

THE NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

aristocratic or democratic, are subordinate questions in comparison with the supreme question: Shall the modern civilized state be spiritual or secular? Shall it be *theocratic*—ruled by the irrational formulæ of faith and by clerical despotism—or *nomocratic*—under the sovereignty of rational laws and civic right? The first task is to kindle a rational interest in our youth, and to uplift our citizens and free them from superstition. That can only be achieved by a timely reform of our schools.

Our education of the young is no more in harmony with modern scientific progress than our legal and political world. Physical science, which is so much more important than all other sciences, and which, properly understood, really embraces all the so-called moral sciences, is still regarded as a mere accessory in our schools, if not treated as the Cinderella of the curriculum. Most of our teachers still give the most prominent place to that dead learning which has come down from the cloistral schools of the Middle Ages. In the front rank we have grammatical gymnastics and an immense waste of time over a "thorough knowledge" of classics and of the history of foreign nations. Ethics, the most important object of practical philosophy, is entirely neglected, and its place is usurped by the ecclesiastical creed. Faith must take precedence over knowledge—not that scientific faith which leads to a monistic religion, but the irrational superstition that lays the foundation of a perverted Christianity. The valuable teaching of modern cosmology and anthropology, of biology and evolution, is most inadequately imparted, if not entirely unknown, in our higher schools; while the memory is burdened with a mass of philological and historical facts which are utterly useless, either from the point of view of theoretical education or for