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THE NEW BASIS FOR EDUCATION

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Can there be a new basis for education? Does the foundation upon which education rests really change? Is the educational system of one age necessarily unfitted to provide for the educational needs of the next? These, and a multitude of the questions which people interested in educational progress are asking themselves, arise out of the process of transition that is seemingly one of the fundamental propositions of the universe. All things change, and are changing; from the tiniest cell to the most highly organized creature, the noblest mountain range, the vastest sun in the heavens. To-day differs from yesterday as to-morrow must differ from to-day. All things are becoming.

Test this statement with the observed facts of life. Here is a garden, well-planted and watered. The soil is loamy and black. On all its surface there is nothing, save a clod here and there, to relieve the warm, moist regularity. Come to-morrow and the level surface is broken by tiny green shoots which have appeared here and there, thrusting through the top crust. Next week the black earth is striped with rows of green. Onions, beets, lettuce, and peas are coming up. Go back to the hills which you climbed in boyhood, ascend their chasmed sides and note how even they have changed. Each year some part of them has disappeared into the rapid torrent. Had you been there in April, you might have seen particles of your beloved hills, in every water-course, hurrying toward the lowlands and the sea. While you watch them, the clouds change in the sky, the sunset wanes, and the forest covers the bared hills. Nature, fickle mistress of our destinies, spreads a never ending panorama before our eyes that we may recognize the one great law of her being,—the law of progression.

How well does this principle of change apply to the organization of society. The absolute monarchy of one age yields place to the semi-democracy of the next. Yesterday the church itself traded in men's bodies,—holding slaves, and accepting, without question, the proceeds of slavery. To-day machines replace men in a thousand industries. To-morrow slavery is called into question, until in the dim-glowering Nineteenth Century, men will struggle and die by tens of thousands,—on the one side those who believe that the man should be the slave; on the other those who hold that the slavery of the machine is alone necessary and just. Thus is every social institution altered from age to age. Thus is effected that transformation which we have chosen to call progress. their childish ways; feel their steps along the precipice of adolescence; enter the wonderland of imagery and idealism; and pass on into maturity and life. How vain is our hope that the child may remain a child; how worthless our prayer that adult life shall never lay her heavy burden of cares and responsibilities upon his beloved shoulders. Even while you raise your hands in supplication, the child has passed from your life forever, leaving naught save a man to comfort you.

From these mighty scythe-strokes which change sweeps across the meadows of time, naught is exempt. The petals fall from the fairest flower, the bluest sky becomes overcast, the greatest feats of history are surpassed, and the social machinery, adequate for the needs of one age, sinks into the insignificance of desuetude in the age which follows. Thus does the inevitable come to pass. Thus does the social institution, wrought through centuries of turmoil and anguish, become useless in the newer civilization which is arising on every hand. The educational system in its inception was well founded, but the changes of time invalidate the original idea. Yesterday the school fulfilled the needs of men. To-day it fails to meet a situation which reshapes itself with each rising and each setting of the sun.

Each epoch must have its institutions. With the work of the past for a background, the present must constantly reshape the institutions which the past has bequeathed to it. These modified institutions, handed on in turn by the present, must again be rebuilt to meet the needs of the future, and so on through each succeeding age.

At times the march of progress is so rapid that even the most advanced grow breathless with attempts to keep abreast of the van-guard. Again marking time for ages, progressive movements seem wholly dead, and the past to the future is overgrown with tradition, and blocked by oblivion and decay. The rapid advances of the Nineteenth Century, challenging the quickest to keep pace, forced upon many institutions surroundings wholly foreign to their spent and scope.

Nowhere is this more true than in the case of the educational system, which had its rise in an age of individualized industry and governmental non-interference, and now faces a newly inaugurated socialization of industry and an impromptu system of government control.

The new basis of education lies in the changes which the Nineteenth Century wrought in industry, transferring village life into city dwelling, and substituting for the skilled mechanic, using a tool, the machine, employing the unskilled worker. The

ment as it stood, built up a new industry. The society, which we in the Twentieth Century must erect upon the political and industrial triumphs of our forefathers, can never be successful unless it recognizes the fundamental character of the changes which Nineteenth Century industry and Eighteenth Century politics have made in Twentieth Century life.

Is it too much to ask that the school stand foremost in this recognition of change, when it is in the school that the ideas of the new generation are moulded, tempered, and burnished? May we not expect that in its lessons to the young our educational system shall spread the language of the Twentieth Century rather than that of the Eighteenth?

Before the modern system of industry had its inception, while the old hand trades still held sway, at a time when the household was the centre of work and of pleasure, when the family made its butter, cheese, oatmeal, ale, clothing, tools, and utensils,—in such an atmosphere of domestic industry, Froebel wrote his famous "Education of Man." Note this description of the way in which a father may educate his son. "The son accompanies his father everywhere, to the field and to the garden, to the shop and to the counting house, to the forest and to the meadow; in the care of domestic animals and in the making of small articles of household furniture; in the splitting, sawing, and piling up of wood; in all the work his father's trade or calling involves."* In another passage he calls upon parents, "more particularly fathers (for to their special care and guidance the child ripening into boyhood is confided)" to contemplate "their parental duties in child guidance,"† and prefaces this exhortation with a long list of illustrations, suggesting the methods which may be pursued by the farm-laborer, the goose-herd, the gardener, the forester, the blacksmith, and other tradesmen and craftsmen, in the education of their sons. Any such man, Froebel points out, may take his child to the age of two or three and teach him some of the simple rules of his trade. How different is the position of the son of a workman in a modern American city.

The very thought of city life precludes any possibility of home instruction. The narrow house, the tenement, the great shop or factory, on the one hand prevent the mechanic from carrying on his trade near his family, and on the other hand make it impossible for the father whose work lies far from his home to give his boys the "special care and guidance" about which Froebel writes.

The system of industry which was established in England during the closing decades of the Eighteenth Century, and which secured a foothold in both Germany and the United States during the first half of the Nineteenth Century, has revolutionized the basis of our lives. The workshop has been transplanted from the home to the factory; both men and women leave their homes for ten, eleven, or even twelve hours of a day to carry on their industrial activities; great centres of population collect about the centres of industry; the blacksmith shop, disappear; food, clothing, and other necessaries of life,—formerly the product of home industry,— are produced in great factories; and the city home, stripped of its industrial functions, restricted in scope,, robbed of its adults, presents little opportunity for the education of the city child. Standing on the threshold of his meagre dwelling, this child of six looks forward to a life which must be based on the instruction provided in a public school system.

The industrial upheaval has changed every phase of modern life. Industry itself has replaced apprenticeship by a degree of specialization undreamed of in primitive life. From the superintendent to the office boy, from the boss roller to the yard laborer, from the chief clerk to the stenographer, the work of men and women is monotonous and specialized. The city has grown up as a logical product of an industrial system which centres thousands or even tens of thousands of workmen in one place of employment. The city home differs fundamentally from the country home as the city differs from the country.

The civilized world, reorganized and reconstituted, rebuilt in all of its economic phases, demands a new teaching which shall relate men and women to the changed conditions of life. This is the new basis for education,—this the new foundation upon which there must be erected a superstructure of educational opportunity for succeeding generations. It remains for education to recognize the change and to remodel the institutions of education in such a way that they shall meet the new needs of the new life.

SACRIFICING CHILDREN

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In the course of the past year, it has been my fortune to examine, at the request of the school authorities, the schools of several cities in the Northeast. In one of them, I came upon a peculiar condition which personally I had met myself but once before, but which I know by fairly authoritative reports does exist in a considerable number of cities and towns, not merely in a school here and there but generally and characteristically.

In the city to which I definitely refer, I found that the intermediate and grammar grade teachers had systematically, deliberately, and successfully sacrificed hundreds of boys and girls upon the altar of examinations to the fetich of good schools. They have been so anxious to have good schools and the reputation of having good schools that they have kept an average of twenty per cent. of their pupils one grade lower than they belong. In some schools, the average runs to above thirty-five per cent.

Some teachers and some school superintendents cannot see that the school is simply a machine for developing boys and girls; cannot see that the machine in itself is worthless save as it contributes to human welfare. A school may be so good as actually to damage the souls and bodies of human