

N.F.S. GRUNDTVIG: SELECTED EDUCATIONAL WRITINGS

Compiled by Max Lawson

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N. F. S. GRUNDTVIG

Selected Educational Writings

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and The Association of Folk High Schools in Denmark.

FOREWORDS

Max Lawson is no stranger to Denmark nor to the Folk High School Movement. He taught Peace Studies at Den Internationale Højskole while he was on study leave here in September 1988.

His main research interests are in the history, theory and practice of alternative educational institutions. This has brought him directly into contact with the educational writings of Grundtvig and the philosophy of Kierkegaard.

Hence this anthology in English which is a comprehensive compendium of Grundtvig's educational writings.

At present he is a Senior Lecturer in Education at the Department of Social, Cultural and Curriculum Studies, University of New England, Armidale, New South Wales, Australia. Here he teaches History of Education and Peace Studies. When I met him once again in November 1990 in Armidale, he was kind enough to entrust me with the manuscripts of this anthology.

I am pleased that the Association of Folk High Schools in Denmark is publishing this in conjunction with The International People's College. The Association will be celebrating its centenary in August and our college, which was founded in 1921 by Dr. Peter Manniche, is 70 years old.

I came to know Max Lawson rather well while he was here in Elsinore and had the pleasure of cooperating with him in Peace Studies. He is keenly interested in Ruskin and Gandhi and of course Peter Manniche who has written a book on Ruskin. Earlier he had spent a year's study leave at Oxford University as a research associate doing work on the writing of John Ruskin.

Max was previously a high school teacher of English and on the staff of Sydney Teachers' College. He has a M.A. (Hons.) from the University of Sydney, Australia, and a Ph.D. from the University of New England and has published widely. A recent monograph, "Peace

Education: Past and Present" was published by the School of Education, Lund University, Sweden. In completing this anthology of Grundtvig's Educational Writings he has the satisfaction of achieving one of his pet ambitions.

David Wilson David
Acting Principal
Den Internationale Højskole
June 1991

Dr. Max Lawson has acquired a profound knowledge of Grundtvig's ideas and visions. And not only through lectures and essays of Danish origin, but through a study of the basic writings of the renowned Danish educator. It is therefore a pleasure to welcome an edition of selected Grundtvig texts in English when the selection has been carried out by Dr. Max Lawson.

It is the hope and the aspiration of the Association of the Danish Folk High Schools that the present anthology, including the editor's own essay on Grundtvig shall inspire people of all nations - Danes and foreigners alike - to discuss and to develop Grundtvig's ideas in order to meet the challenges of tomorrow. The tool is at hand.

Ebbe Lundgaard
Secretary General
The Association of
Folk High Schools in Denmark

PROFILE N.F.S. GRUNDTVIG 1783 - 1872

By Max Lawson

Nicholas Frederik Severin Grundtvig is Denmark's only educator of international stature (1) as well as being a theologian, historian and writer who exercised a profound influence on Danish life, even if he is far less known outside Denmark than his younger contemporaries, the philosopher, Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) and the writer Hans Christian Andersen (1805-1875).

A clear example of Grundtvig's abiding legacy in Denmark is that of the 754 hymns contained in the Danish Hymnal, 271 of the hymns were written by Grundtvig. Much of Grundtvig's prolific writings, however, remain unpublished - a collected edition would run to at least a hundred volumes - and it is only comparatively recently that Grundtvig's educational writings have been partially translated, for example, into English (2). Yet the Danish folk high school movement, which these writings inspired, has led to Grundtvig being called "the father of western adult education" and interest in Grundtvig and the folk high school movement has extended to developing countries as well.

Grundtvig's life, particularly its first half, spanned momentous changes in Danish society. In 1788 the laws of adscription were abolished whereby hitherto male members of the population were not allowed to move away from the estate where they were born without permission from the landowner. Christian VII followed this reform a year later with the establishment of an education committee. By 1814 laws for obligatory school education were passed. When Denmark took the first steps towards democracy in the eighteen thirties with the establishment of advisory assemblies of the estates of the realm (including peasantry) Grundtvig increased his writings on education because if the "lower orders" were to have a voice in the advisory assemblies they had to have an appropriate education so they could effectively participate in the proceedings. At first Grundtvig had been sceptical of these councils but was soon able to declare that "the voice

of the people" was indeed heard in these assemblies and hence he pursued his educational plans with great vigour.

Before his educational writings of the eighteen thirties, Grundtvig had a most chequered career as a clergyman. The very opposite of his father, a clergyman in a country village, who was content with a theology which has been described as pietistic and conservative, (3) the younger Grundtvig, on the other hand, was both influenced by such theology as well as making several departures from it. Because of his polemical writings and often abrasive behaviour, Grundtvig was for a considerable part of his life a preacher either forbidden to preach or allowed to preach but not administer the sacraments. It was only through the intervention of Christian VIII on his accession to the Danish throne, that Grundtvig, at the age of 55, at last had a permanent position as chaplain to Vartov, a Copenhagen church home for elderly women. This minor post (which Grundtvig held till his death at the age of 89) gave him the opportunity to continue his voluminous publications; his collected essays on education (4) appearing only some weeks before his death.

There is an almost regular pattern in Grundtvig's life of being helped out by royal patronage. Long before being appointed to Vartov and later being appointed an honorary bishop by Frederik VII, Grundtvig had been given a royal grant in 1818 in appreciation for translating Old Norse myths and sagas. Grundtvig was again supported by the King who gave him a series of three grants and a later one by the Queen to visit England in 1812, 1830, 1831 and 1843 respectively.

It was a combination of these first three visits to England where Grundtvig was able to observe English education at first hand while continuing his work on Nordic mythology, together with the rapidly changing political and social scene in Denmark that all coalesced for Grundtvig to produce in the eighteen thirties a series of writings in which the idea of the Danish folk high school was born.

In Grundtvig's preface to his 1832 study of Scandinavian mythology, *Nordens Mytologi* (Nordic Mythology) the first glimpses can be seen of the Danish folk high school of the future:

There will be the common centre from which the institution branches out into all the main lines of practical life, and back to which it endeavours to gather and unite all the energies of society. Here, all the civil servants of the state who do not need scholarship but life, insight and practical ability, and all those who wish to belong to the rank of the educated should get the very best chance of

developing themselves in a suitable direction and of getting to know one another (5).

Although Grundtvig's ideas for a folk high school are in the merest embryonic form in Nordic Mythology, nevertheless, this work does contain a full dress rehearsal for Grundtvig's later attacks on the "Schools for Death", the Latin grammar schools. Latin is ridiculed mercilessly; its literature Grundtvig considers to be an "abomination. . . imitation work and unlike Greek and Old Norse did not spring from the life of the people" (6). In Grundtvig's contrasting of the "spiritless and life-less learning of the Romano-Italian" (7) with the vivid oral traditions behind Greek and Norse mythology there is a foreshadowing of the great importance Grundtvig was to give to oral communication in his plans for education. Grundtvig's first longer book to deal with education is *Det danske Fir-Kløver* (The Danish Four-leaved Clover) written in 1836 as a response to the first sessions of the Provisional Advisory Councils, promulgated in 1831 but not meeting till 1835-36. Although Grundtvig was delighted at these assemblies that "the People's voice had risen from the dead" he nevertheless despaired about the then present state of the "loveliness" of the Four-leaf Clover - The King, the People, the Homeland, the Mother Tongue - and saw as his task "to write on what in my opinion must be done so that the rare and fine flower far from withering away can be strengthened and lift its head to the glory of the field" (8). The solution was to be, Grundtvig claimed, "the Voice of the People" demanding a Danish Folk High School "where everything will be about King and People, Homeland and Mother Tongue, and where the Bards who praised King and Homeland in the word which they took from the mouth of the People are forced to make themselves useful for both for food and honour" (9).

This stress on the centrality of the "bard" or "skald" is consistent with Grundtvig's championship in Nordic Mythology of Scandinavian mythology over Roman mythology. With ironic justification Grundtvig referred to himself as a "skald" and claimed that the skald was the real teacher of the common people because of the ability "to entirely awaken and nourish love for the Homeland and obtain strength and richness in the Mother tongue" (10). Hence the centrality of myths, legends and poems in Danish in the curriculum of the first Danish folk high schools and the great importance given to the oral traditions of the past and oral communication, particularly story telling with its rich historical precedents, in the present. Indeed note-taking in the early folk-high schools was often discouraged. There is an oft told story that Christen Kold, the folk-high school headmaster who first

firmly gave a distinctive shape to the early folk-high school movement, claimed in response to a student's complaint that he could not remember what was said if he did not take notes, made the comment: "Do not worry about that. It would be another matter if we were speaking about dead knowledge. It is like what happens out there in the fields. If we put drainpipes into the ground, we must mark the place in order to find them again. But when we sow corn, there is no need to mark the place, for it comes up again. You may be sure that the things you have heard from me with joy will come up all right again when you want them (11).

Running parallel with Grundtvig's championship of the old bards and the centrality of the oral tradition in his concept of the folk high school is his continuing attack on Latin, "the ruling language here (in Denmark) for six hundred years" (12) and its Grammar school repositories, the "Schools for Death" against Grundtvig's "Schools for Life" which would embody the "Living Word."

It is in *The Danish Four-Leaf Clover* that Grundtvig spells out his basic educational aim, "Livsoplysning", ("Enlightenment About Life") claiming that enlightenment "must originate mostly from the single person's own life or at least be tried to see how it fits (13) but it was not till two years later in *Skolen for Livet og Akademiet i Soer* (School for Life and Academy at Soer) (1838) that Grundtvig (as a result of a request by King Christian VIII) attempts to develop further his educational ideas.

The School for Life continues Grundtvig's onslaught on Latin studies wherein he claims that it took him thirty years to "get Rome and Latin out of my system" (14) but he is even more negative about book knowledge and examinations. In poetic vein Grundtvig claims "for all letters are dead even if written by fingers of angels and nibs of stars, all book knowledge is dead that is not unified with a corresponding life in the reader" (15).

This knowledge must involve "living contact and interaction with others" (16). In the second part of *The School for Life* where Grundtvig sketches the beginnings of a program for his proposed school he talks of "mutual education" and "living interaction" as at the heart of his education proposals. As K.S. Bugge has stressed this idea of "living interaction is specially well suited to be the basic formula for Grundtvig's education theory" (17). Clearly Grundtvig's "School for Life" would have to be built upon such a foundation.

"Living interaction" can be seen as a secular correspondence to Grundtvig's concept of "the Living Word", a phrase intimately associated with Grundtvig and deeply woven into the fabric of his

mature theological thought. In a theological context "the Living Word" was the words Christ used at the Lord's Supper. The point being that this sacrament is not silent but in Grundtvig's words "accompanied by the utterance of that wonderful invisible thing which is laid upon our tongue to unite spirit and body; that is the word, and here not our weak words but the words of the almighty power of Jesus" (18). The sacrament is also interactive: in response to Christ's words, repeated by the minister, in which Christ's continuing presence is felt, the gathered Christian community partake of the elements of bread and wine. In a secular context, Grundtvig meant the "Living Word" was not formal instruction or lecturing as such but the communication of personal life between teacher and taught; either the teachings live in the life of the teacher and are actively responded to by the student or they do not live at all, the teaching are mere dead words. The Living Word is not Biblical fundamentalism but the spiritual communication of "The Truth", words of power and authority evoking an active response in the listener. This concept expanded from its theological context is not confined to the actual classroom; indeed its most appropriate expression may often be found in the wider life of the shared residential learning community of the folk high school. During the eighteen forties Grundtvig continued to write on the need for Danish folk high schools, particularly in *Bøn og Begreb om en Danske Høiskole I Soer* (Request for and Idea of a Danish Folk High School in Soer) (1840) and in a section on the Danish Folk High School in *Lykønskning til Danmark med Det Danske Dummerhoved og Den Danske Høiskole* (Congratulations to Denmark on the Danish Blockheads and the Danish High School) (1847) which latter work may be said to round off Grundtvig's development as a writer on educational matters.

In this period of writing Grundtvig becomes more concerned with the actual organisation of the folk high school: details like student's councils, mutual teaching and conversation on Danish community matters.

Grundtvig took up the issue that if ordinary people were to have a say in the shaping of Denmark's destiny through participation in People's Councils it would be good if they received training in self-government in the folk-high schools wherein on all important matters "the steward (or whichever name should be given to the headmaster) would have first to consult the School Council, the members of which were to be elected almost all of them by the students themselves" (19).

To this day student participation in the running of folk high schools - although varying in degree from school to school - is still important in the philosophy of the folk high school movement.

Redefining a headmaster as "a steward" is a clue to what Grundtvig meant by mutual teaching. The life experience the students brought to the folk high school was to be respected, exploring what the students and teachers had in common rather than emphasizing differences was a primary emphasis.

Grundtvig had first placed his hopes of implementing his ideas at Sorø Academy, an institution with rich historical associations dating from 1586, in fact according to Grundtvig from the time of Bishop Absalon (12th century) (20). It flourished for some two hundred years, and was closed only to be re-established in 1826 as an academy by the Danish King. From this time onwards Grundtvig saw it as a distinct possibility as a venue for implementing his educational ideas.

The Sorø institute underwent many reforms after its re-opening, culminating in 1847 when a royal resolution announced the opening of a practical high school at the institute. Although this school in many ways was not what Grundtvig intended, he nevertheless congratulated the King and Denmark on the establishment of the Danish high school: "I have only one prefacing remark, namely that it become a really Danish school" (21). In the course of his congratulatory remarks in his 1847 essay Grundtvig hoped that all the students who attend, having already found a vocation before coming to the school "would return to their task with increased desire, with clearer views of human and civic conditions particularly in their own country, and with an increased joy in the community of people" (22).

Grundtvig envisaged his folk high schools having a mixture of students from different socio-economic strata in society as well as different age groups all coming together to further his stress on fellowship and to help realize his claims that our common humanity help takes precedence over particular religious or political beliefs.

This stress on fellowship in the residential folk high schools is clearly related to Grundtvig's theological beliefs that the Church was not a Bible reading-circle but a fellowship of believers. Yet, nevertheless, Grundtvig was adamant that the systematic teaching of religion had no place in the folk high school or for that matter, in any state primary or secondary education - it was a matter for the Church alone.

It may seem surprising that Grundtvig as a clergyman would want to repudiate religious instruction in schools but this must be seen in the context of another of his puzzling concepts: "First, the Human,

Then the Christian". By these words Grundtvig meant that one cannot be a true Christian without first being a true human being.

Thus despite often obscurity of expression there are a number of common threads that run through Grundtvig's educational thought: the fellowship of teachers and students living and working together and learning from one another as well as sharing in the running of the school; the importance of "the Living Word"; the stress on common humanity even though one needs a thorough understanding of one's own culture before understanding that of others, and most importantly, education as a matter of "Living interaction", leading to enlightenment, a coming to terms with the meaning of one's own existence rather than vocational training or formal instruction.

Grundtvig himself did not found any folk high schools and his relationship to the development of the folk high school movement which invoked his name is sometimes puzzling. For his part, Grundtvig rarely left his study, trying as he wryly put it "to write himself into clarity" except for tending to the needs of his congregation at Vartov, where there was "a singular radiance" (24) about the church life of his congregation that served as the focal point for the spread of Grundtvigianism throughout Denmark in the next generation.

While Grundtvig was tied to his study and his congregation at Vartov it was left to others to develop the folk high school movement. Although the first folk high school was founded at Rødding in South Jutland in 1844 it was not till Christen Kold founded his school in 1851, that Grundtvig was to have a disciple who ensured the development of the folk high school movement even if in a different form than Grundtvig had intended. Nevertheless, the link with Grundtvig remained strong because Kold used to visit him annually with large lists of questions which "Grundtvig helped me so wonderfully to get them all smoothed out" (24).

Grundtvig, however, did not visit the early folk high schools, not even the first founded one at Rødding, despite having received many invitations to visit. It was not till 1856 when Grundtvig became involved in the founding of Marielyst high school outside Copenhagen that Grundtvig became a regular speaker at a folk high school. This early reluctance of Grundtvig to be involved in the initial development of the folk high school movement has been explained by Roar Skovmand and endorsed by Professor K. Bugge, as being because Grundtvig still held out hopes for his dream of a big state school at Sorø, his hopes only being finally dashed by the death of his benefactor Christian VIII in 1848 and the closing of the Sorø Academy in 1849 (25).

By 1864, 15 folk high schools had been established but in that year Denmark having been defeated by the Prussian-Austrian army suffered the loss of Slesvig which was to have ramifications for the burgeoning folk high school movement.

The Slesvig-Holstein dispute was a complicated matter: the Danish King was a duke over Slesvig-Holstein, Slesvig being the southern most part of Denmark and Holstein belonging to the German Empire. This situation brought on wars in 1848-50 and in 1864. Denmark's defeat meant the loss of between 150,000 and 200,000 Danish North Slesvigians to German domination. It was not till 1920, after a referendum, that North Slesvig returned to Denmark, while South Slesvig and Holstein remained with Germany.

The loss of Slesvig was of great symbolic significance for the infant folk high school movement. Rødding, where the first folk high school had opened was now on German soil, so Ludvig Schrøder, the headmaster of Rødding, with two assistant teachers, moved three kilometres north of the new frontier to Askov and the high school founded there "became the flagship and model that other folk high schools looked up to" (27).

Understandably at Askov, in the very near German presence, everything was done to preserve all aspects of Danish culture. Other folk high schools followed Askov's lead in what was later referred to as the "golden age of the folk high school movement". Although in this period the folk high school may seem in hindsight to have been excessively nationalistic, this is a result of the historical circumstances of the period and a justification for such nationalism should not be sought in Grundtvig's own writings.

Although Grundtvig wanted students to have a thorough understanding of conditions in their own country this does not mean that Grundtvig was the ardent super-nationalist as he is sometimes depicted (28). Indeed Grundtvig had a pronounced respect for other people's rights to protect their own identity as shown ever so clearly by Grundtvig's opposition to the Danish government's attempts to promote Danish sympathy in Slesvig through language ordinances which barred the use of German during the period between the two Slesvig-Holstein wars (29).

Misunderstandings arise from Grundtvig's use of the term "folkelighed", said to be untranslatable, but perhaps Peter Manniche's translation of the term as "community life that embraces everyone" (30) is helpful. It is concerned with the preservation of identity, of a nation's literature, poetry and way of life (31). Paradoxically, Grundtvig, following the philosopher Herder, argued that unless a nation has

a strong sense of identity it is stuck in the nationalistic phase and expands and conquers weaker neighbours.

Folkelighed, rather than promoting a narrow nationalism, must be seen as promoting, as Professor Bugge has suggested (32), a means of defending a small country such as Denmark from being culturally crushed by more powerful nations. Another Grundtvigian scholar, Professor Erica Simon, sees similarities between Grundtvig's "folkelighed" and Leopold Senghor's "negritude", which has been defined as "that complex of attitudes and dispositions which make up the collective personality of black people and determine their unique outlook on the world" (33).

In many ways Grundtvig was a citizen of the world symbolized by his writing no history of Denmark but instead pouring his energies into a three volumed history of the world. One of his twentieth century followers, Peter Manniche (who founded in 1921 at Elsinore the International People's College), always stressed the international dimension of Grundtvig and claimed that the folk high school movement, suitably adapted, had much to offer developing countries.

Not only was the folk high school an intensely personal form of education which helped restore a sense of security for people uprooted from "family, tribe or clan" (34) but the folk high school adapted its curriculum to the students. For example, Manniche stressed that the Danish folk high schools over a long period had helped Danish farmers develop their full capacities to return and remain in their jobs. Accordingly, this principle, argued Manniche, recommends itself particularly to schools for rural development overseas: "these must have leaders that can be educated without leaving their villages for a long time and becoming accustomed to and dependent on city amenities" (35).

As for Denmark itself, the nature of the population of the folk high schools changed as did the overall structure of Danish society. Throughout the nineteenth century and for a considerable part of the twentieth century, the Danish folk high school movement was considered a rural phenomenon. But from the 1950's and 1960's instead of the Danish economy changing from one form of agriculture to another as it had done in the nineteenth century, Denmark changed considerably from agriculture to industry.

Initially it was thought that Grundtvig's ideas and the educational innovation of the folk high school would not survive the twentieth century. By 1940 there were only 54 high schools in Denmark hence the nostalgic looking back to "the golden age" following the rapid expansion of the folk high schools after the Slesvig-Holstein war of

1864. But the nineteen eighties saw a remarkable resurgence of the folk high school movement - even if its clientele, including urban unemployed and refugees, changed considerably. The number of folk high schools in Denmark has fluctuated slightly around the hundred mark in recent years with a similar vitality in Sweden, Norway and Finland and activities in other countries such as Germany and Poland continuing. Indeed Grundtvig's plans for short term residential colleges where life itself replaces dead knowledge and examinations may be an educational innovation, although promulgated in the eighteen thirties and forties, still fully to come into its own.

NOTES

1. I would like to thank Pastor Folmer Johansen of the Danish Lutheran Church in Sydney, New South Wales, for translating some of Grundtvig's educational writings hitherto unavailable in English and Professor K.E. Bugge of the Royal Danish School of Educational Studies, Copenhagen, for his unstinting advice.

Some paragraphs of this article have already appeared in Max Lawson, "N.F.S. Grundtvig and the Origins of the Danish Folk High School", *Educational Research and Perspectives* - Volume 16, No. 2, December, 1989, pp. 3-11.

2. Johannes Knudsen, Ed, N.F.S. Grundtvig: Selected Writings, Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1976 (now out of print) and Niels Lyhne Jensen, Ed., A Grundtvig Anthology, Cambridge, James Clarke and Co., 1984.

3. K. E. Bugge, *Skolen For Livet*, Copenhagen, G.E.C. Gads Forlag, 1965, p.362.

4. *Smaaskrifter om den historiske Højskole*, 1872.

5. N.F.S. Grundtvig, Preface to *Nordic Mythology* in Jensen, Ed, A Grundtvig Anthology, p.50.

6. Ibid, p.39.

7. Ibid, p.41.

8. N.F.S. Grundtvig, *The Danish Four Leaf Clover* (translated by Folmer Johansen - published here).

9. Ibid

10. Ibid

11. Nöelle Davies, *Education for Life: A Danish Pioneer*, London, Williams and Norgate, 1931, p.118.

12. *The Danish Four-Leaf Clover* (Johansen translation).

13. Ibid

14. N.F.S. Grundtvig, *The School for Life in Jensen*, Ed., A Grundtvig Anthology, p.74.

15. Ibid, p.66.

16. Ibid, p.74.

18. Quoted in Nöelle Davies, *op.cit.*, p.61.

19. N .F.S. Grundtvig, *Request for and Idea of a Danish Folk High School in Soer*. (Johansen translation).

20. Anders Pontoppidan Thyssen, "Grundtvig's Ideas on the Church and the People 1825-47" in C. Thodberg and A.P. Thyssen, Eds, *N.F.S.Grundtvig: Tradition and Renewal*, Copenhagen, The Danish Institute, 1983, p.272.

21. N.F.S. Grundtvig, "Congratulations to Denmark on the Danish Blockhead and the Danish High School" in Knudsen, Ed, *N.F.S. Grundtvig: Selected Writings*, p.161.

22. Ibid, p.162.

23. Nöelle Davies, *Education for Life: A Danish Pioneer*, *op.cit*; p.171.

24. Hal Koch, *Grundtvig* (translated by Llewellyn Jones), Yellow Springs, Ohio, The Antioch Press, 1952, p.112.

25. K.S. Bugge "Grundtvig's Educational Ideas" in C. Thodberg and A. P. Thyssen Eds. *Op.cit.*, p.224.

26. Thomas Rørdam, *The Danish Folk High Schools* (translated by Alison Borch-Johansen), Copenhagen, Det Danske Selskab, 1986, p.46.

27. Ibid, p.52.

28. See, for example, E.F. Fain, "Nationalist Origins of the Folk High School: The Romantic Visions of N.F.S.Grundtvig", *British Journal of Educational Studies*, XIX, 1971, pp.70-90.

29. Paul Dam, Nikolaj Frederik Severin Grundtvig, Copenhagen, Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1983, p.67.

30. The International People's College 1921-1971, Elsinore, International People's College, 1971, p.21.

31. K.S. Bugge, "N.F.S. Grundtvig" in J.E. Thomas and B.Elsey, Eds, *International Biography of Adult Education*, Nottingham, Department of Adult Education, University of Nottingham, 1987, p.223.

32. Ibid

33. Irele Abiola (Ed), *Introduction to Selected Poems of Léopold Sédar Senghor*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1977, p.22.

34. International People's College 1921-1971, op.cit, p.72.

35. Ibid, p.73.

THE DANISH FOUR LEAF CLOVER OR DANISH NATIONALITY LOOKED AT FROM A PARTIAL VIEWPOINT

Copenhagen 1836 (83 pages).

During winter 1835-36 the advisory Provincial Estates of the Realm had their first assembly in Roskilde. Grundtvig attended the debates with interest, and gradually his view of "The State Council" as he called it was changed to some extent. Before that he had thought, being a bookworm, that the free voice of the people could express itself in by far the best way through the pen. Now he suddenly realized that also the mouth of the people should be liberated, and that this was what actually happened in The People's Council. He felt so thoroughly happy for this council and found that Denmark hereby had restored its real basic constitution.

In a letter to Gunni Busck dated Easter Eve 1836 Grundtvig writes:

"Well, the same way as it happened to me in respect of Church and Christian Faith when I realized that the reliable proof of original Christianity and the vitalizing Church-Word which I looked for in the Scriptures and in the heartstrings had risen from the dead, in the same way I have been struck lately by the thought that the original Danish national feeling and the People's Voice enlivening all that is Danish, the voice I was looking for in old books and within myself, they too have truly risen from the dead in The People's State Council, so as long as we just give it time as we should, everything in Denmark will gradually take Danish shape, just like everything in the Church will take Christian shape, with the help of God. I have now for two full months been standing as if I were nailed to the desk, to point to that wonder, and to the natural or historical, that is the natural history's consequences of it - - -

By carefully attending the debates in Denmark's former capital by which I as you know was not in the least fascinated beforehand I gradually found that in spite of all the sufficiently recognizable weakness, ignorance, and feeling of superiority of the jurisprudence, everything in fact was so genuinely Danish and so wonderfully cultured that even our latin jurisprudence was close to being transformed into Danish, and because thus the prejudice against the whole thing as a dangerous imitation or aping of the foreign set-up had been overcome I suddenly realized that Denmark exactly through this had regained its original constitution and even in that inexpressibly wonderful unequalled way that the absolute mastery is a gift of the people and the public freedom of voting a gift of the King so that the competition to catch the most prominent people in the realm which must be made here by the help of God will have the exact opposite consequences of the discord elsewhere where both power and freedom are and must be seen as and defended as a loot."

("To P.A.Fenger" 6/6 36)

It is the preparation of the book "The Danish Four-leaf Clover" Grundtvig talks about here. It was published shortly after and has its title from the four-leaf clover: The King, The People, The Homeland and The Mother Tongue. Just at this time a discussion went on about the circumstances of the Academy in Sorø, and Grundtvig's first real Pamphlet on the Folk High School had its effect as a contribution in the dispute and is said to have awakened Christian VIII's highest interest. After an introduction full of humour about Grundtvig's bias for the high-born Lady, The Danish Nationality, Grundtvig talks about the relationship between The King and the People in the first part of the book. He gives a brief outline of the history of our constitution. The law from time immemorial for the kingdom was The King's Mastery and the People's overt freedom of voice. Throughout the ages this has changed. The People were gagged by the Clergy, and the Nobility and the King were bound by Coronation Charters. But by two giant steps, introduction of Absolute Monarchy in 1660 and the Establishment of The People's Council in 1831, the bonds have been untied again. The Absolute Mastery is a gift from the People and the Freedom of Voice is a Token of Friendship from the King. The People's Voice has recovered mouth and tongue through the people's State Council, and the immediate tasks here are to obtain freedom in the Church and in the School by the right to untie the bond of parish belonging and the establishment of a Folk High School in Sorø.

Especially in the second part of the pamphlet which is about the cloverleaves "The Homeland and the Mother Tongue" Grundtvig gives his reasons for his demand for a Folk High School and his emphasis on Sorø being the right place for it. But not until Denmark has been released from compulsory Church-membership, and Schooling, and Charity Contributions, all of which have a foreign origin, the Homeland and the Mother Tongue can be given their due.

The extracts are printed from "Small Pamphlets" ("Smaaskrifter") 1872, and pagination refers to these pamphlets.

Is the Light just for the scholars
to spell rightly or wrongly?
No, Heaven grants success to many more,
and Light is the gift from Heaven.
And the Sun rises with the farmer,
not at all with the scholars,
Enlightens better from head to foot
whoever is more up and about.

Enlightenment shall be our delight,
be it just on the rush,
But first and last in People's Voice
the knowledge of Life;
That emerges from People's deed
and expands while rocked in the cradle,
Let it sparkle in our People's Council
until the evening star is extinguished.

(28.May, 1839 in Danish Society)

PREFACE

Accompanied by the Eagle,
as in a second creation,
emerges from the waves
the deep green field!

(Volas Prophecy)

GRUNDTVIG'S BIAS FOR ALL THINGS GENUINELY DANISH

When I myself here call my partiality for all things genuinely Danish "biased" it is neither for a lark, nor is it because I feel convinced that this sufficiently blamed partiality of mine is really overdone. But just because my age is hard on me as it would be on others I grow more composed day by day, and thus I find it easier than before to be moderate, and find it beneficial to nobody, but very harmful to the Author himself to be willing to enter his feelings in a record and prove their correctness by a dash which, whatever it may mean to himself, will only offend most readers. An exception it may well seem to be when the partiality of the writer is exactly for his readers, and if I, being a German or English or Norwegian writer would find myself captivated by the entire Nature of my readers which in my opinion would be great "partiality", I would even have to beware of the offensive expression to be lenient; but now the only fault I have discovered amongst the Danes seen as a nation is exactly a certain partiality for the foreign for every day use recognizable well enough ever since the day when "Stærkodder (name meaning the strong, powerful Odder) curled up his nose" at Ingel's table, and so great that I who am in love with what is Danish must call it partiality, which of course I dare not do without giving the same name to my own partiality. No doubt this also is a naughtiness, but what can I poor man do, I who cannot let go of my partiality for Danish people, have to do all my declarations of love in writing as the Lady up till now has declined any assignation, and long time experience has taught me that at the most only in poetry she endures to be lifted to the skies with the quill, but regards all praise in letter form if not as a pretense then as proof of irrational partiality which she is far too modest to be willing to, and far too sensible of her own faults and defects to be able to stand for. Would you now call it a desperate idea from lover,

forgivable only for a poet, to name his own love partiality, I wouldn't mind that at all; for although I may be too old either to be reckoned truly amongst desperate lovers or to enjoy particularly much of the "freedom of poetry", still some truth will undoubtedly be underlying. Well, when I now and then calmly look at myself and all my as it seems unfortunate proposal I really begin to suspect my own Danish national feeling, so if Future's bookworms take their time to really dissect me and care to taste all of my ingredients they will no doubt, in spite of my interminable genealogy, tell the public that the deuce he was no Dane, but at the most he was a bearable Anglo-Saxon transformed into Danish. - - -

(page 5-6)

THE UNEQUALLED DANISH FOUR-LEAF CLOVER

After all this is enough about the partiality for all genuine Danish which is not nearly so great that I am blinded for everything good outside it, on the contrary I also love the Danish impartiality when only it does not go so far as to put something foreign, call it whichever name in plain terms, above the unequalled Danish Four-leaf Clover: King and People, Homeland and Mother Tongue; and because History teaches me that so far the Danish partiality for the foreign is sometimes apparent, but still basically never really gone, therefore may somehow to a large degree be like a desperate lover, however I find my partiality so well-founded that if I did not believe that a gland was to be found in all meat and a flaw in even the best of our feelings I would not name it partiality except for a certain courtesy towards foreigners to which especially the historiographer who demands a similar courtesy from them necessarily has to endeavour.

So when I on the following pages draw the attention of my compatriots to the loveliness of this Four-leaf Clover and the accompanying happiness I have no doubts for any moment of their heartfelt approval; but still I find it a little despairing under the present circumstances to "write" on what in my opinion must be done so that the rare and fine flower far from withering away can be strengthened and lift its head to the glory of the field. In this respect I know for sure that my way of thinking is so different from the one which used to reign and partly for a long time already was reigning in here that I hardly would have had the courage to develop or even have had a flash of hope to meet it, if not my historical familiarity with "Signs of

the Times" had shown me that all signs must go wrong, if not by the establishment of the people's State Council the tables were turned in Denmark's History, so from now on my civil way of thinking will by no means be found foreign in the field, but gradually become the ruling one, certainly not because it is mine, but because it is that of the people which just somehow was there in me before its time. Somehow, I say, for I have been an admirer of the acts of Providence for too long to think that anything in fact comes either too soon or too late, and I know enough of the laws for human nature to know that it is part of them that never ever will anything new occur in the daily lives of the main peoples unless it has arisen poetically beforehand, also I know enough of Denmark's poetic literature to know that I am far from being the only one who announced that all life would soon be shaped according to the lovely quadruple entirety of King and People, Homeland and Mother Tongue. What I was alone in doing was entirely my particular errors, what with the will to achieve by the pen what takes a different pen and good mouths to achieve, and what with mixing up my ecclesiastical, scientific, and civil thoughts into a big mess of absurdity which was difficult enough to be regarded as poetically passable, and could not possibly find civil agreement. However, gradually I have learned at least as a thinker and a writer to accept the world as it is and leave everybody to his own, so I am pretty convinced that you will not in these pages trace partiality for anything at all, except as already mentioned for the Danish national feeling in its right place, in its own home where no question it has a right to rule. So if only I might succeed as simply and as clearly as I wish, or at least as is found necessary, to express my thoughts about the needs for the kingdom at present I do not fear at all, they would of course have a friendly acceptance, and properly debated be found worth making use of; but whether I shall succeed already this time or not I - as Half-Danish - am still so doubtful, after having - in my own opinion - wasted a lot of painstaking effort, that if I did not look at it as my civic duty with my pen as being my only means to do my utmost for the beloved homeland, I am sure no itch to write which in my case has enough outlets should cause me to inconvenience my Censor by my exceeding Danish national feeling. (page 8-10)

THE KING AND THE PEOPLE

Never talk about freedom where the king is a slave
But sing, Small Birds, about Denmark's luck,
Where the age of Fredegod is clearly renewed,
Where Freedom rules, and slavery flees,
Where the King and the People by tongue and by hand
To the skies will lift "The bond of perfection".

THE STATE

Where you used to say: The King or The Public Authorities, The Interests of the Kingdom or the Common Good, you will now tend to say: "The State" is or has or demands this and that; but it is a mistake, and even if it is just a linguistic error it is not at all indifferent; not only does it make the speech dim and indistinct, but often spoils the meaning and after a while it can easily confuse the whole way of civil thinking. When you do mention The King, or the Public Authorities, you know who they are and what is proper to mention of them, and when you mention the Interests of the Kingdom or the Common Good, you think of something specific; but who can tell us: what is in fact "The State", and what has it got a "Right" to demand? Here we find ourselves in "The indefinite and boundless" which is always a misfortune for "The Civil Society", and if my prayers were able to do something I would therefore, not only on behalf of the other Tongue, but also on behalf of the Homeland, ask all public speakers and writers where it is about whom Danish people should honour and obey, or what they should look for and make sacrifices for, never to mention what in this context is a "Nuisance or a Monster", but again always as before: King and Public Authorities, Homeland, The Interests of the Kingdom, the Common Good, or at least: The "Danish State", you know what that is, or you can still decently give it your consideration. Now when you say: No State, no property, consequently the State has supreme ownership, then you may well as the good Dane in Roskilde did, turn round confidently the sentence and say: no property, no state, consequently the property has supreme power of state; but all the same, it is only a play on words basically on which all civil matters are far too important to be decided, therefore you should on both sides avoid using an expression which by its indefiniteness and boundlessness tempts to all sorts of paradoxes.

For the word "State" is, as we know, a foreign word, and besides it means as it is just a certain "position", no matter which, between Public Authorities and Subjects, and mutually between these, and so it is used just as well in the Turkish Sultanate and in the Mexican Anarchy as it is used in the Kingdom of Denmark, and this confusion of languages has really partly caused the equally distressing and ridiculous dispute and quarrel which nowadays is carried on concerning "Constitutions of States" as if the main issue was not in the least HOW the power was employed but in WHOSE hands it was laid, not concerning which laws you had to obey, but who gave them, in short: not concerning how well or badly the civil society was doing but concerning who in the name of the State could order and command whichever they felt like.

However, although I really believe that a great deal of the ferment in Europe would cease when you made it clear to yourself: what is it in respect of civil matters worth the trouble disputing about and worth the danger quarreling about, even so it cannot be denied either that except for the Kingdoms from Time Immemorial in The North (Norden) the position is very difficult everywhere because the civil societies are either outdated works of art from the middle ages or new samples for testing, in the style for a schoolmaster, and even in the nordic kingdoms conditions ended up so artificial during the middle ages that in the new-year-break-through you had to feel the need of a reformation which without closer knowledge of the History of the Peoples and the Laws of Human Nature than you up till then possessed was next to impossible to implement. (page 11-13)

DENMARK'S GOOD FORTUNE

How the foreign people will get away with it remains their own business the more so as they last of all will ask our advice; but how we get round it will also remain our own business the more so as the foreign people, although partly generous enough of all sorts of advice, still usually they are completely unfamiliar with our particular Nature and History. Fortunately, however, our task is not nearly as difficult as theirs as they are worked together out of fifteen Peoples, and their Law from Time Immemorial is the Right of the Spear, so with us all it is really about is courage and luck to "be left to our own devices", and up till now fortune favoured us so recognizably that there should never be lack of courage. Indeed, Denmark's good fortune is really

unequaled, nobody has more of a vocation to maintain that than the historiographer who recently after a long time abroad which gave material for comparison suddenly realized, which he had not yet noticed, that Denmark by two giant steps quietly had recovered its original, that is to say natural constitution, the best one under the sun, so that Kingdom will most certainly happily have lived through its crisis before we really knew and has just to follow at all ease the road on which it is now, in order to become all that it has aptitude and may have luck to be, that is according to all signs if not something very big then still something very good which gives if not the greatest honour then still the greatest happiness. (page 13-14)

THE LAW FROM TIME IMMEMORIAL FOR THE KINGDOM

The only thing we have to do is to read Saxe's Denmark's Chronicle with a little attention to see that "The Absolute Mastery of the King" and "The Obvious Freedom of Voice for the People" is the Law for the Kingdom From Time Immemorial, of course not in "Pen and Ink", but what is much more: in reality, and even if I dare not answer for the detail that it was exactly "fourteen and forty years before the castle Trøje was won" that King Dan came to be at the helm, even so has apparently

Denmark, the loveliest field and meadow,
bounded by the blue sea,

in time out of mind been such a free Kingdom which under certain circumstances might change its shape, but it never lost its nature and never was the loot of foreign people. Such matters as the Nature of the People and the original constitution stemming from that are no doubt still to day reckoned as next to nothing, just as it is found unimportant whether the natives of the country from time immemorial have defended their ownership or they were made slaves by foreign conquerors; but gradually you will certainly learn what difference it makes, and you leave behind you the schoolmaster's whims that you should be able to make out of any peoples whatever you want.

Still, let it be with the learning as it may, it is strange to see how the Danish people, without any doubt the most flexible and changeable of all peoples under the skies, still basically are the same under Frederik the Sixth as under Skjold and Frode, so not only are the bards singing their old ballad, but the whole Kingdom recovers its old shape, and the jacks of all trades from London and Paris, not to

mention those in Madrid and Lisbon, could apparently highly need to listen to a good lecture on Denmark's History.

The middle ages as anyone will know was the "Age of Purgatory", but our schoolmasters are still far too superficial in dealing with their knowledge; for the fact that the Purgatory in which the Pope threw people after death was nothing compared to the one His Holiness himself as well as all other people had to endure while alive, and which he did not personally go through nearly as well as Denmark did, either you do not see that, or you forget it because of the "Books", and still it is known by us who have passed the "Fifty", what I call "the age of discretion" for the human intellect, and passed it very well, that still all "middle aged" people who can burn have a Purgatory to go through, and that can be bad enough.

Now in this Purgatory came Denmark as well, with its Royal Power and its Voice of the People, Love for the Homeland and Mother Tongue, freedom of conscience and trade, Ballads of Hjarne and Bjarke's Tongue, in short: with all its Glory from Time Immemorial, and in that Purgatory could the Pope just as little throw people as he could free them from it; for when Odin had bidden us farewell in the Battle of Braavalla, when the Spirit was fatigued, the Skjold-descendants extinct, and the age of youth gone, at this point the middle age came by itself with all its unrest and great changeability, now as the "rich bird" comes whispering, comes roaring across the mountains and valleys, and now as the "poor bird" comes hobbling, comes limping across fields and meadows. This is the order of human nature for the individual at all times which also has to be followed in the lives of all peoples and the whole of the genus and cannot be blamed because the scholars ignore it, because the "Classics" have not put it to the record; for "Life" which is more than Food" is certainly also more than the "Books", and must be studied when you want to collect "knowledge of human nature" here the books may be good aids, but they are still as you know not at all human beings, and very bad substitutes for them, too. (page 14-16)

CHRISTIANITY AND THE FREEDOM OF THE PEOPLE

It is to Christianity we owe not only our books, but all our culture, for obviously it has developed the whole new world of the people; but no more has it created the Kingdom of Denmark as the Danish People, so our Kings "by the grace of God" are neither kings by the

grace of the Pope and the Clergy or not even of the "new" God, but entirely by "the old one" who did not leave himself without signs amongst the Nordic pagans either, but was highly generous towards our fathers: gave them from Heaven both rain and dew and fertile times, created food for their mouths and heartfelt joy in their heartstrings. So although the judicious Denmark must realize that between all the foreign peoples who visited our shores to conquer the country nobody had so good intentions or did so substantial favours to the Kingdom as Christianity, still it had no right to reduce to slavery high or low people, big or small people, and as I happen to be well-known to my compatriots both as a worshiper of Christ and as a preacher of His Gospel, I owe both to my faith, my vocation, and my Homeland solemnly to assure that it was never in any way in the nature of Christianity nor in the intentions of the great Master, but entirely in the unfaithfulness or ignorance of his messengers and in the painfulness of that age that Faith became a compulsory matter by which the Danish people suffered a considerable cut as well in their freedom of conscience as in that of their trade. How deep and powerful that feeling has been in Denmark that Faith is a matter of freedom you also see clearly from the fact that supposedly nowhere else did Christianity get so unimpeded permission to expand through its own means, but on the other hand nowhere else it became law in the country so late, for full two hundred years are between the arrival of Ansgar and the death of the Great Knud, and still it is not until half a century later, under the Holy Knud you can maintain that Christianity was imposed on people in here. However, the misfortune always comes in time, and the true saying adds to it: seldom comes alone, of which we experience the truth, I believe, when we see that the same King who made the big breach of freedom for the people, by the way a noble and brave chief, fell as a victim of his error and put a severe guilt of blood on the head of by nature the most peaceful and gentle people. Through this the People's consciousness lost both its freedom and its peace, and the King lost together with his trust in the people and the esteem for its voice his Absolute Mastery as well, that is both his power and his freedom; for although the people still during the reign of old King Volmer tried to be reassured by the thought that King Knud was no saint while alive, but only was made one at his death, and although King Volmer won the people's admiration and kept as well the noblemen as the bishops in check, still the people's purification was just a dirty excuse, and the radiance of the crown just a brilliant delusion. For it takes quite

different sacrifices than jokes to pay the penalty of unrest and murder of a King, and the favour of the people, the praise and power for which apparently old King Volmer had to give thanks to Bishop Axel (Absalon) and his powerful noble family, was far from being his property.

By mentioning Bishop Axel, "Grand Cross of the Dannebrog", and his powerful kinsmen: Skjalm Hvide's in every sense most noble family it is sufficiently signified that this pen will smear neither Denmark's Clergy nor its Nobility from the middle ages, on the contrary they would no doubt be found to be unequalled in their kind; but where Clergy and Nobility are next to anything, then King and People are next to nothing, and then Homeland and Mother Tongue together with all that is of the people are in Purgatory. Denmark is at the same time a kingdom so wonderfully filled with history that you can correctly tell the year when the mouth of the people had a block with a stutter, for it was evidently in 1147 when the Zealander Ole Stam in vain, however, tried with an old gang to impede the self-contradiction of the voice of the people and the division of the royal power. (ref. Saxe's Denmark's Chronicle III 130. Suhms Denmark's History VI,1.) How the following "Civil Wars" for a while were discontinued under King Volmer and his sons, and how well the stagnation was utilized to destroy the Slavic robbers' nests south of the Baltic Sea who threatened Denmark's fall, that is what Denmark's Chronicle is teaching; but with this it is ended, too, a certain sign if not of people's death in the strongest sense, still of a powerlessness and lethargy which resembles death and had to end there if without strong kinds of medicine. When the people has become silent, and the King stands there with his hands tied, the free kingdom has no history any longer, and those who divide the loot amongst them will rather see buried in the dark how they behave, so no wonder that we know so little of how the Nobility and the Clergy practically swallowed all the free peasantry so that it got lost among its slaves. Here as well as anywhere else the clergymen took the soul and the noblemen took the body while they were quarreling: whether the land should be regarded as a gift for the soul or as a means to withdraw a case and penance in court; but fortunately our Nobility and Clergy were mostly born into peasantry themselves, however, so even if they by bad German examples were induced to take the opportunity, and during the reign of "the Bald Count" they had nearly ruined the country, they did not really mean to act nearly as badly as it seemed, and Denmark can never forget that just like the Bishop and Nobleman, Axel, from

Zealand subdued the mad slaves, in the same way the Nobleman, Niels Ebbesen in Nørreriis in Jutland, became the deliverer from Low German tyranny. - - - (page 16-19)

Grundtvig continues his outline of Denmark's History and mentions 1660 as the first giant step by which Denmark recovered half of its old natural constitution: The Freedom of the King, the Absolute Mastery received from an ingenuous People for paternal utilization. When the freedom of speech for the Court Chaplains (Master Ole Vind) was made silent at the German Court of Kristian VI the voice of the people missed an open mouth. The deadlock which hereby occurred Frederik VI reserved for himself to undo through the establishment of the People's State Council:

THE LIBERATION OF THE PEOPLE'S VOICE

- - - This again was the second giant step by which Denmark recovered its natural constitution, so that now it stands in the eyes of the whole world as the free Kingdom which it used to be from Time Immemorial, and be it that our present State Constitution is still not, which however I dare maintain, in itself the best one under the sun, evidently it is for us though the best one and has been renewed in this unequalled marvelous way praising which any bard may wish to sing and become undying. With us it is a fact as we all know that the Absolute Mastery is the People's, and the Freedom of Voice the King's gift of Friendship, which not only has to be found lovely, but it is highly blessed; for the old Danish proverb that whoever takes back his presents, his children will become black, had not yet in my childhood been forgotten and need hardly be refreshed to let us all feel that here the King and the People have nothing else to quarrel about than the rank of generosity, but everything in which to compete to show to the world who is best to honour and utilize the inestimable gift, most clearly justify the mutual, outside Denmark unequalled, paternal as well as childlike trust!

Now where nature so beautifully surpasses the upbringing, indeed an upbringing so unnatural, received by both King and People throughout many centuries, where that is the case nature will no doubt in all respects speak its rights and clearly prove that it was undeserved when it had been despised, so now basically it doesn't matter at all, in my opinion, if we should be obliterated from the big census of the

noble families on earth. True, faith becomes weak when I consider which row of miracles must happen before we get rid of all that is unnatural for Danish People; but as it is entirely natural miracles I feel ashamed, however, to be doubtful, and the first meeting of the People's State Council in Denmark's former capital has so clearly caused disgrace to all sceptics and so recognizably strengthened all believers that I who was one of the disbelievers now have to say in all decency: indeed, if the Danish Nature could work that miracle, surely it both can and shall give rebirth to the growth of the field!

A real people's voice like that which in spite of its brand new tone, not entirely very harmonious, still after all was the ancient one of which the historiographer could not be mistaken, such a people's voice in Denmark, as dry prosaic as it had to be, I believe, where for six hundred years no bard was singing to the ears of the people, in fact so shrivelled that I listened to it for five months without hearing more than two proverbs of which one by the way was an imitation, fatuous if you like, but still not lifeless, dry but still not boring, eager but modest, open but decent and almost without any exception measured for Homeland and Mother Tongue, for the proper, free, and natural feeling; such a voice of the people, created freehand by Noblemen, Commoners, and Peasants somewhere on the islands, by far it exceeded my notion of the possibilities, although I regarded myself as a giant in the confidence in the Danish wonders that now I must regard everything of which I have been dreaming for twenty years as every day events according to the order of nature in this country. The people and the society of commoners in Denmark had to recover their position before they could settle down in their groove again, and now when it has been recovered the rest will be a matter of course, I believe, so what it is all about now is the now way of living the old-fashioned way which of course must equal the new mouth which was given to the old voice of the people from the King's hand. - - -

(page 24-26)

Grundtvig finds that the first Danish People's election has altogether avoided the abuse of the system of representation. The freedom of the press which was given by the Absolute Monarch has evoked a real genuine and living voice of the People. But a public voice will not be tempted out by pens; a living voice is in demand.

- - - The giant step this time is that of the King, just like it in 1660 was that of the people, and if the consequences of the step shall be worthy those of the previous one the freedom of the People and the living activity in all beneficial directions must develop just as quietly and gently, refreshingly and completely from the free voice of the people as did the People's equality, the administration of justice and all of the civil order developed from the paternal Absolute Mastery without us losing the least of what we hereby have gained. This is easily seen to be a monumental work which even in a people with the most fortunate aptitudes cannot possibly succeed unless Art comes to the assistance of Nature, and furthermore, if nowadays the freedom of voice is not less exposed to strong temptations than was the Absolute Mastery in the seventeenth century it would be foolishness to trust Denmark's good fortune if not an education of the people in the royal spirit came to be hand in hand with the People's State Council.

(page 30-31)

CHURCH AND SCHOOL

- - - Now there are two establishments through which Art in a living way can come to the assistance of Nature, in our usual language called "Church and School", and both of them have been looked after with the most excellent paternal care by our Absolute Monarchs; but both of them are hopeless matters for a King to handle without enlightenment of the people's voice because exactly when he is practising self-denial they tend to be to the taste and heart of the clergymen and the schoolmasters, by which the people is often very badly served. As crystal clear as it in fact is, after all, that all refreshing effect on mind and heart of the neighbour must take place with his good will, still both clergymen and schoolmasters have had the whim throughout a row of centuries that they would make people pious and educated against their will, and this kind of popery is so far from assisting nature that it is much more bound either for nature to meet a revolt or to be subdued. The latter was the case with us, and although our present King has also made a giant step to the abolition of this popery there are still so many remains left which hinder the refreshing work of the Church and the School, so if they could not be expected to be removed soon I would not dare predict any durable joy from the best State constitution neither for the King nor for the people; but I have the opinion as well that they under that constitution will almost be disposed of automatically.

Now concerning the compulsory Church matter the compulsion is certainly of irreparable damage to the life of the people, but the church will not in its free activities be of immediate benefit for it either; for the Christian Church is meant only for human nature altogether. However, when Christianity with its unequalled power to lift up and improve human nature which includes all noble peoples' nature has found no place as homelike as Denmark, it will no doubt still by roundabout methods do the Danish nature considerable favours, if only the clergymen through their wish to rule in its name will destroy its free activities. On the whole, however, we must remember what it all reminds us about, that the age of the Church in its civil sense has practically gone completely, for obviously it is the age of the school we are having, and in the school must therefore from now on any civil society look for its utmost support, for which reason we also see that the people's State Council at its first meeting "looked at the Church and went passed it", but urged the Majesty for a School for Life. Now the fact that the State Council so clearly went passed the Church which anyway well deserved the attention which the seven reverend clergymen wanted I call, of course, a mistake, but still I am modest enough to admit that it is equally as urgent to have a School for Life as it is to undo the Parish bonds. The first, however, is just as difficult as the other is easy, and if I had not had as strong a faith both in the Danish feeling as in the Danish good fortune I had to say as a stargazer of the people-sky: it is impossible; because for schools "for death" and if you like "for the next life" we have builders in the thousands, but for a bearable school for "this life", which obviously must be the case her, good advice will cost a fortune, and even so it has had prospects only to be taken, according to usual calculation.

Still, where recently such a giant step has been taken as is the case in Denmark apparently the usual calculations have been seriously upset, and when of late you have seen the lucky star of a Kingdom to be vertically above the people's crown, then you get the courage, I feel, to hope for irrational developments, and so I will confidently point out how we can easily get a school, if "Fate will so ordain", for the Danish People's Life and Civil Life which undeniably is what we miss and what we hardly for one moment can easily do without.

For the time being I only state that when mention is about a "School for Life" all compulsion which has its place only in the school "for death" must be thought to have gone, and that the people's State Council all the time must be in our eyes as a living reality when we think of a school for the Danish People's Life and its Civil Life, for

if it was not meant for that, obviously it was in civil respect completely useless - - - (page 31-33)

THE SCHOOL FOR THE AGE OF DISCRETION

From this it can easily be seen, however, that it is not a "Boys' School" I am suggesting, for boys require discipline, and as the Englishman rightly put it, with women and children you should hardly discuss state affairs, but it is a High School for our commoners' youth whereby the education and enlightenment we would wish to be there both in the State Council and in its electorate will be carefully furthered. The only good boys' school for the civil Life that I can imagine is clever and active citizens' houses where the boys can get both the good mind for the pursuits they have to do later on, and the grasp of them, while all confinement in scholastic prisons is pure corruption of the active civil life: grafting of affectionateness, laziness, awkwardness, manners of a book worm, and all sorts of civil misdeeds. (page 33-34)

HOMELAND AND MOTHER TONGUE

The bird has a nest, and the fox has a den,
 Old Gefion has just his bag and his rod!
 The Queen is begging at everyone's door,
 But she has her bearing now as before;
 She owned the land, with meadow and field,
 The heir is alive, the small shepherd boy,
 Nobody chases him off with steel,
 O wish he could master his Mother Tongue!

GRUNDTVIG'S KNOWLEDGE OF HOMELAND AND MOTHER TONGUE

I may not be friendly towards blurring the tone of the bards, but if the above runic letters should not remain completely mystifying for most readers I must accept to add that the meaning of "Old Gefion", in the reign of King Skjold she was Queen of Leire, is here "The Homeland" in a motherly shape and the meaning of "her small son"

civil "education and enlightenment" which cannot possibly gain any strength without true knowledge of the Mother Tongue.

Now concerning this our Homeland hardly any book worm will know it better inwardly and outwardly than I do; for I am born in the forest and played as a child among the beeches of Zealand, then I grew up in the black heath of Jutland and had a priceless time playing with heather and scrub and went courting during my youth in Langeland at the enchanted belt of the mermaid, and now I am turning grey in the capital at the burly Øresund while the runic letters from BURN-OLD and HIGH-OLD and the Monks' Letters from the middle ages in their most lively shape (meaning the History of the Homeland) for thirty years were my favorites. Certainly I am biased for "Denmark's fruitful Splendour" and know little from own experience of foreign countries, but with the books about the most outstanding ones I am rather familiar though, and during my most unbiased, less patriotic running-days I made an excursion across the North Sea and made comparisons rather cool-headed between the mermaid at Øresund and the queen of the elves from the Thames, between Frederiksberg-Hill and Richmond-Hill, between the White Cliffs of Møn and "Albion's white Shores", and between the Danish Paradise in Zealand with the English Paradise in Devonshire. Hereby I really found abroad the pretty much smaller and only the Ugly much bigger, so with the exception of the amiable modesty from the police, part of the pavements in London and the roads everywhere, the indifference towards all foreign manners which could not advantageously be picked up, but first and last the free and living activities of forces in all directions, altogether matters which could be excellent means of imitation here, at this point I do not know at all what small Denmark should envy from the large, famous, very rich England; but second to its irrational State Constitution which will only fit the "most irrational of all people" there was nothing of English origin we should more reluctantly imitate than the only compulsory matter on the Island, and that is the poor-law authorities, this artificial gulf which can swallow even England's wealth without filling the least into it. (If you want to see superfluous proof, just read the piece of information from parliament: Report of the Poor Laws.)

Coming now to the Mother Tongue I am a work-man in the field from such old age both with "mouth and pen" that you could hardly deny me the right of vote, and even if I am here highly biased and have with great pain avoided up till "passed the forty" to be "germanized" myself I still have the bad taste in my mouth of the

venomous Latin which I spat out a full generation ago, later I went courting for a while with the Icelandic language, have been forced by my historic nature and pursuit to work to some degree with foreign languages, and have at last for a number of years gone in for English which is the language a Danish latinist can most easily master; and after all this I dare confidently repeat all my praises for the Mother Tongue without any fear of a shrug of the shoulders from future's considerably more educated investigators of languages. Thus I do believe that all which is beautiful and good can be translated into Danish without any minimal loss, while the best of Danish cannot be translated into any language, not even into English, without loosing at least half of it, for it is for the language of the mermaid as it is with the sea which is alive all way to the bottom and equally natural in all its manifold shapes: from the most gentle calm sea to the most roaring waves. (page 35-37)

Grundtvig praises the Danish language, especially on the lips of our fair sex, as a sweet language, in our books of the bards wonderfully rich and deep, flexible and sonorous. To us it has the unequaled advantage: to be our property. Has this partiality for the Danish language disappeared?

- - - For it is said that everything in Denmark seems to be established with the greatest self-denial partly according to the convenience of the foreigners and partly according to their taste, and that apparently this is in accord with the spirituality or lack of the same in the people, because the educated people usually know much better the names of all departmental districts in France and all governors' residences in Russia than they know where Salling and Thy are to be found, and they are close to asking forgiveness from Russians or Poles because they cannot talk their languages while they would find it ridiculous if any stranger would apologize for not mastering theirs.

Except for a slight exaggeration this is no doubt a fact, and facts are stubborn things, the Englishman puts it rightly, so I would rather leave it at its own worth until it vanishes by itself as I hope will happen; but I confidently maintain that the more the appearances are against us the stronger the partiality must have been after all as we still have an independent Homeland and a Mother Tongue in book as well as in mouth distinguishable in honour from any other tongue - - (page 38-39)

The Danes are the oldest, never conquered, independent people in Europe. As well in 1801 as during the Seven Years' War with England they bore testimony in the world's history to profound love of the Homeland.

LOVE OF THE HOMELAND

Indeed what the maltreated and exceedingly unappreciated Denmark has patiently suffered exactly in this century together with its King of the people because of its old independence the good fortune will compensate and posterity admire, and at the end of The Seven Years' War when all of Europe overwhelmed us as accomplice to Napoleon although they did not find with us as much as a thread of his loot, but only marks from his eagles, then I was standing there enthusiastic about the Homeland in the middle of the circle of Denmark's book-learned youth seeing their eyes sparkle and their cheeks glow as well as mine did, and really as far as I can see there is no doubt that at the first call the youth capable of bearing arms would from all Denmark dedicate themselves to a sacrifice of their blood the equal of which you would look for in vain in the world's history, and even to a sacrifice not entirely for the Homeland in its proper sense, but or the equally unequaled "Twin-Kingdom" in the North which throughout centuries seemed to have only one soul in two bodies. Norway, however, was not a part of Denmark, and even for the most dear brother this sacrifice unprofitable to him had been too big, that is how it was judged by Providence, and its judgement is always justified; but it is therefore equally clear that although the Danish love of the Homeland had the appearances against her till she has the truth for her, a fact which nobody will deny as soon as we only dare in daily life to appear as we are, so that the love of the Homeland which is the soul of our life of the people, will turn out to become the soul of all our establishments and the common denominator of all our fractions. And surely it must happen, our watchword will be: Denmark above all, and then the foreigners according to their behaviour towards us; for till now they have done all the harm they could to old Denmark, and they could not do it any worse when they are the most angry, and it could not be worse than being overturned which must be the end of it when we continue to give in to the foreigners at the cost of the Homeland. You may talk as much and

as beautifully as you can about the severe justice and the pure need, but when the Homeland will perish, what will the foreigners, and what will the severe justice give us and our children in return? Do to others what you want to have and to happen for yourself, that is people's right as well as human rights, but is it all we can demand, and far more than we have enjoyed from the foreigners, then why should we be that unnaturally hard-hearted or that ridiculously ambitious that we demand more from ourselves? (page 40-42)

THE MOTHER TONGUE AND THE BARDS

Well, this was about the Homeland, and now to the Mother Tongue! What she has had to endure since already Saxe during the days of Valdemar the Victorious wrote The Chronicle of Denmark in excellent Latin, can be described just as insufficiently by my pen as can all which "that old ash-tree" has had to suffer the stem of which is being decayed, its leaves being eaten, its root being gnawed away, and for the misfortune of which both eagle and squirrel take counsel together; but what the Dane still is and can become after six hundred years of slavery to the shattering yoke of the Latin language and to the merciless scourge of the German, that I nearly know, and would it have been possible at all that the Danish language could still be a living tongue not only for peasants and children, but for the King and for all his bards, had it not been for the fact that the people in spite of all apparent contempt still had loved it right from the bottom of their hearts and upheld it as the apple of their eyes? Certainly if it was for the admiration of the Englishmen with whom the Danes fought after a peace of eighty years, assuredly it shall be for the admiration of all the world how the Danish bards used the Mother Tongue in the late eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century! A choir of bards that much to the taste of the people and that patriotic I dare assure on my historic word of honour was never heard in any country since the bards of Hellas died away, and indeed what is between Heaven and Earth: from the highest soaring of human thought to its lightest gliding above lowers in the meadows, and from the peal rolling in the sky of the soft whispering tone in the innermost heart - what is here which the Mother Tongue of these bards could not express both intensely, deliciously, and pleasantly! And from where did the bards get it? They did not write for it, I believe, from foreign countries where nobody would understand it? They did not get it out of the confounded latin grammar and out of the venomous roman

classics either! By the ear which was formed for that purpose under the mother's heart I believe they caught from the people what the people understand and realize to be theirs, or if they forged something new from the same ore and with the same sound no doubt it must be the national character which taught them in this art! That is to say that the national character has not yet disappeared, just as well as the heart of the people has not yet run cold, on the contrary it has proved in spite of the dark death" which is "the latin style" to be fully alive not only in presence, but in power, it has done the important talking, so that both Latin and German became silent in the field, it as in all honesty exerted itself although up till now admittedly in vain, to give back to the people what belongs to the people: an open mouth to express everything that it has from nature, or what can be acquired live, and banish the rest of it. Well, irrational as it sounds that the whole wealth of our Mother Tongue in our Books of the Bards has been found in the mouth of he people, collected by the poor people's mite, still it is necessarily true, and the entire secret is sitting in the Ear of the Bard which is so sensitive that it catches any tone of the people in its full natural sound, and it is so careful that it would not let go of any captive. For instance there are certain Danish proverbs as well as many genuine sayings and expressions which I know for sure to have heard only once, often only in my childhood, and because of that I am the more certain that if the darkening destitution of the mouth of the people was not still in our time remedied through the riches we in a decent way have stolen out of it, there would never be any rehabilitation; but this only gives the proof that now Nature is in need for the assistance of Art, not in the least there is proof that any people's Nature against the most odd weapons of the enemy up till now has been able to help itself as well as the Danish People's nature has!

The end turns out to be, it seems, that although Denmark subjugated by the Latin language and ravaged by the German, many years ago forgot the name of its old goddess, the Lady in her feathered slough who taught the bard songs of love, but at the same time daily shared with Odin half and half in the Giants' Battle Field; in this way Denmark's bards were still to be found in the nineteenth century in the feathered slough of the same Goddess, able to travel therein wherever they pleased to go. On their tongues could be found the same melting tones when they sweetly sang about secret joy, sang in Danish about happiness of love, without still the Tongue of Bjarke was for them the supreme power, or the rushed short of breath to

blow the sound from the Gjallar-Horn, so it may well end up all right with everything which the Mother Tongue has suffered and lost, as long as it can just be allowed to spread alive in the field the way it is still living, scattered in the People but pulled together only with its natural priests and prophets who are the bards. We had been made to believe that it could happen "in pen and ink", but it is as clear as daylight that hereby a people is only buttered up and fails to obtain its heritage. If therefore the Danish People has still the least of love for its lovely Mother Tongue, for its natural, fluent, emphatic way of expressing everything which is in their hearts and runs in their heads they should engage their bards while they have them around live, and in a decent way extort from them all which they have stolen the same way until they became rich, and which they much rather should give back to the proper owners while they live than take it with them to the grave or bury it in the books and follow as apparitions in the reading world. Well, now it certainly remains to be seen whether it is with the endorsement of the People that Latin has been the ruling language here for six hundred years, but as sure as they in Roskilde did not speak Latin, nor did they vote for it, the Voice of the People will surely be for a Danish Folk High School, too, the sooner the better, where everything is about King and people, Homeland and Mother Tongue, and where the Bards who raised King and Homeland in the word which they took from the youth of the People are forced to make themselves useful both for food and for honour, but of course they are forced as free born Danes and unpredictable persons entirely by the People's Spirit, they are impelled as visitors only by the love for the Homeland, and by the prospects of immortality on the tongue of the People which enchants them. (page 42-45)

THE BARDS AS THE TEACHERS OF THE PEOPLE

It may well be found that I must know how it will be felt ridiculous by many to talk about "The Bards" as the teachers of the people; but if not even I could be above this laughter how could the People, so I will do nothing else to calm it down than quite dryly point out that mention is not made here to encourage bookworms or to prepare for "exams", but entirely to awaken and nourish love for the Homeland and obtain strength and richness in the Mother Tongue, and if the classic scholars had been more clever than the Danish poets they would no doubt have been better writers both in and for the Mother

Tongue and long time ago spoken good Danish language in the High School instead of bad Latin. So if to day you want a Danish Folk High School where love for the Homeland shall be able to breathe and the Mother Tongue to flourish you must praise God for the Bards and allow them, if they can, to compel the People's tiny favour both for their ballads from the Homeland and what else can be found in their books of the bards. And by the way, who can have any objection to it except as hardened Latinists as Denmark could not possibly have fostered, I believe, as even the most hardened of them admit that in spite of fanaticism and superstition, of looseness and improvidence for the poets, the School of Latin cannot do without them, however, because of the taste, the liveliness, and the richness of language; for if even the school "for Death" cannot do without the "dead" poets, it is obvious that the school "for life" much less can do without the living ones. (page 45-46)

TEACHING AT THE FOLK HIGH SCHOOL AND THE TEACHERS' VOCATION

I am not afraid of misunderstandings either; for what I have said before I here repeat diligently, of course, that the establishment of a People's State Council which makes a Danish Folk High School most necessary must also be kept fresh in our minds at the organization of the school; and if somebody would even think that I have the wish of a madhouse that the Members of the State Council were dilettantes in the aesthetics, it is however clearly seen by my praise of its first, most unpoetical assembly that this is far from being my opinion. That they should be as well enlightened as possible in the Nature of the People, in the State Constitution, and in the Homeland in all respects is a wish which must be shared with me both by the King and by the People, and there is a good opportunity here for more than bards to do their utmost, but partly, however, this enlightenment must not be without the more sublime stamp which is given by the Spirit of the People, partly without love for the Homeland it would cease to be refreshing, and finally it is neither conceivable nor useful without strength in the Mother Tongue, so it cannot possibly be done without the bards. Furthermore it must be added that to be genuine, "enlightenment" must originate mostly from the single person's own life or at least be tried to see if it fits; but the "sentiment" which

forms his own life, "the eye" through which he conceives of its events, and "the tone" in which he expresses his experience, all of them he needs from his youth to bring with him into life, and that is one of the main reasons for a Folk High School. So who would not well understand that it would be a hopeless matter for all those who can just make both ends meet, and for the whole Kingdom, if the proprietors who rightly choose and form the King's State Council were not made to understand more than their personal and immediate advantage, did not learn ever better to appreciate and to utilize their just as honourable as important position, ever deeper feel and ever more clearly to prove to be the Kingdom's new "knighthood of the Dannebrog" who makes the common good a point of honour and who with pleasure will do the sacrifices which are necessary. We must be children in respect of intellect if we thought that all like this would always be there by a fluke, or if we thought that even the best of a People's Nature in its old age could do without Art which comes to its assistance without the wish to subdue or to rule, like a daughter does to her aging mother! (page 46-47)

PEOPLE'S EDUCATION AND "CLASSICAL SOIL"

It may be quite true that in a Folk High School like this there should be an opportunity as far as possible to acquire the knowledge either in foreign languages or in other fields which individual persons might want, however, it is regarded diligently here as a matter of secondary importance because nowadays it is exactly the big stumbling-block on the school road to knowledge of Life that because of the detail you easily forget the wholeness, because of the separate tracks the common good, or you even burst in an attempt to do the impossible. Looking at one's civil life from the higher view which is formed by People's Spirit and Love for the Homeland you both lead it in a far more noble way and find it far more satisfactory, and that is the teaching of experience in both the old and the new world; but the idea that by doing your civil occupations from a so-called higher scientific level as mere experiments you do them with more usefulness and pleasure, that is entirely a German whim which up till now has had all experience against it, so no doubt it is wiser first to watch the German civil life (to the higher degree) beat the English before you sneeze at the one and grasp for the other. More remote from my thoughts than the Sun from the Earth is now the idea that our civil

education should be based on mathematics with the same strict scientific character as the scholar on the dead languages; for in order to die away there is evidently no need of a school for our civil life, and I am sure they have a more clear feeling themselves than I can express that all the same it must be quite some other people than the Danes who can be made alive either by mathematics or by any strict scientific character. Moreover it was just as little of mathematics or of any strict scientific character as of Latin they in Roskilde wanted more, but on the contrary they congratulated themselves rightly to have let go of all theories and accepted the world as it is, and if we did not regard the needs and embellishments of the People's State Council as the summit of our people's civil education we were indeed incurable fools. Head and Heart for the important and honourable position being the living connection between the absolute King and the free born People, as bright a head and as warm a heart as possible for this our most sublime civil vocation, that is what we demand from the State Council; but that brightness and that Warmth obviously do not emanate from neither mathematics nor any strict scientific character at all, but from Love for the Homeland and a plain Danish mind which sticks to real life and takes out its strength from the People's Spirit. The same qualities which we demand from the State Council we must presuppose to be with the electors and wish to be with everybody, however to a lesser extent, and this way we get a clear idea of a civil education which has nothing to do with the scholastic one, except for the fact that the scholastic education far from fighting the civil one or abdicate it must try to include it when it will not loose the favour of the people on which in fact it is entirely living, not just outwardly as Holberg made the latinists hear that they ate Danish bread, but also inwardly as it certainly is not from the books or from the inkwell but from the People's Life that all living scientific character will draw its nourishment.

Only this way as a total I will express here the proper relationship between the scholastic education and the civil one which certainly will not lead to regarding People's Nature as mother of sheer fools who can be changed into human beings only by mathematics or Latin, by academic art and by the attached "natural craft". The fact that our scholastic education up till now was as non-Danish as possible and therefore cannot possibly be followed but must be completely put aside at the establishment of a Danish Folk High School is crystal clear; on the other hand the fact that the "Latinists" here generally are thinking in far more civil terms than they usually will admit has been

proved by the Assembly in Roskilde, too, so they probably already find it quite wise of me that in time I have endeavoured to transform myself into Danish style. (page 47-49)

TURN TO THE KING

Of course it seems hopeless, however, to establish a "Folk High School" in a country where the "classic soil" more than anywhere else has been regarded as the homeland for the scholars, and Latin as their Mother Tongue, in fact where you still cannot graduate from High School without sitting for "Latin essay", or be a Danish Pastor without being able to speak Latin, so here it seems there is no other piece of advice than the one from the Englishman in despair: Help yourselves! If there was nothing else, of course we had to resort to that, too, so that those of us whose watchword is "Denmark until Doomsday" put together as much as we had, brains as well as pennies, for the great purpose; for because unfortunately the scholars had become latinists old Denmark should not spiritually perish; but under a King as people-minded as Frederik the Sixth not ignorant of Christian the Fourth's martyr crown for the Homeland, throughout fifty years the unequalled patron and benefactor of the Mother Tongue, of the Danish Bards, and of Nordic Science, under his sceptre the Danish piece of advice: "turn to the King" must be preferred by far. So if only the People's State Council which in regard to this matter as well chose the right road had been as familiar with the Danish Chronicle as one of us, certainly His Majesty would have listened to the plea from the Danish language to get back what since time immemorial had been awarded not Latin, but Danish language. Indeed, even without being asked King Frederik the Sixth has done all good for the Danish language which he could think of, and which was given in his power to do by Providence, so I presume what my hint, always insignificant, is here made completely superfluous. Because I am used to regarding my entire personality as superfluous in Denmark, however, without destroying it myself anyhow, so I let my presumably superfluous strokes of the pen remain what they are, and let them be a little useful if they can as long as they at least in my opinion do no harm.

Now in order for the reader not to be mistaken and think that I am so strong in self-denial and forced by so pure reasons to the virtue of writing which the above strictly speaking could make him

presume, I shall entrust to him as a secret that I in a way publicly (that is to say: in printing which is as a manuscript for friends) have predicted that the Noble Academy in Sorø would soon be made into a Danish Folk High School, and as one would indeed hate to be a "false prophet" when one has predicted something good it is quite natural that I hint all that I can, to become a true prophet, for even if it halts slightly in the prophecy when you do the work yourself to fulfill the same, then what? much rather be halting than not be walking at all! (page 49-51)

SOER (= Sorø)

- - - Well, Bard of forms adorning!
You I foresee in Soer,
Where clearly you interpret
What noble is in North,
What is a gift for Denmark,
What gives our Life its value,
Is wise for all man-kind!

A light will now be shining,
in field and forest round
keeps peace of Life, and truly
explains the freedom's law,
which deed and word and thinking,
the three of them, restrain it,
so freedom may endure!

(The Golden Year, 28th January, 1834)

Now I will be quite honest, so that the reader can see for himself which kinds of dodges I use when I predict so that I am not very easily mistaken, and judge for himself if I was stupid to predict The Danish Folk High School in Sorø!

During the days of King Volmer, a time we constantly return to when we want to know what was the end of the old History of Denmark, it is a well known fact that Bishop Axel was head of the whole thing, so to speak, and among his many "good deeds" for the common good it was no doubt in his opinion the most outstanding of them that he laid the foundation of the large monastic cage in Sorø; for as he was a catholic bishop he thought that it would be of use

both for his own and for his dear forefathers' souls, so that they in an enduring way would get out of Purgatory. But as he is said to have directed the monks in Sorø not only to chant Latin, but also to write the Chronicle of Denmark, and as in fact under our first King of Oldenburg in the same monastic cage "The Danish Rhymed Chronicle" was found which not only became the first Danish book which was printed, but throughout all of the sixteenth century was Denmark's common reader and really is the most genuine Danish book I in all my days have read; so in my eyes this was already a great omen that Sorø should help old Denmark out of Purgatory and evidently in the New-year-tide as it did in a hidden way in the middle ages cherish such an unequalled plain enthusiasm for Homeland and Mother Tongue as the rhymed chronicle breathes from first to last page.

However, it was far from remaining there, for when the monastic estate through the reformation had become crown land already Christian the Fourth comprehended the excellent idea of a "noble Academy" in Sorø where the promising youth were supposed to be taught to obey and to be like the King who both knew and loved the Homeland for the best of which he not only ventured but sacrificed his deedful life, and he had the Mother Tongue magnificently in his power. Now, Christian the Fourth became in this respect as well as in any other respect our crowned martyr who not until after his death enjoyed the fruits of his royal endeavours, and it would not be easy to tell which was the most impossible: either to make the Danish Latinists of the seventeenth century speak their Mother Tongue or to make the noblemen of the same century love their Homeland. So the noble Academy in Sorø under Christian the Fourth was an "untimely foster" which was named only in the womb and came to rest only as a stillborn child in his royal fathers arm; - - - (page 51-53)

Grundtvig draws the attention to the fact that Frederik the Fifth re-established the noble Academy, and "Holberg donated to it his barony, earned in honesty by joyful writing in his Mother Tongue." When Grundtvig about 30 years ago visited Sorø where the patriotic High School was empty and deserted the place itself with its numerous relics of "the noble, the powerful, and the brave" made such a wonderful Danish impression on him that he really wanted to make himself more Danish.

- - - So if not all historic signs are wrong which they can hardly be unless Providence had made a mistake which it cannot do, in that case we will soon have a Danish Folk High School in Sorø as it ought to be, both highly royal and freely-for-the-people, and there will be taught how old Denmark can revive in a completely new shape just like the old Upper House at Isøre was revived in the palace in Roskilde, and this learning will be found so delightful by many a Danish lad (especially because he is not being examined in the subject) that when he returns home not only will he try to expand it, but before anything else he will try on himself if it will hold good, and when he realizes that it does he will work with pleasure to make the whole world see, in a decent way, without exactly bursting in to us, but so that it can be made to see in that way, too, when it does want to - - - (page 56)

Where Axel is resting
in bright chancel,
where Holberg is smiling
at errors in the North:
From the heart of Zealand,
King Frode's ark,
throw your mild light,
you candle of remembrance,
on the field of Danes!
flare up, though late
still quite in place! - - -
(page 56)

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE MOTHER TONGUE FOR THE LIFE OF THE PEOPLE

A people without a Mother Tongue is like a King without his kingdom, and in fact both are equally badly served by the fact that their possessions are only "on paper", that is an indisputable empirical sentence, and that a fatuous language in the mouth of the people is equal to a powerless spire in the hands of the King is not a great secret either; for is it "the common spirit" which makes kingdoms powerful, and is the Mother Tongue for all natural peoples its body and Life-expression, no kingdom will flourish unless the Mother

Tongue in its best and most powerful shape truly reigns. The refreshing impact in the public and civil sense from the reformation in the sixteenth century was therefore the installation of the Mother Tongue in its natural rights; but only in England was this event reasonably complete; for in Germany and with us Latin came to rule in the school, and as again the school ruled the Church, and the Mother Tongue had no support as it had in England from a just as public as well as a free voice of the people, it necessarily sank into the fatuity and contempt in which it was found in the eighteenth century. Throughout all of this century it certainly endeavoured by the pen to assert itself and thereby it really came to honour and glory on paper, but that was about all and must remain all there is to it when Life cannot develop as it did in England completely independent of the school, or the Mother Tongue will really be ruling there. So during the eighteenth century it has been introduced in a way in all schools, but not at all as a master, only as a slave, in the grammar schools as a slave for Latin and in all schools as a slave for the alphabetic writing which still when it is at its very best is only the shadow of the Mother Tongue which has to follow and by no means rule the body. Under such circumstances it really looks hopeless; for the gap between the man in the street and the scholars has through centuries grown into a yawning abyss which apparently can hardly be crossed in the feathering of the bard, and any paving would surely fail, too, where the real voice of the people had not recovered its natural position at the ear of the royal Majesty; however, this must inspire the scholars with such a reverence for the Mother Tongue and raise such a living conviction of the priority and advantage for the mouth to take the word that they cannot any longer regard their own foreign consideration and dead handling of the Mother Tongue to be either a perfection or a triviality, but to be a great misfortune which they as well as the people are extremely anxious to remedy as well and as soon as possible. (page 57-58)

THE FOLK HIGH SCHOOL IS A WISH FROM THE PEOPLE

How much it would have been a settled matter before that the scholars, with few exceptions, with all their power would advise against and avoid a free Folk High School like the one which has now been suggested, if only they understand the advantage for themselves they will now find it most desirable as the only means by which the

scholars can gradually recover the lacking mastery of the Mother Tongue and thereby the living influence of the people's opinion and the voice of the people, the only thing which can replace for them the wrongful control over it which they have now lost for ever. If to this is added the Love for the Homeland and "The desire for Life" on which can be counted strongly at least among the younger scholars, then you will find that a Danish Folk High School for Homeland and Mother Tongue is far from being an airy dream as it is much rather a necessary wish from the people by the meeting of which as soon and as well as possible both the government and the scholars will gain inexpressibly much, while we must thank God that we belong to a people which will be neither immoderate in its demands nor unreasonable towards its friendly leaders on the natural way to enlightenment on what it is the wish for it to know, and to an object of bliss which it desires to obtain for itself. The matter is difficult, of course, but the trial is necessary, willing hands make light work, and Denmark's good fortune is unequalled, so here the most reasonable is rarely successful, but always the very best is successful.

Indeed, Denmark's good fortune is unequalled, for the abolition of Latin even in the grammar school which has taken place already in France, nowadays the Roman mainland, will follow by itself in England, Germany, and the Nordic Countries, and through the rule of the Mother Tongue also the education will automatically turn out to be from the people in a way, be it with or without spirit and heart. Elsewhere this inevitable development may become a very worrying matter for the government as well as for the scholars, but in the ancient Kingdom of Denmark married so to speak to the Spirit of History and thereby to all human scientific spirit it will be the triumph just as well for the King and for the scholars as it will be for the people, if only it is not the fatuous and brutish, but the spiritual and the human side which takes the lead. For while the Roman History and poetry were the most venomous food for the souls you can think of for "royal" officers as well as for "nordic" scholars, the Dane apparently will be the most suitable for both, so here the rule of the Mother Tongue and the enlightenment for the people will necessarily create a Golden Year for everything that is noble and good both for high and low people, for the unlearned and for the learned ones.

The Danes are the most peaceful of all peoples and would rather be subdued than having to quarrel with somebody daily, so it is quite possible that even if all of Europe was in commotion Denmark would remain quiet; but had it not been revived beforehand by being set

loose from the bonds in which it looses both courage and power it would be swallowed by the neighbours, and the queen in the Nordic Countries ending up being a slave presumably for the German. This would no doubt have been the end to it if the Majesty had not taken to the right means after having used all other means which in the opinion of wise people could awaken the Common-Spirit and stimulate the activity, as he created a new mouth for the free voice of the people according to the needs of the time; but not only will this probably save Denmark, but raise it to the same glory in the New Year Tide which apparently must have been shining from around it some time in the age of Fredegod, the golden age of all the North. But it is crystal clear that the voice of the people cannot possibly perform such great things unless a Folk High school lovingly educates and guides it so that everything in the kingdom can gradually take its shape in living connexion with it. For it is not just impossible for the people's State Council to fulfill its purpose without being steadily more familiar with the needs of the People's Nature and of the Homeland, and obtaining mastery of the Mother Tongue, but it is just as impossible for Denmark to flourish without first being set loose from the compulsion of Church, School, and Charity which is of foreign origin all of it and will dispirit a Life of the People so sensitive and light, so affectionate and womanly as the Danish people's life has always been and must remain always! - - -

(page 58-61)

REQUEST FOR AND IDEA OF A DANISH FOLK HIGH SCHOOL IN SOER

Copenhagen 1840 (40 pages)

King Christian the Eighth had not been long on the throne of Denmark before Grundtvig in a new publication, "Request for and Idea of a Danish Folk High School in Soer," 1840, tried to make the King become interested in getting for the Danish national feeling a Queen's Chair in this historic place. In the same way as in "The Four Leaf Clover" and in "The School for Life" Grundtvig maintains that there must be at least one place in Denmark "where those who do not speak other languages than their Mother Tongue in the same can be enlightened in anything you need to know to have not only a seat but a voice as well in the People's Council, and for not just being able to give one's vote, but to make it felt." By mistake Sorø has fallen into the power of the Latinists, but Grundtvig hopes that "The King's key" will be used to reopen the door for the Danish Language so that the latinists will leave it open. The puerile scientific character and the Chinese business of examinations must now be abolished, and if by any chance you will maintain Sorø as a grammar school Latin must be reduced and the Mother Tongue must be practiced to a larger degree. Grundtvig has now got more of an "idea" of the organisation of the Folk High School and mentions details like students' councils, mutual teaching and conversation on all common Danish topics. The People's matters are different from the popular ones. History and Poetry must be the main subjects, and the teachers must be men of Life and Inclination, of Abilities and Application. You may feel afraid that the school will not be well attended because the People would be snobbish for the foreign education rather than it will acquire common Danish enlightenment. But Grundtvig shows no fear in that respect. Only the first step will have its price. Once the Folk High School has been established the rest will follow by itself. It does not take much courage to cry for help to build a Dannevirke (= rampart at the southern border of Denmark, up against Germany). - The publication which has not been included in "Smaaskrifter" (short pamphlets) 1872 is here reproduced according to the original version. It is introduced by a poem of 15 verses, "Request to His Majesty for Danish National Feeling, and for the Mother Tongue" from which poem is here given verses 3,5,10,11 and 12.

I do not ask for bonds on any Tongue,
and not for coat of arms for any faith,
for freely to believe, to speak and sing out
I wish that can be done by all on earth,
and only one in fact can make the mouths shut,
and He alone who looks through our hearts
has power of life and death o'er faith and thought.

I ask for satisfaction for a lady,
a queen more noble and more sweet than she
who has her throne where honey is prepared
by tiny birds who kiss the flowers' mouth;
she has been slave, unequalled in her patience,
for the hideous witch, from times of Valdemars'
and waited, King! for your golden year!

In the name of the Spirit which beneath the eyelid
has stars so bright in the pale cloudy sky,
in the name of the Spirit who loves the voice of the heart
and calls it playing the chords for the mermaid,
I beg you, King! be guardian for this queen
whose praise will raise across all mountains,
when the Spirit speaks the Tongue of the Heart!

A leafy chamber is in your kingdom,
in Zealand's heart, near to the bright calm sea,
in comfort let the lovely one ascend to
her fresh green queenly seat on the isle,
with cushions soft from friendly blooming flowers
which will turn blue as long as blood is running
and hearts are beating in our Mother's kids!

Where Axel is asleep beneath the arch well rounded,
and Denmark's noblemen have their coats of arms,
let then and there the People see their old queen
rejuvenated, lovely in the bright New Year Tide!
Let melt together on the Tongue of Denmark
the old Heart tones with the young ones,
to the praise of the queen, and of the King of Danes!

THE CHINESE BUSINESS OF EXAMINATION

- - According to my full and I dare say well-founded conviction all of the Byzantine puerile scientific character and all of the Chinese business of examination are no doubt something partly so empty and partly so unnatural and affected that it will be a Triumph for the human spirit and of benefit and joy for any age when all of it will sink into oblivion with us; but because it is always a great mistake which will lead to punishment in itself to have the intention by force to change the slightest thing in the spiritual world I believe it may not be for a long time yet that there will be a basic improvement of our educational system; for as long as almost everybody who are regarded as scientists will maintain that they owe to the puerile school all that they have, and as long as both learned and unlearned usually believe that examinations can create all kinds of able public officers and learned people from nothing or even from an awkward substance, as long as this goes on any law against it would miss its purpose. The only workable way in which these ruling imaginations and ingrown pre-judices can be fought is now to give freedom and open up for an opportunity for natural development and true culture which can undeniably prove that people were significantly wrong when they maintained that the earlier you started to pretend being a scholar the more thorough scientist you became, and in the more dead and living languages you dabbled the more of a master you became in the neglected Mother Tongue, and the more steadily you kept at the books from childhood the wiser you became of the Human Life with which you had noting to do at all. This striking (practical) proof, however, cannot be demonstrated as long as the grammar schools and the High School based on them are either the only spiritual workshops or even the source and the pattern for all of them, so that a pure Danish Folk High School is not only the Right of the Mother Tongue and the Demand of the People's Life, but it is the only proper preparation, too, for a basic improvement of our entire educational system. However, what is possible without abolishing the puerile scientific character and the trials of memory to reduce and to mitigate their miserable consequences, certainly that should not be left undone.

- - -
(page 10-11)

A LEARNED, DANISH SCHOOL

So if you would improve the shape of the grammar school in Sorø you should not just leave out the Latin essay, but also reduce the Latin reading to a few tolerable books, and instead put an effort in Icelandic, Greek, and especially in The Mother Tongue of which boys can more easily get the taste, and in which they can collect their thoughts, as well as it must be the firm and living basis of development and education for even the utmost scholars among us, not to mention for the practical public officers, when it should be of use for and to the delight of Danish people and the Danish government. The thought that the people should be in existence entirely for the sake of the government is I believe a Turkish principle which nobody have more strongly rejected than the most recent absolute Kings of Denmark; but the thought that both government and people should be in existence entirely for the sake of the old classics and the Latin school masters would be madhouse talk, and even so it could be appropriate only under this hopeless presupposition from childhood to educate the coming people's-teachers and royal officers for the opposite ideals of what both King and People would want from them, and they would suffer incalculable loss by missing it out: the opposite of familiar knowledge of People's- and Civil-Life, of the Mother Tongue and her Classic Works, so it is just as wise as it is reasonable to give all possible freedom to open better ways. Hereby I have now given my opinion on the Grammar School in Sorø, but as Freedom creates only a possibility for a better approach, and as I do not know whether the school has or at present could get teachers with inclination and ability really to follow up freedom I cannot possibly tell if the change would be of use. - - -

(page 12-13)

STUDENTS' COUNCIL

However, to work in the spirit of our State Constitution, both the spirit of the King and that of the people, the Folk High School had to be governed like the kingdom, so that the steward (or whichever name should be given to the headmaster) on the one side could ordain on his own responsibility what he would like, but on the other side in all important matters he would have first to consult the School Council the members of which were elected almost all of them by the youth themselves; for this altogether would be most suitable for the work of the enlightenment, and especially it would give to the State

Constitution far more lucidity, life, and firmness in the minds of the People while the elected members would find that it was a good preparation for the People's Council. Indeed it is known that the old School Master crotchets are still in us even if we have put aside the wig which was part of it, so we find it most suitable that the youth listen carefully to all we say, and make it a point of honour to play up to us; but we must learn to accept that this is not at all suitable at a Folk High School where the youth have not been brought by fines nor have they been tempted by livelihood, but they will visit and value the school only when they find it both useful and pleasant, and whether they find it to be so nobody can tell except themselves, so they must have a proper chance to do so in the School Council, and with what they so to speak unanimously are dissatisfied may well in certain respects be quite good anyhow, but still it is no good in the Folk High School.

Here you see one of the important reasons why I only reluctantly will go deeper into the development of the organisation of the Folk High School as it is in the nature of the case that when the work is going to succeed the organisation must not be according to the mind of the one man but of the people, and just as much according to the heart of the youth as to that of the old age, so the organisation must be created and developed as far as possible by itself, what can be done without any danger when only the headmaster is an reliable man and has a free hand. Another just as important reason why I up till now have shrunk from developing my thoughts further on what should be the contents of the enlightenment work and how it could be worked through successfully is simply the one I have given that any description of Life and Work, certainly also that of the Folk High School, must be a history which follows after the achievement and the event and cannot possibly be made in advance; for all that I can tell about it must be called prophecy, guesswork, dream or presupposition, and I am so used to hearing my presuppositions ridiculed that I should not attach more of them than most necessarily to a matter in itself so good and clear which should not suffer neither from the obscurity of my notions nor from the wish of others to mock at them. So now when I will attempt to give a clearer outline of a Folk High School open for the youth from all over the country, a school where everything was in the Mother Tongue about the Homeland I still have to do it briefly, and to keep it vague and even expressly add one thing is the need for such an institution for the youth, for enlightenment on Denmark and Danish National Feeling in all ways in the Mother Tongue, and something completely different are my thoughts

of what at present or in the long run can be gained thereby, and of the best way in which to proceed; for these thoughts might be very foolish, and the organization still remained necessary. (page 15-17)

MUTUAL TEACHING AND DIALOGUE

If I suggested an imitation in Danish of the University with examinations ahead and behind it would be easy I believe to enumerate which books besides the Danish grammar you must have learned by heart to be allowed into the sanctuary, and in which subjects lectures should be held daily, or weekly, every half year, and in that case it would be just as easy to predict the consequence, that is to say that either nobody at all would voluntarily visit a mortuary like that, or that the whole thing would soon pass away or die without having had more than the appearance of Life and alertness; however, it is unfortunately something which among us is quite new that I have in sight, an institution of enlightenment that is by which the People gradually would be awakened to self-consciousness, and where the leaders were learning just as much from the youth as they learned from them, such a living interaction and mutual teaching whereby a bridge was laid across the yawning abyss which has been consolidated by the hierarchy, aristocracy, Latinery and honourable ambition between almost all of the People on the one side, and its leaders and teachers with a handful of so-called Cultured and Enlightened people on the other side, this yawning abyss in which otherwise almost all civil society and all calm historic progressing development had to perish. Nobody can respect the establishment of the People's Council and its so-called democratic and materialistic (minded for the people, and deep-rooted) composition to be more opportune and well- advised than I do, and the collections of voices by the People's groups about the value and the sufficiency of the Council now and after this which have started already, no matter how unreasonable they may be found, and they will hardly cease; but the consequences had to be the most sad ones when it is not happening that civil people and farmers both within and outside the People's Council learn to understand themselves and us, learn to think of the needs for the wholeness, of the Homeland in the past and in future, and even if you have the greatest superstition in People's reading and in the power of letters you must indeed dread the more of the enlightenment which is spread out by the People's Newspapers. So even if the true friends of the people and the homeland were doubtful that a Folk High School like the one

I suggest would be found possible or able to succeed, still you should make a trial the sooner the better whereby nothing at all was to be lost but nobody knows how much, maybe everything was to be won. But under hopeless circumstances nowadays you carry out the most advantageous and often in civil respect the most pernicious matters, so I believe we should have the courage to try a matter as innocent and in no way unreasonable as it is to enlighten the most peaceful People under the sun of what serves for its peace, the most loving People of what love for the Homeland is, and finally to enlighten the people quick to learn all that is joyful and pleasant of which inexhaustible source for innocent joy and common pleasure they have in themselves, in old and new ballads, in popular books and in "loveliest field and meadow" when only they learn to make use of it.

By this has been said in fact what will be attempted at a Folk High School, that is: Understanding of the People without which we cannot speak to them in a way that they will understand us, and secondly communication of all that can be for use and for joy is common possessions, and finally the enlightenment which must be found with the best of minds in all circles in order for the people's Council to be both elected and for it to work for the common good which must be the unchangeable constitution of any society which will exist by the will of the People and grow old with their honour. Clearly this is the aim, and about the way it is not possible to say much as it must first be opened and to a certain extent be broken, which of course will only succeed in relation to the abilities which meet, and the efforts which are made on both sides. Certainly it is easy to say that both firstly and lastly it is the mouth which must be used, partly because it is the only living tool for the spirit on earth, and partly because we never will get more in common with the People than that can be therein and by itself be passed on from mouth to mouth as well, and it is as easily said that only to the same degree as the speech becomes dialogue partly between old people and young ones, and partly between the youngsters themselves, only to the same degree the enlightenment will succeed; but how far those concerned will have the minds to help each other and bear with each other until the mouth gets really going time will show, and although I am sure that the difficulties can be overcome because indeed the mouth has been made on both sides for speaking, and entirely because of a bad turning the lock has jammed, still I know for even more certain that the difficulties will not be made to vanish by talking. - - - (page 17-20)

MINDED FOR THE PEOPLE, NOT POPULAR

Now what I mean in the first place by understanding the People I cannot express more briefly and emphatically than I did already sixteen years ago in this way:

Who wants to meet the People
and know them completely
must yelp with the People
if they cannot bark,
who wants to sing for them
must borrow their tongue
and learn to breathe onto it - - .

But as I have both experienced and learned a good deal since then I may make it somewhat clearer that I mean something quite different from what has been called "popularity" and already in the word it is shown that it was something foreign which could not even be transformed into Danish, far less the People could be made to believe that you had learned from them. For our popular school masters either attempted to teach the children only what they already knew but felt wasn't worth the trouble to mention: that the pigs had four legs, the hens only two, and that the nose was situated right between the two eyes and was made originally for smelling, or they explained joy by what was "of interest", the sky by "the firmament", and indifference by "failure to appreciate value and importance of objects", or when it was at its best they only practiced to "talk to children" which is not to be blamed, but does not please neither men nor lads, and it does not enlighten any People of its natural character, need and desire, load and luck, delight and distress, and still it is with this we shall learn to address them so that they understand, and talk to them so that they are encouraged, enlivened and enlightened.

Now to understand a People so that we can speak from their hearts the People must have a share in our heart, and borrow their tongue to us, so if we despise the minors, and the Mother Tongue as it is in the mouth of the People, of course we shall never become minded for the People; but even if none of these are the case, and we diligently use all both inward and outward aids to learn the natural way of thinking for the People and to acquire not the embarrassing, the deadly, and the objectionable part, but the living, and the characteristic of their way of speaking, still the foreign and unnatural influence in our education as well as the dark destitution of the

People, in the spiritual sense, make it very difficult and for a while it will make it an imperfect way for us to learn how to understand each other. Concerning myself, I who both as a bard, Zealander and Jutlandish-born, and as an old worm in the most Danish books have a great advantage over most people, I must confess that it is only on rare occasions that I can speak Danish as well and as minded for the People as I can write it, so I would not be surprised if most readers for a start quite literally would have to hold "loud-readings", and if only what they read would be clear and minded for the people that too would be useful, but altogether it would be a makeshift which should not be made into the rule. So much concerning what would be called the way of teaching (the method) but what I call the gifts-of-speech, and what the people would call knowledge of how to choose one's words, and I will only add that this is not taught from any Danish Grammar, but only if you are minded for the People by using your ears and by industrious reading with reflection such books as The Danish Rhymed Chronicle and The Proverbs of Peer Syv.

Coming now to the question of what should be communicated to the youth at the Folk High School by means of as lively talk as can be made, no doubt it is not very informative to say: certainly not all that we know, but all that can be common possessions from it, for usefulness and for joy; but still it is not possible beforehand to tell much more with certainty as nobody can give more than he has, and only experience will teach us how much the people can both have the taste for and properly digest.

In the brief principle is also a warning against the usual school master mistake to have a wish to cram even into children, not to mention lads, all that they know, and especially the most dry and the most indigestible of it, so when professors have some other purpose in their lectures apart from having them it must be the purpose to create the same kind of professors as they are themselves in scores and in hundreds, which may barely be all right in Germany where the names of the Universities are Legion, but it is hopeless in Denmark where the University is only one, and the professors in most subjects are rarely two at a time. If some thing like this was done at the Folk High School thinking that at least some small part would stick, so that a certain scientific look would be won, you made a most bad mistake and would pester nine tenths of the youth to make one tenth feel either ridiculous or at least dissatisfied with its occupation and make them unprofitable in their trade. But even if this is a living fact in our minds, so that we diligently endeavour in ourselves to distinguish between what belongs to us as individuals, be it a certain belief and

partiality or a certain knowledge, art or science, and what we can have in common with the People, and attempt to communicate this only, still mistakes are inevitable and especially in the beginning they will be frequent, so that you give both too much and too little, without anything else to be said about it than the fact that you must provide as good leaders as possible and let them see to it themselves how they go about it, but they must be able to move and act freely, too, to the best of their judgment. (page 21-25)

THE HISTORICAL POETICAL VIEW

So it is possible both according to the nature of the case and according to the uniqueness of our People to predict that especially History and Poetry, and from that again the History of the Homeland and the Ballads, will play the master at the Folk High School, and in my eyes this opens the brightest prospects; for when this inclination is nourished and well utilized the People will see that they have a famous Homeland whose honour is a heritage they owe to their children, and the life of the People will have, both in the individual homes and at parties and gatherings, another kind of noble and joyful character than it has had for many centuries. But even if we rightly could reduce the communication to History and Poetry, still little or nothing was then said, for nothing is easier to maltreat while correct use minded for the People will be in the richness, sense and tact which is to be found with the leaders, and in the experience they will gradually collect.

But just as already in this respect a remarkable difference will be found between "Zealander and Jutlander" the Folk High School cannot be reduced at all to certain subjects because in all that is human is a good deal that is minded for the People, and especially it is a wish that the whole present condition of the Homeland, its State Constitution, its Laws and Establishments as well as its Trade and Shipping, branches of Business and natural Character will be given a good deal of attention by the People which nowadays cannot possibly fail, too, if only there will be skilled people more merciful than the lawyers in Roskilde who will know how to make obvious and living what knowledge they have, and who will have wits to spice what would otherwise be found too dry. It is no good either to have the intention of beforehand laying down anything as all will be according to what the persons concerned has to offer and how much pain they will take to enlighten and to encourage the People. Here the task is so much more difficult as the best minds should be taught not only to form a

clear idea of what they might meet in the People's Council, but be taught to express easily what their opinion is; for during the long period of apparent death the People has almost forgotten the entire more noble part of the Mother Tongue, and by either imitating us or "speak the written word" as the Jutlander puts it, the commoner and the farmer will necessarily be trapped in a rigid preaching-tone or school master style which fit them very badly and deprive their words of almost all effect except for the ridiculing one. Here was indeed a difficult situation (directly translated: good pieces of advice were expensive) but rather be dead than perplexed (directly translated: without any idea, or advice, of what to do), thus tells the proverb, and hereby we are reminded that a relic of the pith and glory of the Mother Tongue has been kept by the people in the proverbs which can here come at the right moment to them when they learn how to use them in other contexts than everyday matters. Now again I believe that we will meet the difficulty that mostly we know little of the People's proverbs, and we often despise them, but the latter is apparently a bad habit which we should do away with, and for the first there is help to be found; for partly we have got ears to use them, partly we are always reminded of some old acquaintances when we meet them in Syv or Laale (old Danish writers), and lastly I have been so provident already in my youth to write down all the proverbs I remembered to have heard, and as could be expected this was the first booklet I issued after the Establishment of the Folk High School, to give my mite and encourage others to do the same. Many people may still think that it is important whether a proverb is found in the mouth or it is taken out of a book, but partly experience will show that for the People it means a remarkable difference, and partly it is given by common sense that a proverb which we have never heard in a context can rarely or never be used in a living way by ourselves.

Now I dare believe that we have shown that the reason why it is not possible to give real directions neither for the contents of the communication, nor for the procedure in the Folk High School is the fact that it should not be a school for Death but for Life, so that everything is depending on how much vitality will meet, and how well it is utilized; but it may well be that many people even because of this will think that the difficulties are insuperable, and to this I can only answer that if you do not even try of course they will not be overcome, but that it is cowardice to give in to an enemy before you have tried your strength against him, and still the ruling foolishness of Life paired with ridiculous self-opinionated feeling is the most terrible enemy of the Homeland which has yet been there. (page 25-28)

THE PROPER TEACHERS

That from the beginning it will be difficult to find leaders who with the necessary knowledge and insight can combine Life and Inclination to work for the solution of big task, however among scholars usually reckoned as a despised or hated task, that is a consequence of the painfulness of the time; but still I believe that part of the professors in Sorø with pleasure would do their best, some good assistants would certainly be found, too, and I myself would be happy to participate yearly some months, when it was desired and as long as I was able to, in an act of love which I am sure would be of use and joy to the Homeland till the latest generations and thus be its own rich reward. Where it depends completely, however, on the Life and Inclination, Ability and Hard Work of the people concerned whether a monumental work shall succeed or not any mistake must have the most sad consequences when it could not quickly and easily be corrected, and still it must more often be the case that your expectations did not come through, so that experience would show that here the inclination and the Hard Work without the equivalent Abilities, and there the Abilities without the Inclination and the Initiative were useless. - -

(page 28)

WILL THE FOLK HIGH SCHOOL BE ATTENDED?

Certainly it is doubtful, too, whether a Folk High School for only Danish National Feeling and Mother Tongue would from the beginning be much visited; for on the one side there is no country in Christian World where the opinions of the foreign matters are so high and of your own so low as in Denmark, and on the other side most people have from childhood a fear in their blood or most certainly a disgust for all that is called School, so that they during their youth would not easily visit an establishment like that, when they will be promised neither certain livings nor position and honour; but partly bright young people with us, too, have a desire to try something new where they can walk freely in and out and will not be in "painful examination", and partly love for the Homeland and for the Mother Tongue must soon gather, in spite of all hesitations, the best part of the youth where the banner of the Fathers fly and where the voice of their mother is heard. So it will do no harm at all if for a start there will be just few, for as for ourselves we have little to start off with, and

if we saw the People flocking around us we had to think downheartedly: what is it among so many, so we can need a breathing space, and the People can benefit from the fact that experience will teach us how to avoid the worst mistakes before they could do harm.

Finally you may have the opinion that the Folk High School, even when it was at its very best and round the country appreciated according to its merits, even so it would be insufficient to enlighten the youth from all the People, indeed even if it is remembered what is now usually forgotten that the Folk High School is not at all for fatheads, but meant only for the bright ones, still it can be said that the inevitable costs of attending the Folk High School will prevent many from going there; but if only the work gets started and becomes a monumental work minded for the People only unprofitable worries are made for its necessary imperfections, and besides it is crystal clear that the longer the Folk High School is working, the more and the better assistants it gets round the country, so although it will never become superfluous it will gradually become less indispensable. The natural enlightenment minded for the People is in fact in all ways in relation to the natural and the foreign education as Life is to Death, so the same natural laws which make it a fact that the Latin enlightenment is barely to be found now even at the University not to mention anywhere else, after having been given by all efforts for three hundred years, the same natural laws will work it so that when the Danish enlightenment has been given just by reasonable effort for one generation it will be found even in the cottages in the heath, and its Folk High School will be in the middle as the great focal point in which all rays are collected, only in order to return with renewed strength and enlighten Life and clear the brows in all hidden corners. What is acquired only for the sake of an examination and a living is of course forgotten in a hurry when the examination is over and done with and the living obtained, and it is done with so much better conscience as it is seen that it does not enlighten or sweeten at all, but it darkens and embitters life; but what is acquired only because it is desired, that is in reality never forgotten, and you attempt to spread it the more industrious, the clearer you are convinced by experience that it leads to a true and joyful outlook on life, makes us more clever in our work and more satisfied with our position than we would have been otherwise. So it is to be found that before anything else in a royal Danish Folk High School where the Mother Tongue will be displayed in all her richness and unequalled loveliness unknown to most people, where the Homeland in all its beauty, light and shady, is depicted in our eyes, with its roads leading to honour and

happiness as paths winding through cornfields, and where all old heroes of the People are awakened by the Giant Ballads to repeat their heroic works in a spiritual way, in a Folk High School like that it is literally speaking the first step only which has its price. - - -

And now finally courage of which I believe have nothing to loose, how much of it would be necessary to cry for help to build the rampart Dannevirke? How much courage do we need, old Denmark's declared friends, single persons, scattered as we are, surrounded by Latinisms, Gallicisms and Germanisms, to collect all that is kindred to the People around us and try if Danish is not still the strongest in the field? If we did not have that much courage we must be happy about the death of the old giants, for they would have lashed us as did Thor to the dwarf at the fire of Balder.

Now the first step will cost insignificantly much, and that is all, for if it did not succeed the "story" would be ended, and if it succeeded we have gained the victory, with us both the Spirit of the North and the Heart of Denmark will gain the victory, and in that case we cannot find it worth the while to mention the cost of the victory, but we must find that for a mere song we have gained part in the immortality which no skies gave its giants as proudly as the North and no country its loved ones as deliciously as in Denmark. - - -

(page 29-33)

THE UNIVERSITY IN LONDON AND THE ACADEMY IN SORØ

FAS EST PARVA COMPONENTER MAGNIS

(from "Metamorphoses" by Ovid: If I may be allowed to compare small matters to big ones.)

It is notorious to all of us that King Frederik the Sixth, whose desire is to erect for himself memorials of secret grandeur which certainly will not surprise the children of the moment, but they must have the blessing of generations to come - it is notorious that he also turned his eye to the tomb of Axel the King's friend, where Fourth and Sixth CHRISTIAN's schools of the knighthood, just vaguely supported by Holberg's golden laughter, fell in ruins and ashes! It is notorious to all of us that the Majesty with a strong Word of the King here laid the foundation stone of a new pyramid on the Hero's Tomb where no mummies but alive people were going to live, and to renew or, if possible, to outshine the splendour of passed times, not through bombastic panegyrics, but through spiritual heroic deeds. It is not notorious to me that as yet a firm decision has been made on the organization and the width of the Third Academy in Sorø, and I am fond of that because now I am the more free to express my thoughts in the matter, and they are the fruits of quiet deliberations during a long period of time. But keep quiet I would, if not - in my opinion - the foundation would be able to support the building which was my favourite thought in those days already when the flame played with ancient grandeur, and when only tiny prospect for renewal of the splendid past was left. However, the basic idea is now to establish in Sorø a High School for the Life of the People in its total clearness, where in addition to that people can submit to various tests in the previous knowledge which is demanded by the State of those who want to be educated in one of the Training Colleges for scientific officers - which are usually called the four faculties of the University - this basic thought is exactly what I deeply wanted to see being accomplished to a much larger degree and with a much more free working together of the awakening powers than the establishment so far seems to predict. For a long time I have kept quiet, even if the word was right on my lips, and even if the HORRIBLE RUMOUR that History in Sorø would be taught in FRENCH which nowadays is almost as if it had been in TURKISH - even that only forced a smile from me, partly because it was far too unreasonable to be believed, and partly because I wanted another person to say what from my pen, which has been excommunicated, that's how it is, probably would find a resistance which in itself it did not deserve at all. But now I feel

in any way that the moment has come when it is neck or nothing between Danish readers and my humble self, so that my pen, if it cannot do anything else, must shake the dust off itself. This feeling regarding Sorø became alive and strong in me when I recently I inadvertently came across the news bulletin about the real beginning of a building for the New University in London of which I in between my books had heard nothing. Then the building in Sorø was alive before me and occupied all my thoughts, and I felt: Now it is not only the question of who is first, but especially of who is best. For now we know that time is up.

Romantic feeling, the old romantic feeling! that's what our peculiar readers are likely to say, but if I may give them a piece of advice they must read through the pamphlet, for then they will find without doubt that if there is a romantic feeling here it is brand new, and if there is something of age here, it is entirely empirical truth which will never be outdated. It may well be that who ever is completely ignorant of the History of the Human Spirit, or who believes to be able to give to it the direction he chooses, from his own common sense and mind, that this kind of early most learned and by nature erudite people find it most insignificant that a new University is being established, even if it is the people with the highest spiritual power, and the richest resources, even if it is the British People who after having used the monastic schools of Oxford and Cambridge since the days of King Alfred, and who change their view only about once every thousand years, even if they are the ones who find the necessity of a new University in the Capital of the World. But because of that I am not ashamed at all to see in this English egg a WORLD EVENT which - what ever it will otherwise do - when hatched will surprise all full sighted people and change even the blind people, enlighten the living world and be master of the dead. This supposition is not put to shame either by the fundamental features of the new establishment which may be seen in writing designated by the governing Council, and which I (according to the Westminster Review, April 1826) will now communicate to the readers who do not know them already.

ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY IN LONDON AND THE ACADEMY IN SORØ

Sorø and London are of course like a small village up against a large and powerful city, but still not by any means like Time up against Eternity as small villages with good potentials will on the contrary be

in the same relationship to the huge Capitals containing one or one and a half million bodies, as the one in which the small red-cheeked boys will be to the waddling heads of oxen. The ones have got a hope to grow and to last for many good days, the others just a hope of a night's respite before they will be bursting. So although London boasts of having as many inhabitants as the whole of Denmark and Sorø has got just few of those living in Zealand, still it might be possible that in future many more great men would come from the small village than from the Capital ready to burst, and at least it is a hope which has got the contents of experience as England's own history shows that from a corner in the North men could come who dared compare themselves with not just all the inhabitants of London, but with the inhabitants of all Britain!

After in this way having met the laughter which a comparison of the University in London with the Academy in Sorø easily must cause for us who will usually find nothing more ridiculous than the idea that we might do something else than come staggering behind, I shall move straight to the point and tell what I think of the two new establishments for Education of the People in London and in Sorø, at least they are almost of the same age, and they deserve in my opinion both of them our attention. Although the foundation stone for the Students' court in London has been laid only recently, and the Academy in Sorø is not only towering above the lake, but it's name has been written already with golden letters not just across the gateway where it could well be lacking without being missed, but written in History as well, still I will not be so impolite as to start with the village, but first I will turn my eye to the labyrinth in Microcosmos in which the new University is going to be the guiding string.

For those who consider such minor things which spiritual growth and education of mankind in our highly spiritual time usually must submit themselves to being, it has already for a long time been a mystery how the grand and broad-minded Englishmen have been able to do with the Highschools in Oxford and Cambridge, in their works so restrained and in their impact so small, and when in fact it is estimated that just in London there must be about SIX THOUSAND youths whose parents can afford to give them a scientific education, i.e. to pay 30£ per year being school fees, it certainly is high time to establish a somewhat broader highschool than the present one. Whether it is wise, however, to start off with a building worth seven barrels of gold (in our currency) or it isn't we will take for what it is worth, especially because seven barrels of Danish gold do not even equal one barrel of English gold, and because we have the weakness

ourselves to make a big stall for the unborn calf. Whether or not smaller universities scattered around the country would be more beneficial both for the people and for science than a university so immensely big as the one in London appears to be, we can well leave that for the Englishmen themselves to decide as they must know better both what they need and for how much of that they have the willing hands to make light work. But what we by no means must forget is the grand thought that scientific education must not be regarded as Purgatory for part of the future public servants in the State, but as a good fortune of which of course all parents who are able to do it will give their sons a share. That this English thought is not at all too big to be sheltered in tiny Denmark is proved not only by the time passed, but even by the present time, as with us on a yearly basis there are many more graduates than vacant offices, but as many people out of a peculiar blindness regard this so-called disproportion as a great misfortune, it may well be a good thing to hear the opposite side of it from England, where most certainly they are not blind to the useful matters in a practical sense: lack of scientific education for those who by profession and wealth rise above common people, to hear this lack proclaimed to be a great misfortune which by all efforts possible must be made good.

The other great English idea for which I deeply wish citizenship in Denmark to be obtained is that a Highschool which is aimed strongly towards education of the People as a whole must have completely different and far more free organization than the old Monastic Schools which under the ostentatious name of Universities have outlived themselves long time ago through an entirely mechanical development (the machinery of studies), and they produce like dilapidated factories sheer characters of a piece, sheer pieces out of one and the same pattern with which the loom according to usual practice is working automatically, without such possibility for the few alive professors who have higher ambitions other than making themselves if not deadly ill with annoyance then at least seriously ill, enough to turn their hair grey. All friends of enlightenment and of scientific spirit must now feel deeply happy that most contrary to the scholar factories in Oxford and Cambridge a Free School will be established at long last right in the middle of London, where the chairs can never - without becoming name seats - be neither sinecures nor favours. For not only England, but all of Europe, is in need of a free school like that, which certainly will find its imitations, because the universities on the Continent, too, even if they partly better than the English ones have kept pace with time, still they are far from being ahead of their

time which in fact everything must be which in an alive way should be able to have any impact on future. The university of London is planned to exist by voluntary contributions, and in the first place it will employ 32 professors, without being tied into either an unchangeable cycle or onto incorrigible personalities, it must be responsible on its own to gain high esteem and trust, or it will perish, and who does not in this organization recognize the right constitution for all scientific establishments which - if they do not make themselves indispensable - are a ridiculous as well as an oppressive burden! The fact that examinations have to be passed at the new university, i.e. tests must be made, is another proof of the Englishmen's good view. For a school without examinations may be comfortable for the teachers who think entirely on themselves, but it will never be comfortable for the parents who think of their children, and not for the sensible friends of the students either, and where the tests become a burden to people other than the lazy ones the error is either with the teachers who want rather to be echoed than to get proper answers, or it is due to the fact that the youths must sit for tests in other matters than what they came to school to learn according to their desire and decision. In the same way no reproach is deserved because no theology will be taught at the new university. For just like any sensible state must see to it that its teachers of religion acquire a reasonable scientific education, likewise the most free thing in the world which faith undeniably is, must be a completely optional matter at school, and nobody should ask about faith, so when the Council who opens a school for the Youth of every religious persuasion simply recommends the important duty of religious education for the care of parents and guardians I fully approve of it. But I am highly surprised that so clear-sighted and thoughtful men have failed to see that Dogmatics and Church History may very well be separated, and in the school they should be separated. For as ridiculous as it would be to introduce the dogmatics of either the High Church or the Low Church in a free school, just as irresponsible would it be in all ways to exclude the History of Faith, i.e. of the human spirit, and where the professors must have the pleasure of talking to themselves then nobody cares to listen to them it would be easily made so that the professor of church history could dogmatize life-and-death as much as he would like to. Now it may be said that the historic professor as it is has to take faith into consideration because its historic works are too big to be overlooked from his lectern, and it may certainly be true, but I am right, too, when I half-way smile, half-way feel annoyed to see the historic professor standing so solitary between politics and jurispru-

dence that really he is like the man who fell among robbers, for what is politics, and what is jurisprudence when they separate themselves from history, when they will not further the well-being of mankind under the actual historic conditions, but they only want to feather their own nest, knowledge, eight of the... (*manuscript ends abruptly here*)

IS FAITH REALLY A MATTER FOR THE SCHOOL?

Right at the change of the years 1835 and 1836 the famous revivalist preacher and teacher Rasmus Sørensen, Vensløv, had written an article in New Church Tidings 1836 No. 4, in which he claimed the main thing in the school must be "The Communication of Faith". This article urged Grundtvig to contradiction, and the present article was printed late January of the same year. Grundtvig's ideas concerning the Religious Education have here been put in a programmatic and a concise form.

This question is much more important nowadays than people in Vensløv School imagine, and it is not to be ashamed of in that school as long as they do not dream themselves to be more clever in the matter than the rest of us, who I believe have a voice, too, and we should have no less opportunity to test the matter, even in the middle of the books, than if we were in Vensløv School. It is a most important question, I claim, although of course it goes only for those who have an alive Christian Faith. For those who haven't got any Faith at all may not care a great deal, and those who have only a dead scholastic belief cannot possibly regard it as a question: whether Faith, which is for them entirely a matter for the school, really belongs in the school?

Now then, to and for the alive Christians, let them be few or many, I will write my opinion, not in the least is it a transient idea or letter-arithmetic, but it is an opinion emerged from Life, reflected upon for a long time and compared to experience, an opinion which is that Faith, thank God! IS NOT A MATTER FOR THE SCHOOL AT ALL, that the entire Religious Teaching in the schools, however, with which we have pestered ourselves and the children throughout centuries was a big delusion which we must be pleased to be able to recognize, compelled by the prevailing confusion. I do say 'thank God!' that Faith is not a matter for the school at all, for if it were so, we had to call our stand despairing, and it would be just poor consolation

for Danish Christians that in Venslv, and here and there in the corners, there was a Lutheran School Master, when up against this one there were scores whose grafting of belief or disbelief onto the children of the Christians we had to dread. So now, in a time when the majority of the school teachers apparently haven't got our faith, and still the majority of the children are bound to attend each their nearest school, and there is not even the slightest chance that the schools will again become Lutheran, in such a time I believe that even the most rigid Lutherans must want Faith to be little or nothing at all to do with the school, and who wants that will not close the eyes for a truth either of which the ingrained prejudices under different circumstances would make us suspicious.

Now, when we want a well-founded opinion in this matter we must not stop at the school education WE OURSELVES have communicated in Religion. For who does not expect good fruits from his own laborious work, and who does not shrink like a worm from the thought that it should be all wasted efforts! However, if we want to form an impartial judgment of a matter we ourselves must make sure above all to stay outside the play, and if it is too hard on us to abandon ourselves and our tiny works, far too insignificant to be considered at all, in that case we must deduct them as being something which may be just an exception, and it must not in any way be elevated and made a rule.

However, if we have come so far that we do not stand in our own right, but we ask impartially which fruits have come altogether from the school education in matters of Faith, then at least we are not tempted to estimate the good ones too high, unless we include disbelief. For it is a well-known fact that as well in the Protestant Germany as with us where the religious education has been carried on in a scholastic way throughout three centuries it has by far been the case that Faith became stronger and more alive year by year, on the contrary it became more dead and more declining, until finally in the school Faith usually gave way for disbelief.

This big, firm, and in any Christian's opinion sad fact, might be explicable by a bad or awkward and unsuccessful school education, so that room was left for the claim that a changed and improved education would produce the opposite fruits. But without denial of the possibility we must remark straight away, however, that the mere possibility will carry practically no weight against the three centuries of real experience in the other scale, so it would be most unfair for the few Christians left to risk their children in a school faith which so clearly and sadly deluded their fathers.

If we had the courage to proclaim that according to evidence from experience the school education in religion, or the training into being Christians, had furthered disbelief and indifference just as little as it had furthered Faith and trust, we could regard this as a fairly unimportant matter, while at the same time we must find it unreasonable to waste the children's time and strain their efforts for no purpose at all, and we must find it improper to use the most sacred concepts for mankind for a mechanic intellectual exercise. However, it follows naturally that any continual and serious occupation in the field of Faith, when it does not consolidate Faith it certainly will be undermined, when it does not strengthen the sincere participation it will be highly weakened.

Suppose now that someone could think of and even carry out a school education in religion which was just as alive, strengthening, and consolidating as the usual one has been dead, weakening, and slackening, in that case still it would be necessary, before the Church was congratulated on the matter, to find a means to employ in the schools as a rule men who were able and willing to regard and carry out the teaching in this way, and at once we have to give up hope of this when we are aware ourselves of what we are saying. For in this matter apparently a new teacher-training college is no good, a new method is no good, anything new under the sun is no good, except for new people whom we have difficulties to recognize, let alone create. In order for the teaching to become alive first of all the teacher must be alive, and in order to have strengthening and consolidating teaching the teacher must be strong in the Spirit and firm in his Faith, and if it were a ridiculous hope to employ almost entirely men like that as school teachers, still we must wish for a teaching to stay away which without these conditions will do unpredictable damage instead of good.

Now let it be that we old-fashioned Christians, taught by bitter experience, won't have any of this type of religious education for our children as it will always be in most schools, even if it was of the uttermost orthodox kind, seeing that we must dread for it at a time when it is nothing less, when many a believing father and mother daily twist their hands because they have to send their children to a school where the Faith which is the treasure of their hearts, the best inheritance for their children, is being treated like an old superstition which is inconsistent with common sense and a disgrace to mankind. In my opinion it is clear at least that if you dare not expect Faith to be soon recognized and declared to be a sacred thing from which the school masters had to keep away their fingers, in that case the old-fashioned Christians had to break with the State Church in order for

them to maintain the same influence on the faith of their children as have the Jews. However, as the unbelieving parents, when they are or become in the least way serious, must find it just as unreasonable to send their children to religious education with an orthodox school master as we find it to send our children to one of the opposite type, I certainly have the hope that all sensible people will soon agree in denouncing religious education in the public schools of all kinds, specially all those who have the slightest feeling that Faith is a matter of the heart, and who are not school masters themselves, will realize that it is utterly wrong to be taught Faith by heart as if it were some homework, or to blur it and tear it to pieces catechetically. That it is good for our children to learn in the schools, if at all they are reasonable, how to behave in the world, and how to avoid to fall in the hands of the law court, but on the contrary to be honoured in your circle and leave behind you a good name, that is a straight forward matter, but it is the same for both Christians, and Jews, and Pagans, and it should be left completely out of the matter of Faith, and even if a higher view of Human Life and its natural relationship to the deity must be prevailing, higher than what is usual now, before we can send our children to them with pleasure, still this is something which is to be expected by the present sudden change of the time-spirit, while "Christian Schools" which in a real sense correspond to this name have never existed and never will except for certain domestic circles.

Anyhow, I must confess to the whole world that the ORTHODOX and the HETERODOX school education of Christianity are almost equally dear to me, that is to say most deplorable, so the latter only annoys me the most because believing parents take it much more to heart than the unbelieving parents do the opposite one, and if people will call me a heretic or an apostate because of that I can bear it, but I do hope that my children shall not cause me the distress that they throw out Christianity with their school books, which would be most natural if they are both in one conception.

Still more was to be said about the stones which our fathers unnotoriously gave us for bread in all of the Theology which is ever so Biblical and Christian that it is not stone dead for the children's age. But I want just to remark that when Faith was liberated from being taken to school, and the children confirming their Baptismal Covenant was a personal matter between the old-fashioned Christians and their Pastors, the Confirmation as a matter of Information and Knowledge could be dealt with in one parish at a time without the

slightest reference to the individual's faith, and it is understood to be a beautiful national ceremony giving admission to the community.

Certainly it is high time when we want the best for both Church and State: when we want to be allowed to seek for us an eternal Homeland from above on the path which pleases us, but want also to do anything we can to serve and honour our Homeland on this earth while we are here, it is high time that we leave all wrangle about matters which both here and in the next world must be anybody's personal affair, and endeavour with a real freedom of Faith and Conscience to combine such a friendly working together into all that is Genuine and Lovable, Great and Good which Danes according to all historic signs have a calling for and are suitable for. If it is possible, apart from all other good things we do for our neighbour, in a reasonable way to bring him slightly closer to Heaven, no doubt we would be pleased about that, but to bring him there by the whip won't do, we have seen that already, and if we had the power to throw into Hell which is by far the case, Danish People should have too much heart to use that power, in so far as it would be downright wrong to say that Christ had commanded us to do it, He who came himself not to condemn but to save, and he commanded us to be the same way he was in this world.

The School for Life is part I of Grundtvig's main essay on education "The School for Life and the Academy at Soer", which appeared in 1838. Like Grundtvig's other reflections on education this short essay is a contribution to the debate of the age – partly on the education of children and young people, partly on adult education as the necessary prerequisite for the common man's participation in politics. Since 1660 Denmark had been without a parliament, the King was an absolute ruler. But in 1834 King Frederik VI introduced "advisory assemblies" of "the estates", one for Jutland at Viborg, one for the Danish Isles at Roskilde, and one for Schleswig-Holstein at Rendsburg. In his essay "The Danish Quatrefoil" (1836) Grundtvig described this institution as the "second giant stride" by which "Denmark regained her natural constitution" from the Middle Ages. Here Grundtvig recalls that at the first meeting of these assemblies "a strong plea was made to the King for a School for Life". It was proposed to set up a practical secondary school with instruction in mathematics, natural science, and modern languages beside the disciplines of the grammar school at the old Sorø Academy in Zealand. To Grundtvig's mind that was not "the School for Life" that was needed, and when he voiced his opinion to the Crown Prince, later to become King Christian VIII, the latter suggested that he put his ideas in writing. The present essay is Grundtvig's response to this challenge. Later as King Christian VIII issued a writ concerning the foundation of a high school at Sorø in accordance with Grundtvig's ideas. The King, however, died soon after (in January 1848) and the plan for a school was never carried out by the Folketing, the parliament introduced in 1849. In 1844, however, a folk high school had been founded at Roedding in Schleswig, and in a speech to a big political meeting Grundtvig publically welcomed it as a sign that the people of Schleswig wished to speak Danish and take part in political life in this language. The said folk high school became the first Grundtvigian folk high school in Denmark.

William Michelsen

The School for Life

The School for Death we know only too well, unfortunately, and not just those of us who went to the school that takes a pride in resting on the 'dead languages' and confesses that grammatical infallibility and lexical perfection are the ideal that the school, at the expense and sacrifice of life, endeavours to reach. No, with us the whole nation knows the School for Death; for that, without exception, is what every school is that begins with letters and ends with book knowledge, great or small, and that means everything that has been called 'school' over the centuries and everything that is still so named. For all letters are dead even if written by fingers of angels and nibs of stars, and all book knowledge is dead that is not unified with a corresponding life in the reader, and not only are mathematics and grammar soul-destroying and deadening, but so is all exhausting brain-work for man in his childhood, before his brain and the rest of his body are properly developed and before life, both the inner and the outer, has become so familiar to us that we can recognize it in description and can feel a natural desire to be enlightened about its conditions. Therefore, by seeking to implant in children the order, quietness, reflection and wisdom of old age, we graft only death from the weakness of old age on to both soul and body. We completely destroy the vitality of many of them, so that as half-grown boys they dwindle into mere shadows, and we work towards destroying human nature in all of them by defying its laws, so that even if the animal life in man survives, his experience of human life with us will in the very power of youth be that of an unnatural old man who in his diary can merely describe and curse his daily slavery under the yoke of animal nature. This is by no means just an obsession of mine, nor in any way just a sad observation by qualified philanthropic doctors, particularly in England and America, but also a pervasive truth that daily experience and every page in modern history reveal and confirm to every open human eye. The fundamental mistake to which our school-

madness for boys' scholarship, or rather for the gods underground, can be traced, is, as the English doctors quite rightly observe, the opposition one imagines that exists between the body and the soul, so that what the body loses, the soul must win. Although this opposition has a little to do with Christianity as the conclusions that were drawn from it, nonetheless its letter and its shadow have undeniably served to sanctify both, inasmuch as after the school had laid us in the grave or at least deformed our healthy human nature and eroded our vitality, our fathers apparently consoled themselves with the thought that it was only the body that was being killed, only our completely depraved human nature that was being maltreated, and that as long as we had learned our catechism and our scripture as well as the next man, we had thereby obtained a title-deed to eternal life; and temporal death, far from separating us from it, was precisely the only road and desirable bridge to it. This superstition with a Christian appearance is now, I am sure, a long way from oppressing or comforting very many people in our time, but what our fathers ascribed to the sort of Christianity that can be learnt from books and forced into children is now generally ascribed to book-knowledge and mechanical reflection, so that they are supposed to be an everlasting gain for the soul, however useless or even damaging they may appear on earth to both body, and soul, to all the skilfulness that the life of man was predisposed towards, and to all the industry upon which our earthly welfare, cheerfulness and common sense obviously rest according to the will of providence and the nature of our being. Now wherever this unnatural partiality for death prevails, it surely does not seem very helpful to defend life in black and white or to enumerate the deadly sins of the school, but those of us who either by natural strength or particularly favourable circumstances retain enough human vitality to survive the illness and who see how the school works towards the destruction of the final remains of our glorious nature, so that all civilised nations must become slaves of their animal nature and of the barbarism around them, we cannot do other than testify, exhort and warn, first by speech and example as far as they go, and then by the pen, if for no other reason than to prove how dead and powerless are those letters for which people sacrifice the lives of their children and from which they expect eternal fruits. Nor is the position quite so desperate as it appears, and least of all in Denmark, where the so-called 'educated circles' are in fact more na-

tural at heart than they seem or dare to admit to themselves; so here it will be a rare event if someone really wished himself or his children to die of education and literary skill. Therefore, at least among us speech and writing will doubtless gain sufficient acceptance and so to speak general applause, to Death's chagrin and in the interest of life, as soon as the people learn to realise its purpose; and the fact that this is very difficult must not surprise us, since both we who speak and write and they who listen and read, precisely because we are right in our allegation of the demoralizing influence of the dead school system, cannot help having a great lack of vitality and being bunglers of our mother tongue. The feeling that we lack and are in urgent need of a School for Life, as we have also recently learnt from the loud voice of this people in both Roskilde and Viborg¹ must be very common in Denmark; so that when nevertheless more schools for death are asked for, it is obviously and simply a mistake, which can easily be explained partly by the lack of a clear-sighted eye for life, which the demand for schools presupposes, and partly by the gullibility of the Danes who will invariably accept it as an article of faith when, quite unlike the grammar school, which itself professes its pact with death, a school boldly pretends to be the straitened way which leadeth unto life². Therefore, the more we teach ourselves to speak and write naturally, clearly, plainly and cheerfully about this 'matter of life and death', the more the Danish and the living education, which we so much wish to replace the dead Latin one, will be understood and cherished. What makes the matter look desperate is obviously partly the genteel ambition of most Latinists both young and old, big and small, and partly the natural weakness of the Danes at logic. For genteel ambition resents the thought that a school education may not have been a giant stride forward to enlightenment but a step backward for life. Their weakness at logic, despite the strongest objections and everyday experience, easily dupes the Danes into believing that either in grammar or in mathematics a panacea is to be found which can cure it in the course of time, though by a method unintelligible to us. Obviously it is also absolute folly to believe that human nature, the life of a nation and its mother tongue would be able to win their case in a court thus constituted. But appearances deceive, and nowhere more so than in Denmark, for better or worse. So that just as here, contrary to our expectations, we have found many good things, so we will also find powerful

spokesmen for nature, life, and the mother tongue, even if all the spokesmen should wear women's clothes! Yes indeed, on that we can and must depend, that Danewoman³ and her daughters will soon learn how to understand us, even though we chatter away in a somewhat stilted and obscure way about life and about the definite advantages of resolute and vigorous industry and of a mother-tongue in all circumstances and in particular for 'everyday use', both in preference to mathematics and grammar, algebra, and lettering and all sorts of scholasticism; and when we have won over Danewoman, then we have won the kingdom's immortal Queen since the King will never for long have the heart to refuse her anything. In fact then we have won Denmark's heart, which the head could never bear to crush. This, which since it has its own deep, natural reasons will be found to hold good more or less everywhere, is so completely and absolutely the case in Denmark as scarcely anywhere else; so that here, when nobody else knows how a man is to be brought to see reason, his wife is sure to know, and among us there is hardly an old headmaster, much less a young teacher, that pretty girls could not easily teach to raise his mother tongue far above all dead languages. If only the woman here in Denmark realises that her language and all the enlightenment and education she can achieve, without learning either mathematics or Latin grammar, will under the old system be called coarseness and barbarism, then the old system will lapse of its own accord. I see this with my own eyes every time my wife, despite my express prohibition and my moving description of all the misery that can, and most likely, will follow, has cleared up and washed the windows in my study and compelled me so nicely to kiss her for it, whilst I scratch behind my ears and cannot deny that the room has become lighter and more attractive, and that the little things that can get mislaid are much easier to find than before, when everything was hidden in half-light under the dust and piles of paper. This is definitely what will happen to the studies inside the Danemen's heads, once Danewoman has courage to clean them up and wash their windows.

But is it not a form of treason to teach the admittedly fair, the kind, the captivating, the extremely ingenious at handling men, but nonetheless completely ungrammatical and unmathematical, unscientific, that is inherently spiritless, unreasoning and barbaric sex to realize its power or at least to make use of it in this matter of education, which until now they have in all modesty allowed men to

control? Is it not a blind physical power, and at that the strongest, most dangerous and most terrible we unite with to topple what we call a tyranny without having the least guarantee that it will not, in its blind activity, make bad worse and cast us headlong back into barbarism?

What I could and would say to this, if the fair sex we are talking about was not Danewoman and her true daughters, or if I was not just a little bit of a historian and nordic bard, I really do not know, but now the matter speaks for itself. For like all Denmark's serious poets I must thank Danewoman and her daughters for the fact that we did not have to emigrate like the North Americans⁴ to find readers, and as a historian I would claim that those members of the fair sex who abused their superiority to the detriment of the spirit and of life, it was not they who wished to unite with me, not the friends of naturalness and the mother-tongue and useful industry, but precisely the opposite kind, whilst Danewoman bore, and her daughters garlanded both the heroes who defended the kingdom against all barbarians, the bards who in every land are the natural priests of the national spirit, and the saga-tellers who penned records that told of their heroic deeds. Finally it must be added that it is by no means because of a lack of valid arguments against the school that fights nature, the life of the people and the mother tongue that I feel the need of assistance from the fair sex, but only because the unreasonable partiality for what is unnatural, for book-wormery and for dead languages defies all rational argument and can only be defeated by another and stronger natural love that sets life high above books and which is at one with the mother tongue. Only to show this, only to ensure my alliance with Danewoman and her daughters, to show the innocence of it and the beneficial consequences that the victory it promises must of necessity entail, only for this reason, and not in any way out of confidence in the effect of rational argument in the present circumstances, will I endeavour to show the necessity of a national civic high school for the people, which, far from spiritually outlawing Danewoman and wounding her deepest feelings, will appeal both to her head and to her heart.

I shall first attempt to state as clearly as possible what I understand by the School for Life since I have noticed that the majority have not only rather vague, but actually very wrong notions of such an institution, which unfortunately only exists at present as

an idea and on paper, with the result that it is always believed to be a literary laboratory where the rules are enjoined and inculcated, after which one must correct, improve and, in fact, transform one's life completely, the beginning of which is naturally a decomposition, that is, a death. This typically German fancy that life can and must be explained before it is lived, can and must be transformed by learned heads, this fancy, which must turn all the schools it establishes into workshops of decomposition and death where the worms live well at life's expense, this fancy I completely reject, and I maintain that if the school really is to be an educational institution for the benefit of life, it must first of all make neither education nor itself its goal but the requirements of life, and secondly it must take life as it really is and only strive to shed light on and promote its usefulness. For no school can create a new life in us, and it must therefore neither destroy the old one nor waste time developing rules which a different and better life would supposedly follow, if such were to be found.

As human life in all its complexity may nonetheless be classified into three main branches – the religious, the social and the scientific – so could one imagine three sorts of Schools for Life, namely the church school, the civic school and the grammar school, which must naturally have the same diversity as the corresponding life in society. But since it was only the civic school they expressed the lack of at Roskilde and Viborg, that is the one I will dwell on here, and that is so much the better since it is the only one that can be common to us all. We can and must all become educated and useful citizens, Danish citizens, but obviously only a few at a time can become professors and scholars; and as long as we do not delude ourselves that the church school can create a religious and Christian life where it does not exist, then we must of necessity conclude that we have enough church schools just as we have enough churches, for wherever life is lacking, its enlightenment is completely superfluous. Finally we have too many institutions rather than too few, too large rather than too small, in which to educate our clergy and our professors, whereas we have none at all in which to educate Danish citizens, so that even if all our educational institutions were admirable, and suitable as well, they would be exceedingly inadequate so long as we lacked a high school for the national and social life that we must all take part in, and must furthermore regard as the natural root and source of all endeavours, so that if *that* life

is disdained and neglected, all other education must be as dead in itself as it is deadening for the people and damaging for the kingdom.

I am well aware that this is a great heresy among the learned since the Latinists have to maintain that above all one must be on guard against Danish and all Danicisms if one is to become a good Latinist, and one must constantly get away from Danish barbarism to 'classical soil' if one is to be at home among the ancients. At the same time the mathematicians preach a pure scientific spirit that is really concerned with neither life nor death nor any sort of human activity and in itself is so universal and cosmopolitan in its application that it cannot possibly limit itself to any particular language or give special preference to the needs and interests of any individual nation or kingdom unless it is there that mathematics both pure and applied is given most study and widest scope. Without retracting my scientific heresy, which lies roughly equidistant from both creeds and proclaims the whole, great life of man and of the race, not excluding but embracing the life of the nations and the individual as the object and task of the true and living spirit of learning. I nevertheless wish here sedulously to avoid all learned controversy and only from my own position as a common citizen observe that the country and the people are very badly served by erudite men on their guard against their mother tongue, and not much better served by those who want everything to be measured and numbered. So they would do all countries a great service if they founded a 'Learned Republic' in New South Wales, or wherever else there is room, and either made Latin their mother tongue there or created a universal language in which they informed the world, by the first ship available, of their discoveries, be they in Latin grammar or pure mathematics or somewhere in between. They would doubtless have been given this advice a long while ago if people had not held the conviction that the dead languages, and particularly Latin grammar, were not only the source of all profound knowledge but also of the education that was desired for all state civil servants and required for the clergy, judges and so on and had not by now acquired the notion, to boot, that mathematics can perform miracles to improve and ennoble all social pursuits, whilst in passing it sharpens the intellect to explain absolutely everything.

Now to make this as short and as clear as possible I shall allow the fact to speak for itself as to whether the Danish clergy, judges

and so on, in order to become competent civil servants in their field, have to plough through Latin grammar in their childhood and write innumerable Latin proses, and later at university, in addition to text books in mathematics, astronomy, physics, practical and speculative philosophy still have to be taught, in the case of the clergy, to translate and explain the New Testament in Latin, and in the case of the judges to apply Roman Law to Danish conditions and translate and understand Danish Law in Latin. I allow all this to speak for itself, because the good cause will gain nothing from using my pen to attack so deeply-rooted a prejudice. But I confess that it is my firm conviction that all puerile learning is a monstrosity, and that bookwormery, segregation from the people, disregard of the mother tongue, and an idolization of Latin literature, which is inimical to all nations and kings and consists of eulogies over tyranny and rebellion, are the most inappropriate childhood learning for Royal Danish civil servants that I can imagine!

But suppose now that I was utterly mistaken in thinking this, so that I myself had to thank Latin grammar and proses classical reading and Latin exegesis of the New Testament for my being able to become the sound Danish priest and patriot I fancy myself to be. Even so it is nevertheless obviously not through Latin grammar, proses and going to school that one comes to love Denmark or becomes familiar with the people and its mother tongue, so there is at least one gap in our system for educating Danish civil servants who are to have an active influence on the life of the Danish society and people, as especially the church and judicial civil servants must. This gap could presumably not be filled by anything less than a high school for the Danish national and social life, where the mother tongue was sovereign and everything was concerned with the King, the nation, and the land of our fathers. Furthermore, even if one were to claim that a close acquaintance with Latin, a language the total opposite of Danish, and a general knowledge Rome, that tyrannical enemy of kings and nations, was the best preparation for a preference for all things Danish and close familiarity with them, since contraries forced together throw one another into relief (*opposita juxta posita magis illucescunt*) nevertheless, it cannot be denied that it is a hazardous venture to stop halfway and merely trust to luck that a Danish culture will be the result, which will place Latin in its proper, hateful, and abhorrent light. For if that does not happen, we are obviously more un-

suitable as Royal Danish civil servants the more we learn to write and speak Latin, and the more completely we have grasped and the more deeply we have acquired the Roman outlook, mode of thought, and way of speech, which are not just totally foreign to the Danes' nature, mother tongue, and environment, but are actually inimical to them. I myself have spent at least thirty years getting Rome and Latin out of my system to the extent that you can see and hear, and that in many respects with modest success even though I have really had nothing else to do and have seldom been idle. So if it should be found appropriate in future to let the Royal Danish civil servants take this dangerous Appian or Latin way round to the Danishness they least of all can do without, then the homeward journey from classical soil and the conversion from the Roman mode of thought and the Latin style must be made easier for them in every possible way if the majority of them, even with the best of intentions towards their fatherland, are not to remain alien to it and incapable of sharing, much less governing the life of the nation. If therefore a royal Danish high school should not be considered necessary for any other people in the kingdom it is nonetheless absolutely necessary for the time being for the Latinists born and bred, who, if the discharge of their office is to be beneficial, must both think and speak Danish, and love and know our native land and its constitution better than any, but for one thing they cannot do this unless they come into living contact and interaction at a high school with a number of their contemporaries who know only Danish but who from experience know a greater or smaller area of the fatherland, the national and social life far better than can be described in any book, least of all the Latinists'. Furthermore, future civil servants will have great need of such a living education in the mother tongue and of a living acquaintance with the people and the country, even when, as we hope will happen in future, they have received an elementary education which was in no way hostile to the Danish way of life but in the kindest possible way related to it. For even when we in the North come to reject civil servants who are Latin stylists, classical thinkers and Roman orators, as I sincerely hope and trust we shall, the elementary knowledge of the Bible and its original language that is expected of a priest, and the acquaintance with laws and decrees that is expected of a judge, will require a certain amount of book-work by way of preparation, which, when pursued with diligence at a young age always results in a cer-

tain self-conceit, an alienating stiffness, an erudite manner and an inflexibility which in themselves would make the interaction at a folk high school almost a necessity. If this is the case now with all the Royal Danish civil servants, who, in order to be proficient and genuinely useful, must be servants of the people as well as of the monarch, how much more is it the case for all those who wish to prepare themselves suitably for the higher ecclesiastical and temporal posts, which of necessity have a great influence over general and fundamental acts of government! How absolutely necessary it is for them to have a living knowledge of the people and the country as they now are, together with as clear a view as possible of what they have been and may reasonably become. This knowledge and this view are necessary at all times if they are not to misdirect the aspirations of the people and the interests of the country. In fact they are doubly necessary now and in the near future, since first the Roman Church and Papal Law for four centuries and then the Latin School and Roman Law for three have sapped the strength of the people, disheartened the life of the people, inflated and complicated the legislation, restricted the equally inalienable freedom of the King and the people, and damaged in us all both high and low the naturalness of our way of thought and the purity of our mother tongue, from which they will never perhaps quite recover. In such circumstances, where we cannot assess completely the damage that alien and hostile elements have done to the country, much less repair it in a moment or a generation even with the best will in the world. We can easily see that even if we limited ourselves to a consideration merely of the education of higher civil servants, a Danish folk high school where we endeavoured to make the interaction between the young people of the country as great and as living as possible, would still be absolutely necessary for a brighter future.

But if a Danish folk high school as royal, free and popular as possible is necessary for the education of civil servants, can it be less so for the great majority of the people who neither will nor can become civil servants but who must support them as well as themselves? That the root and branch of the nation, its tenants and freeholders great and small, its artisans of all kinds, its sailors and businessmen, need no other enlightenment or education than what they can gain behind a plough, in the workshop, at the mast and in the grocer's shop, that may be what barbarians and tyrants believe, but it was never the Nordic way of thinking among the

kings or the people and never could be, because it holds true here more than anywhere that we are all of 'one blood', so that the same educational ability is to be found in the poor man's cabin as in the rich man's mansion. This natural equality, which is now to be found really only in the Nordic countries where no foreigner has forced his way in and enslaved the former inhabitants, we cannot cherish enough since it is capable of giving our love of the fatherland a greater depth and the education of the people a greater truth than would otherwise be possible. And even if our, on the whole, dismal history of education had no other bright spot, still it is undeniable that such a bright spot was the school that from the Reformation onwards and especially since 1660 liberated and, so to speak, ennobled the boy from the most wretched hovel so that he could have a chance to develop to the full and rise to the highest offices. So only just recently, for example, the son of a smallholder in Funen⁵ became, not only our greatest grammarian, but one of Europe's greatest philologists, and if his philology lacked the life and spirit to vanquish all the temptations of grammar and dead alphabetic lore, then it was obviously only the Latin school that had weakened him. So if there were no other people under the sun who deserved a folk high school in their mother tongue there would still be the Danes, and if no other people could expect its government's solicitude for popular enlightenment and patriotic education, then the Danes would, whose paternal kings in this as in all solidarity with the people have long been the models that Europe wanted all kings to imitate. However, should there still exist the smallest doubt as to the Danish people being worthy of an education after its heart, or as to the Danish King's recognition of and paternal solicitude for this, then this doubt would be defeated if not gloriously then at least gladly by the free voice of the people that King Frederik the Blissful called forth in the ancient capitals of Zealand and Jutland¹⁶. For it is as clear as daylight that a widespread patriotic enlightenment is needed in our day to make the voice of the people confident and civilised, and it goes without saying that there is no request to which His Majesty would rather lend his ear than to the request for a folk and civic high school for Life. For it is the Age of the Intellect we live in, and that does not mean that people are now born with all the intelligence they need, but that each of us has a great urge to go by his own mind with the result that wrong-headed nations have never done so much harm

as they do now and will continue to do so if we do not make provision in time for a general education, especially in social matters, that can gather most of the good brains under one hat, that is, under the gold crown on the people's head that is the paternal crown of the monarch. Such an education, however, will also be a success to some degree wherever in Christendom it is diligently promoted, and I am certain that nowhere will it succeed better than here in the North, and hardly anywhere so completely as in Denmark, which, comparatively speaking, is never disturbed by great passions but has her hereditary enemies in the apathy and gullibility, which will only leave the day to the enemy when education is neglected or is of the wrong kind. Now education is never neglected in Denmark, comparatively speaking, but it has hitherto clearly been on the wrong track as it made the mistake of attempting to teach all of us every bit of German knowledge about the heavens and logic, and the civil servants also Roman knowledge of the world, but no common sense about what lies nearest to us: about our own nature, conditions in the fatherland, and what is best for the common interest, which, after all, is not only what in social terms is the 'one thing needful'⁷, but also probably the only thing the average Daneman is capable of understanding. It is no wonder therefore, but a consequence, as logical as it is regrettable of the said mistake that most people in Denmark feel and admit they have no understanding of earthly, real-life and social matters outside their own position, occupation, and branch of trade, and that nearly all the so-called understanding of natural and social matters in general, at least as practised in Denmark, is false. For according to the traditional path we have taken it must as a rule be either the Roman or the German mode of thought about the nature of man, the social conditions and the general good that we have endeavoured to promote, which Daneman has usually been very poor at, and when he has had great success, it has given rise to the most dangerous misconception. For even if the Roman and German mode of thought had created as much accord and social happiness on their native soil as history teaches us they created the opposite, they would nevertheless amongst such an unRoman and unGerman people as the Danish have done nothing but damage. However, it is only a little misery that such a wholly alien mode of thought about natural and social matters has created compared with what it would do and be bound to do from now on, misleading or defying the free

voice of the people if a living, natural, and patriotic education does not soon banish the alien way of thought amongst the majority and leave it powerless amongst the rest, that is, harmless from a social point of view. But in an Age of Intellectualism such a gentle and beneficial enlightenment must increase in Denmark by the law of nature as soon as the opportunity is made available, since all living understanding or understanding of life is nothing more than a feeling within us that moves into the light and becomes aware of itself, and when Danemen reach an understanding that corresponds to that feeling which the gentlest, most peaceful and most loyal nation has displayed over the centuries, what mortal would not envy the King of the Danes his good fortune, and who would wish to live and see good times and not want to live in Denmark! Where else in the world should it be either more immediately recognized or more gladly agreed that a nation's happiness does not rest, as nearly all foreigners think, on the fact that it legislates for itself, but on the fact that the Law is 'fair and proper'⁸ and that the government has both the honour of making and the power to uphold such laws. Where else in the world, I ask confidently, should this important truth, so generally misunderstood in our time as to bring misery to nations and sovereigns alike, be more immediately recognized and more heartily agreed to than in the country where the people with keen awareness of its significance solemnly handed on to the King unlimited power for paternal use. And where else, I ask again, would it be more certain that an absolute monarch would take pride in using his absolute power in a paternal way by adapting all the laws and institutions according to the enlightened nature of the people and the general good; where more certain than in the very country where the people's nature is the life source of royal power and where the absolute monarch, after thousands of demonstrations of his paternal care, crowned the work by voluntarily electing the voice of the people to his council. Truly in Denmark, where the ear of the people was raised to the royal mouth and the royal ear was lowered to the mouth of the people, there are, with the one exception of a natural patriotic education, all the conditions necessary on earth for the greatest social happiness, so that such an enlightenment here must of necessity be to the honour and happiness of both the King and the people, provided Heaven adds its blessing. And where, I finally ask, can the effort towards a gentle and friendly education of the nature which God Himself has

created and of the conditions which His providence has ordained one be surer of Heaven's blessing than where as in Denmark it descended visibly, and averted a thousand dangers and allayed all our misfortunes, while we strayed from the old Royal Road and groped either for what hung too high above us or for what was not worth owning.

At this point, mindful of Denmark's good earth and lucky star, I would prefer to end my consideration of our need for a folk high school, which would in no way have been less even if we had not had it in common with any other nation in the world, and of the bright prospects it would open up for a domestic and social happiness which, should it be found to be without equal will thereby become only the more inestimable. I would prefer to end in order to turn to the gratifying consideration that when His Majesty, who desires everything that can serve to make Denmark happy, ventures to believe that a royal Danish folk high school would serve that purpose, then at that very moment it is ours, admittedly very imperfect, as everything human on this earth must be at first, but yet real, with the capacity for total perfection. As I say, I would prefer to end now, but I dare not do so before I have expressed as kindly and frankly as I can, my convictions concerning the school curriculum for life which *appears* to have the voice of the people behind it even though it assuredly has both the nature of the people and the experience of history against it.

The school that I have in mind is the secondary Boys' School, which is just as strongly scientifically based on mathematics as the grammar school is based on the dead languages, a school which with a smile at the German professor's understanding of the welfare of society I would pass over in silence, were it not for the fact that this terrible workshop for the death of society seems to be vociferously extolled by the voice of our people as the School for Life that we needed, but which I have now been near despairing of. For no writer can feel more deeply than I the impotence of his pen when set against the voice of the people or what passes for it, so if this new secondary school did not stand in the way of the Danish folk high school I would much rather pretend that I had not seen it at all, and leave it to experience and the high school to correct the people's voice or clear up the misunderstanding. Now on the contrary, I simply have to endeavour to show that such a mathematics boys' school cannot possibly in any way take the place of the

Danish folk high school or achieve a single one of the latter's beneficial effects.

Confining myself to this point I wish only to remark in passing that if the grammar school for boys is inappropriate for intending professors and a great misery for practical civil servants, then the mathematics boys' school must be equally inappropriate even for intending professors and a great misery for industrious citizens. In passing I will only add that the damage a country suffers at the hands of perversely educated civil servants, however great that damage may be, is only a trifle compared with the misery of warped commoners, who either cannot be bothered to work or can only be bothered to read, do sums on a slate, draw figures and make logical conclusions. For it simply must be remembered that it will never do to split a nation up into nothing but professors, civil servants, and paupers, unless they can all literally feed on air. Finally, I wish only to point out in passing the unassailable fact that the English and every nation that has been successful in social industry and prosperity did not reach their goal by using mathematics boys' schools, but by using only what is incompatible with them: the desire for physical activity, a good grip on their practical work and a longing from childhood for an independent position, whilst the High Germans, in spite of their scientific ennoblement of the day-to-day pursuits and the branches of trade, have watched both their industry and their prosperity decrease and have seen the preference for safe positions at public expense, even if the living was to be sought in prison, spreading from day to day. For I am more than certain that if one could get on proper speaking terms with the Danemen no one would come to learn more easily the lesson that even if mathematics was for all other nations both Fortunatus's purse and the philosopher's stone and source of joy, it would still not be either of these things for them. But in the course of more than thirty years as a writer I have been completely cured of the delusion that one can talk to people by writing books, even if they are read much more than most of mine, and therefore I only point out in passing what may indeed be the chief concern of the 'precious few' but what may well to the majority here sound as double Dutch.

On the other hand it seems to me as clear as daylight that even if the mathematics boys' school should be just as admirable a roundabout way to industry in society as the grammar school

was believed to be for civil servant efficiency in Denmark, it would nonetheless still be so only for those who passed through it, and that must without a doubt darken our eyes when we consider what so many mathematics boys' schools would cost that would just accommodate the sons of all our townspeople, whilst in the rural areas the majority still remains, which is surely not to tarry in barbarism. It is equally clear, I believe, that however admirable a roundabout way to industry in society it might be to undergo the purgatory of mathematics, it was only so when the boys escaped intact, put all their sums and scientific demonstrations on the shelf, banged all the bookworm mentality out of their heads, put diligence on with their everyday clothes and eagerly got to grips with their respective trades. For if they did not, they were qualified at the very most to be professors of mathematics or teachers in schools of that sort, by which method we should acquire on a much larger scale a cycle just like that of the grammar school – of school attendance, examinations, getting a safe job – which must drain the resources of even the richest country let alone the poorest. Experience teaches, however, that it is no easy matter when one has spent or misspent one's childhood years in a schoolroom with books and slates, pen and ink and all sorts of high jinks, and in general led a sloppy, lazy life at the expense of others, to take hold of the hammer and tongs, axe and saw, or rope and tar barrels with eager energy, or generally gain proficiency in and feel happy with the so-called 'coarse work', the lower position and way of life, as regular as it is simple, which industry and prosperity in society demand, so I doubt whether even the best Danish folk high school will manage to convert the mathematics boys to promising young men in the practical social sense, and that it will be extremely necessary in such cases, is for me incontestable. However, suppose it was otherwise, suppose that by a miracle mathematics trained the boys in diligence, modesty and moderation, it would still hardly awaken or nourish their love of the fatherland, make them acquainted with the life of the people or add those years to their age which they must necessarily muster in order that they may reason with us about human nature and society in a way that is beneficial rather than harmful, so that when one had been through the mathematics school as a boy, one would still greatly be in need of a folk high school in one's youth, and in fact would usually need it very badly since the more one strives to develop a boy's reason the

more one produces and encourages a self-opinionatedness and misunderstanding of real life, of which in his limited experience he is ignorant.

Nevertheless, I might as well break off now, since however crystal clear all this seems to me, who with a strong Nordic bent have endeavoured for thirty years to get rid of the whole, foreign, artificial way of thought, my pen is all the same unlikely to make it clear to the reading public, who are deeply imbedded in the Roman way of thought, usually without noticing that it only has coherence when one regards the 'educated people' as a flock of Romans who have all the rest of the world as slaves and are completely useless to a nation without slaves who must eat their bread with sweat on their brows and can only afford to support civil servants and intellectuals if also their lives and efforts contribute to the general good and will only have a mind to do so in the Age of Intellectualism when general education of the people will continue to improve their appreciation of society and weigh up against one another the advantages and difficulties of the various occupations while they gain an education that ennobles them and enchances even the lowest. These days we shout ourselves hoarse for freedom and education, and that is indubitably what we all are in need of, but the proposals for these things all have the same fundamental flaw in them as Plato's Republic, where the guardians of freedom and education themselves swallow up both, so that the people, for all their hard work, are given only the shadows of all the virtue and all the beauty to embrace, but are in fact given proud tyrants to obey, to feed, and, if it can be of any comfort to them, to admire and idolize.

Notes

1. Grundtvig refers to the advisory assemblies mentioned in the introduction p. 65.
2. Matthew 7.14.
3. The Danish equivalent of Danewoman contains a pun with Danish and a homonymous word meaning honourable.
4. Grundtvig refers to Washington Irving's long sojourn in Europe.
5. Rasmus Rask (1787-1832) is a Danish scholar of languages who was the first to draw attention to the Germanic sound shift (1814) and who is recognized as one of the founders of the comparative study of languages in the 19th century.

6. Grundtvig refers to King Frederik VI of Denmark.
7. Luke 10.42.
8. "Fair and proper" is a quotation from the preamble of the medieval Jutlandic Law.

The Danish High School²⁶

1847

Translated by JOHANNES KNUDSEN

I presume that I need not ask the reader to forget what I have previously written about this subject. I am sure he has never read it, and if he has, he has forgotten it without my encouragement. What I have written has never become a reality, for the world was against it. Nevertheless, I will request that the readers who remember what I wrote in "The Four-Leaf Clover" or "The School for Life" or "Prayer and Concept of a Danish High School" do what I have done: forget about it for the time being! The task is no longer that of convincing the government or my fellow citizens that we should undertake this effort; nor is it the task of disarming opponents. The task is not to show *how* the Danish high school, whose establishment His Majesty paternally has determined and royally commanded, can become a really new institution, unequaled in its quality, for the good of the people and the country, i.e., for the common good of all true Danes, from castle to cottage. Although we so-called scientists, full- or part-time schoolteachers, book-writers, journalists, and above all tutorial drillmasters, critics, and reviewers, characteristically could not associate anything other than books and literary activity of our own making with the idea of a high school, His Danish Majesty, who creates a folk high school open to all, must necessarily think of the advantages to all of the people and all of the country. We do not need more academicians in Denmark, nor should a rational government wish for more book reviewers or stewards than crop up by themselves. Last of all could His Majesty desire to govern an entire people of so-called scientists, stewards, and reviewers. Although the image of a "learned republic," as

26. A section of the essay "Congratulations to Denmark on the Danish Blockhead and the Danish High School."

concocted by Holberg²⁷ or as current stardust, might seem even more attractive than a kingdom of the people, such a learned republic could never be a peaceful, lasting, flowering, and happy *Danish* kingdom, and the latter must, as a matter of course, be the goal of His Danish Majesty. By the establishment of a Danish high school such a kingdom will be brought about, certified, and undergirded. However, if the people and the country did not have the disposition and the resources for this kingdom, no high school or any other institution could create it, regardless of its wise character. The enlightenment of a people and the formation of its culture is a great work of art of whose magnitude the majority has no real concept. With the exception of the art of warfare, which is in itself destructive, every art, to be successful, must build on nature and must expect more from this source than from itself. Therefore, only because I know that the Danish nature is profound, rich, and fruitful in the sense desired by the king and all enlightened friends of the kingdom, I congratulate the king and Denmark on the occasion of the establishment of the Danish high school. I have only one prefacing remark, namely, that it becomes a really Danish school. It must never suppress, alter, or reconstitute the nature of the Danish people, but it must, by all efforts and by all means, to the best of its ability, be of assistance to this nature, so that this may gain strength, courage, and light and so that it may use the opportunity for movement, development, unfolding, and clarification.

The Danish high school must necessarily teach "the language, history, statistics, political science, legislation, and administration of the fatherland," but this is not enough. All this could easily take place in a stiffly formal, deadly, and boring, or even so un-Danish a manner that the school became an empty shadow or a national plague. Of shadows and plagues we have an abundance without the establishment of high schools.

At every high school of the people, which lives up to its name or which would be worth establishing even in the middle of Germany, the people and the home country must not be approached from the point of view of learning or of academic chairs, but rather from the

27. Ludvig Holberg, 1684-1754, gave a satirical description of the "learned republic" in *Niels Klim*.

requirements of life itself, and this means the life of the people. There must be concern for the very core of this life, its natural conditions, its diverse vocations, requirements, and industries. There must be an effort to seek whatever knowledge of country and circumstances would be possible and desirable, useful and enjoyable for all those who love their country and who have an average intelligence. Only then can we be sure that we are addressing all the people when we speak to them in their own tongue. Whether or not the impression they gain would be ephemeral or lasting, the effort would always be made with the right approach and for the good of people and country. . . .

What we therefore must seek to accomplish at every high school of the people is that all young men who attend and who already have found a vocation of their choice and competence could return to their task with increased desire, with clearer views of human and civic conditions particularly in their own country, and with an increased joy in the community of the people. This would encourage participation in all great and good things that have been achieved by their people and would continually be achieved.

In a human community there is always the obvious danger of inner dissolution, increasing conflict, and growing dissatisfaction with one's lot in life. Thus it is today, and the high schools of the people will therefore be both a necessity and a great help, inasmuch as their aim is to enliven and strengthen that love for country and that sense of community which ennobles and elevates as well as pacifies. The need is no less great in Denmark, where the ancient community of the people and the great love of country are the only profound sources of folk-life. Although we have done much in our blindness to block them, it is to be hoped that these sources will be inexhaustible. As soon as our eyes are opened we must hasten to reopen the fountains and, as far as possible, direct our efforts toward the ultimate limits in time and space of our domain. We must furthermore remember that even the minimum of that scientific attitude which would be essential in Germany would frighten Danish people away from the high schools. If we continue that game of playing schoolmaster, which is our constant temptation, we will irreparably harm the Danish high schools.

All this will become more evident when we consider seriatim the

items mentioned in the royal decree about the Danish high school and the shape it must have in order to be suitable for Danish folk-life and useful for all situations. Too often our schools emphasize the benefits to individuals, even when these might be harmful to many, and thus we do more harm than good.

The *language of the country* is the first item mentioned by the king. This is right, because the mother tongue has decisive significance in all human education, even the most advanced, and because it has been downgraded as nowhere else in the cultured world. Although neither Germany, England, France, or Italy have duly appreciated their mother tongue for its value to humanity, the natural self-centeredness of these peoples, their great numbers, and other circumstances have prevented the neglect, abuse, and discard of their own language which is our situation. . . .

I know well enough that such talk about the mother tongue gives offense to many intellectuals, but this merely demonstrates that they are bunglers in their own language, despite their claim that they are great lights. In other countries intellectuals are well aware that they fall short when they do not master their own language. They know well enough that the mother tongue is a living expression of the unique character of a people, so that all the originality of even a genius has its root here. The cost involved is the very life of the people, when the mother tongue is scorned, suppressed, and downgraded so that it is used only in practical, everyday matters, used only in academies to introduce foreign and dead languages, as is the case with us, and constantly ridiculed because it expresses foreign niceties in a crude manner. The consequence will soon be that few people, or none at all, will be able to use the mother tongue in speaking or writing and that it will become a faint shadow of a foreign language. Then it will be dead and buried and it will float around like a spook. If our Danish mother tongue is not miraculously revived, it will soon be extinct.

Inasmuch as the mother tongue is the soul of the people, and inasmuch as its speech unites us with the people or separates us from it, the use and treatment of and information about the mother tongue is a major concern of the Danish high school. . . .

Books and book-learning will have to play a greater role, especially at the start, than they deserve. . . . This is readily admitted

by one who, contrary to all his vexation at printed matters, nevertheless has his nose in a book early and late. . . .

Quite naturally our *ballads*, our *proverbs*, and *maxims*, with all their Danish imagery, their wisdom and innocent jest, must first of all be revived, dusted off, launched, and promoted, if we yet master them, or if we can discover their valuable property in hidden corners. . . .

Good Danish *books*, contemporary or future, which can be recommended to young people, will undoubtedly be promoted at the high school without my recommendation. I will therefore merely state that we need not fear that the Danish people will not ask for pens that "further their cause" when they learn to use their ears and their tongues. I must warn, however, that damage can be done when people are frightened by an abundance of books or when they are goaded to read them. . . .

The *history of the fatherland* is mentioned in the royal decree immediately after the language, and this is right. At the Danish high school the history of Denmark quite naturally will suit the mother tongue, but it will not be easy to get started. . . .

The matter in a nutshell is this: for the people the chronicle of the fatherland is neither more nor less than the "recollection of the fathers." This is the living narrative from mouth to mouth, from generation to generation, about the remarkable things that have happened in the country and to the country. The depth of love which a people has for its country can be measured by the living flow of this narrative with its high and low tides. . . .

I believe that the *statistics of our country* should be called "Denmark's mirror" at the Danish high school, or at least something similar. We should never burden people with foreign words, for they meet these too often. Statistics has no real place in the high school program, even when it is used rightly. It gives a static rather than a dynamic picture of the condition of the country. . . .

The *constitution of the country* has been a bone of contention for some time.²⁸ and it is quite remarkable that the royal decree included it as an item of study in the Danish high school. All friends

28. Denmark was yet a year or two away from its first democratic constitution.

of king and people must rejoice, however, for the Danish constitution is not a child of darkness but of light. The constitution can stand the light and like all living things it needs the light for a strong and fruitful development. . . .

The *legislation of the country*, as far as it concerns the common affairs of its citizens, is also mentioned in the royal decree as a course of instruction at the Danish high school. This is right, for it is important that every citizen in his total activity has knowledge of that part of the law that pertains to all. It is therefore doubly necessary that all those who are called for counsel on legislation have a clear view of the country's legislation and justice in order to express the will of the people in current legislation or in the revision of laws. . . .

Finally, *administration and municipal affairs* are mentioned in the royal decree as a course of instruction at the Danish high school. Such foreign terms are not in favor and they really belong under the study of statistics, or "Denmark's mirror," but they are still a matter of concern and need daily elucidation. The newly established national councils, county councils, and parish councils now parallel the function of state departments, county prefects, and sheriffs, and the opportunity for conflicts and confusion has grown. . . .

The danger of all precipitous and sweeping change is the inevitable clash of old and new, but the danger is even greater that the needs of a new order²⁹ are not discovered and supplied in time to prevent the disorder that will occur in traditional arrangements. . . . The first and great step will have been taken, however, by the establishment of a true Danish high school, and the second step will come when the Danish high school is combined with a nursery³⁰ for civil servants. These officials have many areas of activity in common with the people, and their education should be related to the people. No one should have spiritual or physical power without genuine appropriation. The Latin school and the university are the most unfortunate training grounds for civil servants. Such an expansion can readily be made, would inconvenience no one, and would do much good for all.

29. Representative democracy.

30. Training institute.

The Speech before the Constitutional Assembly 1848

Translated by ERNEST D. NIELSEN

It is in my mind's eye an extraordinary right that His Majesty has accorded all Danish *Rigsdagsmaend*,³¹ when he empowered these men, who are accountable to the king and the people, orally and publicly to direct questions to his counselors. Precisely for this reason it is my earnest desire that both the Ministry and the entire, distinguished Assembly may understand that when I today, for the first time, exercise this right it is in no way personal, but a question affecting the people as a whole which I, as a *Rigsdagsmand*, address to the Ministry. This must of necessity be my most deep desire; yet, the destiny, accident, or whatever else we choose to call that inscrutable power, which especially this year³² appears to have played its game with all peoples, has willed that the question which I today place before the Ministry of Denmark's educational system because of the high school in Sorø very easily may be construed as absolutely one of the most personal questions that possibly could be raised in the House. Therefore, I ask the honorable Minister and the entire distinguished Assembly to give me your kind attention as I strive to throw light on the subject of the importance to the people of the question which I intend to present today. Indeed, I dare presuppose this courteous attentiveness; for if I did not dare to make such an assumption I would be compelled to find myself completely useless here in the House. I am now an old, definitely independent person who does not belong to any of today's political parties. I am here in the *Rigsdag* solely for the purpose of speaking with old Danish simplicity and courage in behalf of the cause of freedom, the common life, and education; not, however, in that indefinite, gen-

31. Members of the Constitutional "Rigsdag" or Assembly.

32. 1848 was a year of revolution in Europe.

eral way which is currently popular and espoused by more than enough spokesmen, but to speak in behalf of this cause in its relation to time and place, its relation to Denmark and to the past and present condition of the people.

The high school in Sorø, which I am inquiring about, is, of course, the institution which King Christian VIII established during the last year of his reign [1847]; and he devoted his very last thoughts to this school which, however, seems to have been buried with him in his grave. In accordance with his thoughts and decision, the high school was intended, on the one hand, to open the door for greater freedom in the study of the sciences than hitherto has been practiced here in Copenhagen; and, on the other hand, it should provide opportunity for all young people, regardless of class or occupation, to acquire a better foundation for the study of the mother tongue, and better instruction in subjects about their country and everything Danish than that which, up to the present, has been available through any publicly sponsored educational opportunity in this country.

It is this type of high school that I am inquiring about; thereby not implying, however, that I for my part believe that scholarship at our university or any of the other existing universities is practiced as independently and with that regard to the public good which the times require and I could wish. However, that question is not at all before us; I am under no mandate to speak to it. Even if my personal connection with the school in Sorø, or with the idea about the school, were to be brought up, which is unnecessary here, it never has been my thought or my proposal that the two should be mixed.

Succinctly stated, the object is an educational institution for all young people. It was decided that such an educational institution should be established in Sorø where the existing physical facilities are fully adequate for its realization and present a befitting royal appearance. Naturally, people will ask whether such an educational institution for all young people ought to be founded. This school will aim at awakening their national consciousness, nourishing their love of country, instructing them in related areas at an early stage, and teaching them whenever feasible that we all, individually and

collectively, and regardless of our social rank and occupation, belong to one people and as such have one mother, one destiny, and one purpose. It is obvious, therefore, that such a school, when it is nowhere to be found in a country, becomes the people's fervent desire, becomes something deeply wished for by those individuals who are becoming conscious of the indigenoussness of the people; an awareness deeply felt precisely at a moment of time, which, like the present, constitutes a turning point—the greatest that can happen to a people.

It is a turning point which certainly is clear to all in this Assembly. We have been summoned here, as we know, to deliberate on a new constitution, that is, a new political foundation for the whole nation. Furthermore, we are called together also to deliberate on how to restore order once the old class distinctions have been abolished, and to envision how all may work together in a common spirit for the good of all. Yet, we must clearly recognize that among us, as with every other people in Christendom, it is not the majority only but even we ourselves who lack the clarity and the confidence which obviously are needed if this otherwise great task—the rebirth of a people—is to succeed.

Speaking in general terms, there surely is no question but that such an institution for the people's enlightenment, like that which was intended to be opened in Sorø, is well devised to meet the need of the times. Therefore, I am justly amazed, indeed, that the former responsible Minister of Denmark's school system at the very outset decided to let the idea lie dormant instead of effecting its realization. Unless all the rumors are false, it was his intention to close down the school completely. For this reason, I hope that the entire distinguished Assembly and the honorable Minister will recognize that even if I had not had the least part in developing the idea which should have been implemented, I still would have had the explicit obligation as well as the right to submit a question. The important question which I address to the present Minister, if it seem reasonable to him, is whether he plans to promote or hinder such an educational institution from being established.

Assuredly, I do not deny that in making this inquiry I am speak-

ing with great warmth and seriousness of feeling and, I may add, with great anxiety for the awaited answer, because this institution has been my cherished idea throughout a whole generation. It not only has been a subject close to my heart but one that I have reflected upon continuously. Surely, this is not, I think, unpatriotic. What other reason can I give for this heartfelt concern and reflection but that I am an old friend of the people and an old friend of the rural people. Consequently, I sincerely hope that Denmark's farmers not only may be praised for their self-restraint but may have the good fortune quietly to deliberate and discuss what, above all, concerns them; next, that they may reflect and express their views on general issues which may be for the common good of the entire people, while the rest of us are tempted to be attentive to that which is in the best interest—if not of any particular station in life or class, then, surely, in the interest of a particular vocation, a particular science, or field of knowledge.

I dare say this because the educational institution which King Christian VIII definitely spoke about and promised me the last time I saw his face, that institution, even if it were not to be organized in every respect as I hoped, was intended to be open to all regardless of station in life or occupation; its open door policy would have eliminated any painful entrance interview and required no entrance examination.

Regardless of my personal involvement in the destiny of this institution, I take the view that my involvement is a necessary obligation. Not only have I fathered the idea of the school throughout a long span of years, but I had hoped to devote my advanced years to the realization of the idea by contributing all my energy to that end. It was my hope that I also should see the high school founded by the king. He gave his royal word that regardless of what might happen, I should be given the opportunity at Sorø, in my advancing years, freely to prove whether the idea of the school was, as many believed, a brainstorm, a poet's dream, or whether it was in the people's best interest that such a school be established.

It is still worthwhile, I believe, to prove whether it is possible to create and nurture all indigenous, patriotic, and inspirational educa-

tion open to all despite all the differences which, in so many ways, are observable both in our occupations and in our ways of thinking. Yet, there are boundary lines where we all meet, areas of common concern about which we all ought to be sufficiently enlightened and even as commensurately zealous in order to promote the common good for the benefit of the people and for the success of the nation.

A Letter Concerning the Folk High School to Peter Larsen Skraeppenborg in Dons

January 1854

Translated by JOHANNES KNUDSEN

I like this, said the preacher; they gave his children money. This is an old saying, as you, my old friend, must know. It is appropriate right now, for I like that you will not only give money but lots of it to the high school which my friends are helping me to establish. This is one of "my children," and when it is given birth it will be regarded by me in the most fatherly way.

What I like less, or rather not at all, is the fact that you have a dark and suspicious view of my intentions with the high school and the usefulness it might have. You may have valid reasons for this questioning, but neither old nor young authors appreciate it when their opinions are questioned after they have written books to make them plain.

What can we do about it? Is it reasonable to expect that a short letter can clarify what is still vague for one of my oldest, most diligent, and competent readers, despite my industry in books and journals? And you are in as basic agreement with me concerning human living and its rightful application as few others within or without Denmark.

I cannot be certain, of course, but a frank and "open letter," which is also a letter to a friend, gives more encouragement and opportunity for an author to express his opinion frankly and clearly than a general letter to everyone. In the latter case an author is not certain to whom he writes, about what his readers agree with him, or what language they are familiar with in a discussion of human matters. It is therefore worth a try to give you a satisfactory answer about the matter of a high school. I hope that this answer will proceed through your voice to the ears of many whom I cannot reach with my voice and for whom my pen is useless.

I will start with your assumption that the purpose of my high school was to teach young people to use their reason. You claim that this is important, inasmuch as it is undoubtedly terribly neglected in all other schools, where it is hampered more than promoted by rote learning and alphabetism.

The expression "to use one's reason" is not a favorite with me. I do not choose it or promote it in my writing about either church or school. In both of these situations it is commonly used to give voice to a view of human living and education which is far from mine.³³ I dare even say that this deviates from the truth or from the view of the Lord. I know, however, that when you use the expression and when it is commonly used by the people you mean to say that we must use common sense and consideration. This is exactly what I desire and hope that the young people will be encouraged to do at my high school and that they will be given better direction than they would at other high schools. This merely means that I intend to establish a real and decent school. It means that this school thereby becomes a Danish high school of the people. A school is not a real school if it does not promote common sense and consideration. It makes a great deal of difference, however, *for what and how* common sense and consideration are applied. Furthermore, "common sense and consideration" do not represent the *whole man*, and it is for the sake of the *whole man* that we need schools and churches. Whether I consider the educational program from the "purely human" side, which in my style is called the "Christian" side, or whether I consider it from the side of the Danish people, I conclude that we badly need a new school for our young men. I call this a "high school," not as a matter of pride or conceit but to indicate that this must be, in a decent manner, a free school for adults. It must strive to awaken, nourish, and clarify a higher concept of human living in general than is commonly held, and specifically of the life of the Danish people and the Danish citizen.

Dear friend, you are right that neither piety nor patriotism are school items. Such things are not spoon-fed. It is a poor school, however, that loses sight of these matters of the heart or puts them

33. Grundtvig is thinking about the age and philosophy of rationalism.

in a false light. All good educators know this. In their presentation of the general condition for human living and the sound use of human life they will make the students aware of the fact that when the human heart, which is the source of human living, is not there, all human education (enlightenment) is out of the question.

To awaken, nourish, and enlighten that human life, which is presupposed in Danish youth, this is the one and only objective of the Danish high school of the people. If it uses the means that further this objective, it will be distinguishable from all other schools, high or low. All of these have some form of book-learning as their objective, usually without any challenge to such learning's benefit or harm for the total human life of the student and certainly without consideration for the unique conditions, virtues and faults, advantages and disadvantages, of human living among the Danish youth, in contrast to the German or French youth or to a youth which exists nowhere on earth other than in the fantasy of sages who try in vain to make youth the same in all lands.

With this in mind I am sure you will agree with me in my conception of a Danish high school. As a sensible man who looks realistically at life and seeks practical solutions, you will agree that our Danish youth not only need such a high school but will benefit greatly from it. This is not only true when the young people wish to become Danish legislators or Danish officials; it is true when they are to become Danish human beings in all vocations. For they are not to jump out of their skin but are to save it as far as possible and to live within it. In order to do this they must be more familiar with themselves, their people, and their mother tongue than our youth has been awakened, helped, and shaped to be in any school up to now.

In regard to your final request concerning our inhuman and un-Danish schools for boys, I wish to do all in my power to change these schools as soon as possible. Rather than preparing human enlightenment for adulthood, they hinder and prevent this. If the schools for boys are to be changed, these schools will, above all, need good teachers who can and will put the change into effect. Such teachers we can gain only by the education of young adults at a high school of the people. A good school teacher with a human under-

standing is always a rarity. You seem to believe that by rules and regulations for teaching I will be able to inspire a number of school teachers who know that the schools for boys should be more alive and human than is now the case, but who do not know how to go about this. But an old "writer" such as I am has long since been cured of the superstition that the pen can change people or make them come alive, and I refuse to try this. What we can do, for the time being, for these schools is abolish the compulsion which daily erodes them and select the liveliest possible people as teachers. For neither of these actions do I have any competence, and neither will be effected until a higher human education has taken root in the young adults, making it impossible to continue the headless rote learning and the debilitating worship of the alphabet.

Finally, a few words about the "Danish Society" in the midst of our country, which you humorously compare to the "godly assemblies," called a church within the church by preachers.³⁴ I will stay within the metaphor and say that if the purpose of the "godly assemblies" was merely to acknowledge and to hold fast to that living Christianity which was maintained by only a few people despite the general membership of all, then they would correspond within the church to the function of the "Danish Society" within the people. It is the acknowledgment and maintenance of a living Danishness for which the latter is founded, a Danishness which is statistically allotted to all citizens but which is found in relatively few people. Both of these social relations³⁵ would then have their justification, and they can be a benefit to Christianity and Danishness. I do not consider either of these self-made relations so indispensable that I would "fight and suffer" to any degree for them. I am ready, however, to fight as hard and to suffer as long as possible for living Christianity and living Danishness. For me, as for most people in Denmark, the two are inseparable and for valid reasons. On the one hand, a living Danishness is always aware of the omnipotence of Christianity and its own impotence. On the other hand,

34. "Godly assemblies," revival meetings or spiritual group meetings, were often held where the local minister was strictly orthodox or a rationalist. The term "church within the church" comes from the expression "*ecclesiola in ecclesia*" used by the German pietist Philip Jacob Spener.

35. The religious and the national.

the spirit of Christianity always finds its expression in the language of the people in which he abides and whom he enlivens and enlightens.

in Grundtvig

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