nothing of teaching beyond the pleasure I have in it, and the pleasure it gives me when they learn. Perhaps your overhearing my little scholars sing some of their lessons has led you so far astray as to think me a good teacher, Ah! I thought so! No,

I have only read and been told about that system. It seems so pretty and pleasant to treat them so like the merry robins they are that I took up with it in my little way."

Here was a girl whose love for her scholars made her a successful teacher. She did not restrain their carefree spirits but she let them sing their lessons just as if they were playing a game. She herself entered into their enjoyment and was just as happy as they. This atmosphere of enthusiasm and gaiety was considered by Dickens to be necessary not only to the successful teaching of young children but also to that of older pupils as we shall have occasion to mention later on.

In the brief picture of Phoebe's school Dickens is once more emphasizing that the child is like a tender young plant, and the home and the classroom are the places in which he develops, expands and blossoms. For this growth to be natural it must have freedom and it must be warmed by the sunshine of sympathy of cheerfulness and of love.

Agnes Wickfield taught her little girls with the same love and sympathy as Phoebe. Teaching was a pleasure to her even as it was to Phoebe. The reader cannot help feeling that if Agnes taught her pupils to love truth and everything that was noble and good even as she herself did, the fruit of her labours would indeed be very great.

Mr. Marton, the simple kindly village schoolmaster, had the sympathy and understanding for his pupils which made him respected and loved. Dickens describes the beautiful friendship which has sprung up between the schoolmaster and his cleverest young scholar, who, alas, is on the brink of death. Though there is such a difference in their ages, there exists a real comradeship between the elderly man and the little boy. Many adults would feel ashamed to be companionable to one so young, but Dickens believed that just such

an ability was the prerequisite of a successful teacher. Many times he stressed the importance of the teacher being one with his pupils, of coming down to the level of the child so as to understand his problems. Though Mr. Marton had very little equipment for his school, yet his teaching was far more successful than many masters who had the advantage of a fine set of books and a fully equipped school. His success came from his understanding of the nature of the boy he was dealing with. He was not deluded by the false principle that they should be coerced and restrained and kept continually under the fear of the rod. He may not have always kept perfect order in his classroom and his pupils may have eaten apples and made faces at one another, but yet every last boy respected the schoolmaster and would not have done a thing to hurt him in any way.

On the afternoon before his little friend's death he cannot bear to carry on classes and as he dismisses his pupils for a half holiday he urges them to be happy and thankful for their own good health; and before they leave, he asks them to be quiet in their play so as not to disturb their sick companion. The boys are very quiet as they go out but just as soon as the bright sunshine greets them at the door and they think of all the delightful things they can do on that glorious summer afternoon, they begin to laugh and shout. The schoolmaster is not annoyed at their disobedience. He knows that exuberance of spirit is a gift given to young boys and girls and that no one has the right to rob them of their enjoyment.

"It's natural, thank Heaven!", says the poor schoolmaster, looking after them, "I'm glad they didn't mind me!"

Many critics have marvelled at Dickens' success as an educator. I believe that a large part of his success may be attributed to the fact that he never grew up but always remained a child at heart. Otherwise he would not have possessed the unsurpassed ability of creating child characters. No other author

has ever succeeded in creating so many true-to-life children. And no one can deny that Paul Dombey, Pip and Tommy Traddles are as really delightful as any children we have ever known. The reason for this lies in the fact that part of Dickens' soul remained in the realm of childhood after he grew up to manhood. He never forgot how the world appears through the eyes of a child. He remembered the sense of immensity which the child feels in looking at the world about it. In his novels he becomes a little boy once more, wondering and dreaming all those fantastic and beautiful dreams that are the companions of every child. At such times he speaks with the lips of a child; he philosophizes with that artless simplicity which is too often lost in adolescence and adulthood. He is a great educator because he has that sympathy for children which is only found in one who remembers his own childhood. He knows that children are sensitive and easily hurt, that their little problems are very real to them, that they crave understanding and kindness. It has often been said that Dickens felt not merely for the child, but with it.

The general principles of the Froebelian theory of education are accepted to-day in English-speaking countries everywhere. Froebel supplied the principles, but it was a great novelist and a great humanist who taught them to a people guilty of cruelty and neglect towards their children. It has been said that he surpasses all other educators in his love of children and his interest in their welfare.

"ASK JUSTICE FOR THE CHILD"

Dickens has given us in Household Words an allegory which illustrates what he believed to be the proper and the improper methods of teaching children. In this allegory, a spirit takes a mortal to see the Land of Life. At first he shows the children at play:

"All that is lovely in the world of flowers makes a fragrant bed for the dear children; birds are singing, they breathe upon the pleasant air; the butterflies play with them. Their limbs shine white among the blossoms and the mothers come down full of joy to share their innocent delight; they pelt each other with the lilies of the valley. They call up at will fantastic masques, grim giants play to make them merry, a thousand grotesque loving phantoms kiss them....."

The spirit asks, "Who dares to come down with a frown into this happy valley?"

But someone does come to destroy the delightful picture of childhood:

"A severe man seizes an unhappy shrieking child. He will lead it over steep rocks to the plain of the mature. On ugly needle points he makes the child sit down and teaches it its duty in the world above."

We find that the child is bruised and bewildered and is unable to take in its lessons. And now another teacher appears:

"Yes, now there comes one with a <sup>\*</sup>smiling face, rolls upon the flowers with the little ones and they are drawn to him. And he has magic spells to conjure up glorious spectacles of fairyland. He frolics with them and might be first cousin to the butterflies. He wreathes their little heads with flower garlands and with his fairland upon his lips he walks toward the mountains; eagerly they follow. He seeks the smoothest upward path and that is but a rough one, and yet they run up merrily, guide and children, butterflies

pursuing still the flowers as they nod over a host of laughing faces. They talk of the delightful fairy world, and resting in the shady places learn of the yet more delightful world of God. They learn to love the Maker of the flowers, to know how great the Father of the Stars must be, how good must be the Father of Beetle. They listen to the story of the race they go to labour with upon the plain and love it for the labour it has done. They learn old languages to understand the past - more eagerly they learn the voices of the men of their own day that they may take part with the present. And in their study when they flag, they fall back upon thoughts of the Child Valley they are leaving....."

"Sports and fancies are the rod and spur that bring them with new vigour to their lessons....."

The Spirit whispers, "You have seen and you have heard. Go now and speak unto your fellowman; ask justice for the child."

It is probable that Dickens felt that some good spirit gave him this very command to ask justice for the children of his country. However this may be, he certainly felt a calling to aid in the progress of proper educational methods. In this brief story, part of which we have quoted, Dickens first describes innocent children at play. They live in a land of make-believe where everything is joyful and beautiful. He believes that it is a great wrong to destroy the peace and innocence of childhood days. The Squeers, Creakles and Murdstones of society with their brutal and coercive methods are guilty of very great injustice towards boys and girls by robbing them of the happiness and beauty of their young years. The severe man who seizes an unhappy child by the hair symbolizes a schoolmaster lacking in qualities of gentleness and kindness. He leads the child over steep rocks, that is, difficult studies which its undeveloped mind cannot grasp, and he sets it in the plain of the mature to take

on the cares and anxieties of adults. We cannot help thinking that Dickens is referring to the Gradgrind educators who aim at making all children assume the burdens of adulthood from their very earliest years. It reminds us, too, of Doctor Blimber who does not believe that scholars should be urged on gradually and permitted to take in new impressions and learning little by little. This gentleman, like his friend Mrs. Pipchin, believes that they should be "kept at it" with no rest from their labours. It is little wonder that the child is bruised and bewildered from such rough and unnatural treatment which its frailty was never meant to endure and that it is unable to learn the lessons it is forced to study.

But then there comes "one with a smiling face", symbolizing a teacher filled with kindness and sympathy. This teacher joins the little ones in their games and thus gains their confidence. He tells them fairy stories, and gently leads the way towards the mountains which they must climb towards adulthood. But they follow him joyfully, while he seeks to guide them along the smoothest paths, knowing that they are so easily hurt. He makes their lessons as much like a game as possible and they move on eagerly, ready to join the men of the world. Unlike the Gradgrinds and the Blimbers who keep the children at their labours until they give up from sheer exhaustion, the good teacher brightens their days and lightens their burdens by permitting them to engage in sports and reading imaginative tales.

It was Dickens' fundamental belief that every child should have a free and happy childhood. Coercion, restraint or anything that robbed the child of its happiness must be abolished. No system of education could be endured which destroyed the spirits of the child and made him prematurely full of cares and worries. It is only a healthy happy boy or girl who will grow up to be a credit to his country.

One might say that our reformer's sole purpose in the field of education was to seek justice for the child. He has introduced at least twenty-eight schools, and every one of them has this same purpose. His teachings were, in a sense, more destructive than constructive. He is much fonder of exposing injustice than of telling his readers the proper methods of education. Let it not be supposed that his work was for this reason any less valuable. His very exposal of improper methods of teaching left no doubt as what were the proper methods. For instance, no one can read the story of Pip's early training by unnatural restraint and coercion without becoming convinced that it would have been much better for the child had he been treated with kindness and sympathy. Neither can one read the account of Oliver Twist's early struggles with neglect and hunger, without realizing the importance of physical development for the well-being of the child.

We have already mentioned that Dickens, by reason of his understanding of the true nature of the child, placed it once more in its rightful position in the scale of being. He was one of the first to perceive that the child has certain rights which not even a parent or teacher can violate. This was an entirely new idea to the nineteenth century public. Amazed, incredulous, they could not see how such a tiny bit of humanity had any rights. At that period all too many schoolmasters had the false notion that children were naturally depraved creatures; in other words, that they were wholly bad. Miss Murdstone never lets David play with other boys "because all boys are vipers who contaminate one another." It is almost unbelievable that such a false notion could have been so firmly established. But unfortunately, it was held in good faith by educators all over the country. It was the principle upon which they based their methods of instructing children. What these methods were is not hard to imagine. If the child is naturally and wholly bad, the task of the teacher will be primarily to check and repress its every inclination.

The master must consider his pupil as though he were a little criminal forever on the point of committing a new offence. All the child's native spirits and spontaneous boyish impulses must be quelched. At all times he must be made to feel the weight of his own depravity. Give the child a bad opinion of himself, stop up his youthful energies and his joyful spirits, keep him at difficult tasks all day long, never give him any time for play. Do all these things for your pupil and you will have accomplished your duty.

It was this false doctrine of education which Dickens wished to destroy. It was based on a false conception of the child's nature.

We have indicated that a child has inclinations towards evil as a result of original sin, but it is not wholly bad. There are elements of divinity in the child. It has God-given powers and talents which must be given an opportunity to develop freely and naturally. This can never be accomplished if the boy or girl is continually restrained and forbidden free expression for its overflowing energies. The false educator emphasizes the weaknesses of the child; the true teacher will not disregard these weaknesses, but will endeavour to overcome them by encouraging the developing to the fullest extent abilities and talents. Methods of restraint and punishment will give way to methods of encouragement and kindness. In one instance Dickens states that you can teach the child only to the extent of your trust and confidence in him. If you are convinced that the child will never accomplish anything worthwhile, you are unlikely to inspire him to put forth his best efforts. Far from impressing on the child the unlikeliness of his amounting to anything the teacher must make him feel that he is intended to do great things for God and humanity. He must be shown the opportunities of doing good and the necessity of putting forth the greatest possible efforts to fulfil his destiny in life.

In Dickens' campaign of asking justice for the child, he had a double task to perform. He wished to expose the harmful methods of those harsh teachers and parents who stamp out every spark of talent and genius and who destroy the initiative, the ambition and the happiness of the child. And on the other hand, he endeavoured to establish the principle that the child must not be denied the right to develop freely. The teacher must be patient, kind, encouraging, but never coercive or domineering. Our purpose in this chapter of our discussion is to illustrate how Dickens established this fundamental principle by a series of contrasts.

Mrs. Gargery, for instance, was one of those harsh guardians who believed in violent methods. We recall Pip, the poor little fellow whose parents and five little brothers lay in the cemetery on the marshes. His sister, Mrs. Gargery, some fifteen or twenty years his elder, brought him up "by hand". She has very definite ideas about training her little brother and one of them is that much knocking about is good for the soul. Consequently she is very lavish with her use of "the tickler", a wax headed cane worn smooth from constant friction with Pip's tickled frame. The poor boy supposes that he is more familiar than anyone else in the world with the sensation of a wedding ring passing unsympathetically over the human countenance. Pip knows his sister has no right to abuse him in that fashion and he resents it from his earliest years. He tells us:

"My sister's upbringing had made me sensitive. In the little world in which children have their existence, whosoever brings them up, there is nothing so finely perceived and so finely felt as injustice. It may be only small injustice that the child can be exposed to, but the child is small and its world is small and its rocking-horse stands as many hands high according to the scale as a big boned Irish hunter. Within myself, I had sustained

from my babyhood a perpetual conflict with injustice. I had known from the time I could speak that my sister, in her capricious and violent coercion, was unjust to me. I had cherished a profound conviction that her bringing me up by hand gave her no right to bring me up by jerks. Through all my punishments, disgraces, fasts and vigils and other penitential performances, I had nursed this assurance, and to my communing so much with it in a solitary and unprotected way I, in great part, refer to the fact that I was morally timid and very sensitive."

This is a sad reproach for any boy to speak against his foster mother. And yet, if we analyse it closely, it is but the sense of resentment against someone for violating what he knew and felt was his natural birthright. For God has put this sense of justice in the human heart, and He has likewise created man for the possession of certain rights which no other man, even though he be a parent or a teacher has the right to violate. This necessity, therefore, of respecting the rights of the frailest bit of humanity, a young child, is founded on the nature of man and the law of God. Its violation causes the child much unhappiness and even real harm, for it makes him resentful and sullies its pure soul with feelings of hatred and anger.

Our author continues his narrative of Mrs. Gargery's methods. Pip tells us that he has always entertained the idea that he had been handed to his sister at birth to be dealt with according to the outraged majesty of the law. She has always treated him as if he had been born in defiance of all the laws of reason, religion and morality. On every possible occasion his sister told her friends in the presence of Pip of all the worries and troubles he had been guilty of, and all the injuries he had done to himself. On every occasion he was made to feel the weight of his faults which, of course, were magnified to many times their real size.

If Dickens felt that children should be happy the whole year through, he certainly believed that they should be especially joyful at Christmas. Unfortunately, Pip could count on having a very uncomfortable Christmas. Of course, it never occurred to Mrs. Gargery that she should in any way endeavour to make Christmas day a very special occasion for Pip. On this day of the year she always invited some friends from the village: Joe's uncle, Mr. Pumblechook, Mr. Wopsle and Mrs and Mrs. Hubble. Mr. Pumblechook took great pleasure in teaching Pip and the child always received the full brunt of his improving advice. At the Christmas dinner, Pip tells us that he would have been very happy indeed and would scarcely have minded Mr. Pumblechook's elbow in his eye or the scrappy pieces of meat which his sister gave him, if they had left him alone. But instead of that they kept (as Pip puts it) "sticking the point of their conversation into him". So soon as Mr. Wopsle had finished his long oratorical grace on gratitude, Mrs. Gargery fixed her eyes on Pip and said in a reproachful tone, "Do you hear that? Be grateful!

"Especially", said Mr. Pumblechook, "be grateful to those which brought you up by hand."

Mrs. Hubble looked at Pip with the air of one who knew he would never come to any good. She said:

"Why is it that the young are never grateful?"

This moral mystery seemed too much for the company until Mr. Hubble tersely solved it:

"Naturally vicious". Everyone murmured "True" and gazed at Pip in a particularly unpleasant and personal manner!

In this conversation Dickens summed up the whole attitude of those educators who looked upon children as naturally depraved. Mr. Hubble thought that all young boys were naturally vicious and that therefore Pip should be made feel the weight of his own viciousness. Dickens thoroughly disagreed with

this attitude, and with good reason. In the first place, there is nothing so disastrous to any child as to cause him to lose faith in himself. A teacher who makes the child feel that he has no confidence in him is unlikely to inspire the child to put forth his best efforts. Any adult who, like Mrs. Hubble, thinks that the child will never amount to anything, is the very first cause of that child's failure. There is nothing so bad for the soul of a child as to be held up as an object of ridicule. Either he will grow up with a secret desire to get back at those who have humiliated and scorned him, or he will lose courage and become a miserable failure. And that is why Dickens ardently pleaded with parents and teachers to treat children with respect, as became their position in the scale of being. Mrs. Hubble believed that the best way to make a child good and intelligent was to show him the unlikeness of his ever amounting to anything worthwhile. How much more effective would be a single word of encouragement or a gentle word of praise for a little task well done!

It was the presence of one kind, understanding soul that saved little Pip from complete misery of soul. Joe Gargery was the gentlest and finest of men and the only real companion the boy ever knew. Like Pip, he too experienced the weight of Mrs. Gargery's superior strength of mind and muscle. As a result, Joe and Pip, being brothers in misery, were very good friends. Joe could never raise a hand to harm any child, for he remembered much too clearly his own miserable childhood. One day he had told Pip that the "wigor with which his father pounded him was only equalled by the wigor with which he did not hammer at his anvil". A drunken father had deprived Joe of a happy childhood and an education, and so he had infinite sympathy for Pip. In his kind way he used to tell him that he would do away with the tickler if he could and would gladly take all the blows himself. Many a time he saved Pip from Mrs. Gargery's blows

by fencin<sup>g</sup> him with his great leg in the chimney corner. On this Christmas day which we have been mentioning, Joe showed his sympathy for Pip by giving him more gravy each time he was made an object of ridicule.

Dickens seems to be holding Joe up to his readers as an example of a man who knows how to deal with children. Joe may be awkward and ignorant so far as a literary education is concerned, but his heart is in the right place. He does not talk down at Pip as the others do. He is his companion and friend; they are pals. In all his novels Dickens emphasizes the importance of coming down to the level of the child in order to gain his confidence. One feels that if Joe had been given the duty of rearing Pip, he would have endeavoured to give him a free and happy childhood. Dickens wished adults to see that they were wrong in believing that the only way to train children was to coerce them. To illustrate this point that kindness can have a much greater influence over the child than harshness he introduces an incident which serves as<sup>an</sup> admirable example of the impotence of brutality in guiding a child to do right and avoid evil

Children are very sensitive about being misunderstood. Their little trials and sorrows are very important in their eyes. If they feel that they will not be understood they will go to any trouble to avoid telling the secret worries and humiliations of their young lives. After Pip's visit to Miss Havisham, he is quite miserable over the thought that he is so common and ignorant and that he wears such coarse clothes and has such awkward manners in contrast to Estella. He has been severely wounded by the contempt and scorn of the proud and beautiful Estella, and he longs for someone to whom he may confide the pent-up miseries of his heart. Mrs. Gargery is bursting with curiosity to learn what he has seen at the famous Havisham House. Pip knows that if he confides in his sister what is uppermost in his mind and heart, she will have no sympathetic words for him. He is afraid too, that if he tells her what he has actually seen

and heard she will not believe him. And so he resolves to say very little. His sister, sensing his reticence, thumps him on the back and sends him flying against the kitchen wall. In desperation the poor boy is driven to invent the most fantastic tale about the wonders he has witnessed.

Pip knows that he has done wrong and, just as any other child, he feels remorse for what he has done. But he does not feel any guilt for the sin before Mrs. Gargery or Mr. Pumblechook; it is before good, honest Joe that he feels ashamed. Pip would have undergone the worst corporal punishment from Mrs. Gargery and have come through with no sorrow for the lie he has told. Corporal punishment is nothing compared to the look of pain which he knows will come to Joe's face when he learns of Pip's deception. He knows Joe will not punish him or even scold him, but the very thought that Joe's trust in him might be weakened is far more efficacious than any other power in the whole world. That night when Pip is alone with Joe, he confesses to him the whole deception and why he stooped to it. Joe chides him gently for what he has done, but he understands the agony of the child's soul, and even while he chides him he consoles and encourages him. It was Mrs. Gargery's harshness which drove Pip to invent a fantastic tale, but it was Joe's kindness and honesty which brought the boy to remorse and repentance.

These incidents which we have just mentioned indicate that continual restraint and coercion are a wholly unnecessary part of the teaching of any boy. Not only do they rob him of the happiness and carefree joyfulness which he should enjoy, but they retard his natural development. As another instance of this Pip asks his sister a great many questions, as any curious young **boy** might do. Such curiosity and desire to know more is severely checked by Mrs. Gargery. Failing to realize that he is thirsting for knowledge, she forbids him to ask questions for she says that that is the first step towards perdition. She

foresees a fearful fate for him as a convict since she can conceive of no other end for a boy who asks so many questions. Such an attitude appears very foolish indeed when teachers at the present time endeavour by every means in their power to stimulate the curiosity of their pupils and cause them to ask questions. Positive methods of education were almost unknown in those days and consequently the negative method of restraint was too often the only one which was recognized.

Having shown the ineffectiveness of Mrs. Gargery's methods of rearing Pip, which symbolized the methods of restraint and coercion, Dickens gives us the story of Jemmy Lirriper who enjoyed a free and happy childhood if ever a boy did. Jemmy, like Pip, was an orphan, his mother having died shortly after he was born and his father having run away several months before his birth. Mrs. Lirriper - a more kind hearted soul could not be found among all Dickens characters - adopted him and brought him up as her own. He was called Jemmy Jackman after his godfather, the Major, and Lirriper after his foster mother. No parents were ever more fond of their child than these good people, and never was a child treated with more kindness and understanding. Their greatest motive was to make the child happy and useful. Unlike Pip, he never suffered physical violence. He was treated with infinite care, just as though he were a young plant which could very easily become bruised by unkind treatment. His foster parents felt towards the child that reverence and respect for its nature which Dickens thought so necessary to a successful teacher or parent. Pip had always felt that he had been born in opposition to all the dictates of reason and law and that he was forced to do continual penance for this crime. Jemmy was regarded by Mrs. Lirriper as a precious gift of God given to her to cheer her lonely life.

It was not that Mrs. Lirriper and the Major let Jemmy have too

freedom. As we might say to-day, they did not spoil him by giving him too much of his own way. However, their method of checking him was not by much knocking about and harsh words. He was rebuked when it was necessary, but not unkindly. Their efforts were directed not so much to scolding the boy for something he had done wrong as to directing his boyish enthusiasm into the proper channels. No problem which presented itself to Jemmy's childish mind was ever considered too petty or unimportant to warrant the serious and sympathetic consideration of his foster parents. He was treated as an equal and not "talked at" on any occasion. The Major did not consider it beneath his dignity to join in his games and in fact, as we have seen, he outdid the child in his believing ways. Jemmy responded to their affection and in his turn did his very best to fulfil their every wish with a loyalty which could be inspired only by love and respect. In "The Old Curiosity Shop", Dickens says that it is not a small thing to be loved by a child. Jemmy's love for his foster parents amply repaid them for all the care they had given him. It is needless to say that Jemmy never betrayed the trust they placed in him.

Dickens gives us another lesson on the necessity of love and sympathy in his story of the boyhood of David Copperfield. The first years of his life were very happy with his pretty young mother and his kind and faithful nurse Peggotty. David was a particularly bright and intelligent child and very fond of his mother and Peggotty. No shadow of any meanness was allowed to darken his joyful days. His mother ruled him by affection alone and by it she taught him to love what was good and right and to avoid what was evil. She taught him his first lessons, and at her knee he acquitted himself very well. Under her encouragement he progressed rapidly. No restraint or coercion was needed to rear and teach the child.

This was changed, however, when Mr. Murdstone and his metallic

sister came to dispel the happiness of the home. David, with a child's instinct, saw at once that Mr. Murdstone hated him and he returned the feeling of dislike. Mr. Murdstone and his sister were quite convinced that a boy could be trained only by the severest discipline and coercion. On the first day that David came under his step-father's care, he took him aside and said:

"David, if I have an obstinate horse or dog to deal with, what do you think I do?!"

"I don't know."

"I beat him". "I make him wince and smart. I say to myself, 'I'll conquer that fellow and if it costs him all the blood he had, I should do it. What is that upon your face?'"

"Dirt", I said.

"He knew it was the mark of tears as well as I, but if he had asked the question twenty times, each time with twenty blows, I believe my baby heart would have burst before I would have told him so."

Dickens tells us that a single word of encouragement, a kind word of reassurance and affection would have made David respect his step-father instead of hate him. But no such word was spoken because Mr. Murdstone did not believe in kindness towards children.

David also disliked Miss Murdstone who shared the theories of her brother. When she arrived in the home she said to David's mother, "Is that your boy, sister-in-law?" My mother acknowledged me. "Generally speaking, I don't like boys. How d'ye do, boy?"

"Under these encouraging circumstances I replied that I was very well, and that I hoped that she was the same with such an indifferent grace that Miss Murdstone disposed of me in two words: "Wants manners!"

Miss Murdstone did everything in her power to make David feel unwanted and unhappy. No longer was he free to sing about the house or play with other boys. For hours at a time he was compelled to sit in the livingroom and if he but moved a muscle, she complained that he was restless. He was no longer permitted to talk to his mother, and she was afraid to show any affection towards him for that too was quite forbidden by the Murdstone doctrines. They worried David's mother by convincing her that David was a very bad boy and likely to come to some evil end.

Under these circumstances David became dull and sullen. He lost all his enthusiasm and spirits. Each morning he was required to repeat his lessons for his mother under the watchful eyes of Mr. Murdstone and his sister. The lessons which had once been so pleasant and easy to him now became a hopeless muddle. Fear quite took possession of all his faculties, and it was in vain that he endeavoured to learn his lessons. Mr. Murdstone believed that David was refusing to learn through stubbornness. Seeing that his methods were unsuccessful in causing David to progress in his studies he determined to flog him. Driven to desperation, David bit the hand of his cruel step-father. After this Mr. Murdstone would have beaten him to death if it had not been for the intervention of his mother and Peggotty.

The moral of this account is very evident. A child, like a bird, thrives only when it has freedom and it is stunted and unhappy when caged by repression and restraint. There is little doubt that this story of David's childhood taught many parents and teachers the very important lessons which our reformer so ardently desired them to learn.

Dickens has given his readers many examples of successful teachers, parents and guardians who have recognized the efficacy of understanding and encouragement over methods of excessive firmness and cruelty.

One of those guardians whom, I am sure, Dickens felt embodied all those characteristics which are so important to anyone who has the duty of caring for a young boy or girl, was Betsey Trotwood. Fortunately David found a happy home with his aunt when he was still only about eleven years of age. Dickens must have entertained a great admiration for Miss Trotwood for he painted her with such sympathetic and masterful strokes. She is every inch a lady, and beneath her angular appearance and abrupt manner, she possesses a great gentleness and kindness of nature. Her magnanimity and moral rectitude could not help touching the heart of any boy who had the good fortune to come under her care. No doubt she had some compunction for having deserted her nephew's family when David disappointed her by being a boy. However, from the time that David came to her, a wretched bit of humanity, she endeavoured to do her duty towards the boy. She did not set out with the assumption, as did Mr. Murdstone, that David was naturally bad. On the contrary she refused to pronounce any judgment until the boy proved what he was by his conduct. She was too wise to scold David for running away from employment in a factory, for keenness and sympathy told her that the boy had good reason for running away.

At all times Miss Trotwood showed the greatest kindness towards David, and he, in turn, resolved to justify the trust she placed in him. How much more effective were her kind words of advice than all the cruel punishment he received at the hands of Mr. Murdstone! She sent him to the best school that she knew of, the school of the learned Dr. Strong. When parting with him she told him that she believed that he would be a credit to himself and to her. She said: "Never be mean in anything; never be false; never be cruel; avoid these three vices, Trot, and I can always be hopeful of you."

These words were uttered with great feeling. Best of all, David knew that his aunt felt that he would fulfil her fondest hopes for him. He con-

ducted himself very well while at Dr. Strong's school and by dint of diligent study he became head boy.

When David had finished school Miss Trotwood realized that only David himself was competent to decide what profession he would follow. To establish his self reliance, she sent him away alone to revisit Yarmouth and London. She was justly proud of him and did not think it harmful to tell him so.

"It's a mercy that poor dear baby of a mother of yours didn't live", said my aunt looking at me approvingly, "or she'd have been so vain of her boy by this time that her soft little head would have been completely turned, if there were anything of it left to turn." (My aunt always excused any weakness of her own on my behalf by transferring it in this way to my poor mother).

She taught him all the fine virtues which ennobled her own life. These virtues could not be taught by a man like Mr. Murdstone whose cruelty had driven out all uprightness. Before sending him away she urged him to be natural and rational and never to pretend to be anything greater than he really was. She urged him to be firm and resolute, a man of character and strength of purpose.

When David expressed his desire to enter the Doctor's Commons, Miss Trotwood knew that it would be very expensive to article him, but she considered that this was of small concern when her sole purpose in life was to fit David to be a happy and useful citizen.

The contrast between the Murdstone methods of training young people and Miss Trotwood's vastly different methods was surely not accidental on the part of Dickens. In a subtle manner, and Dickens always preaches his lessons in a subtle manner, he is pointing out to the people of his generation that methods of coercion must give way to kindness and encouragement. In one

instance he said that once the teacher had gained the love of the child, it was very easy to teach it anything. Miss Trotwood possessed all those qualities which would gain and keep the love and respect of a child. She was kind, generous, understanding, possessing in her nature nothing mean or base. It was just such a person that Dickens would want a teacher to be.

Dickens introduced another contrast in the story of David Copperfield which was likewise designed to indicate the proper methods of educating children. This second contrast is between two masters, Mr. Creakle and Dr. Strong. Dickens introduces Mr. Creakle to show the ill effects which a cruel and ignorant master may have on the personalities and lives of the young people that come under his care. Dr. Strong is the ideal type of schoolmaster, learned, kind and competent. The one made use of every kind of cruelty and coercion in an attempt to make his pupils learn, the other inspired his pupils to diligent study by the example of his own bearing and his high and noble ideals.

Dickens paints Mr. Creakle with vivid strokes for he remembers very well many unhappy days when he was the pupil of a man just as cruel as Creakle. When David describes this brutal schoolmaster, it is really the young Charles who is speaking. Mr. Creakle was more ignorant than the lowest boy in the school, and his only accomplishment was the art of slashing. He was the most brutal of men, with a fiery face, small eyes sunk deep in his head, and thick veins in his forehead which showed terribly when he was angry, and that was most of the time. Perhaps the most horrible thing about him was his inability to speak above a whisper. The consciousness of this weakness made his cruelty even more excessive. So soon as he entered the class room in the morning he began to inflict pain on the little boys with brutal slashes of his rod. He preserved discipline by frequent and fearful application of the rod. And yet David tells us that the discipline in his classroom was very poor. The boys followed him

about the room with their eyes, wondering who would be the next to suffer from his hungry rod. His appetite for inflicting pain was insatiable and he could not resist a chubby boy. Under the influence of such a master it may be supposed that the boys learned very little indeed. But we begin to realize that it would be much better to remain in ignorance than to learn under the influence of a teacher so brutal.

The purpose of education is not only the acquisition of knowledge, but is especially the training of the moral faculties. It is not difficult to imagine the effects of Mr. Creakle's influence on souls and hearts of his little charges. This is all the more apparent when it is known what preparation Mr. Creakle had for his career as a teacher. He had been a hop dealer, but having lost his money and being unable to enter any other profession, he set up a cheap private school. His servant, Tungay, a worthy comrade of his master, knew too much of Mr. Creakle's dishonest dealings so Mr. Creakle kept him in his service. His duty was to repeat in a loud voice everything that the master said in a whisper. As Dickens says, Mr. Creakle was no more fit to be a teacher than he was competent to be Lord High Admiral, in which position he would no doubt do far less harm. To be entrusted to his care during the most impressionable and formative years was indeed a miserable fate for any boy. What virtues would this man instil into young hearts, he who knew nothing but how to inspire fear and hatred? He set himself up as an angry idol to whom the boys bowed in cringing submission. Dickens felt that such a case as this was an outrage to humanity. He realized the full injustice of the situation from the standpoint of the child, and he wanted this realization to become universal. It must be remembered that Mr. Creakle was no myth or mere creation of Dickens' mind. He stood as the representative of a great class of masters who were unworthy of the name of teacher. Very many of Dickens' readers would

recognize in Mr. Creakle the unkind master of their own boyhood days. Parents would realize the unsuitability of such a man to undertake the sacred duty of instructing their children. It was because Creakles really did exist that Dickens' vivid portrayal of his type was so effective in creating an atmosphere which rendered such masters intolerable to society.

Dickens knew that there would be some among his readers who would doubt that any methods but coercion and cruelty would obtain a response from boys. They believed that only a schoolmaster who did not spare the rod could be successful as a teacher. It is for this reason that he sets up, in contrast to Mr. Creakle, another type of master, whose methods of teaching were entirely different. Dr. Strong ruled his pupils not by fear but by love and truth. Dr. Strong's school was well ordered and well conducted. He, himself, was the idol of the whole school. In all things he relied on the honour of the boys and never once was this trust betrayed. In his fatherly way he taught the boys the simple and eternal virtues which he himself practised. He was a man who could gain and hold the love and respect of his pupils. A harsh and brutal man may force his pupils to obey but he will never force them to honour him with their love and respect. The very association with Dr. Strong was an uplifting influence. If the important part of a child's education is his moral training, it is of paramount importance that he should have daily association with one who is imbued with the principles of right and wrong. Duty can be very unattractive to a young boy unless he finds concrete embodiment of it in some forceful character whom he reveres.

Dr. Strong, by reason of his learning, was capable of fulfilling the duty given to him as a teacher, of acting as an interpreter and as a co-ordinator for the boys in their studies. He was inspired by the dignity of the task he was performing. It was by his own enthusiasm that he persuaded the

the boys that the lessons in hand were worthy of their best efforts. A pupil cannot study long under a master who is inspired by enthusiasm without experiencing some of the same zeal.

Such, in the opinion of Dickens, was the ideal teacher and such were the best methods of achieving success with his pupils. It would seem that he is asking the parents of England to rise in rebellion and abolish forever those schools in which their children were receiving instruction from a man quite incapable of raising their ideals and their ambitions. And, on the other hand, Dickens urges them to send their children to schools where they will learn manliness, generosity, patriotism and love of God from a man worthy of his profession.

Dickens was so convinced of the efficiency of a school system designed to encourage children to greater efforts by kindness and sympathetic encouragement that he would abolish corporal punishment almost entirely. Of course, corporal punishment was in his day considered a necessary part of every system of education. As one historian puts it, "Flogging went on every day, and all day long." The administering of physical punishment was thought to be the sure and only cure of every ill that could trouble any boy. It was given as a preventive to stop him from becoming lazy, and it was given as a cure when he didn't study well. The rod was brandished by almost every master, for they believed almost without exception, that no boy would ever apply himself to learning without the encouragement of the rod. There were some teachers, like Creakle and Squeers, who may have beaten their pupils out of a distorted desire to inflict pain, but the vast majority of teachers were prompted by no such motives. It was a matter of ritual with them. They could not conceive of a classroom without the cane as one of the predominant features of every lesson.

Dickens believed that there were methods of education which were

quite effective without resorting to the use of the rod which could and often did cause serious bodily injury.

Any boy, especially if he is clever and full of natural abilities is bound to be troublesome. He is a bundle of energies all seeking expression. These youthful spirits are bound to get him into trouble for he does not understand yet how to control his overflowing zeal for action and for adventure. Such a boy needs instruction and advice from his teacher. He has to be trained to direct his energies in the proper fields of endeavour. This is the work of the teacher, and Dickens believed that it could not be done by the use of the rod. Flogging was an attempt on the part of the teacher to make the boy behave himself, to make him study harder. But the teacher was evading his duty which was to find out why the boy disobeyed in this particular case, or why he refused to learn his memory work. In other words, the first duty of the teacher is to understand the problem of the boy's behaviour through the eyes of the boy himself. Corporal punishment inflicted at such a time will cause the boy to become silent and stubborn; he will resent what he considers to be an act of injustice on the part of the teacher. All ties of understanding between the master and his pupil will be severed. On the other hand, a sympathetic teacher can always gain the confidence of his pupils. He will endeavour to understand the nature of the boy he is handling, and thus will be able to offer him judicious and wise advice. He will know how to direct his energies into the proper fields and channels. The bond of companionship which exists between master and pupil will make any advice offered by the teacher readily acceptable to the pupil.

Dickens believed, moreover, that corporal punishment is entirely unnecessary to make a scholar put forth his best efforts when his teacher has first of all explained to him the value of the lesson in hand and the advantages

to be gained from a proper study of it. Fear does not produce intellectual alertness. Eagerness, enthusiasm, interest, these are the dispositions which must prevail in the classroom. The teacher must show enthusiasm, he must give his pupils the impression, as one writer expresses it, "that he is having the time of his life." Enthusiasm is catching, and not even the dullest pupil will be left uninterested when the teacher approaches the lesson in this spirit. Study changes from dreary penance to a glorious game to be played and won. The pupil will be imbued with the spirit of conquest. He will put forth his best efforts so that he will earn the commendation of his teacher who, he knows, is sincerely interested in his progress. He will endeavour to compete with his fellow pupils. He will be urged on by the pleasure he feels from a duty well done.

In Household Words Dickens expresses these ideas through the words of one of his characters:

"Not one single stupid or idle boy within my experience did Old Bob, with all his flogging, improve in the least. And his severities, I am sure, disgusted some possessed of good abilities, with study. For my own part, I never was flogged, but the fear of being so kept me continually in misery; and as long as I was subject to it, hindered my advancement, prevented me from learning anything with pleasure and caused me to look upon my tasks as impositions, to perform them with ill will in a sulky perfunctory manner. I shall never forget the torment I suffered in cramming all lessons in Greek Grammar under terror of the rod. Exert myself as I would, I could not get anything dry well by rote, whereas poetry or whatever else interested me, I remembered without effort. This was lucky for me; I knew then as I know now how worse than foolish and idiotic was the notion of whipping a boy into parrot-learning. I perceived then as clearly as I perceive at this present

time that memory is no single power of mind; there is as much of feeling in it as of intellect; that we best remember the ideas which we delight to dwell upon and that the proper way of imparting knowledge is to render it as pleasant as possible, or, if this cannot be done, to instil it by degrees, to administer the medicine whose flavour you cannot disguise in minute doses. I saw, I knew all this; judge then with what different sentiments from those presented in the catechism, I, a boy, looked upon my pastors and masters, who knew it not....."

"But I can speak positively as well as negatively as to efficacy of the flogging system. I was past sinking into despair of my capacity and arming myself with dogged obstinacy against the consequences when Old Bob gave up the school."

The boy describes in the following paragraph his new teacher.

"This gentleman made our work as easy as he could; his manner towards us was kind and affectionate; he endeavoured to interest us in our studies and he urged us to exertion by recommending proficiency for reward instead of giving up dullness for punishment. Under this management I, previously considered a dunce, rose rapidly to the First Part of the school."

The thoughts on proper methods of teaching which Dickens gave expression to in these lines that we have just quoted are so widely accepted to-day by teachers that we can easily lose sight of their great importance at the time they were written. One might say that Dickens was facing a hostile world, when he thus boldly denounced corporal punishment. Those who would try the methods of kindness and gentleness which he suggested were afraid to try them for they saw the apparent success of other masters who ruled their pupils with a ready cane. Too many young teachers mistook a subdued class of young people for a progressive one. They forgot that there was a great difference

between an obedience inspired by fear and one inspired by respect. The boy, whose words we have just quoted knew that his teacher was unjust and injudicious in his methods of teaching, and so he felt nothing but a silent scorn for him. He could not study for fear had paralyzed his faculties.

Dickens worked very hard to abolish corporal punishment. He described the schools of Squeers and Creakle to expose the brutality that was exercised within the walls of cheap private schools. He introduced the scene in David Copperfield in which Mr. Murdstone flogged David to arouse the English people to a realization of the injustice and inhumanity of such punishment so ruthlessly administered. In Barnaby Rudge, it is suggested that poor half-witted Barnaby could be made intelligent by beating, so that people might see the absurdity of flogging the feeble-minded, a custom which was not unknown in the nineteenth century. In all the schools such as that of Dr. Strong which Dickens holds up as examples of good schools, flogging had no place.

At the present time a successful teacher very rarely resorts to corporal punishment. He will use it as a last resort when all other methods of handling his pupil have been in vain. There are some cases, and this Dickens admitted, in which corporal punishment is necessary, but these are the exceptions. There are some states in the United States which forbid corporal punishment in schools. Educators have universally accepted the principle that it must be prohibited whenever possible.

The good spirit which prompted Dickens to seek justice for the child could not have been disappointed, for few men have ever pleaded a cause more zealously nor met with greater success. The worst forms of abuse have been abolished. There is scarcely anyone, be he parent or teacher, who does not recognize and respect the rights of children. A universal feeling of sympathy for their welfare exists. The Creakles and the Murdstones have almost disappeared from society. Coercion in its worst form has disappeared. Almost every child enjoys a free and a happy childhood.

### AGAINST CRAMMING

Doctor Blimber's school is intended to teach an educational principle which we have not yet fully learned even in the twentieth century. The principle is this, that young people should not be forced to study subjects which are beyond the power of their minds to fully grasp. Mr. Dombey wished his son to become a fine learned man, and so he sent his delicate boy, Paul, to school at the age of six years. Doctor Blimber's school was the most renowned and expensive institution he could find. This school catered to wealthy and ambitious parents who wished their children to be brought along quickly. The master only took ten boys at one time, but any boy whom he took in hand could be sure of a tight squeeze. He had knowledge enough for one hundred boys, and it was his delight to gorge the unhappy ten with all his learning.

When Paul was presented to the Doctor, the latter promised to make a man of him. Paul replied, "I had rather be a child", and finally burst into tears. The boy's father was alarmed at such unaccountable behaviour, but the master was nonplussed. "Never mind, we shall substitute new cares and new impressions". This shows an entire lack of sympathy and understanding on the part of the master. He could not understand why Paul should want to remain a child for a little while longer. Dickens could have told him that it is a crime against the child to rob him of the happy carefree days of play. A boy of six is not yet ready to take on the burdens of more mature years. Doctor Blimber is like the cruel man in the fairy tale who grasps the shrieking child and places it in the realm of adulthood where it is completely bewildered, even as Paul is. The boy needs a few more years to grow strong and to take in those impressions little by little, which will prepare him for greater work later on.

It is not difficult to make people see that children should be rescued from cheap private schools and illiterate masters, but it is difficult to persuade them that the forcing system is almost as detrimental. Parents desire their children to progress rapidly and here is a school in which they will acquire all knowledge. It was our author's purpose to illustrate that young people became living encyclopaedias at great expense, from which many of them never afterwards recovered.

Nature was of no consequence in this school. If a boy happened to be clever like Paul, he was forced to study all the harder. If he were naturally dull and somewhat slow, he was pushed ahead just the same. The school is a veritable hot-house in which the forcing apparatus is forever at work. Of course, there were some disadvantages insofar as the fruits of the boys' labours were immature and unsatisfactory. The mathematical gooseberries produced out of season were very sour, Latin and Greek vegetables grew on the driest bits of twigs and under the frostiest conditions. Mental green peas were produced at Christmas and intellectual asparagus all the year round. Results had to be obtained no matter whether the soil was ready for production or not. As might be expected, the over-taxed mental faculties showed some ill effects. Mr. Toots, the eldest of the ten boys, is a notable example of this. He gave up blowing one day and by the time he began to have whiskers he left off having a brain.

Every fibre of their intellectual faculties was strained to the utmost. The result was rather telling on the spirits of the boys. They had none of the enthusiasm which characterizes healthy happy boys. Dickens tells us:

"The young gentleman were prematurely full of corking anxieties. They knew no rest from the pursuit of stoney-hearted verbs, savage noun-substantive inflexible syntactic passages and ghosts of exercises that appeared to them in

their dreams. Under the forcing system, a gentleman usually took leave of his spirits in three weeks. He had all the cares of the world on his head in three months. He conceived bitter sentiments against his parents or guardians in four; he was an old misanthrope in five; envied Curtius that blessed refuge in the earth in six; and at the end of the twelve months had arrived at the conclusion from which he never afterwards departed, that all fancies of the poets and lessons of the sages, were a mere collection of words and grammar and had no other meaning in the world."

Apart from the fact that the boys became bitter, tired old men before they reached teen age, this cramming deprived them of any appreciation for the great works of literature. Study became a dreary penance. When their young minds could not understand their tasks, they soon discovered that a mere mechanical repetition of words satisfied their teachers. The load of undigested matter thus acquired arrested the further development of the mind. They became mere memorizing machines. Unfortunately, this is true of some pupils even to-day. Looking back on our own school days, perhaps few of us can deny that we crammed for examinations. We received good marks for recounting facts which had little meaning for us. The time may come when examinations will be abolished in schools and universities and replaced by a more effective system. When this is done, let us hope that Dickens will be given his share of the laurels.

Another fallacy which Dickens points out in this respect, is the error of masters trying to teach their pupils everything. The first morning Paul was handed a stack of books which his little arms could not hold all at one time. He had to study something out of every one. They comprised a little English and a great deal of Latin, a bit of orthography, some Ancient History, a few tables of Arithmetic and some general information. It is small wonder that by the time Paul had memorized the second he had no idea of the first lesson and the fourth

got mixed up with the third. Finally, he could not remember whether twenty Romuluses made a Remus or hic, haec, hoc was a troy weight or a verb always agreed with an ancient Briton, or whether three times four was Taurus a bull. There is no sense in bewildering a boy of six with such a conglomeration of information. If he had been given only one book, then at least, he would have acquired a bit of useful knowledge.

Dickens, while addressing an audience, again expressed the same idea regarding the absurdity of endeavouring to teach students everything:

"There is a piece of foppery to be guarded against, the foppery of universality, of looking into all sciences and excelling in all arts, chemistry, mathematics, algebra, dancing, history, reasoning, riding, fencing, Low Dutch, High Dutch and natural philosophy. In short, the modern precept of education very often is 'Take the Admirable Crichton for your model. I would have you ignorant of nothing.' Now my advice on the contrary, is to have the courage to be ignorant of a good number of things that you may avoid the calamity of being ignorant of everything."

Our author has something to say on what students should learn in school. When Tozer finished school, he was so full of antiquity that he was nearly on a par with an ancient Roman in his knowledge of English. The study of antiquity has its place but only to the extent that it enables a pupil to understand his own civilization and culture. The subjects studied in the class room must have practical value. Moreover, a student should be permitted to specialize in that particular branch of study for which he has natural ability. A boy who is a genius at mathematics should not be required to make an intensive study of the classics. Learning has no value unless it equips the scholar to fill a position in life in which he will be happy and useful. Having to wade through subjects for which he has no talent invariably makes a student discourag

and does him little or no good. On the other hand, if he has a study which interests him, he will work hard and progress rapidly..

Doctor Blimber and his assistants had several faults which a successful teacher must avoid. Miss Blimber, for instance, though slim and graceful, did no soft violence to the gravity of the house. She was dry and sandy with working in the graves of deceased languages; there was nothing alive and human about her. Though not by any means unkind, she was unable to establish a bond of sympathy with her pupils. She bewildered them with long definitions which had no meaning for them. She never saw how immense a task can look to a small boy. So full was she of abstract knowledge that she offered her pupils no concrete and practical information.

Mr. Feeder, B.A., was even worse than Miss Blimber. Dickens describes him as a human barrel organ, grinding the same tune over and over again. He is quite unable to inspire his pupils with enthusiasm by presenting the lessons in an interesting manner. Unless a teacher can arouse an enthusiastic response and effort from his pupils, he is doomed to failure. It did not occur to Mr. Feeder that his monotonous voice and dry manner contributed to the disinterest of the tired leaden-eyed boys.

It should be remembered that the Doctor was perfectly sincere in the effectiveness of his educational principles. He did not realize that hours of study, and no play, was undermining the physical and intellectual faculties of his pupils. He was but carrying out the wishes of ambitious parents. Perhaps he went farthest astray in his belief that a vast quantity of knowledge constituted true learning.

If the cramming system did produce good results then at least it would have an ounce of justification. However, such was not the case. We

remember Mr. Toots was rendered into a state bordering on imbecility. Nothing but difficult and continuous studies killed Paul. By the time Mr. Briggs graduated, his learning, like an ill-arranged luggage, was so tightly packed, he could not get at anything he wanted. Moreover, it had been subjected to so much pressure that it had none of its original form left. Mr. Blitherstone was in a happier condition. As soon as the forcing apparatus was removed he experienced the relief of feeling all those troublesome facts slipping away from him and being on a ship bound for Bengal it was doubtful whether his declensions would hold out to the end of the voyage.

Much more effective did Dickens consider Major Jackman's system of teaching Jemmy. His lessons were a delightful game. Arithmetic was learnt from counting the pots and pans and other common utensils about the house. Nor did the Major think that the lessons should not be relieved by plenty of laughs and claps. After a week or two of half-hour sessions, the day arrived when the Major invited Mrs. Lirriper to witness the arithmetical feats of her proud young godson. The Major sits behind the table on which are piled all sorts of kitchenware and Jemmy stands on a chair, his cheeks rosy and his eyes <sup>dancing. What</sup> a contrast to poor Briggs who sat staring at his lessons in a state of stony stupefaction and despair, or the other young gentleman who was grasping his forehead convulsively over mathematical problems! Mrs. Lirriper describes the scene:

"But picture my admiration when the Major, going on almost as quick as if he were conjuring, sets out all the articles he names, and says, 'Three saucepans, an Italian iron, a hand bell, a toasting fork, a nutmeg grater, four potlids, a spice box, two egg cups, and a chopping board - how many? And when the Mite instantly cries, 'Fifteen, tut down tive and carry ler 'topping board' and then claps his hands, draws up his legs and dances on his chair.

The pride of the Major! ("Here's a mind, Ma'am!", he says to me behind his hand.)"

Jemmy was not forced to study for long periods at a time. The Major taught him in half-hour sessions. The rest of the day he was free to play. His health and his right to a happy childhood were not sacrificed for the sake of piles of useless knowledge.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PHYSICAL ELEMENT

It was a common belief of the nineteenth century that children did not require good food. Because they were small, they required only the smallest quantity of the weakest food. Many there were who did not realize that though a child was small, he needed plenty of good food, both for energy and growth. If his limbs and muscles were to develop into those of a strong man, he required nourishing food. It seems strange that a novelist would have to awaken parents and teachers to a realization of the importance of the physical element in the rearing and education of children.

As is his custom, Dickens pleads his case by exposing the abuses which lack of food caused. In the first place, he attacks the parish workers and those who were responsible for the nourishment of unfortunate individuals who had to rely on public charity for their maintenance. In his novel, *Oliver Twist*, Dickens exposes those who were starving the children of the poor in the name of public economy. The gentlemen of the relief board had cut down the rations to such an extent that the saving was all consumed in the increasing number of coffins required. However, there was some consolation that these coffins could be made very narrow by reason of the fact that their dead were so very thin. Pitiful as this is, Dickens makes us feel that it is a still greater crime to deprive young children of proper foods. The well-fed officials took the attitude that they were doing all that was required of them by permitting the poor and their children to continue living. Dickens arouses public opinion to a realization that the children of the poor who, through illness or economic conditions, are unable to earn their living, should not be systematically starved by public officials in the name of economy.

As Oliver's mother had died, the child was farmed out; that is, he

was sent to a detached workhouse where twenty or thirty other juveniles were allowed to roll on the floor without the inconvenience of too much food or too much clothing under the supervision of an elderly lady, who cared for the children at the expense of seven pence halfpenny per head per week. Dickens tells us that this lady, being a good philosopher as well as a nurse, knew that seven pence halfpenny's worth of food was too much for any child, and so as not to overload his stomach, she used most of the money to buy food for herself. Consequently, the juvenile offenders - the only offence being that they dare to live - received the smallest quantity of the weakest food possible.

Dickens tells us that this system was very satisfactory to the parish because it was so cheap, especially as many of the infants didn't survive long. Those children who did not die of starvation grew up to be puny and sickly.

Oliver, being from his birth a particularly rebellious child, insisted in spite of everything on living. At the age of nine the puny pale-faced boy was too old to stay any longer at the farm and so he was sent to the main workhouse to learn a trade. It should not be supposed that Oliver, accustomed to the pangs of hunger since infancy, fared any better at the workhouse. The children were allowed three bowls a day of the thinnest gruel. The spoons were almost as big as the bowls so it did not take long to finish the meagre allotment. There was never any need to wash the bowls for each young gentleman polished his bowl lest a precious drop should be left, and when this was done, he licked his fingers and looked at the bowls with such hungry looks that it seemed they might have eaten them too.

At last the boys grew desperate with hunger and they contrived

among themselves that one of them should ask for more gruel. Lots were cast and it fell upon Oliver to walk before the master that night and ask for another bowl of gruel. Oliver took his bowl and reckless with misery and hunger, he stood before the master and asked for more.

This scene in which the desperate boy asks for more of the thin gruel has become one of the best known scenes among all Dickens writings. Our author makes Oliver the mouthpiece of all those real children of the poor who were suffering misery and disease because of improper food.

The master, who was a fat healthy man, for he was not fed on parish rations, turned very pale, and gazed at the boy in speechless amazement. To think that any boy would ask for more when he had eaten the allowance permitted by the dietary! He regained his voice and shouted loudly to the beadle. This latter gentleman, Mr. Bumble by name, ran to tell the Board of this incredible incident. There was horror registered on every face when they heard the terrible news. The gentleman in the white waistcoat was sure Oliver would be hanged. One and all agreed that such a boy was too dangerous to remain in the workhouse. And so the very next day a sign was put up advertising that £5 would be given to any man who would take Oliver off the parish hands.

When this novel was read in the homes of the English people they were both surprised and shocked that such things were permitted in their fair land. Public opinion was aroused to such an extent that parish overseers were forced to see that those children under their supervision received at least enough food to allow normal growth.

Dickens let it be known, however, that parish overseers were not alone to blame in this regard.

When Oliver was apprenticed to an undertaker, Mr. Sowerberry, he was fed on the scraps that no one else would eat. On the first evening of his arrival, Oliver was presented with some cold bits of meat which had been set aside for the dog. Young Oliver had scarcely eaten meat <sup>before</sup> in his life and he devoured the scraps with pitiful avidity. And Dickens says:

"I wish some well-fed philosopher whose meat and drink turn to gall within him; whose blood is ice; whose heart is iron; could have seen Oliver Twist clutching at the viands that the dog had neglected. I wish he could have witnessed the horrible avidity with which Oliver tore the bits asunder with all the ferocity of famine. There is only one thing I should like to see better, and that would be to see the Philosopher making the same sort of meal himself with the same relish."

When Oliver's just anger had been aroused by the cruel taunts against his mother, he showed all the fire of his young spirit, which, in spite of starvation, was not lacking in contempt for injustice and cruel treatment. Mr. Bumble solved the problem by affirming that it was meat which made the little boy so defiant:

"Meat, ma'am, meat!", replied Mr. Bumble, with stern emphasis. "You've over-fed him, ma'am. You've raised an artificial soul and spirit in him, ma'am, unbecoming a person of his condition; as the Board, Mrs. Sowerberry, who are practical philosophers will tell you, 'What have paupers to do with soul or spirit?' It's quite enough that we let them have live bodies. If you kept the boy on gruel, ma'am, this would never have happened."

"Dear, dear!", ejaculated Mrs. Sowerberry, piously raising her eyes to the kitchen ceiling, "this comes of being liberal!"

"The liberality of Mrs. Sowerberry to Oliver had consisted of a profuse bestowal upon him of all the dirty odds and ends which nobody else

would eat; so there was a great deal of meekness and self-devotion in her voluntarily remaining under Mr. Bumble's heavy accusations."

Another example of the disregard for physical well-being is shown when Mr. Bumble takes Oliver to wash under the pump in very cold weather. He keeps him from becoming too cold by the frequent application of the cane.

Mr. and Mrs. Squeers systematically starved their pupils.

On one occasion Squeers sat down to breakfast with five hungry little boys. He ate a hearty breakfast of toast and cold beef while the children looked on, devouring the food with their eyes. At length he ordered a very small quantity of milk and proceeded to drown it in a very large mug of water. Then he divided bread and butter enough for three into portions of five. First he handed the pitcher of weak milk to the nearest boy and when he had drunk just enough to want more, the master gave the order to pass the pitcher to the next boy, and so on down the line. The boys had just started to eat voraciously the meagre portion of bread and butter when the horn sounded announcing that the coach was ready. At this signal the good master produced a basket into which each hungry boy regretfully dropped the remainder of his breakfast to be eaten during the journey.

Squeers endeavoured to make out that he was teaching his pupils a lesson in self-denial by thus depriving them of substantial food. While hastily devouring a generous meal himself, he offered the boys this improving advice:

"Subdue your appetities, my dears, and you've conquered human nature. This is the way we inculcate strength of mind, Mr. Nickleby", said the schoolmaster, turning to Nicholas, and speaking with his mouth very full of beef and toast.

"Nicholas murmured something - he knew not what - in reply; and

the little boys, dividing their gaze between the mug, the bread and butter (which had by this time arrived) and every morsel which Mr. Squeers took into his mouth, remained with strained eyes in torments of expectation."

"Thank God for a good breakfast", said Squeers when he had finished.

A child easily perceives hypocrisy and selfishness, and there is no doubt that these little boys despised their master for his display of both vices.

At Dotheboys Academy, conducted by the two good souls, Squeers and his faithful spouse, economy was practised to the last degree. The classroom was never heated on the coldest day of the year and the children huddled together to keep a bit warmer. The food consisted of the least expensive variety, chiefly of thin gruel and meat which the butcher could not sell to anyone else. On certain days Mrs. Squeers lined up the boys, and into the mouths of each one she poured a quantity of an ill-tasting mixture. This dose was invariably administered before breakfast. The good lady explained that the children were bound to be sick if they did not have medicine of some kind, and this dose served a double purpose as it took away their appetites. for at least the rest of the day.

What a violation of the laws of humanity and justice! When Nicholas Nickleby entered the classroom he was aghast at the appearance of the children. Cold, starvation, neglect and cruelty had done their worst on the bodies and souls of little helpless victims. Children whose faces should have been handsome were wasted away and lined with suffering. Thin legs were scarcely able to support still thinner bodies. Little ones <sup>there were</sup> who had never known kindness, whose spirit was broken, whose growth was stunted. Let us see how

Dickens describes them:

"The pupils - the young noblemen! How the last faint traces of hope, the remotest glimmering of any good to be derived from his efforts in this den faded from the mind of Nicholas as he looked in dismay around! Pale and haggard faces, lank and bony figures, children with the countenances of old men, deformities with irons upon their limbs, boys of stunted growth, and others whose long meagre legs would hardly bear their stooping bodies; all crowded on the view together; there were the bleared eye, the harelip, the crooked foot and every ugliness or distortion that told of unnatural aversion conceived by parents for their offspring, or of young lives which from the earliest dawn of infancy, had been one horrible endurance of cruelty and neglect. There were little faces which should have been handsome, darkened with the scowl of sullen, dogged suffering; there was childhood, with the light of its eye quenched, its beauty gone and its helplessness alone remaining; there were vicious-faced boys with leaden eyes like malefactors in jail, and there were young creatures on whom the sins of their frail parents had descended, weeping even for the mercenary nurses they had known, and lonesome even in their loneliness. With every kindly sympathy and affection blasted in its birth, with every young and healthy feeling flogged and starved down, with every revengeful passion that can fester in swollen hearts eating its evil way to their care in silence; what an incipient hell was breeding here!"

No author but Dickens could depict so much horror and suffering in a few lines. There is a challenge in these lines, a challenge to good Englishmen everywhere to abolish these dens of suffering, to drive out these evil impostors masquerading as schoolmasters.

The most pitiful character of all is Smike, a boy of eighteen, who through long years of abuse has become a harmless imbecile. So thin is he

that he still wears about his neck the frill of a collar which loving hands placed there when he was sent to the school at a very young age. He has taken a passionate liking for Nicholas because he was the first adult he could remember that had spoken kindly to him instead of boxing his ears.

Such tales of neglect and cruelty caused the furore which might be expected. In almost every home in England Dickens' novels were loved and read. Complacent Englishmen everywhere were aroused. Many disputed the accuracy of Dickens' accounts of misery and brutality. No man could be so cruel as Squeers, no woman so hypocritical as his wife. But our author unhesitatingly answered these attacks. He assured his critics that his representations were but feeble pictures of the real truth. Indeed, confided Dickens, not without unbounded satisfaction and with not a little amusement, several schoolmasters had written him, each one believing himself to be the original Squeers. One man threatened to sue him for libel. Another one had a good mind to journey to London for the express purpose of committing assault and battery on him. Though our author appreciated the compliment which each one of these schoolmasters was paying him, yet he assured them that Squeers was meant to be the representative of a class rather than of any individual.

So effective was our reformer's exposure of the horrors of the Yorkshire schools that within a few years they had become almost extinct. In his second preface to Nicholas Nickleby Dickens told his readers that the Squeers' type of cheap private school was almost a thing of the past.

If Dickens did nothing but abolish these schools, the English speaking world would still owe him a great debt of gratitude. But he did more than this - he made parents and teachers conscious of the importance of building up strong bodies. The health of Squeers' pupils was sacrificed on the altar of

economy. Mrs. Pipchin, rather a violent but not entirely unkind lady, likewise deprived her young charges of nourishing food. In her case, though she was saving, yet this was scarcely her chief motive. Rather it came from the belief that children did not need to be fed like adults. She herself ate plenty of mutton chops and other substantial foods, but she offered only farinaceous and vegetable foods, chiefly rice, to her pupils. Though the children did not lack food, yet they were not supplied with the nutritive foods so necessary to build up strong bones and tissues.

Jemmy Lirriper made up the story of a schoolmaster who was imprisoned for his treatment of children. One of his punishments was to eat only the boys' food, and to drink half a cask of their beer everyday. It should be remembered that Jemmy was not sent to a second rate school, but to the best that his godparents could find. This indicates that even in the best schools the physical development of the children was neglected.

However, there are other considerations which are as essential as good food to the physical well-being of growing children. They must have plenty of fresh air, sunshine and exercise. These are essential to proper functioning of the mind as well as of the body. There is a world of truth in the proverb "A sound body, a sound mind". Children will make very little progress in their lessons unless they have plenty of chance to play games and exercise their limbs. In Dr. Strong's school, sports were given an important place in the curriculum. On the other hand, Doctor Blimbers' boys were permitted to engage in nothing so frivolous as sports. The Doctor himself was a kind man, quite incapable of inflicting intentional physical suffering on his scholars. Yet his system is just as detrimental. Study was the order of the day and of every day. Study, study until the eyes would hardly stay open,

study until the head ached and the limbs were numb from sitting so long. At mealtime the ten young gentlemen solemnly betook themselves to the dining room. There was good food set before them and plenty of it for every boy, but somehow few of them ever had any appetite. Perhaps it was because they were too fatigued; perhaps it was because of the classical conversation about antiquity which always passed between Dr. Blimber and Mr. Feeder at mealtime; or again, perhaps it was because of the air of formality which enshrouded every ablution in that severe dining hall. In fact, there was nothing in the whole atmosphere of the house which permitted the boys to forget that they resided in a place of hard learning. Nothing so unclassical as a laugh or a gleeful shout was ever known to resound through the walls of that house. At certain periods the ten gentlemen, each one regaled in the stiffest and most uncomfortable of high stiff collars, took his exercise in the open. This latter, however, consisted of walking in pairs up and down the courtyard in a most solemn and dignified manner. When this exercise was duly executed the boys returned to their study.

Dickens is showing his readers that children cannot be kept under a continual strain of study without the relief of plenty of good, strenuous games. Dr. Blimber has killed the spirit of the boys so that they are dull and stupid. They are no longer children, but little men, possessing none of the enthusiasm of youth, but only the cares of adulthood. The air of solemnity which surrounds their every action is just as poisonous as improper food. No boy can become physically sturdy and mentally alert without the sense of freedom and careless abandon of youth. He must have a cheerful atmosphere and bright surroundings. Children do not understand formality and they should never be forced to live in a home or school where they are afraid to act naturally and give vent to their overflow of energies.

Study should never interfere with the health of children.

When Paul entered the classroom he discovered one pupil grasping his forehead convulsively; another one, with his face like a dirty window pane from much crying, was endeavouring to flounder through a hopeless number of lines before dinner; a third was staring at his task in a state of stony stupefaction and despair. This last boy was Briggs, who later confided to Paul that his head ached to split and he wished himself dead if it were not for his mother and a blackbird he had at home. Tozer didn't say much but sighed a great deal. Their lessons haunted them in their sleep and they kept Paul awake with muttering scraps of Greek and Latin. In the morning their eyes were swollen and they were no more rested than when they went to bed. The boys resumed their tasks with no other feeling than that of grim resignation.

Human calculation will never be able to estimate the fruits of Dickens' untiring efforts in the field of education. We have in this discussion but indicated imperfectly the extent of his labours in a cause so dear to his heart. Like all reformers he was much ahead of his time and our own century has not yet seen the full acceptance in practice of his teaching. His influence will continue to be felt as long as his novels are read and we believe that this will be as long as the English language is spoken.

Many people are inclined to underestimate the importance of his work in the field of education. This is partly because the principles which he upheld are now almost universally accepted. In Dickens' day they were very often either completely ignored, or violently contested. He won justice for the child in the face of an indifferent and sometimes a hostile public. At all times was he prompted by a sincere love of truth and justice and a deep affection for all little children. Would that we could offer fitting praise to a soul so magnanimous and a reformer so zealous. We can do no better than quote a few lines of William Watson's sincere tribute to our author.

"And still across the years  
His soul goes forth to battle, and in the face  
Of whatsoever is false, or cruel or base,  
He hurls his gage, and leaps among the spears,  
Being armed with pity and love and scorn divine,  
Immortal laughter and immortal tears."

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