



On the Future of our Educational by Friedrich Nietzsche

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THE COMPLETE WORKS

OF

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

The First Complete and Authorised English Translation

EDITED BY

Dr. OSCAR LEVY

[Illustration]

VOLUME THREE

ON THE FUTURE OF OUR EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

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FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

ON THE FUTURE OF OUR EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

TRANSLATED, WITH INTRODUCTION, BY J.M. KENNEDY

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PREFACE.

(To be read before the lectures, although it in no way relates to them.)

The reader from whom I expect something must possess three qualities: he must be calm and must read without haste; he must not be ever interposing his own personality and his own special "culture"; and he must not expect as the ultimate results of his study of these pages that he will be presented with a set of new formulæ. I do not propose to furnish formulæ or new plans of study for *Gymnasia* or other schools; and I am much more inclined to admire the extraordinary power of those who are able to cover the whole distance between the depths of empiricism and the heights of special culture-problems, and who again descend to the level of the driest rules and the most neatly expressed formulæ. I shall be content if only I can ascend a tolerably lofty mountain, from the summit of which, after having recovered my breath, I may obtain a general survey of the ground; for I shall never be able, in this book, to satisfy the votaries of tabulated rules. Indeed, I see a time coming when serious men, working together in the service of a completely rejuvenated and purified culture, may again become the directors of a system of everyday instruction, calculated to promote that culture; and they will probably be compelled once more to draw up sets of rules: but how remote this time now seems! And what may not happen meanwhile! It is just possible that between now and then all *Gymnasia*--yea, and perhaps all universities, may be destroyed, or have become so utterly transformed that their very regulations may, in the eyes of future generations, seem to be but the relics of the cave-dwellers' age.

This book is intended for calm readers,--for men who have not yet been drawn into the mad headlong rush of our hurry-skurrying age, and who do not experience any idolatrous delight in throwing themselves beneath its chariot-wheels. It is for men, therefore, who are not accustomed to estimate the value of everything according to the amount of time it either saves or wastes. In short, it is for the few. These, we believe, "still have time." Without any qualms of conscience they may improve the most fruitful and vigorous hours of their day in meditating on the future of our education; they may even believe when the evening has come that they have used their day in the most dignified and useful way, namely, in the *meditatio generis futuri*. No one among them has yet forgotten to think while reading a book; he still understands the secret of reading between the lines, and is indeed so generous in what he himself brings to his study, that he continues to reflect upon what he has read, perhaps long after he has laid the book aside. And he does this, not because he wishes to write a criticism about it or even another book; but simply because reflection is a pleasant pastime to him. Frivolous spendthrift! Thou art a reader after my own heart; for thou wilt be patient enough to accompany an author any distance, even though he himself cannot yet see the goal at which he is aiming,--even though he himself feels only that he must at all events honestly believe in a goal, in order that a future and possibly very remote generation may come face to face with that towards which we are now blindly and instinctively groping. Should any reader demur and suggest that all that is required is prompt and bold reform; should he imagine that a new "organisation" introduced by the State, were all that is necessary, then we fear he would have misunderstood not only the author but the very nature of the problem under consideration.

The third and most important stipulation is, that he should in no case be constantly bringing himself and his own "culture" forward, after the style of most modern men, as the correct standard and measure of all things. We would have him so highly educated that he could even think meanly of his education or despise it altogether. Only thus would he be able to trust entirely to the author's guidance; for it is only by virtue of ignorance and his consciousness of ignorance, that the latter can dare to make himself heard. Finally, the author would wish his reader to be fully alive to the specific character of our present barbarism and of that which distinguishes us, as the barbarians of the nineteenth century, from other barbarians.

Now, with this book in his hand, the writer seeks all those who may happen to be wandering, hither and thither, impelled by feelings similar to his own. Allow yourselves to be discovered--ye lonely ones in whose existence I believe! Ye unselfish ones, suffering in yourselves from the corruption of the German spirit! Ye contemplative ones who cannot, with hasty glances, turn your eyes swiftly from one surface to another! Ye lofty thinkers, of whom Aristotle said that ye wander through life vacillating and inactive so long as no great honour or glorious Cause calleth you to deeds! It is you I summon! Refrain this once from seeking refuge in your lairs of solitude and dark misgivings. Bethink you that this book was framed to be your herald. When ye shall go forth to battle in your full panoply, who among you will not rejoice in looking back upon the herald

who rallied you?

INTRODUCTION.

The title I gave to these lectures ought, like all titles, to have been as definite, as plain, and as significant as possible; now, however, I observe that owing to a certain excess of precision, in its present form it is too short and consequently misleading. My first duty therefore will be to explain the title, together with the object of these lectures, to you, and to apologise for being obliged to do this. When I promised to speak to you concerning the future of our educational institutions, I was not thinking especially of the evolution of our particular institutions in Bâle. However frequently my general observations may seem to bear particular application to our own conditions here, I personally have no desire to draw these inferences, and do not wish to be held responsible if they should be drawn, for the simple reason that I consider myself still far too much an inexperienced stranger among you, and much too superficially acquainted with your methods, to pretend to pass judgment upon any such special order of scholastic establishments, or to predict the probable course their development will follow. On the other hand, I know full well under what distinguished auspices I have to deliver these lectures--namely, in a city which is striving to educate and enlighten its inhabitants on a scale so magnificently out of proportion to its size, that it must put all larger cities to shame. This being so, I presume I am justified in assuming that in a quarter where so much is *done* for the things of which I wish to speak, people must also *think* a good deal about them. My desire--yea, my very first condition, therefore, would be to become united in spirit with those who have not only thought very deeply upon educational problems, but have also the will to promote what they think to be right by all the means in their power. And, in view of the difficulties of my task and the limited time at my disposal, to such listeners, alone, in my audience, shall I be able to make myself understood--and even then, it will be on condition that they shall guess what I can do no more than suggest, that they shall supply what I am compelled to omit; in brief, that they shall need but to be reminded and not to be taught. Thus, while I disclaim all desire of being taken for an uninvited adviser on questions relating to the schools and the University of Bâle, I repudiate even more emphatically still the rôle of a prophet standing on the horizon of civilisation and pretending to predict the future of education and of scholastic organisation. I can no more project my vision through such vast periods of time than I can rely upon its accuracy when it is brought too close to an object under examination. With my title: *Our Educational Institutions*, I wish to refer neither to the establishments in Bâle nor to the incalculably vast number of other scholastic institutions which exist throughout the nations of the world to-day; but I wish to refer to *German institutions* of the kind which we rejoice in here. It is their future that will now engage our attention, *i.e.* the future of German elementary, secondary, and public schools (Gymnasien) and universities. While pursuing our discussion, however, we shall for once avoid all comparisons and valuations, and guard more especially against that flattering illusion that our conditions should be regarded as the standard for all others and as surpassing them. Let it suffice that they are our institutions, that they have not become a part of ourselves by mere accident, and were not laid upon us like a garment; but that they are living monuments of important steps in the progress of civilisation, in some respects even the furniture of a bygone age, and as such link us with the past of our people, and are such a sacred and venerable legacy that I can only undertake to speak of the future of our educational institutions in the sense of their being a most probable approximation to the ideal spirit which gave them birth. I am, moreover, convinced that the numerous alterations which have been introduced into these institutions within recent years, with the view of bringing them up-to-date, are for the most part but distortions and aberrations of the originally sublime tendencies given to them at their foundation. And what we dare to hope from the future, in this behalf, partakes so much of the nature of a rejuvenation, a reviviscence, and a refining of the spirit of Germany that, as a result of this very process, our educational institutions may also be indirectly remoulded and born again, so as to appear at once old and new, whereas now they only profess to be "modern" or "up-to-date."

Now it is only in the spirit of the hope above mentioned that I wish to speak of the future of our educational institutions: and this is the second point in regard to which I must tender an apology from the outset. The "prophet" pose is such a presumptuous one that it seems almost ridiculous to deny that I have the intention of adopting it. No one should attempt to describe the future of our education, and the means and methods of