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## TEACHERS AND THE NEW WORLD

*A presentation of the very important point of view that if education is to meet its full duty it must order itself in relation to the social group as a whole.*

THE subject for discussion in this essay has been chosen to illustrate and so indirectly to present the very important point of view that if education is to meet its full duty it must order itself in relation to the social group as a whole. The position meant to be combatted is the tendency to treat education, actually if not intentionally, as if it were purely or mainly to prepare certain pupils to get on well in the world. Many an actual school does, in fact, so influence its pupils that henceforth they are concerned in selfish and partisan fashion primarily for the welfare of themselves alone or at most of a small part of the total social group. The position here assumed is that our schools must consciously assume an important part in the attempt to effect a better state of civilisation and must determine their aims and consequent procedure in consistency with this duty.

What, then, is demanded? In particular, what demands arise from the present critical state of the world's affairs? How shall we estimate and judge this serious tide in affairs in order to get from it the most of guidance?

Truly the present is a most momentous period in the world's history. When we consider how much is happening, in how few years the events are compressed, what results flow from them, how far-reaching the influence—when we think of these things, the effect on the imagination is overwhelming. A decade ago, as we read or studied history, our thoughts at times dwelt musingly upon

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those interesting periods of the remote past that stand in such relief upon the pages read. Our own times seemed so prosaic, so uneventful, that we perhaps envied the dwellers in that past the opportunity they had to see those mighty events and share in moulding and shaping the outcomes. My friends, our day will in time be judged no less interesting and no less momentous than those. The French Revolution may rival the present in the intensity of some of its moments: but in extent of regions influenced this is far greater. More is now happening, events move more quickly, more has been at stake than perhaps ever before.

And of particular concern to us is the fact that the part played by book and thought is greater than ever before. Larger numbers now read. The conscious study of society is far more widespread and the interchange of views is almost infinitely more easy. If any object that the widespread reading and thought are but the little learning that carries danger in its train, we need neither admit nor deny, but only point out that if so, then the greater the demand upon us to bring up a rising generation able to cope with the situation.

The thought is worth developing. Go back to 1815, when the Congress of Vienna took every conceivable precaution to determine for subsequent generations the paths that civilisation should henceforth follow. But they chose a path that represented reaction rather than progress, and what was the result? In answering, note that a generation is reckoned at 33 years. Add a half generation to 1815 and we get the revolutionary period of 1830-32. Add the full generation and revolutions again come, those of 1848. What does it mean? The movements of history are complex, but are we not forced to conclude at least this much—that no settlement of any great social question can afford to overlook the rising generation. When the half-grown boys of 1815 came to

maturity they took matters ruthlessly into their own hands and overturned governments that had been a half generation before restored with so much care. In 1848 the like happened again.

Do we, as we look forward, face a future of revolutions? That changes will come, great and far reaching, no one need doubt. What these changes shall be and whether they shall come by revolution or in orderly fashion depends in large measure upon the character of the successive generations. Education—as the name for all moulding influences—is the factor that determines character; it is our only hope for order. We dare not leave this matter to chance. Conscious education must lend its every aid. The result may depend upon what we here in this room and our colleagues outside decide to do. In proportion as the present is big with possibility, in proportion as thought and character are factors in shaping affairs, in just such proportion lies our responsibility.

What is the situation confronting us? What do we see as we look over the world? The aftermath of the greatest war in history, millions upon millions killed, billions upon billions of property destroyed, new-made nations starving and quarrelling as they starve, Russia in chaos, other parts of the world little better off. Everywhere international suspicions, fears, selfishness, and in too many cases despair. If we look into the domestic affairs of our countries—you in yours, I in mine—we find alike a welter of unrest, strikes, threats, bitter partisanship, industrial warfare, class hatreds. Wherever we may look, at home or abroad, the future seems dark.

But let us look beneath the surface of this most discouraging situation, and see if deeper moving tendencies may not furnish guidance. What is the characteristic feature of the period in which we live? Is there anything to distinguish it from preceding periods? The answer seems clear; it is the growth of tested thought and its application to the affairs of men. Other periods have thought and thought acutely, but the characteristic features of our time are found in the tendency to test suggested thought in as objective a fashion as possible, in the accumulation of thought so tested, and in the disposition to apply this thought to improving the affairs of men.

Three far-reaching tendencies co-exist with this modern characteristic and receive greatly added impetus from it; a tendency to criticise our social institutions, a tendency toward the aggregation of men in larger and larger units and their integration in ever closer relationships, and the democratic tendency. It is not suggested that criticism is a modern phenomenon—far otherwise. What is claimed is that modern criticism finds its chiefest support in the growth and application of tested thought. There is a seeming inevitability and relentlessness in the onward sweep of modern science that gives credence and acceptability to its criticisms. The successes of science make it bold, and no region is exempt from its search. The faith that was once yielded unquestioningly to the Church or to the Bible is now being transferred to science, and more and more our institutions are subjected to criticism. So long as tradition told us what to think conservatism held sway. Science introduces conscious questioning and the disposition to change grows apace. The strength of this critical tendency is not yet at the height. We may confidently expect a stronger and more penetrating criticism to make a yet more inclusive scrutiny of human institutions, and a yet more radical tendency to change things in accordance with criticism. Whether we approve or not, Frankenstein or no, the spirit of criticism is loose in the modern world.

The second tendency is toward the aggregation of men in ever growing units and the integration of mankind in ever more numerous relationships. That this aggregation and integration grow out of the application of tested thought to the affairs of men needs no elaboration. To use the term "industrial revolution" almost of itself suffices to prove the contention. The point here insisted upon is that the process of aggregation still continues, and in such way as to carry integration constantly with it. Before science had revolutionised our industry each community lived largely in self-sufficiency. What was eaten was grown in great measure immediately at hand, what was worn was similarly made at hand of the materials produced nearby. The customary life of the majority of mankind was lived in small areas. But as tested thought was applied to production, affairs changed. Home and shop industries gave way to the factory. More men were brought

together in one organisation, raw materials were brought from greater distances and the products similarly sold over wider areas. Cities sprung into being. Transportation facilities have kept pace. Ever growing cities are joined in ever closer relationships with ever increasing areas. Aggregation and integration are thus practical correlatives. Nor is the end in sight. Every improvement in means of production, of transportation, of communication but increases the tendency. As never before we are members one of another. The evening speech of the Prime Minister is read by the whole world the next morning. A murder in southern Europe involves the whole world in war. A crop failure in a remote corner of the world threatens hunger for the poor of Europe. More and larger aggregations, closer and more numerous integrations, and the entire world hangs together as one whole in a degree never known before. And again the end is not in sight. The process is endless unless civilisation begins to die.

The third tendency, that towards democracy, is not so easy either to define or to explain, but its forward sweep cannot be questioned. Whatever else it may mean it includes at least this: that the world and its resources and all human institutions exist for the sake of men, that men may live as well as possible, not a few chosen and set apart, but all men. A tendency this was called, and properly so, for it is still far from realisation, but a tendency it is, definite and pronounced. Whatever the Great War may have been in its inception, it came to be a question of democracy. Only on this basis could our side prolong the war, on the lack of this basis our enemy collapsed. And still again is the end not in sight; democracy will not stay its stride till many matters be set straight. Nor will the end then come, for it is an infinite world in which we live, and the spirit of human justice will ever find work lying at its hand.

As these three great social tendencies have received strength and impetus from the growth and application of tested thought, so do all working together in their turn lead to two conclusions especially significant for us.

The first is that authoritarianism in the affairs of men wanes to its death. The time was when kings held sway by a "divine right"

about which their subjects were held to have no choice or say. Governmental control and its authentication were alike external. In recent times government increasingly derives its powers from the consent of the governed. External authority yields to internal. So with learning and knowledge; the time was when the *ipse dixit* of some master, the decree of some council or ecclesiastical potentate, the letter of the biblical text, sufficed to fix the doctrine. It is yet so with many: but increasingly here also is the authority changing its external superimposed character into internal, deriving its just power from the internal process of its efficient working. Criticism and democracy allow no resting place for authoritarianism as such. The internal authority of efficient working in the process alone can stand the test. It is the realm of morals that is now being called upon to yield its external authoritarianism sway. To many among us the prospect is one of dismay. But whether we like it or no, the time is fast passing when an external authoritarianism of morals can be relied upon to give effective guidance or control to those who stand most in need of it. Already a new generation that came to maturity during the war is asking why and why not, and will not be silenced by the traditional answers. What is worse, they are in large numbers answering their questions by denying any sort of authority, internal as well as external. The external authority of church, or book has been in the past the reliance of many in questions of morals. But these external authorities have for the many passed beyond recall. For these, if morals are not to descend to a mere temporary expediency, some other basis must be found and found quickly. Herein we who educate face a distressing situation. The downfall of authoritarianism elsewhere most of us stand ready to approve: but what to do in the matter of morals constitutes one of our most serious problems.

The second conclusion from the far-reaching tendencies earlier discussed is if anything even more significant, namely, that change is inherent in the very process of civilisation and so far as concerns human institutions practically all-embracing. It is only too true that many among us have been hoping and praying that affairs will at last quieten down and let civilisation catch, as it were, its breath. It is not improbable that the war has acted

temporarily to hasten the process of change: but taking centuries together change will never quieten down: on the contrary, it will almost certainly become increasingly rapid. What, do you ask, can be the justification for so disquieting a prophecy? Consider the facts. Civilisation takes its character from—or better, finds its character in—the fabric of human achievement known to us as tools, machines, and the like, and the correlative customs, institutions, and systems of thought. See what the single invention of the steam engine has done to change the affairs of men; or the telegraph; or the germ theory of disease. Every first-class invention makes far-reaching demands for changes in human behavior and relationships. The increasing aggregation of human affairs hastens the spread of change. More first-class inventions have been made in the past 200 years than in 20,000 years before. We have every reason—unless civilisation goes to pieces—to expect the next 200 years to show even more invention, because thought begets thought, tested thought begets fruitful thought. If so, more change, and so *ad infinitum*. As inevitably as civilisation continues to exist and thought continues to be itself, with that same inevitability will changes come. We face then a world of inherent and unending change. What the changes will be, whether they will carry us, we know not. The only thing we can with certainty assert is that we face an unknown and rapidly changing future.

In view of all the foregoing what shall we say are the special demands made upon us who teach? What characteristics are especially needed to enable the rising generation to meet its problems and difficulties? Some things can be named at once.

Among the many changes that are to come some will come apart from our special efforts to bring them about, perhaps even in spite of efforts to prevent their coming, but others we can bring or not as we like and according to the fashion we choose. Change is, in fact, inevitable, but progress is contingent. It is, then, exceedingly important that the rising generation shall believe in *orderly processes of capitalising change* rather than in violent and catastrophic measures. The road to revolution if often travelled can but lead to the death of civilisation.

If the world faces many and great and

unknown changes, it is impossible that we by taking thought can prepare our youth specifically to meet that unknown situation. We must prepare them to adapt themselves, when the time shall come, to that unknown and shifting world. We must, as far as we can, make our young people *adaptable*, capable of easy and intelligent adjustment. It is methods of investigation they must be taught, not specific solutions. *That* they shall think, and not *what* they shall think must be our aim.

Since there is no longer dependence to be placed upon merely authoritarian ethics inculcated by blind habit, we must seek an *intelligent moralisation*. Moral habits? Yes, but moral principles besides. On no other basis can we expect our young people to adjust themselves morally to that ever shifting world. If they do not have the "why" as well as the "what" of morals, they will not clearly recognise the moral demand in the changed aspect of affairs. To give them habituation only is to invite moral anarchy. This is indeed a great responsibility. The time once was when the school could say to the church, this matter of morals belongs to you, but that day, for good or ill, has passed. It is to the school that society must look and we can only meet our duty by building an intelligent moralisation.

A fourth matter perhaps not quite so pressing as the preceding is the demand that none of our youth get only trade training. Trade training we need and it must be got somewhere, but our working people need something more. We must have artisans who understand the "why" of what they do. Else they cannot co-operate consciously in what they do, and, more to the immediate point, they will be unable to adjust themselves to the shifting demands of new processes. Intelligent our workmen must be, for their own sakes as well as for the sake of their work. But even more, our workmen of all classes and grades in common with all others—if there are to remain any who do not work—must be intelligent citizens. Anything else is dangerous to the welfare of society. A more pernicious doctrine is not preached than that of education as a mere trade training.

But the principles given in our analysis yield yet other guidance. Consider our international situation. The unending process of aggregation and integration has for us a very

definite lesson. An inclusive integration is absolutely inevitable unless civilisation is to fail. A round world was bound in time to return upon itself. As the seven petty kingdoms of England could not continue separate, but must unite in time into one inclusive kingdom: as the clans of Scotland could not forever continue in mutual warfare, but must unite to form one country: as in my own country the thirteen original states could not walk independent paths, but must form first the confederation and then a union and finally make of this an indestructible union: so the same processes of integration are bringing the nations of the world together. Granted the continuance of the aggregation and integration, now steadily increasing, the time was bound to come when the multiplicity of mutual relationships would demand the joint intelligent solution of common problems. If nations are already so bound together that the assassination of one man in an obscure corner lights a fire that spreads over the whole world—if these things can happen, it would seem that the time has already come when inclusive organisation shall make such things impossible.

And what do these things mean for the teacher? They mean that we must build *world-mindedness* in our children, the ability to see the world of humanity and not merely the people of one single nation. It means further a positive world patriotism, an unselfishness in dealing with the mutual affairs of our country. I am not saying that we should no longer love our respective countries. Far from it. But I do decry a selfish patriotism that lets the immediate and apparent good of country outweigh considerations of right and justice and good-will to men. The patriotic rivalry I would advocate is a rivalry to excel in helping mankind, and not rivalry in the exploitation of backward nations. The world-mindedness we would build must see the practical and moral impossibility of an exclusive national sovereignty. It was on this rock that Prussia came so near wrecking the civilisation of the world.

Such a conception of world-mindedness means for my country, and possibly for yours, a new history, a new geography, and a new civics. It must be a history that unites and not one that separates. It must be a geography that teaches respect for other nations,

that sees the whole world mutually interdependent. It must be a civics that brings home to the individual his duties and possibilities in relation to others, and the like duties and possibilities of his nation in relation to other nations. The task is great, the schools cannot do all, but we can at least do our part to make the spirit of human brotherhood permeate the work of instruction.

We may get light also on the domestic situation from our analysis. In matters industrial the tendency to aggregation has far outrun the spirit of democracy. So far our organisation has considered mainly the money outcome: we have too often forgotten the element of humanity. These men who work in factories are not merely producers, money-makers: they are also men of like passions with ourselves. We have been prone to forget this, and have left democracy out of account in our industrial affairs. If our analysis is valid we may be sure that in some way, somehow, the spirit of democracy must enter also the industrial realm. We cannot say what specific form this will take—we do not know, possibly no one has as yet even conceived a suitable plan: but this we can rely upon; unless the worker lives *in* his work as well as *from* his work, we are going to have unrest forever. And this holds of all kinds of workers. We must live *in* our work as well as *from* our work.

What is then demanded of the school? That it build in its pupils *breadth of view* in social and economic matters, the *unselfish outlook*, a *sense of responsibility* for improving affairs, and such an *ability to think* as will keep our pupils grown to maturity from being the prey of demagogues. Regard for these things should permeate all our teaching. Each time any one of us faces a class it ought to be to lead our students to a firmer grip on such attitudes. The school must provide opportunities for cultivating breadth of view, the sense of responsibility, and the ability to weigh arguments in social and economic matters. Practice in these is necessary to build them firmly. The very manner of conducting the class will have no small part in the matter. The unselfish attitude will prove difficult to attain, but a sense of fair play in life's affairs can be built up at least within certain limits.

The school we have inherited has come

on the one hand and to impart bare knowledge or skill on the other. These things no longer satisfy. The duty of the school is now as large as is the life of the child who is to live in the democratic society of the future. It is our part to see that the ideals and attitudes necessary for that democratic life enter into the very innermost souls of our young people. In no other way can we meet the demand of the times upon our schools. In preparation for that unknown and changing future books and examinations are not sufficient. Ideals and attitudes are immensely more important. Among these, three especially stand out as worthy of our every endeavor: unselfishness, adaptability, and responsibility.

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### IN THE ENGLISH WORK SHOP

TO paraphrase George Eliot, errors and mishap present a far wider range of possibility to teachers of written composition than do clearness and precision.

Many of the English teacher's hardships come about through a traditional notion that learning to put a series of sentences into writing is of necessity a slow, painful process, full of cares to the student and of vexation to the teacher. Consequently, we teachers of composition, defeated at the outset, assume an attitude of patient endurance and set about waiting for our pupils to make up their minds to leave off spelling incorrectly; to somehow decide to start punctuating; to stop voluntarily and see the difference between *its* and *it's*; and probably, to take an interest in the ends of sentences. Meanwhile, we, like indulgent mothers, follow along behind, picking up after them and setting things to rights, leaning heavily upon our prayers and good intentions.

As a matter of fact, the bright children sense our attitude of toleration and leniency, and those of them that do not wink in their sleeves, deliberately capitalize our policy of watchful waiting and use it shamelessly. The teacher who doubts the truth of that can make a quick test by raising up a tablet of

Thou-Shalt-Nots in the way of a list of minimum requirements for the mechanical accuracy of all written work prepared out of class to be handed in. It is astonishing how docile students are, after the first shock of surprise that the teacher has emancipated herself from the slavery of little mistakes. But they like the idea that they *must not* hand in a piece of written work having even one misspelled word in it: they are to be sure of that fact by consulting the dictionary as grown people do when in doubt about a word; that they *must* be able to give a reason for every mark of punctuation they use; that it *does* make a difference what form they use for their written work; and that it is merely *stupid* to run sentences together. The number and difficulty of the requirements depend, of course, upon the grade. Such a standard is not any more rigid than are the answers in the backs of their arithmetics and algebras—both depend upon fundamental principles.

The use of projects by the teacher who holds rigidly to a fixed standard of attainment yields wonderful results. Often the novelty of a particular project, or the enthusiasm of the pupils—yes, they can really be enthusiastic in spite of a rigid standard of mechanics—will tempt the teacher to accept quantity for quality; however, the part of the teacher is to act as ballast as well as to serve as a motor. Under any well-launched project, the amount of written work done by the individual pupil is many times what he does under the assigned theme plan; so it is easy to see the advantage of swimming up, while at the same time swimming out. As to the possibility of the wrong mind-set, that invariably depends upon the teacher's own attitude anyway.

One of the advantages of teaching composition by projects lies in the possibilities presented for entrapping the lazy and indifferent. Sometimes such a pupil takes hold, if only for a moment, of some little tendril hanging near him, only to find himself completely enmeshed in the plan. As an example: Shalley was one of six boys engaged in getting out the first edition of a daily newspaper. The project was only a little past the germination stage, and they were struggling with the organization of a staff. Shalley remained only luke-warm on the subject until