

In general, the stigma, when in the unexcited state, is positive to the style. As, however, it can be shown that other factors, not concerned in the excitatory process, are operative in the production of this result, not much importance is to be attached to it.

I send this short note in order that physiologists interested in the subject may be able to repeat the observations during the present season.

University College,
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TAUNTON COLLEGE SCHOOL

THE circumstances alluded to last week, under which the Taunton College School is threatening to collapse, and is in immediate danger of losing the head-master who has made it what it is, are interesting on public grounds to the advocates of scientific instruction, as well as to the general educationalist. In a pamphlet published in 1865, and containing letters from Dr. Daubeny, Prof. Phillips, and Dr. Acland, Mr. Tuckwell was, we believe, the first English schoolmaster to assert publicly the claims of science to an honoured place in the curriculum of all first-class schools; and his evidence before Lord Taunton's Commission, his papers read to the British Association in 1869 and 1871, and his communications to the Royal Science Commission, show how diligently he has for twelve years past been working out in his school at Taunton the many practical problems which beset the introduction of a new subject into an ancient, established, jealous system. The school has thriven in his hands, risen rapidly in numbers, and gained the highest public distinctions at the Universities, the India Civil Service, Cooper's Hill, and Woolwich; and though the short-sighted economy of his governing body left him for years without a science master or a laboratory, and refused him a museum, botanical garden, and science class-rooms, he has overcome all these difficulties by patience, by the munificence of friends, and by pecuniary sacrifices; and at this moment many distinguished scientific visitors are glad to testify to the completeness of a system which passes the whole school through a course of physics and chemistry, and includes physical geography, botany, and meteorology in its more special training. In 1875 the number of boys had risen to 120, but the thrift of the governing body kept down the number of the masters. The typical proportion of assistant-masters to boys in modern schools of this size is one in sixteen; the Taunton masters were only one in twenty-seven. The school could not continue to succeed under this policy; the masters were unequal to the work; the number of boys fell off until a visitation of fever brought them below the paying point, and the school, already heavily in debt, was on the point of being closed. The panic-stricken officials laid the blame upon the head-master; his theology and politics were pronounced suspect; his unpopularity had caused the falling numbers; and when his friends came forward liberally with money and promises of money the governing body took the money, but upon condition that the head-master should leave at Christmas. Against this parents and old pupils are indignantly remonstrating; both have sent to Mr. Tuckwell public addresses of sympathy and confidence; the parents forwarding also a strong protest to the president of the governing body, and in many cases threatening to remove their sons if Mr. Tuckwell goes. So far, however, the custodians of the school's interests show no sign of yielding; it seems certain that the head-master will be turned out, and more than probable that the school may, after all, collapse.

There are two points in this struggle between philistinism and culture on which we should like to dwell, in the interests both of general and of scientific education.

The first is the mischief being worked in the less important first-class schools by the constitution and habits of their governing bodies. These were the pet institutions of the Endowed Schools' Commission. They were to include the educated gentleman of the county and the representative tradesman of the town: the first, rich in recollections of Eton and of Christ Church, was to initiate, develop, control; to support and instruct the head-master; and to keep his *bourgeois* brother straight; while that second-rate but docile coadjutor was to back the enlightenment of his superior, and to reconcile while he typified the democratic feeling so essential, it was thought, to the local popularity of a school. Charming in theory, it was in fact the weak point in the Commissioners' scheme. The feet on which their image had to stand were of iron mixed with miry clay; the two refused to coalesce, and the clay came uppermost. The gentlemen make admirable governors, but they are in London, in Scotland, on the Continent, at Quarter Sessions; and the local men, who are always on the spot, become virtually the governing body. They too frequently know nothing of education. They cannot understand a head-master's ideas and aims; they in too many cases govern the school as if it were a workhouse, and treat the head-master as they habitually treat the master of their union. The world has not forgotten Felsted Grammar School; and the committee of head-masters could tell us of many other cases, less notorious, but not less galling and mischievous. No first-class school can thrive unless its governing body is composed of gentlemen, who understand, as Mr. Walter said the other day at Wellington College, that their first duty is not to interfere with the head-master.

The second point is one which we have often urged before: the opposition offered by many of the clergy to the *Culturkampf*. Of course there are notable exceptions to this incrimination; but the *Viri Obscuri* of Revellius, and the clerical bigots who combined to oppose the new learning of Colet, Erasmus, and More, would recognise their legitimate posterity in those of the present day, who, themselves uneducated even according to the narrow standard of the past, join in denouncing science and unsectarianism as the irremissible sins of a head-master. Bishop Fox, the founder of the ancient school at Taunton, was rattened by the Oxford clergy for forcing the new study of Greek upon his college of Corpus Christi; his representative in Taunton shares his fate to-day, driven from the school which he has re-founded for forcing on it the new study of science.

We write in no hope of assisting the head-master, or of educating his opponents into large-mindedness. Mr. Tuckwell will see his schemes collapse, and be parted from the profession in which all eagerly attest his success, and to which he has given the best years of his life. The school will either break up under the irritation of the parents, or its distinctive features will perish with the ruler who called them forth. The order of the old teaching, the assertion of the old theology, will resume their way in Taunton School. Chemistry, and physics, and botany; Shakspeare, and Milton, and Macaulay, and Guizot, will give way to gerund-grinding and Latin verse. Where Wesleyans, Independents, Quakers, Catholics, and Unitarians worshipped in the same chapel and attended the same scripture-classes, sectarian exclusiveness will re-enter its swept and garnished home. We can only chronicle the facts as indicating the obstacles to be met and reckoned with by the pioneers of modern educational progress. We can only express sympathy with the head-master, who will yet find some compensation for his worries in the unusual warmth of testimony contained in the address which first brought these circumstances to our knowledge, and in the consciousness that, having advanced a noble cause, his work will not in the end be thrown away.