

## T H E S I S .

Subject, Plato's Educational Ideal.

Name, Bert F. Ober.

In the history of every wise nation are to be found strong educators and philosophers. Egypt had her Ptolemy; China, her Confucius; Judea, her Solomon; and Greece, her Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. One of these, I am glad to note, is Plato who was born in Athens about 428 B.C.

The foundation upon which Plato built his excellent educational principles was very much like that of Socrates. He said, "That God is good" and "That God is true." He believed that woman was man's equal in every natural gift save physical strength. He placed woman

in a position even higher than is recognized at the present day.

In beginning the teaching of children he assumes that the child, before coming to school, has learned a few letters of the alphabet. The teacher should, in the beginning, use these known letters in short words and in a few words that have short, easy syllables. Then he should have the pupils recognize and name these letters at a glance. By associating these letters with letters not known, and by comparing different combinations of the same letters in words and

syllables, the pupil will soon learn to spell and pronounce words correctly. By using these known words in sentences, and by introducing and developing new words each lesson, the pupil will soon <sup>be</sup> the master of a useful vocabulary of words.

In imparting instruction the teacher should not try to train the pupils under his care for any one profession. He should have in mind those business avocations or occupations which tend to "build up a strong intelligent state" in the fullest sense of the term. If the pupil's mind seems to naturally incline

toward the carpenter trade, the teacher should notice this trend of mind and should supply him with a few tools and sticks out of which he may build a play-house. The teacher should make similar observations in the case of each pupil in school.

It should be one of the highest desires of each teacher to lead his pupils to see the necessity of an education—how useful it will be to him. When the pupil is led to see this, it becomes a guide to him, and stimulates him to work with a more willing hand. But how shall the teacher lead him to see this? How can this

revolution of soul be brought about? By the agency of studies which tend to draw the child's mind away from the sensual to the real - from the visible to the eternal - to the realization of future success. Therefore the various branches should be taught according to a proper system, both with reference to the age of the child and to the proper correlation of the branches.

In the literary training, great care must be exercised in selecting just such stories and other productions as will give the pupil that mental training necessary for the profession or occupation for

which nature has intended him, or for which he is expressly laboring. In all training, however, the future welfare of the future welfare of the state is never to be lost sight of. It should be the uppermost thought in all education to instil in the minds of the pupils a love for their country. No soft music should be allowed, since this would tend to effeminate or soften the feelings of the pupil, and no such qualities in the nature of a man tend to make up a good soldier - a defender of the state. The chief object, however, should be to develop in the mind of the pupil a sense

of beauty, harmony, and proportion. For a just life is always preferable to an unjust life.

Gymnastics and proper diet are two very essential things to be looked after, especially in the education of the young. It is better to have a poorly cultivated brain in a strong body than to have a strong mind in a weak body. But the teacher should aim to develop both - a strong mind in a strong body.

Children are very easily influenced by their playmates and friends. How shall we manage the period between birth and education? What



kind of associates shall they have? There can be but one answer to these questions.

They need the critical care of a kind, loving, energetic mother.

The period for educating children is a very critical one. It was the proper education of Cyrus the Great and Darius that made them so illustrious, and the lack of which failed to make Xerxes what he should have been. It is not riches and royal standing that gives this power, it is personal worth.

Philosophy should be taught early in childhood; not as it is generally taught - approaching it backwards - but should begin with the simple

and natural. The reason for teaching philosophy is that no state can ever expect to become prominent without some wise men in it who can see far into the future. Philosophers are just such men.

Quotations:

"Good education is that which tends most to the improvement of the mind and body."

"The fairest bodies ought to grow up from infancy in the best and straightest manner."

"Right education depends upon the due regulation of convivial intercourse."

"Education is the constrain-

ing and directing of youth toward that right reason, which the law affirms, and which the experience of the best of our elders agree to be truly right."

Plato's educational ideal, therefore, was to thoroughly prepare boys for good citizens of the state, and to give an equal education to the girls since they were to be the mothers of the future "protectors" of the state. — "The hand that rocks the cradle moves the world" — might well have been one of his mottoes.

# Bibliography:

1. "Plato's Republic".
2. " " Best Thoughts."
3. "The Greek Philosophers", Vol. I.
4. "The International Encyclopedia".