

Dean Frederic Farrar (1831-1903): Educationist

Author: Brendan Rapple

Persistent link: <http://hdl.handle.net/2345/4417>

This work is posted on [eScholarship@BC](#),
Boston College University Libraries.

Dean Frederic Farrar (1831-1903): Educationist

by
Brendan Rapple

Abstract:

Though his best-selling novel of school life *Eric, or, Little by Little: A Tale of Roslyn School* has over the years been the subject of much attention, the wider educational thought and practice of Frederic William Farrar, teacher, novelist, scientist, classicist, theologian, and Dean of Canterbury, has for the most part been neglected by scholars. This paper discusses certain aspects of Farrar the educationist, including his distinctive evangelical attitude toward children; his fervent criticism of the prevailing Classical public school curriculum; his advocacy that much more science be taught; his strong antipathy to corporal and other punishment; his distaste for the increasing athleticism in the public schools; his view of the main purpose of education, namely the inculcation of morality, religious conviction, and intellectual rigor.

Rapple, Brendan. "Dean Frederic Farrar (1831-1903): Educationist," *British Journal of Educational Studies* Vol. XXXXIII, No. 1 (March 1995): 57-74.

Frederic William Farrar, whose life closely coincided with the limits of the Victorian era and who was himself the very quintessence of stereotypical Victorianism, attained high prominence in diverse fields of endeavor. A friend of Darwin, he was elected a fellow of the Royal Society for his studies in philology. One of the century's most respected and beloved pulpit preachers, his published sermons were read throughout the nation. Dean of Canterbury, England's premier deanery, he wrote widely influential theological works, in particular a Life of Christ, "the best-selling biography of the later Victorian age." [Chadwick, 1972, p. 67] Honorary Chaplain to the Queen, and later Chaplain-in-Ordinary, he was on intimate terms with many of the age's most eminent figures in the Church, in literature, in politics, in education, in society in general. A best-selling children's novelist of school and college life, he was most influential in rendering this literary genre one of the most popular of the later part of the nineteenth century. The earliest of these novels, Eric, or, Little by Little: A Tale of Roslyn School (1858), for years rivaled Thomas Hughes's hugely successful Tom Brown's Schooldays (1857) in readers' acclaim. Amid these manifold activities Farrar was also a schoolteacher from 1854 to 1871 and then headmaster of Marlborough College from 1871 to 1876. In addition, he was a prolific writer on educational topics, though, as he declared in a critique of Matthew Arnold's report for the Taunton Commission, he was rather skeptical about the proliferation of works on education: "Education is a subject on which every one asserts his right to speak, and the consequence is a multiplication of theories and of treatises so rapid that it far outstrips the reading capacities even of those who are most interested in educational questions." ["Dean Farrar on Matthew Arnold," 1953, p. 413] Nevertheless, his own educational writings were extremely important in helping to introduce such subjects as science and modern literature into the pervasive classical curriculum of England's Public Schools, thereby helping to foster a more humanistic ideal in education.

Farrar was born in Bombay in 1831 where his father was a missionary chaplain. At the age of three he was sent back to England and lived with two aunts in Aylesbury. Having moved to the Isle of Man with his parents who were on furlough from India, he was enrolled in 1838 in King William's College, a minor Public School. Though the school was not of the first rank academically Farrar, mainly through his own aptitude and diligence, did well at his studies. He was also appointed head boy. Upon his family moving to London in 1847 Frederic became a student at King's College. Here he continued his academic success and in October 1850 he went up to Trinity College, Cambridge. Farrar had a distinguished academic career at Cambridge. He won numerous prizes, was elected to the "Apostles," the prestigious and intellectually elite society, and in 1854 graduated B.A. with a first class in the Classical tripos and as a *junior optime* in the mathematical tripos. Before the results of his undergraduate degree were announced, Farrar's great promise had been recognized even outside Cambridge. In 1854 G. E. L. Cotton, the Arnoldian headmaster of Marlborough College and later Bishop of Calcutta, invited him to take up a teaching position at the Wiltshire college. Cotton, who had rescued Marlborough from near financial disaster and grave social and educational problems, wanted masters of high scholarly ability, strong religious and moral principles, palpable leadership qualities, and saw in Farrar a likely candidate. Though some felt that he was taking a position below his true worth, Farrar accepted Cotton's offer.

Farrar remained only a year at Marlborough, leaving in late 1855 to take up an assistant mastership at Harrow School at the invitation of its head, Charles Vaughan. He remained here for fifteen years. In 1858, a year after he was ordained priest in the Church of England, he published Eric, or, Little by Little: A Tale of Roslyn School a novel which brought him to public attention. Eric, appearing only a year after Thomas Hughes's Tom Brown's Schooldays, from early on caused controversy and was subject to much adverse criticism. Still, though Tom Brown, more genial, less Evangelical, and less sentimental than Eric, became more famous over the years and sold more copies, Eric itself was for long a best-seller, going through 36 editions in Farrar's own lifetime. This novel is a late product of a long tradition of Evangelical, moralistic children's literature, whose subjects frequently included the stressing of children's natural inclination to wrongdoing, the constant

urging of the need to repent and change one's evil ways, the depiction of scene after scene of death. Eric, replete with similar ingredients, is an avowedly moral tale, even its style, as P. G. Scott points out, owing "a great deal to the pulpit-medium." [Scott, 1971, p. 179] The story's central theme is the gradual moral deterioration (hence the "Little by Little" of the title) of Eric Williams, a pupil at Roslyn School, who after yielding to more and more evil finally expires repenting his wicked ways. Farrar informs us in his preface to the twenty fourth edition that he wrote it "with but one single object -- the vivid inculcation of inward purity and moral purpose, by the history of a boy who, in spite of the inherent nobleness of his disposition, falls into all folly and wickedness, until he has learnt to seek help from above." [Farrar, F. W., 1977, p. vii]

It may justly be argued that Farrar, in Eric, failed to flesh out his characters' personalities, only presenting them as personifications of virtue and vice. In particular, all too often his best behaved schoolboys are unlikely miniature adults who, it has been said, are "leaden puppets, mouthing sentiments and advice more suitable to aged ecclesiastics than high-spirited boys." [Jamieson, 1968, p. 272] Furthermore, Eric is saturated with a constant display of emotion and sentimentality. As The Saturday Review contemptuously complained in 1858: "everything is served up with tear sauce." [Review of *Eric*, 1858, p. 453] After a reading of Eric one might easily be persuaded by Hugh Kingsmill's observation that Farrar was "the most complete exponent of mid-Victorian emotionalism in one of its most important branches." [Kingsmill, 1929, p. 30] Boys kiss boys and declare their love, albeit a fraternal one, for each other; it takes little for them to break down weeping; they preach to and pray for each other. Clearly, the Roslyn boys bear little relationship to those better known Public Schoolboys, fictional or real, who, exemplars of *sang-froid*, invariably maintain a strict code of independence and self-restraint. In addition, the novel's melodramatic preoccupation with death, especially the depictions of the angelic death-bed scenes of both Eric himself and Edwin Russell, his friend, and the fatal accident of Eric's younger brother Vernon, probably make most of today's readers cringe. Moreover, many of the latter are probably deterred by Eric's insistent didacticism and moralizing. Still, tastes change, and it is important to remember, as Alan Horsman

has observed, that in its day Eric's "preaching was no deterrent to popularity." [Horsman, 1990, p. 199]

Its critical merits aside, Eric's main importance to the topic of Farrar as educationist is that it epitomizes the author's view of the primary purpose of education, namely the inculcation of morality and religious conviction. Farrar was well aware of problems pervading the Public Schools. But whereas the Clarendon Commission, which reported on these schools in 1864, saw their principal faults to be an outmoded curriculum and an inadequate administration and use of endowments, Farrar, also sympathizing with these conclusions, viewed their main problem to be still one of morality. Though improvements had been effected, he was adamant that much remained to be done and that it was the prime duty of teachers not merely to impart academic subjects but to teach virtue and help save their charges' souls. Farrar was extremely influenced by the reforms of Thomas Arnold, whom he considered "the greatest of English schoolmasters," especially the improved moral tone, which Arnold helped foster in England's Public Schools. [Farrar, F. W., 1878, p. 463] However, it is clear that Arnoldian reforms had not yet reached Eric's Roslyn School. One of the latter's major shortcomings was the absence of the monitorial system, "that noble safeguard of English schools," the "Palladium . . . of happiness and morality," which Arnold also believed was a prime necessity for the good moral climate of a Public School. At Roslyn, in the absence of prefects, "brute force had unlimited authority" and bullying was ubiquitous. [Farrar, F. W., 1977, p. 189] In fact, Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine in 1861 suggested that Farrar's real purpose in writing Eric was to promote the benefits of a monitorial system by depicting the evils into which a large school can sink without one. ["School and College Life," 1861, p. 137-138] For Farrar had no illusions about children's propensity to do wrong. As he asked rhetorically in Eric: "Why is it that new boys are almost invariably ill-treated? I have often fancied that there must be in boyhood a pseudo-instinctive cruelty, a sort of 'wild trick of the ancestral savage,' which no amount of civilization can entirely repress." [Farrar, F. W., 1977, p. 26] Moreover, he was very well aware of the multifarious temptations which children encounter at school which inevitably exacerbate any innate disposition for wrong-doing. He drew heavily from his own experiences at the Isle of Man's King William's

College in writing Eric. Told that his portrayal would be injurious to the school, he wrote that such an opinion was "absurd . . . for the picture, as far as it is one, is highly flattered . . . the things that *did* go on there are really far worse than I have described." [Farrar, R. A., 1904, pp. 76-77]

Nevertheless, though neither Thomas Arnold nor Rugby are mentioned and it is manifest that Roslyn is in a pre-Arnoldian stage, it is odd, as David Newsome points out, that it is Eric which presents a truer picture of Arnold's educational and moral ideals than does Thomas Hughes's tale which has done most to make Arnold's views known. [Newsome, 1961, p. 37]

In 1859 Farrar published Julian Home: A Tale of College Life, a novel differing from Eric in being set at university rather than Public School. His second novel of school life, St. Winifred's; or, The World of School, appeared in 1862, and was clearly based on aspects of his career as a teacher at both Marlborough and Harrow. His last schoolboy tale, The Three Homes: A Tale for Fathers and Sons, was published in 1873. All three were akin to Eric in having as main emphases the vanquishing of evil by virtue, the inevitable success accompanying hard work and study, moral and spiritual rectitude, godliness and good learning. They also display some of the same shortcomings as Eric: sentimentality, excessive moralizing, and a distinct propensity to melodrama. Moreover, the development of character is generally a vehicle for pinpointing some stereotypical moral attributes. Nevertheless, while it is difficult to imagine many of today's youth enjoying these novels, they were popular in the nineteenth century and went through multiple editions.

An important pedagogical concern only lightly touched on in Farrar's fiction is his attitude to curricular matters. Though he was himself a consummate classical philologist and published in 1867 a best selling Greek Syntax, and Hints on Accidence, he consistently maintained that the prevailing approach to teaching Latin and Greek, mainly to stress syntax and accidence as well as prose and verse translation from English into the ancient languages, was counter educational and, in addition, was failing in imbue in pupils any real appreciation of Greek and Roman civilization. Rather, what was needed was to instill a love of literature not a contempt for grammar. As a philologist he by no means rejected the teaching of formal grammar, only the prevalent meaningless rote-learning of grammatical forms. He made a particularly strong attack on the dominance of the classical

curriculum, and the totally inadequate education necessarily resulting, in "On Some Defects in Public School Education," a lecture delivered before the Royal Institution on 8 February, 1867. One of his sharpest criticisms focused on the fact that though the curriculum of Public Schools was geared towards university entrance only about twenty-five per cent of pupils actually proceeded to university. Furthermore, a high percentage of this twenty-five per cent, who presumably constituted the best products of the system,

leave school at the age of eighteen or nineteen, not only ignorant of history, both ancient and modern, ignorant of geography and chronology; ignorant of every single modern language; ignorant of their own language and often of its mere spelling; ignorant of every single science; ignorant of the merest elements of geometry and mathematics; ignorant of music; ignorant of drawing; profoundly ignorant of that Greek and Latin to which the long, ineffectual years of their aimless teaching have been professedly devoted; and, we may add, besides all this, and perhaps worst of all, completely ignorant of -- altogether content with -- their own astonishing and consummate ignorance. [quoted in Farrar, R. A., 1904, p. 101]

In the same year Farrar edited Essays on a Liberal Education, an influential series of papers by distinguished authors, of whom Henry Sidgwick was perhaps the most renowned. The main purpose of the volume, "a landmark in the development of modern schooling" according to Lionel Trilling, was to examine some of the great contemporary debates on diverse theories of educational reform and on what constitutes the optimal liberal education. [Trilling, 1965, p. 3] Farrar's own paper, "Of Greek and Latin Verse-Composition as a General Branch of Education," was another incisive attack on some of the absurdities perpetrated on Public Schoolboys in the name of Classical education. His principle point was that the very long time devoted to teaching "composition" in school would be far better assigned to other subjects such as comparative philology, history, modern languages, English language and literature, Hebrew, and above all science. If the appropriate changes were made, then, Farrar was convinced, the Public Schools might send forth "a large number of men who, while they would know as much or *more* Latin and Greek than the paltry minimum to which they now attain, should not at the same time startle and shock the world by the unnatural profundity of their ignorance respecting all other subjects in heaven and earth." [Farrar, F. W., 1867, p. 208] Not surprisingly, Farrar's views were not unopposed. In a review of Essays on a Liberal Education John Conington, Professor of Latin Language and Literature at Oxford, though acknowledging that

Greek and Latin verse writing was not suitable for everyone, accused Farrar of writing "unwarrantably and extravagantly." [Conington, 1868, pp. 9, 11] The strictures of the Rev. Stephen Hawtreys, Assistant-Master at Eton, were more severe. In his 1868 A Narrative-Essay on a Liberal Education he asked to what extent did Farrar's power in denigrating verse composition owe to his training in writing verses. For Hawtreys, in common with many contemporaries, considered that a great educational benefit of verse composition was in fostering the child's mental faculties, a benefit certainly not resulting from the study of science which Farrar advocated. If boys learned "about the electric telegraph, the lightning conductor, the electric light, the Davy Safety Lamp, chloroform, and vaccination, (for these -- deprived of the poetic imagery with which he surrounds them -- are the subjects which Mr. Farrar puts in the place of the idol worshipped in the shape of classics,) would there not be a great danger of the boys becoming less vigorous-minded than they are?" [Hawtreys, 1868, pp. 29-30]

On 31 January, 1868 Farrar delivered another lecture on Public School education at the Royal Institution. Disabusing his audience of the idea that he was the Classics' enemy, he nevertheless averred that there had been excessive claims for their educational value. Moreover, even if the claims were true in theory, in practice the system of teaching Greek and Latin had been an utter failure. Indeed, in many cases boys, on whose Classical education great sums of money had been spent, knew far less and had attained much less culture than their sisters who had been educated at home by a single governess. He humorously suggested that if it were possible to communicate with the Ancient Greeks they would be "amazed to be informed that . . . a power to construe and emend their own choruses and hexameters was still held to be the highest and rarely attained achievement of an English education in the nineteenth century of the Christian era." [Farrar, F. W., 1868, p. 241] Nor, he underscored, was this view of the debacle of Classical education only his opinion; rather it was an assessment pervading page after page of evidence of the voluminous reports of the two recent Royal Commissions on the Public Schools and the Universities respectively. With Farrar's criticism of the Classics' curricular dominance was the concomitant complaint of the totally inadequate exposure of pupils to other subjects. In particular, he expressed bitterness at the neglect of science,

stressing that an understanding of the laws and phenomena of nature was an essential attribute of any true education. It should never be a matter of either a scientific or a linguistic and literary education. Both were indispensable. Furthermore, Greek and Latin were not, Farrar maintained, essential subjects. He was convinced

that if there were at this moment any school in England where, other advantages being equal, Science in its richest and broadest sense was intelligently and systematically taught as the principal study, and where a thoughtful training in English Literature and in Modern Languages were substituted for Greek and Latin, I should not indeed hold that such a school had elaborated a perfect theory, but I should hold that for all except a very few it would be furnishing a better, a more fruitful, and a more successful education than any at present attainable at our public schools. [Farrar, F. W., 1868, p. 238]

Six months of German, Farrar declared, would provide access to "a nobler and more attractive range of literature than six years" of the ancient languages. A moderate study of French, besides its utilitarian value, would introduce a pupil to a literature in many respects far surpassing that of the Classics. But Farrar seemed in little doubt that English both for nobility of thought and literary worth was the best language which a child should study at school. However, he lamented that there were few boys who received as much exposure to the great names of English literature as to the Classical authors. [Farrar, F. W., 1868, pp. 238-239] Accordingly, setting out the ideal outcome of a secondary school education, he proposed:

that every boy of average ability leaving school at eighteen or nineteen should be able to read at sight any easy author in Greek and Latin; that he should be well grounded in arithmetic, algebra, and geometry; that he should understand French and German, and if possible speak one of the two; that he should be able to read his own language well, to write it intelligently, and to show some familiarity with its greatest literature; that he should have a sound knowledge of history and geography; and lastly, that he should be acquainted with the nature and greatest results of the sciences in general, and have a more minute, practical, and experimental acquaintance with one of them at least.[Farrar, F. W., 1868, p. 243]

During the first half of the 19th century England, leader of the industrial revolution, was far in advance of most other states in scientific, industrial and engineering inventions and applications. However, as the century progressed she began to fall far behind many Continental nations in the teaching of subjects which were specifically related to such inventions and applications. One of the prime reasons for this neglect in the Public Schools was the distaste and even contempt of many of England's most influential and powerful establishment figures for what they felt were disciplines totally illiberal, banalistic, utilitarian, practical. An education in the humanities, especially Classics,

they believed, was by far the best preparation for Public Schoolboys who would later assume important positions in society. The content of scientific subjects was not viewed as appropriate for either the requisite intellectual or character training of such boys, though it was satisfactory for those who would work at more mechanical or artisanal or professional jobs. However, the claims of science were more and more being put forward as the years advanced with such supporters as T. H. Huxley, Michael Faraday, Lyon Playfair, Herbert Spencer vociferously advocating increased scientific content in the curriculum of all schools. Even the Clarendon Commission into the Public Schools which reported in 1864 recommended that a moderate amount of science be taught in these schools. However, the 1868 Taunton Commission was much more insistent in its advocacy that more science be taught, though it was referring specifically to secondary schools other than the elite Public Schools: "We cannot consider any scheme of education complete which omits a subject of such high importance We think it established that the study of natural science develops better than any other studies the observing faculties, disciplines the intellect by teaching induction as well as deduction, supplies a useful balance to the studies of language and mathematics, and provides much instruction of great value for the occupations of after life." [Schools Inquiry Commission, 1970, p. 34] Furthermore, the publication of Darwin's Origin of Species in 1859 provided science's supporters with an added reason for increasing science teaching at school and university.

Of course, among those vehemently opposed to the claims of science, and especially arguments ensuing from Darwin's bombshell, were the clergy. However, Farrar, termed by Mack as "science's most ardent champion" after Huxley, was one cleric who fervently believed that an understanding of the laws and phenomena of science was an essential attribute of any true education. [Mack, 1941, p. 61] In fact, he held that the prevailing education, especially the clergy's own, was "'distinctly *irreligious*'" in focusing on Classics while neglecting "'the mighty works of God,'" which he viewed were best represented by science. [quoted in Hannah, 1867, p. 2] Moreover, this was patently silly, as he argued in an 1868 article "The Attitude of the Clergy towards Science," for if the rationale for theology is to seek a true interpretation of God's revelations, "'then *Science is itself one of the noblest forms of Theology.*'" [quoted in Moore, 1988, p. 443] Likewise, in his 1885 Bampton

Lectures at Oxford University, published under the title The History of Interpretation, he declared that "true science and true religion are twin sisters, each studying her own sacred book of God, and nothing but disaster has arisen from the petulant scorn of the one and the false fear and cruel tyrannies of the other." [quoted in Elliott-Binns, 1956, p. 51-52]

Accordingly, it was not surprising that Farrar was convinced that it was essential to remedy science's neglect in the Public Schools by making it an important part of the curriculum. In his 1867 "Of Greek and Latin Verse-Composition as a General Branch of Education" he had termed science "a study so invaluable as a means of intellectual training, and so infinitely important in the results at which it arrives, that the long neglect and strange suspicion with which it has hitherto been treated can only be regarded as a fatal error and a national misfortune." [Farrar, F. W., 1867, p. 207]

Though Farrar did not teach science himself, he founded a Natural History Society at Harrow in order to stimulate interest in such subjects as botany among pupils who were little attracted to the normal Classical fare. He also initiated, during his Harrow days, valuable prizes for the best collections of bird's eggs, butterflies, shells, and such like. In addition, he inquired of Sir Joseph Hooker, Director of the Royal Botanic gardens at Kew and staunch Darwinist, how best to teach botany, becoming himself a useful botanist. [Farrar, R. A., 1904, pp. 88, 84]

Farrar's Headmaster for much of his time at Harrow, H. Montagu Butler, praised his endeavors to increase science appreciation among the boys. In particular, he was grateful that Farrar invited distinguished scientists to lecture at Harrow: "It was to him that we owed the first lectures of Tyndall on sound, of Huxley on the anatomy of the lobster, of Ruskin on minerals." [Farrar, R. A., 1904, p. 139]

Though today we would consider the preceding to be rather rudimentary forms of science pedagogy, there is no doubt that Farrar was an innovator in science teaching. Such was the dearth of scientific content at English Public Schools during the 1860s.

Farrar's own efforts in science mainly revolved about philological research. Perhaps as a result of a rebuff from some practitioners of the harder sciences, he published in 1869 an article "Philology as one of the Sciences" in which he argued that "whatever definition of science we may feel inclined to accept, it is hard to see how we can refuse that illustrious name to the treasury of

results which have been attained by inquiries into the nature and laws of human speech." [Farrar, F. W., 1869, p. 252] He published widely on philology, his principle works being: The Origin of Language, based on Modern Researches: an Essay (1860); Chapters on Language (1865); Families of Speech: Four Lectures (1870); Language and Languages (1878). The Origin of Language so impressed Charles Darwin that he proposed Farrar for a Fellowship of the Royal Society. He was elected in 1866. Farrar, in turn, thought so highly of Darwin that he arranged for his burial in Westminster Abbey over the objections of many ecclesiastics. He also preached Darwin's funeral sermon. As a cleric Farrar saw no irreconcilable conflict between Darwin's views and religious beliefs. As he declared elsewhere: "Whether we accept or not the Darwinian hypothesis, this at least is certain that . . . there is nothing in it which is contrary to the laws impressed on matter by the Creator." [Farrar, F. W., 1891a, 306] Darwin himself may not have agreed. Still, though Darwin lost his religion, he could declare that he "never published a word directly against religion or the clergy." [quoted in Elliott-Binns, 1946, p. 168]

Though I cannot locate any instance where Farrar actually suggested that practical courses in art should be included in the school curriculum, his notion of what should constitute a true education clearly included an understanding of art. George W. E. Russell, one of his pupils at Harrow, wrote that Farrar, always keen to instill an appreciation of beauty, "decorated his schoolroom with antique casts, as models of form, and Fra Angelico's blue Madonnas and rose-coloured angels on golden backgrounds, as models of colour." [Russell, 1910, p. 235] Farrar clearly had a strong interest in art himself. His daughter reported that collecting was his single self-indulgence and that he made their home into "a museum of lovely objects." [Farrar, R. A., 1904, p. 185] His writings on the nature of art and its relation to man were strongly influenced by Ruskin. In "What Art Teaches Us," the first part of a long three part article published in Good Words in 1891, he declared that the first function of art is to teach us to see, the second is to teach us what to see, the third is to teach us to see more than we actually see. [Farrar, F. W., 1891b, passim] Accordingly, as he pointed out in his pamphlet Ruskin as a Religious Teacher, art constitutes something far more than Aristotle's definition of it as an imitative activity. Involving the faculty of creative contemplation, art leads us to a greater

understanding of God: "It sees in earthly beauty the analogue of heavenly glory, redeeming the world by its presence, as significant of Divine energy." [Farrar, F. W., 1904, p. 18] However, during the 1850s and 1860s when Farrar was a Public School master there was little opportunity of such art appreciation and understanding ever being formally included in the classics-dominated curricula of most of England's private schools.

Farrar the Public School teacher differed from many of his colleagues in having scant interest in sport. Though cricket is often mentioned in his novels, little detailed descriptions of games are provided, a fictional neglect of sports which would come increasingly rare in school and college stories as games' mania pervaded Public Schools during the latter part of the century. While Farrar presumably accepted that certain educational and character building benefits resulted from sport, it is clear that he was quite wary about games, about their proliferation, and the disproportionate amount of time devoted to them at the manifest expense of other school subjects. Sir Edwin Arnold, a fellow student of Farrar at King's College, London, wrote about his friend's distinct lack of interest in games: "Boys are stern and keen judges of their instructors, and those who were smitten with the modern passion for athletics did not always find Farrar enthusiastic enough about cricket, football, and the out-of-door portion of an English boy's upbringing. Yet he was proud of the victories which Marlborough, under his rule, gained in the fields of exercise and youthful competition, though I doubt whether he ever wielded a bat or handled any implement of sport, such as gun, fishing-rod, or hunting gear." [Farrar, R. A., 1904, p. 33] Canon Henry Bell, one of Farrar's pupils at Marlborough in 1855, related that Farrar once chaffed him about cricket: "What fun can you see in trundling a piece of leather at three bits of stick!" [Farrar, R. A., 1904, p. 58] Still, Bell acknowledged, revealing that Edwin Arnold's doubts were not altogether justified, that Farrar sometimes joined boys in their games, though his primary motivation stemmed from a desire to get to know the boys better, rather from any intrinsic love of games.

Farrar certainly had little time for what Mangan terms the "athletocrat." [Mangan, 1981, p. 109]. Moreover, he was insistent, as he pointed out in a sermon delivered to the pupils while he was Headmaster of Marlborough, that boys should recognize the relative unimportance of games in the

general scheme of school life: "Now while you play with all heartiness, do not forget that games, however useful and delightful, are not of first-rate, not even of third, fourth, or fifth -- scarcely even of tenth-rate importance in comparison with higher things." [Farrar, F. W., 1889, p. 371] Higher things for Farrar were clearly identifiable with the development of such attributes as virtue, religious feeling, morality. In addition, he was assured that it was far better for a schoolboy to aim at becoming hardworking, scholarly, and intellectually rigorous than being an ignorant Captain of the First XI. True manliness for Farrar was much more closely associated with a general nobility of character than with any prowess on the sporting field. Unlike many of his colleagues, he saw distinct problems with the fervent enthusiasm for games at school. He was quite categorical in his 1896 work The Paths of Duty that "There is more danger of athletics being made *too* prominent than of their falling into neglect," among middle and upper class pupils [Farrar, F. W., 1896, p. 21]. Earlier, in his 1868 lecture before the Royal Institution he had termed "extravagant athleticism" as one of "two potent enemies of intellectual progress." Besides being frequently injurious to the body, athletics "wastes that inestimable leisure which might else have been so rich in mental and moral benefits, not for our sons only, but for our country, and for all mankind." [Farrar, F. W., 1868, p. 237]

It is unclear just how skillful were Farrar's own pedagogical talents. Canon Henry Bell, relates of Farrar's first teaching year at Marlborough: "I quite remember how his treatment of us was a revelation. His whole manner, his kind way of speaking to us, was something we had never been accustomed to: he completely won our hearts, and there was nothing we would not have done for him Farrar came, and brought the boys who were in his Form a new idea of life, and the conviction that we were made for something better and higher than to be caned and cuffed." [Farrar, R. A., 1904, pp. 56-57] It seems that he was temperamentally more proficient and at ease instructing the older, better behaved, and more advanced boys of the Sixth rather than those of the more junior forms. For example, one of Farrar's pupils, Walter Leaf, later Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, wrote that "he was never at his best as a teacher of a low form; his half-humorous impatience of the dull and backward was not all assumed, and his quick sympathies needed the intelligent response of the picked boys before his powers of stimulating and guidance could show themselves. Hence it was that

he was never so happy at Harrow, where he never had a high form, as with the Sixth at Marlborough." [Farrar, R. A., 1904, p. 92]

In an 1883 lecture General Aims of the Teacher delivered at Cambridge University, Farrar discussed his educational theories, some of which he probably practiced himself. Many who read it today might consider his views pedestrian and commonplace. But he was speaking at a period when, as he himself points out, most secondary teachers were totally untrained in pedagogy, when "the art of teaching was supposed to spring into full-born life." [Farrar, F. W., 1883, p. 4] Some of his maxims might well have been uttered by such as Quintilian, Comenius, Locke, or Pestalozzi: gain "a sense of the importance, the dignity, the sacredness of" teaching; [p. 5] "I am convinced that no *bad* man can ever be a good teacher;" [p. 9] "trust your boys; teach them to trust you; rely on their sense of your sympathy and kindness, and not on fear;" [p. 19] "we should try to have wide appreciation of differing gifts and to be many-sided in our teaching;" [p. 22] "always, even for the lowest form, *prepare your work*, or at least look at it beforehand;" [p. 23] "rational teaching is always more interesting than irrational;" [p. 25] "make your lessons interesting;" [p. 24] "it is . . . a duty to make the teaching as human as we can." [p. 25] Farrar, in this lecture, repudiated the excessive physical punishment in which many of his Public School contemporaries, patent successors of Horace's Orbilius Plagosus, indulged. "Who can estimate the evil which has been done by centuries of flogging?" Discipline maintained in this manner, he was convinced, was nothing but a "discipline of death." [p. 12] The best teacher was the one who punished least. It is true that descriptions of physical punishment occur in his schoolboy novels and it is likely that he himself on occasion flogged boys; still, he strove to lessen the amount of punishment in his classes. As he wrote to his friend E. S. Beesly while teaching at Harrow: "Now we get on together as well as it is possible to do on a system where boys only know masters as punishment machines -- a system whose trammels I am breaking more and more every day." [Farrar, R. A., 1904, p. 129] In fact, in General Aims of the Teacher Farrar indicated that he had little time for any punishment. Even such penalties as writing out lines or lessons were only a teacher's own "confessions of weakness" and no good teacher whose job is to "encourage, help, sympathise, inspire" pupils should have to use them. [Farrar, F. W., 1883,

p. 15] "Abuse, taunts, sarcasm" were also anathema, Farrar always esteeming the precept "maxima debetur pueris reverentia." [pp. 15-17]

Farrar's respect for children naturally resulted from the Evangelical bent of his religious views. Evangelicals tended to surround their children with care and attention, building a tight domestic relationship -- the Victorian close-knit family owed much to their influence. Parents' main duty was to raise their offspring in a God-fearing, spiritual environment and guide them on their path to forgiveness and salvation. Consequently, as Farrar pointed out in an 1870 review article "Learning to Read," the child neglect of many English middle and upper class parents was reprehensible. Nurseries, he declared, were frequently located in the home's smallest most remote, most unhealthy room. It was common for fathers to see their children for only a few cursory moments daily. Mothers all too often gave the intellectual and moral training of their youngsters to ill-equipped governesses who frequently were "without the slightest insight into the nature of education, or the philosophy of teaching." [Farrar, F. W., 1870, p. 447] In short, children of England's wealthier families, Farrar believed, generally had far too little contact with their parents and accordingly suffered from a shortage of family tenderness, attention, care. While girls, as they grew older, probably did somewhat better than boys in this respect, in that they received all their education at home until they "came out" or were dispatched to some finishing school, boys were typically shipped to a preparatory boarding school at age eight, thereby losing nearly all attachment with home and family life. One of the main themes in Farrar's 1873 novel The Three Homes: A Tale for Fathers and Sons was the flagrant lack of understanding displayed by the father of Ralph Douglas, who was a pupil at Rugby School, in dealing with his son. Of course, even a very happy and compassionate home life before attending boarding school was no guarantee that a boy would turn out well. In Eric the hero gradually degenerates at Roslyn School despite coming from a good and loving Christian family.

In 1871 Farrar was appointed to take over the Headmastership of Marlborough from G. G. Bradley. During his five and a half years in this position Farrar revealed that he was not so gifted an administrator as his predecessor. He also differed, not surprisingly, in his attitude to curricular

matters from Bradley who considered grammar the perfect educational tool, especially when applied to prose composition. For Farrar it was a greater mark of a cultured man to have an extensive acquaintance with different literatures, especially that of England herself, than the ability to turn a passage of English into Greek or Latin. Shortly after Farrar's death in 1903, a former pupil J. D. Rogers published a "warts and all" portrait of him as headmaster, though the praise outweighed the criticism. If Farrar, sometimes failing to grasp juvenile mentality, innocently gave boys more intellectual and moral credit than they deserved and occasionally lost control of a class, Rogers believed that he accompanied a "want of firmness by excess of kindness." [Rogers, 1903, p. 604] Farrar was a compassionate and sympathetic, if not quite a master, teacher. Rogers also emphasized that one of Farrar's greatest successes was in reaching pupils with his great love of wide reading, not only of Classical but also of more contemporary literatures -- his favorite motto was "Lege, lege, aliquid haerebit." Rogers testified that "his influence in clothing the great names and phantoms of literature with life, in driving us to wonder and explore far and wide, and in instilling into us . . . an idea of the unity and greatness of the great literature of the world, was definite, persistent and ineffaceable." [Rogers, 1903, p. 603] In addition, Rogers observed that the fact that Farrar formed a significant part of the contemporary literary scene, being on friendly terms with such luminaries as Ruskin, Stanley, Browning, Tennyson, and Arnold was not lost on the boys and that it helped to foster in them a regard for modern English literature. [Rogers, 1903, p. 602]

In 1876 Farrar, aged 45, accepted Prime Minister Disraeli's offer of the post of Canon of Westminster and Rector of St. Margaret's, London, and thereby ceased being a full-time teacher. It was during the following years that he became one of the most popular preachers in the nation. Two decades later he was appointed Dean of Canterbury. It was a well deserved honor, though he might have expected a bishopric. Probably, his sporadic diversions from conservative theology, particularly his repudiation of the common belief that God condemns multitudes of souls to everlasting torment in hell, rendered him an uncertain choice in the eyes of some in the Establishment. Towards the end of the century Farrar developed muscular atrophy. He died in

March, 1903 after a long life of tireless and devoted service to the Church, to literature, and to education.

Frederic Farrar is best remembered today for his theological writings. His books for juveniles have failed entirely to retain any of the interest still afforded such Victorian children's works as Dodgson's Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, Kingsley's The Water-Babies, or Hughes's Tom Brown's Schooldays. Of course, even before the close of the Victorian era there was a distinct falling off in interest among the young for Farrar's particular brand of literary style, content, and message. His son, writing in 1904, was well aware of the change in temper: "If, Reader, you dislike idealism, and cannot tolerate books written 'with a purpose,' . . . Eric and St. Winifred's are not for you. No cynic, and no mere worlding, was ever wholly in sympathy with Farrar's work; and the clever modern public-school boy is but too often an amateur of cynicism He detests emotion, sneers at it in others, and stoically suppresses it in himself." [R. A. Farrar, 1904, p. 73] Whether or not the late twentieth century schoolchild is an emotion-repressing cynic, there is little doubt that today Farrar's novels for the young are virtually unknown among the age group for which they were intended. And even if the name Eric, or, Little by Little is nowadays recognized among adults, it is a recognition more likely than not accompanied by a knowing, ridiculing sneer. Literary tastes inevitably change and it is now the fate of Farrar's children's works that their appeal is almost solely limited to the scholar and academic. However, scholars and academics who have interested themselves in Farrar's educational and pedagogical views are in extremely short supply. This is curious considering the intrinsic interest of the educational opinions and deeds of this many-sided man who for over twenty years was intimately associated with two of England's leading Public Schools. The neglect is also unfortunate since it would be easy to argue that many of Farrar's views on education are still relevant today. Certainly, those relating to the need for a broad and liberal curriculum recur in various forms in the contemporary curricular debate. May I suggest, in conclusion, that a full-scale study of Farrar the educationist, more comprehensive than this present paper, is long overdue. Such a treatment would undoubtedly not only be engrossing, but might also constitute a useful commentary from a historical perspective on certain dominant modern topics in education.

REFERENCES

- Chadwick, O. (1972). *The Victorian Church*. Part II. 2nd ed. London: Adam and Charles Black.
- Conington, J. (1868). "A Liberal Education." *The Contemporary Review*, 7, 3-20.
- "Dean Farrar on Matthew Arnold." (1953). Reprinted in *The Fortnightly*, 1038, n.s., 413-415.
- Elliott-Binns, L. E. (1956). *English Thought 1860-1900: The Theological Aspect*. London: Longmans, Green.
- Elliott-Binns, L. E. (1946). *Religion in the Victorian Era*. London: Lutterworth.
- Farrar, F. W. (ed.) (1867). *Essays on a Liberal Education*. London: Macmillan.
- Farrar, F. W. (1868). "Public School Education." *The Fortnightly Review*, 3, n.s., (15), 233-249.
- Farrar, F. W. (1869). "Philology as One of the Sciences." *Macmillan's Magazine*, 19, 252-257.
- Farrar, F. W. (1870). "Learning to Read." *Macmillan's Magazine*, 21, 445-448.
- Farrar, F. W. (1878). "Thomas Arnold, D. D." *Macmillan's Magazine*, 37, 456-463.
- Farrar, F. W. (with R. B. Poole) (1883). *General Aims of the Teacher, and Form Management. Two Lectures Delivered in the University of Cambridge in the Lent Term, 1883*. Cambridge: The University Press.
- Farrar, F. W. (1889). *"In the Days of Thy Youth." Sermons on Practical Subjects Preached at Marlborough College from 1871 to 1876*. London; New York: Macmillan.
- Farrar, F. W. (1891a) *Social and Present Day Questions*. Boston: Bradley and Woodruff.
- Farrar, F. W. (1891b). "What Art Teaches Us." *Good Words*, 32, 404-408.
- Farrar, F. W. (1896). *The Paths of Duty: Counsels to Young Men*. Boston: Crowell.
- Farrar, F. W. (1904). *Ruskin as a Religious Teacher*. (Originally delivered before the Ruskin Society of Birmingham in October 1898). Bournville, England: Saint George Press.
- Farrar, F. W. (1977). *Eric, or Little by Little: A Tale of Roslyn School*. New York; London: Garland. (reprint of the 1892 ed. published by Adam & Charles Black, London).
- Farrar, R. A. (1904). *The Life of Frederic William Farrar*. New York: Crowell.
- Hannah, J. (1867). "The Attitude of the Clergy Towards Science." *The Contemporary Review*, 6, 1-17.
- Hawtrey, Rev. S. (1868). *A Narrative-Essay on a Liberal Education: Chiefly Embodied in the Account of an Attempt to Give a Liberal Education to Children of the Working Classes*. London: Hamilton, Adams.
- Horsman, A. (1990). *The Victorian Novel*. Oxford: Clarendon.
- Jamieson, A. (1968). "F. W. Farrar and Novels of the Public Schools." *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 16 (3), 271-278.

- Kingsmill, H. (1929). *After Puritanism 1850-1900*. London: Duckworth.
- Mack, E. C. (1941). *Public Schools and British Opinion Since 1860*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Mangan, J. A. (1981). *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School: The Emergence and Consolidation of an Educational Ideology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Moore, J. R. (ed.). (1988) *Religion in Victorian Britain. Vol. III. Sources*. Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press.
- Newsome, D. (1961). *Godliness and Good Learning: Four Studies on a Victorian Ideal*. London: Cassell.
- Review of *Eric; or, Little by Little*. (1858). *The Saturday Review*, 158 (6), 453-454.
- Rogers, J. D. (1903). "Dean Farrar as Headmaster" *The Cornhill Magazine*, n.s. 14, 597-608.
- Russell, G. W. E. (1910). *Sketches and Snapshots*. London: Smith, Elder.
- Scott, P. G. (1971). "The School Novels of Dean Farrar." *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 19 (2), 163-182.
- "School and College Life: Its Romance and Reality," (1861). *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 89 (544), 131-148.
- Schools Inquiry Commission, Vol. I, Report of the Commissioners 1867-1868. Irish University Press Series of British Parliamentary Papers. Education General 17*. (1970). Shannon, Ireland: Irish University Press.
- Trilling, L. (1965). "The Two Environments: Reflections on the Study of English," *Encounter*, 25 (1), 3-13.

