

## EDITORIAL

As our world grows more technological, it becomes more specialised. Progress depends upon specialist knowledge, and schools are expected to provide this as soon as possible. Today's curricula consider primarily what will be 'useful' to the pupil, and so reduce both the Arts and the Sciences to materially-orientated skills.

Bertrand Russell maintains that 'one of the great things that education can and should give is the power of seeing the general in the particular.' By imposing a specialist knowledge on an individual as soon as possible, we equip him to perform a useful social function. But we also make him a prisoner of his own limitations. We condemn him to spend his life in the monotonous application of a given set of skills, because we restrict his vision to the particular, instead of opening it up to the general. So we deny the true nature of Art as well as of Science, which are both exclusively concerned with the pursuit of Truth. This is the moving testimony of Isaac Newton who, towards the end of his life, could write:

I do not know what I may seem to the world, but as for myself, I seem to have been only a boy playing in the sea shore, and diverting myself in now and again finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than the ordinary, whilst the great ocean of Truth lay all undiscovered before me.

Today we ask our children to decide *how to earn a living* instead of *how to live*. When we encourage them to ignore things extraneous to their future careers, we encourage them to deny our common humanity. Because our computerised society can do everything from putting men on the moon to reducing a working week to three days, we confer on ourselves the status of supermen. It is worth recalling Albert Schweitzer's warning:

The superman, in the measure that his power increases, becomes himself poorer and poorer . . . The more we become supermen, the more we become inhuman.

Only the ability to be human in the fullest sense — to recognise man's most sublime achievements as well as his most severe limitations — can show people how to live. Only minds capable of seeing beyond the surface can use change as a creative rather than as a destructive force. Education should enable our children to use specialised knowledge to understand the common nature of all things. It should lead them out of themselves towards a fuller understanding of life, and a richer enjoyment of it. Above all, it should not be the servant of materialism, but the guide of idealism.

The enquiry of Truth which is the . . . wooing of it, the knowledge of Truth which is the presence of it, and the belief of Truth which is the enjoying of it, is the sovereign good of human nature.

Francis Bacon