

Richard Aldrich. *School and Society in Victorian Britain: Joseph Payne and the New World of Education*. New York and London: Garland, 1995. Pp. xxvi, 317. US\$50.00 cloth.

In his Introduction, Richard Aldrich briefly reviews a number of prominent interpretations of nineteenth-century English education. Although he acknowledges that all provide substantial insights into Victorian schooling and society, he contends that few of them really focus on the practical details, the actual nuts and bolts of daily educational practices. Their primary themes are the more general ones of educational policy and administration, social organization, and culture. Aldrich promises that he will adopt in his book a somewhat less common approach and will examine the actual school and educational practices, the teachers, and the pupils of nineteenth-century England. Moreover, he will accomplish this by focusing on "the experiences of a quite remarkable, but hitherto-unremarked learner and teacher Joseph Payne" (p. xxi).

In the first few chapters Aldrich recounts the main circumstances in the life and educational career of his chosen educationist. Joseph Payne was born into humble surroundings in 1808 at Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk. Receiving only elementary schooling, he was probably working as an assistant by the age of sixteen at a boy's school at Olney in Buckinghamshire. By 1827 he was teaching as an assistant master at a boys' private school in London. In 1830, at the age of twenty-two, he attracted much attention in educational circles with the publication of his 56-page pamphlet *A Compendious Exposition of the Principles and Practice of Professor Jacotot's System of Education*. In 1837 he became partner and headmaster of Denmark Hill School, which was to become one of the century's most flourishing private boys' schools. During this period Payne also became a well-known textbook writer, his *Select Poetry for Children* and *Studies in English Poetry* being particularly successful. In 1845 he established the Mansion Grammar School at Leatherhead in Surrey, where he remained as sole proprietor and headmaster until his retirement from schoolteaching in 1863.

Aldrich provides a well-researched examination of the early years of the College of Preceptors, founded in 1846 to improve the standards and standing of Britain's teachers. Although it is not apparent what precise role Payne played in the actual founding of the College, he was strongly involved in many of its activities from the beginning. For example, for a number of years, the first in 1847, he set the College's examination on *The Theory and Practice of Education*. These examinations were substantial and comprehensive, indicating not only Payne's own learning but his commitment to the development in England of the very subject of educational theory and practice. This stress on high standards also reveals his concern to improve the educational and intel-

lectual background of teachers. Moreover, Payne worked hard to require that guarantees of educational and teaching worth be demanded of all those who taught in secondary schools, including those in public and endowed grammar schools. However, as Aldrich indicates, "Payne's vision of the erudite schoolteacher, at one time learned in the theory of education and distinguished in its practice, was not fulfilled at this time" (p. 122). Too many practical difficulties hindered the development of teachers' education in mid-nineteenth-century England. Aldrich discusses, for example, a lack of training colleges for secondary teachers, an absence of evening lecture courses, a dearth of contemporary textbooks and secondary works on education, and scant incentives for teachers to embark on further study. Furthermore, although Payne consistently urged the College of Preceptors to demand proper qualifications of its members, it was not until the 1870s that the College began to require of them any test of educational knowledge or pedagogical fitness.

In 1873 Payne was appointed Professor of the Science and Art of Education at the College of Preceptors, this being the first professorship of education in Britain. He held this position for three years, using his chair to continue to publicize his ideas as a critic and reformer, until he was obliged to retire because of ill-health. Aldrich provides an informative analysis of a number of Payne's views on education: believing that the minds of men and women were essentially the same, Payne strongly supported better access to education for females; he resolutely urged the reform of the Public Schools, which were pervaded by "privilege, custom, corruption and immorality, . . . inefficient teaching, limited curricula, and an over-concern with games" (p. 175); he was a very stern critic of many aspects of contemporary elementary schooling and proffered numerous remedies for its amelioration; his overriding solution for improving the quality of education at all levels of education was to initiate a thorough improvement in the quality of teachers and their training.

Aldrich examines Payne's pioneering work in developing the new concept of "the science and art of education." He also treats the evolution of some of Payne's curricular views, detailing his espousal that a broad range of subjects be taught in middle-class schools for boys aged from eight to sixteen. Science he generally considered to be as suitable as Greek and Latin. However, more cautious than Herbert Spencer, he was adamant that the Classics still had their place. With respect to elementary schools, Payne was extremely critical of their narrow "3 Rs" curriculum and the mechanical pedagogy forced upon them by the 1862 Revised Code. Aldrich is particularly interested in Payne's views on educational history. The latter's professorial lecture course on the history of education at the College of Preceptors was extremely comprehensive and ranged from the time of the ancient Chinese, Indians, Egyptians,

Persians, and Jews up to the modern period. He insisted that it was essential that teachers, if ever they were to rise above the level of mechanics, gain at least a broad knowledge of the theories and practices of their profession throughout history. In addition to being a strong promoter of the comparative study of education—he made several visits to Germany to examine schools—Payne was very active in a number of educational associations other than the College of Preceptors: he was chairman of the Women's Education Union; he was a shareholder and Council member of the Girls' Public Day School Company; he served on the Committee of the Froebel Society; he was a member and chaired the first meeting of the Society for the Development of the Science of Education.

As its title declares, Aldrich's book is far more than a biography of Payne, much of the subject matter concerning the broader theme of Victorian schools and society. As promised in the Introduction, Aldrich gives much attention to the practical day-to-day affairs of schools, especially those with which Payne was associated. He discusses in detail the curricula of the schools, the examinations, aspects of the background and academic achievement of some of the pupils and the masters, and Payne's pedagogical theories and practices, including his attitude to corporal punishment. Although Aldrich consistently takes care to set his account in the wider societal context, he successfully depicts what at least some private schools for middle-class boys were actually like in nineteenth-century England. Furthermore, his account of the College of Preceptors is extremely welcome. This important institution generally receives superficial attention, if any, in most treatments of this period of English educational history. At the same time, Aldrich's picture of the hitherto little-known but original educationist, Joseph Payne, is well-drawn. His account is also enhanced by a number of illustrations and photographs of Payne, his family, and his various schools. However, it is a pity that none of the pictures are of teachers, pupils, or actual classrooms. Aldrich's bibliography of both primary and secondary material is comprehensive and provides the reader excellent starting points for further research.

By no means the least interesting of the results proceeding from an examination of Joseph Payne's views on the science and art of education is an appreciation of his deep commitment to the study of the history of education. This study, he was convinced, was essential in the training of all teachers who should possess a good understanding of the scope of the diverse theories and methods of education from the time of the Ancients onwards. Moreover, this understanding of the history of education was necessary if teachers were "to rise above the grade of mere mechanics and empirics" (p. 225). Payne was right, and contemporary teacher educators would do well to pay a similar attention to educational history in curricula for trainee teachers, whether at the

elementary or secondary level. Today in North America the demands of credentialism leave little time in B.Ed. and M.Ed. programmes for most of the foundations of education. The latter are all too often considered an intellectual luxury. Moreover, many professors of education, themselves possessing only a narrow technical background in their subject, echo the cry that social, cultural, philosophical, and other foundational areas of education have little to do with learning how to teach. Accordingly, it is little wonder that far too many of our primary and secondary teachers graduate from college or university with meagre knowledge of Plato's, Rousseau's, Froebel's, or Bruner's educational theories. In short, far too many are, in Payne's words, "mechanics and empirics."

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Claudia Nelson and Lynne Vallone, eds. *The Girl's Own: Cultural Histories of the Anglo-American Girl, 1830–1915*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1994. Pp. 296. US\$45.00 cloth.

This collection accomplishes two things: first, it contributes new research on the social history of white middle-class girls' lives in Victorian England and the United States. Second, the collection furthers the study of the mediating role that popular culture plays in history, shaping and re-shaping both perceptions and experiences of gender roles. Central to the book is the argument that culture has historically controlled the lives of young girls while it simultaneously provided opportunities for girls' resistance to patriarchal values.

The editors set out to investigate the variety of ways in which girls' culture was experienced and lived, and to explore how "the Girl expressed her independence, as well as the ways in which she was imagined, presented, manufactured, and controlled" (p. 2). The variety of media of cultural production under study makes this a particularly intriguing, if sometimes disjointed collection. One group of essays studies the cultural representation of girls in paintings, photographs, and magazines, raising the broader issue of the objectification of girls' bodies and the commodification of girls' culture for economic, political, and erotic purposes. The complicated symbolic value of the Victorian girl as both virtuous and sexualized, both the passive object and the active subject, both the sacred and the profane is played out in the paintings of John Everett Millais, the representation of girls in popular fiction, and advice literature for schoolgirls. The emphasis on representation can be