

## Review of F. Storr, *Life and Memoirs of R. H. Quick* (London, Cambridge University Press 1899)

The Cambridge University press has recently issued a work, the need for which has long been felt, entitled *The Life and Remains of Quick*, written by F. Storr, M.A. This biography of Quick will rank with two others which have been published during the last eighteen months, viz., Thomas and Matthew Arnold, by Joshua Fitch, and *The Life and Letters of Edward Thring*, by Mr. Parkin. Three biographies of schoolmasters! Quick is familiar to us by his *Educational Reformers*, a classic work on the history of education which deserves to be read by all those interested in educational work. This present volume is well fitted to stand cheek-by-jowl with the author's own work. Mr. Storr, who has done his work thoroughly, has had the difficult task to construct a readable biography from the vast amount of material at his disposal. "The material from which I have drawn," he says, "consist of forty note-books of various dimensions, a life record extending over more than a quarter of a century. These, if printed *in extenso* would make on a rough estimate ten or eleven volumes of the same size as this one." It is a conscientious work throughout, and, although written purposely for those engaged in the teaching profession, there is much of interest to those outside the profession.

### QUICK'S LIFE

Robert Hebert Quick was born in London on September 30, 1831. His early childhood was uneventful, except as showing special traits in his character. He went to a private school for a time, and thence in 1846 proceeded to Harrow. Unfortunately, owing to ill-health, Quick did not stay here long. After a time he entered Trinity College, Cambridge, where "he ground away with a stubborn conscientiousness at mathematics, a subject for which he had little aptitude, and less taste." He had a devoted liking for languages and a keen appreciation of literary style. *Le Misanthrope* and *Faust* were as keenly relished by him as were Milton and Shakespeare. Quick passed out of Cambridge as Senior Optime in the Mathematical Tripos of 1854, and went as an "additional unpaid curate" to St. Mark's, Whitechapel. Four years later he gave up his curacy, starting en route for Germany to "do something with the language." In May of the same year he took a mastership in Lancaster Grammar School, which post he soon resigned. Another visit to Germany, and on his return he accepted the mathematical mastership at Guildford Grammar School, where he remained till 1860.

A description of his school experiences, in his own words, will find an echo in many hearts to-day:- "What then has been the outcome of my school experiences? One thing at least has made itself clear, that such a life as a schoolmaster's settles down almost irresistibly into a life of merest routine. This I found to be the case, whether I had much to do or little. After a day's work, there is little energy or inclination for anything but the merest amusements. Moreover, the employment of school teaching keeps the mind constantly engaged in small matters, small points of discipline, small correction of faults."

Here is a typical example of teaching given in Quick's days quoted from his own diary:- "Having had to take two forms of over thirty boys each in Geography I am nearly rabid. They had learnt all the English countries with their county towns, and the rivers on which these lie.... We cry up our business, and insist on the importance of education, and then when boys are entrusted to us we compel them to cram lists of useless words and call that education!" Happily, so far as Elementary Education is concerned to-day, these methods, under more auspicious circumstances, have vanished into oblivion. He took posts successfully at Hurstpierpoint and Cranleigh, and finally at Harrow. During the interval which elapsed from the time he left Cranleigh to take up his appointment at Harrow, he wrote his *Essays on Educational Reformers*. He found that the best educational works were written in German,

And having a knowledge of that language, he utilized the information he had gleaned from a study of German Pädagogik for the benefit of teachers. For a time the book was a failure, but ultimately it achieved popularity and success.

### QUICK'S LIFE AT HARROW

In 1869 Quick took up his appointment at Harrow, where he was fairly successful, but he constantly grumbled at the methods adopted. "His Harrow life," says his biographer "as the extract from his diaries will show, did not fulfil his expectations. He was handicapped in his work by chronic headaches, and, as a consequence, subject to fits of mental depression. He was naturally a slow worker, and the incessant grind which is the lot of Harrow and Eton masters was too much for him. He is always complaining, that, do what he will, he cannot get abreast of his work." A day's work at Harrow was by no means an easy one, as the following time table shows:- "Down at six. Worked at Prendergast and French construing till school at 7.30. Breakfast 9.15 to 9.45--Then maps, exercise, &c., till 12 o'clock school. From 1 to 1.45 lunch. From 1.45 to 3 prepare French construing, and compose German exercise. From 3 to 4.30 in school. 4.30-5.30 looking over exercises. 5.50-6.30 Cæsar lesson. 8 to 10.30 looking over German

exercise." A day of thirteen hours' continuous work.

Once or twice Quick endeavoured to carry on a school according to his own ideas and methods, but they resulted in complete failure. In 1879 he was appointed by the Senate of the University of Cambridge to give lectures on the History of Education. At the first lecture 100 were present, of whom nearly 90 were women. This number gradually diminished, owing to a lack of interest in educational matters.

### HIS LEISURE TIME

In 1879 Quick edited Locke's *Thoughts Concerning Education*, for the Pitt Press Syndicate. This book was well edited, full of copious notes, together with a succinct life of Locke. He accepted a living in 1883 at Sedburgh in Yorkshire, but only remained there four years. Quick finally settled down at Redhill. "This was his last flitting," says Mr Storr. At Redhill he brought out a second edition of *Educational Reformers*, edited Mulcaster's *Positions*, and wrote several articles to the Journal of Education. His study walls were lined with books from the floor to the ceiling. He had some valuable first editions. "Chairs, arm-chairs, and sofa were strewed with books, pamphlets, and reviews." He was fond of reading Manning's Sermons, Macaulay, Carlyle, Helps, Lamb, and Matthew Arnold. The two latter were the "most lasting friendships." Quick died from spinal apoplexy in the house of Professor Seely.

The life of Quick in the volume before us occupies a hundred odd pages, the remaining portion of the work being devoted to extracts from Quick's note-books. These extracts, which occupy four hundred pages, contain Quick's opinion on every conceivable topic: elementary education, examinations, school wrinkles, child nature, training of teachers, memory, preaching and lecturing, criticism of books, etc. One of the most interesting sections in the whole book is that dealing with Quick's two children, Dora and Oliver. His extremely close observations on child nature are almost unique. In his descriptions we see the father, and at the same time the student. Although not psychological, these notices are given from a human stand-point. Parey, Preyer, and Sully have given us valuable contributions on child life, but information on this topic is as a rule scarce and unreliable.

### MISCELLANEOUS REMARKS

Quick, having paid visits to many schools in England, in France, in Brussels, and in Germany, has given us some notable descriptions of the educational methods in vogue at that time in these countries. They form very interesting reading, especially when compared with the educational methods adopted in England. That Quick did not believe in mere instruction is evident from the following remark: "The life of education does not consist in the list of subjects, nor in the stages into which each subject is divided. It consists in a great measure in the action of the intelligent mind of the teacher on the minds of the taught, awakening their intelligence, and rendering them capable of thinking and acting for themselves."

The biographies of Thring, head master of Uppingham, and Quick should be read together, both for comparison and contrast. Both were eminent educationists, both wrote a notable work on education, and contributed to numerous magazines, etc. and both placed high ideals before them. But, although Quick suffered all his life from chronic headaches, we do not see the despondency which is so apparent in Thring's diary. However, it must be remembered that Thring's despondency was due to financial difficulties.

This biography of Quick leaves nothing to be desired, and although it is impossible within the brief limits of an article to do justice to a work of this description, so well written, and so brimful of information, nevertheless we hope this succinct notice will be the means of causing many of our readers to peruse the book - a task full of enjoyment and interest from cover to cover.

*(He also wrote on Fröbel. He died in 1891; his personal library forms what is now the greater part of the Quick Memorial Library collection at the University of London Research library. Books, pamphlets and periodicals are included, dealing with most aspects of education.)*