

THE TRAINING OF BOYS AT ETON.

MR. FROUDE, in an epigrammatic passage in the "Life of Lord Beaconsfield," speaks of liberty in the modern sense as being "liberty where the rights of man take the place of the duties of a man." It is liberty in the old-fashioned sense that English public schools aim at cultivating; the liberty that coexists with the duties of the individual and keeps his rights in the background—liberty, instinctive rather than mechanical, real rather than theoretical.

I venture to take Eton as the most typical of English public schools, though it perhaps differs more from the majority of these institutions than they do from each other; but at Eton the tendencies and principles which underlie the English public-school system have their fullest and freest development and are seen in their most ideal form. Eton is singularly free from limitations. At Winchester, in many respects one of the most typical of English schools, in antiquity and tradition perhaps preëminent, the comparatively small numbers present the experiment on altogether a lesser scale; at Harrow there is a want of local dignity and a somewhat fortuitous prestige; Rugby is rather overlooked by its past—it is somewhat cramped by an unconscious but perpetual reference to the shadow of Arnold; Marlborough is by its constitution obliged to be more directly utilitarian; Clifton is not primarily a boarding-school; Wellington College is too predominantly military in tendency; Charterhouse has broken with its past; Westminster has lost it; Haileybury has hardly a history; Uppingham is the efflorescence of individual genius.

It has been said that Eton is too large for coherence. But the only test of coherence can be the personal acquaintance of a headmaster with his boys; and the moment that the numbers of a school rise above two or three hundred, this becomes impossible, except in the case of men of such dominant personality as Arnold or Thring. Eton is certainly not too large for a public opinion of its own, most minute in its ramifications, and even pressing rather too hardly, it may be thought, upon originality, while those who are at all intimately acquainted with the organization of the place see no reason why a

still larger number than the thousand which it has lately reached should not successfully be governed on the same lines. It is true that at Eton there is no building where the entire school can be assembled at any one time, and this would be a desirable addition to it; but the school has met on more than one occasion lately in the open air without difficulty.

Eton and Winchester, together with Westminster, differ somewhat in constitution from other English public schools. In these three cases the nucleus of the constitution was originally a college "of sad priests," as the old documents say. At Westminster it was the dean and prebendaries, at Winchester the warden and fellows, at Eton the provost and fellows. Westminster remains intact; the school is still a mere adjunct of the collegiate church, but at Winchester and Eton the public-school commission has within the last thirty years abolished the original college. The warden and provost remain and reside within the college; in both cases they are presidents *ex officio* of the new governing bodies, which consist in each case of a certain number of eminent persons nominated by state officials and learned societies. The provostship of Eton is in the gift of the Crown; but for many years, with only an occasional exception, the headmaster has been nominated to the office upon the decease of the provost.

The provost, therefore, exercises a certain control "over," though not "in," the place. The management of the religious worship of the college is practically in his hands: he shares the appointment of preachers in the college chapel with the headmasters, and with his previous experience in the government of the school is always at hand as a valuable counsellor; in practical matters of organization and discipline he does not interfere with the action of the headmaster, yet as chairman of the governing body, any plans of reform must pass under his sanction. But the headmaster is for practical purposes an autocrat, though controlled generally by the governing body. Governing bodies are comparatively modern institutions; perhaps they have not existed long enough for us to form an ultimate judgment upon them. But the difficulty of getting ten or twelve eminent public men, a judge, a bishop, heads of Oxford and of Cambridge College, members of Parliament, and peers to meet frequently enough to consider in detail the needs and claims of a school seems almost to counterbalance the advantage of having men of first-rate eminence to pre-empt the fortunes of an institution which must adapt itself with great rapidity to the swift currents of nineteenth-century opinion.

The headmaster has the absolute right of appointing and dismissing his assistant masters, who are, however, invariably addressed by him as his "colleagues." He thus presides, as at Eton, over a college, so to speak, of some sixty graduates, of whom most will have been appointed, as the years go on, by himself. He holds two formal meetings of masters in every half-year, at which questions of any kind that affect the discipline or morals or organization of the school are discussed, any master being at liberty to place a subject upon the paper of *agenda*; but besides this, there is at Eton an informal meeting of masters daily, lasting from ten to twenty minutes, so that every master has the certainty of being able to find any of his colleagues with whom he has any business to transact, and the advantages of the plan are obvious. At most public schools the junior masters and the masters who do not hold boarding-houses live on the collegiate system with a common room for meals, primarily, no doubt, from motives of economy; but there is no such system at Eton, the junior masters either living in hired lodgings in the town or combining two or three together to take a house within the college precincts.

At Eton there is no central building where the majority of the boys are lodged. The seventy "King's scholars," the number typical of the seventy Disciples, as the twelve fellows of the twelve Apostles, are housed in the college itself in a new wing, the old "long chamber," the scene of a rude and boisterous life until the middle of the present century, having been partitioned up into rooms. These boys are admitted by competition, there being generally some seventy or eighty competitors for ten or a dozen vacancies. They are boarded and lodged at the expense of the college, their tuition fees are paid, and thus the expenses of a collegier are inconsiderable. These boys wear in public the gown of the old foundation, and in many ways they are a distinct clan, though the old sense of inferiority which used to hang about them has partially died out, from the fact that socially they are now drawn from the same clan as the "oppidans" or town-boys. A similar body exists at Winchester with traditions in many respects identical. Their importance in the fortunes of the school is great; there is a singular tradition of close study among them, and it is to them that nearly all the highest academical honors won by Eton fall. They practically govern themselves on a species of monitorial system; there is a master attached to and resident in the college, but he never interferes in disciplinary matters unless invoked, and is more in the relation of an elder friend than a master.

As vacancies occur, masters in order of seniority are presented to the various boarding-houses, though the headmaster has now the power of passing over any man if he thinks fit. Some of these houses are modern buildings erected by the college; some of them are old houses adapted, and not always well adapted, to their present use; some belong to the non-resident lord of the manor, some to private owners. The numbers in the boarding-houses are about forty, and it is in this boarding-house system that the Eton principle of government by division, "*divide et impera*," is most clearly seen. Within his own boarding-house a master is practically supreme; as a rule, a monitorial power devolves upon the captain of the house, the senior boy, but it is rarely used, and depends to a great extent upon the character of the individual who exercises it. In a boarding-house the boys are generally supplied with breakfast and tea in their own rooms, with liberty to add what delicacies they like to an otherwise frugal meal. They dine together at two and have supper together at nine; shortly after this prayers are read and the boys disperse to their rooms, every boy, except in the case of brothers, having a room of his own. It is customary then for the master of the house to make a tour of inspection, visiting every boy individually, seeing that his work is done, talking about any incident that may deserve a few words, and ready to be consulted on any point. The relation of a boy to his house-master is a very close and pleasant one, and nearly always on the part of the boys both affectionate and loyal; it is the rarest thing to find a boy criticising his house-master with severity, either while he is at Eton or after he has left it.

There is generally a matron attached to every house, who looks after the health of the boys. The matrons are, as a rule, ladies of education and refinement. It is a very important post, as, in the case of bachelor masters, the matrons have practically the entire control of the household management, the servants, and the provisioning of the boys. Disciplinary disturbance in a house is now practically unknown at Eton; the government of houses is of course more strict in some cases than in others, but the fact that a house generally contains boys of all ages from nineteen to twelve makes the control easy. The elder boys, "uppers" as they are called, keep the lower boys in order in their own interest; and the responsibility which they thus acquire makes it rarely necessary for any stringent authority to be exerted over themselves. This familiarity between masters and boys is of a comparatively late growth; there are plenty of people now

alive who remember being in houses where no conversation was allowed at dinner or supper, but now conversation between the boys themselves and the house-masters is of the most natural and easy description. Consequently, relations being so confidential as they are, a master has opportunities of learning about the character and disposition and actual doings of the boys under his charge without the least suspicion of espionage; they "force themselves upon the ear," and the result is the extraordinary increase of what may be called "humanity" which has taken place between the boys themselves and between the boys and masters even within the last twenty years, the point to which the recollections of the present writer carry him. The most marked instance of this is the practical disappearance of what was so characteristic a feature of public schools in the past—"bullying." It is no longer necessary to reassure anxious mothers on this point; petty persecutions and irritations, sharp criticisms and mere physical encounters, still, of course, occur, and it is right that they should do so. "Ground in yonder social mill, we rub each other's angles down." But of systematic arrogance, with the rare exceptions perhaps of boys of ludicrous eccentricity and of deliberate and wanton cruelty, there is little trace, and if a master is vigilant there need be none.

Each house is a singularly united society. The games of each are united for purposes of numbers with some two or three other houses; their work is in common; their whole life is lived together. Of the special arrangements of work which make the life at Eton so particularly sociable I shall speak presently; but the *esprit de corps* of a house is a feeling which exists long even in later life. An old boy comes down for a game of football, and naturally spends his day in the old house, sharing in the meals, and reviving old stories with his successors; and the most valuable part of this feeling is a certain sensitiveness which makes a boy afraid of doing anything which can discredit "the house." "The house has got a bad name," said a boy to me some years ago, "so it's no use trying." This motive lies ready to hand, and is a force which can be brought to bear by a serious master upon the minutest faults.

I must pass on to the intellectual life of the place. The whole school is divided into "divisions" of about thirty boys, massed into six "blocks"; the basis of the work is, of course, still classified. The whole school is examined at the end of every half-year for promotion. The tendency, therefore, except in the case of a boy of exceptional

brilliancy or the reverse, is to go slowly up the school in the company of the boys among whom he is placed. The classical curriculum consists of lessons construed in school, composition in Greek and Latin, repetition lessons in the same language, and, in the lower parts of the school, grammar; besides his classical master, every boy attends the lessons of a mathematical, French, and science master. Taking thirty as the average number of hours in the week spent actually "in school," the proportion will be represented by sixteen for classics, six for mathematics, four for modern languages, two for subjects such as history and geography, and two for science. This is, of course, only a rough statement, and varies in the different parts of the school, classics pure and simple predominating in the upper "blocks."

The lessons are mostly oral, boys being called upon to construe in form and the master questioning and commenting. There is also a certain amount of paper work; but at Eton the exercises are generally done out of school in a boy's own time, and those who have experience of this system are inclined to rate it very highly indeed as a gain in responsibility. A great deal of voluntary energy and interest is expended by the majority of the boys on their work, and it is easier for a master to put pressure on a boy by results than when the work is done under his own eye. It is all the difference in fact between time-work and piece-work, and the boys value their liberty in this respect so highly, their power of settling for themselves when their work is to be done, that a mere suggestion of having it done for the future under a master's inspection is generally quite sufficient to bring the most procrastinating and neglectful, if not to a sense of duty, at least to a sense of prudence. There is considerably more latitude in this respect at Eton than at any other public school. It is the custom at most schools to set apart a certain period, called "preparation," when the work is done under superintendence; but those who are acquainted with the Eton method can honestly say that the work intrusted to the boys' own hours is as a rule best done.

Three important modifications have been lately made in most English public schools:

(1) The teaching of science. Thirty years ago, science was almost universally neglected; it now holds a prominent place. Then, at Eton there are two laboratories, a chemical and a physical, with theatres for lectures with demonstrations. There is an ample museum with scientific collections and an observatory carefully fitted with all requisites, and four masters are allotted to scientific subjects.

(2) An army class. Since the introduction of a severe competition for the army, most schools have set apart a certain staff of masters who are engaged in teaching solely with a view to passing boys into the army. These boys have a different time-table and extra hours, but share in every other way the common life of the place. This to a certain extent does away with the necessity of passing a boy into the army through "crammers'" establishments where boys are herded together at a dangerous age without much disciplinary restraint and without the possibility of much physical exercise to counteract the evils of sedentary pressure.

(3) "Modern sides," as they are called, have been instituted at most public schools for boys destined to commercial careers, where the classics are almost entirely dispensed with and time is devoted to modern languages and mathematics. But, curiously enough, they are not generally in favor either with masters or boys, though it would be natural to suppose that the subjects dealt with would be more congenial to the majority of both. The fact is that, at school, subjects must almost necessarily be taught in an academic way. For practical purposes, a boy will learn far more in six months at Dresden or Tours than he will learn in four years by poring over a grammar; and the principle that, in education, *what* is taught is not so important as *how* it is taught is not an intellectual chimera, but a precept of the most practical and utilitarian kind. A large percentage of boys at every English public school are destined for the universities, and the universities adhere with greater fidelity, it has been lately shown, to both Greek and Latin than was expected; were they to dispense with Greek, Greek would vanish from the public schools except for classical specialists. But in the mean time we classicalists have an instrument of high educational value and culture in our hands, and use it to the best advantage. At Eton, instead of establishing a "modern side," a boy is allowed to give up Greek at a certain part of the school. The change was made quite lately and with some anxiety; it has been completely successful, but the number of boys who avail themselves of it seems to diminish rather than increase. A boy gets the most good out of an institution by falling in with the normal type of its spirit, and though an institution which depends for its success on popular favor must adapt itself to popular opinion, it also has a duty to perform in upholding a high educational standard which it cannot dare to neglect. The schoolmaster nowadays must be more philosopher than sophist if he is to do his duty to his generation.

The result of the arrangement of work at Eton, and in a lesser degree at all public schools, is to leave in the hands of the boys a certain margin of leisure, gradually increased as the boy rises in the school, which he may dispose of as he will. At Eton every boy has a classical tutor who makes certain calls on his leisure time and with whom he prepares most of his work; but a boy who uses careful management, who employs his odds and ends of time well, can secure for himself a certain independence of pursuit which enables him to follow his own bent. At many schools there are, for instance, ardent natural-history societies which make collections, botanical and entomological, in the neighboring district; but at Eton the tendency has been for the most part in the direction of literature. In the first place, almost every house has its debating society, where topics of perhaps somewhat threadbare interest are ardently discussed by embryo members of Parliament, where future squires deliver themselves on the question of allotments or strikes, future diplomatists argue about foreign intervention. Into these societies masters only come as invited guests; they have no *status* there except by the will of the boy president. These debating societies are connected at Eton largely with social success, and the school debating society known as "Pop" is the blue ribbon of popularity.

Almost every year, too, there start into life one or more periodicals, in which boys are allowed to indulge in freedom of speech and great latitude of criticism as long as it is never personal; but the instinct is so perfect in these matters that the interference of the authorities is almost unknown. A certain number of the boys frequent the school library, and indulge in the wide and desultory reading which has conferred upon Eton a marked share of literary spirit. Here, again, there is no magisterial control; a master and a committee of boys choose the books to be purchased, but the library is open at all hours of the day, and it has never been found necessary to employ any supervision beyond that of a paid assistant to register books taken out. For boys of a mechanical turn, a workshop, which numbers about a hundred members, is open for almost the whole of every day. The same freedom exists there; the place is rarely visited by masters, and the instructor has no authority but a moral one, and it has not been found necessary to augment it.

The religious instruction of an English public school is usually a feature of special prominence. There is no sectarianism; Jews and Roman Catholics are allowed the full exercise of their religious ob-

servances, but they are a comparatively small class. For most boys there is a short choral daily service and two full services on Sunday, with the ceremony at Eton of cathedral worship. At most schools, however, the music is entirely performed by a choir of boys; at Eton the nucleus is a paid choir, but that is owing to the collegiate traditions of the place. There is weekly instruction in the Greek Testament, and on Sunday a set of scripture questions are answered on paper by every boy in the school and shown to the division masters on Monday. Tutors, too, have on Sunday a class of pupils, where the Bible is read or lectures of a simple religious kind in biography or history delivered; the subjects, however, are left absolutely to the tutor's discretion, and it is not at all uncommon for him to consult the boys as to what they would like to do.

In religion it is unusual to find a public-school master of pronounced ecclesiastical tendency; the rule is to secure moderate men. A few public schools, such as Lansing, have a high-church bias, but the majority teach a plain biblical Protestantism, and the frequency with which headmasters of public schools are chosen to fill the highest ecclesiastical offices is a proof that they are, as a rule, men of moderate and practical orthodoxy. There is certainly no school in England where the teaching is avowedly evangelical; there is no school where the teaching is latitudinarian, and what may be called the moderate high-church section is certainly the most largely represented. With the great majority of masters a sedulous anxiety as to the moral character of their pupils is a continuous preoccupation, shown not by needless interference and inquisitive investigation, but rather by close observation and timely caution. Boys are carefully warned as to the special dangers which attend the morals of a boys' community, and the time of preparation for confirmation (which is annually administered by the Bishop of Oxford) is much valued by masters as an opportunity of giving friendly counsel and connecting religion with the difficulties of practical life.

And of course such a society, in many ways an artificial one, is attended by special dangers which will at once occur to the mind of every one. The only hope, however, rests, not in the dealing severely with special offences, but in the united ambition of masters and boys to keep the tone high and pure. The tone of an institution is subject to obscure and mysterious variation, but by wise vigilance and by leading rather than attempting to drive feeling and action into the right direction, much may be done to keep the moral and social atmos-

phere wholesome; once secure a high general tone, and it acts as a corrective, raising the weak and making the irresolute ashamed, at all events, of his lapse; and thus many dangers slip insensibly which otherwise would entail both that espionage and suspicion.

To revert to more ordinary deficiencies, the danger that all institutions have to face is the predominance of one single tendency, copied and exaggerated and distorted from the outside world. The two tendencies which we should select as chiefly to be guarded against at present in English public schools are athleticism and utilitarianism. Athletics are the fashion everywhere, and have gained ground in the last twenty years at a prodigious rate. Within certain limits the athletic spirit brings such a great accession of power to a schoolmaster that it is a particularly insidious opponent, for it is usually against the very temptations which he sees to be the most dangerous to which boyhood is exposed; moreover, the deprivation of games to a moderate degree is a most useful engine of punishment—one that is effectual and needs hardly any repetition. What the master has to fight against is the idolizing of the athlete. If a boy admires, he almost necessarily worships; and so, though it is on the one hand a great advantage to a schoolmaster to be able to command the respect paid to athletics, he has to show clearly that he does not accept the boyish idea or look upon athletic success as an end in itself.

Athletic prominence is in English public schools almost synonymous with social prominence; many a boy whose capacity and character command both respect and liking at the universities and in after-life, is almost a nobody at a public school because he has no special athletic gifts. This, of course, has its advantage. A boy, heir we will say to great wealth, large territorial interests, family traditions, an ancestral name, will find at Eton or at other public schools that these go for positively nothing if he has not geniality and good nature and honesty; but even these qualities are hardly sufficient to insure anything like success unless he be athletically inclined. On the other hand, great athletic capacity may coexist with low moral and intellectual character, though it is fortunately exceptional; and the prominence that may devolve on such a character is likely to do infinite harm. But on the whole the schoolmaster must recognize that athleticism is the best of servants and be careful to keep it in hand.

Utilitarianism is a more open foe, and perhaps it is more characteristic of Eton from the circumstances of the case than of other schools. At Eton, most boys come from an atmosphere of wealth and

ease, and it is inevitable that they should naturally be tempted to measure everything by these standards, and to believe that money comes, as a sordid necessity perhaps, but still as a necessity, even before the kingdom of Heaven. Such a spirit requires to be fought with delicate weapons. At other schools it appears in perhaps even a more plausible guise—in the worship of success even more than wealth; and it can only be surely baffled by direct teaching, by such opportunities as have lately been given by the establishment of missions in connection with the larger public schools, where the school supports by voluntary contributions one or more of the clergy in some populous district of London, and partly by the example of strict devotion by those who have the charge of the youths of England.

At present, public boarding-schools are very decidedly the fashion. The great principle that underlies them is the spirit of liberty and responsibility. The former is the inheritance of bygone generations; accompanied by license, it was unfortunately only too characteristic of the earlier English schools. Anything, it was thought, and rightly, was better than espionage; and so the boys were drilled and flogged and otherwise left to themselves. A certain rude freedom was the result for the majority, a magnificent sense of duty for the higher few, and, alas! too much shipwreck for the weak of the flock. Espionage is kept at bay as much as ever (happily), but indifference has in the rulers of these great institutions been succeeded by vigilance. The heart of boyhood does not require much assistance to beat true; it requires to be trusted and trustworthiness is the result. "Let us obey our rulers," says the "*Carmen Etonense*," the favorite Eton ditty, "provided only that they season laws with liberty and wed liberty to law. So may our liberty, unshackled by law, love stable principles and stand in the security of obedience."

"Obsequamur regibus,
Modo jungant reges
Libertatem legibus,
Libertati leges.

"Lege sic solutior
Leges amet certas;
Sic parendo tutior
Nostra stet libertas."

A. C. BENSON.

NEEDED REFORM IN NATURALIZATION.

FOR the last twenty years the restriction of immigration to the United States has been a topic of constantly increasing interest. Since the act of March 3, 1875, which prohibited the admission of convicts and of women imported for purposes of prostitution, four Federal statutes have been adopted with a view to the exclusion of aliens other than Chinese, who have been shut out as a race. These four enactments, which have been made in the last decade, relate to the repulsion of idiots, persons diseased or insane, paupers or persons likely to become a public charge, polygamists, convicts, and contract laborers. Nevertheless, the tide of immigration still rises. The annual number of immigrants is now about half a million. It was stated in the press that on Thursday, the 7th of April last, there were landed at Ellis Island five thousand four hundred and twenty-four immigrants—the largest number, with one exception, when steamers were kept back for several days by a fog, ever received at the port of New York in a single day.¹ Nearly all the countries of continental Europe are said to have been represented, though the number of Italians, of whom there were upwards of fourteen hundred, was more than double that of any other nationality. Scandinavia contributed six hundred, Germany five hundred, while Poles, Slavs, Hungarians, French, and Dutch chiefly made up the remainder. Only sixty out of the grand aggregate possessed more than a hundred dollars; a somewhat larger number brought more than ten dollars, but the majority had five dollars or less. "Thursday's product," says the reporter, "it was explained to me, was unusually poverty-stricken, and was composed of wretched specimens of humanity."

It is not my purpose to discuss the subject of immigration or to make suggestions as to its further restriction or regulation. I am inclined to think that we should endeavor to devise means for the just application and enforcement of the restrictions already existing, rather than try a radical departure from our traditional policy. But, however this may be, there is another and kindred problem that merits

¹ This number was exceeded on April 21.