

at the outside, about one per cent? I think so.

It comes down to this: Is it the object of education to produce and foster an élite, or to groom the mediocrity of the masses? We in America think the latter; we call it by the absurd name of 'democratizing education.' The judicious have always known better; they have known that the dissemination of culture is and must be an effect of the high culture of such as are capable of culture; in other words, of an élite. Trying to get at it the other way around, as we do, results only in what Mr. Michael Sadleir calls 'the decapitation of the eminent in the interests of the average,' and in the consequent ostracizing of culture; which is precisely what the addiction to our theory has brought about, just as Ernest Renan long ago foresaw it would. As far back as before you and I were born, he said that a people committed to our theory 'would long expiate their mistake by their intellectual mediocrity, the vulgarity of their manners, their superficial spirit, their failure in general intelligence'; and it does not take much of an eye to see that this expiation is now going on at full speed and with no sign of respite.

In its virtual isolation, Haiti has bred an élite which I must say is the wonder and admiration of a visitor. It is very small — probably in about the right proportion to the population — but of a remarkably high and fine order. I have conversed with several specimens of it, and have read their books. True, some have gone abroad to put a mansard roof on their training for some specialty, usually scientific, but many have got on with what their native schools were able to give them. One of these latter told me he had got all his education in the free schools of Haiti, and had never gone outside the island until he was forty-four; and he is one of the most accomplished and

highly cultivated men in my acquaintance anywhere. You see, I think, what I am driving at. If Haiti's isolation were dissolved, every foreign influence would bring pressure, direct or indirect, to 'democratize education'; yet if Haiti's schools can produce even one specimen as creditable as this man, it strikes me that the Haitians may well go very gingerly about a flirtation with that theory, especially when they observe its effect on the civilization of the countries which have adopted it. A hundred years ago, New England's schools were probably but little, if any, better than Haiti's, yet they somehow contrived to produce a very respectable élite; and if the 'democratized' schools of New England are now producing any Channings, Holmeses, Lowells, Everetts, Emersons and Danas, I have so far somehow not heard of it.

As with education, so with the other avenues of intercourse with other nations; commerce, finance, news-service, transportation, tourist-traffic and so on. I get the impression, whatever it amounts to, that perhaps the Haitians are doing pretty well as they are, and that they have about all the machinery of civilization that they can carry comfortably. The other day an American who has been here a dozen years told me that when he came an officer of our invading forces said to him, 'I think possibly your experience here may be something like mine. In my first year, when I saw what needed to be done and how easy it was to do it, I felt I had to pitch right in and get it done. In my second year I was n't in such a hurry; I was willing to wait a little and let things have a chance to happen; and now in my third year I catch myself thinking, Well, it's their country, and if they want it this way, why not let them have it?'

Why not, indeed? The Haitian looks happy, acts happy, and there is unanimous testimony that he is happy. How