

# **Dreams of Democratic Education**

An Anthology for Educators Wishing to Stand Between  
Children and the Madness

**Curated by Gary S. Stager, Ph.D.**

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Updates and edits will be made

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# Introduction

This book is ugly, poorly formatted, too long, riddled with typos, missing countless works, and incredibly necessary!

In 2007, former President Bill Clinton told thousands of assembled school board members and educators gathered at the National School Boards Association annual conference that “every problem in education has been solved somewhere.” No truer words may ever have been spoken.

As I assemble the first edition of this eBook in early 2018, we live at a time of societal and political chaos; a time when educators need to be at the forefront of making the world a better place. Yet too often, rather than stand on the shoulders of giants and do what we know needs to be done, we medicate ourselves with word salad about reform, mindset, transformation, innovation, and innovation, as long as we do so within the confines of Twitter and ensure that no one is ever offended.

Educators need to take pride in the contributions of our colleagues and predecessors. Our future will be built on their wisdom, courage, and powerful ideas.

This anthology is an attempt to assemble some of the most profound thinking about learning, teaching, schooling, and progress written by educators over the past 105 or so years. Some of the work may be familiar to you, but is worth revisiting. You are likely unfamiliar with other texts. However, I hope you will be moved and inspired by the assembled works.

This progressive education reader is incomplete and its contents entirely subjective. This subjectivity is based on my personal point of view and constrained by the availability of materials online, particularly in the public domain. The first essay in the anthology is a suggested list of other books, but even it is subjective and limited in scope. **Let this imperfect reader be an invitation for other educators to create his or her own.**

As a voluntary project, there was no time, energy, or resources available for reformatting all of the books and essays found within. They are as I found them online. I hope that the power of the substance will overcome the style of the book. Soon, I will include a description of the texts within, explanation of their inclusion, and perhaps even a functioning Table of Contents.

Many of the books are available in, you guessed it, book form. I hope you will be inspired to buy a copy of the ones that pique your interest. I am extremely grateful to [Project Gutenberg](#) and the [Internet Archive](#) for scanning and distributing these important education texts! Many thanks to Professor Lakoff for graciously granting permission to include his essay on political communication. The articles by me are not nearly as important as the other authors in this reader, but they may add contemporary perspective.

*Gary Stager, Ph.D.  
February 23, 2018*

# Wanna be a School Reformer? You Better do Your Homework!

by [Gary S. Stager](#)

Originally appeared in *The Huffington Post* on 10/19/2010

Shouldn't people bold enough to call themselves "school reformers" be familiar with some of the literature on the subject?

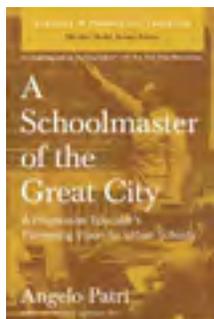
Most of the school leaders who signed last weekend's completely [discredited](#) "manifesto," are unqualified to lead major urban school districts. Michelle Rhee and Joel Klein are not qualified to be a substitute teacher in their respective school districts. U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan could not coach basketball in the Chicago Public Schools with his lack of credentials. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that they advocate schemes like Teach for America sending unprepared teachers into the toughest classrooms armed with a missionary zeal and programmed to believe they are there to rescue children from the incompetent teachers with whom they need to work. **In public education today, unqualified is the new qualified.**

The [celebration of inexperience and lack of preparation](#) is particularly disconcerting when it comes to education policy. When you allow billionaires, ideologues, pop singers and movie viewers to define reform, you get **Reform™**.

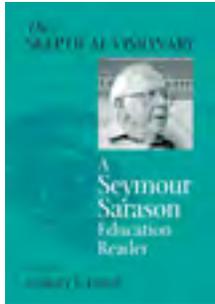
**Reform™** narrowly defines school improvement as children chanting, endless standardized testing preparation, teacher bashing and charter-based obedience schools who treat other people's children in ways that the rich folks behind **Reform™** would never tolerate for children they love.

If that were not bad enough, **Reform™** advances a myth that there is only one way to create productive contexts for learning. It ignores the alternative models, expertise and school improvement literature all around us. Public education is too important to society to allow the ignorant to define the terms of debate. Great educators stand on the shoulders of giants and confront educational challenges with knowledge, passion and intensity when afforded the freedom to do so. There are a great many of us who know how to amplify the enormous potential for children, even if we are ignored by [Oprah](#) or [NBC News](#).

Reading is important for children and adults alike. Therefore, I challenged myself to assemble an essential (admittedly subjective) reading list on school reform. The following books are appropriate for parents, teachers, administrators, politicians and plain old citizens committed to the ideal of sustaining a joyful, excellent and democratic public education for every child.



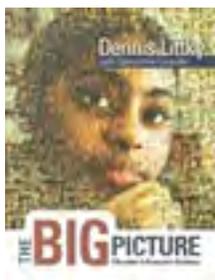
In [A Schoolmaster of the Great City: A Progressive Education Pioneer's Vision for Urban Schools](#), school teacher and principal Angelo Patri identifies and solves every problem confronting public education. This feat is all the more remarkable when you learn that the book was published in 1917!



Recently deceased Yale psychologist Dr. Seymour Sarason published forty books on a wide range of education issues well into his eighties. A good place to start is [\*The Skeptical Visionary: A Seymour Sarason Reader\*](#). You have to admire a guy who published a book with the title, [\*The Predictable Failure of Educational Reform: Can We Change Course Before It's Too Late\*](#), twenty years ago! Books written in the 1990s, [\*And What do YOU Mean by Learning\*](#), [\*Political Leadership and Educational Failure\*](#) and [\*Charter Schools: Another Flawed Educational Reform?\*](#) remain quite timely and instructive.

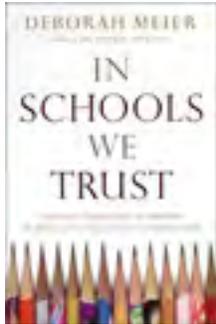


No serious citizen or educator concerned with the future of education can afford to ignore the role of technology in learning. Jean Piaget's protégé, [\*Seymour Papert\*](#), began writing about the potential of computers to amplify human potential in the mid-1960s. His view is a great deal more humane and productive than using computers to quiz students in preparation for standardized tests. All of Papert's books and papers are worth reading, but I suggest you start with [\*The Children's Machine: Rethinking School in the Age of the Computer\*](#).

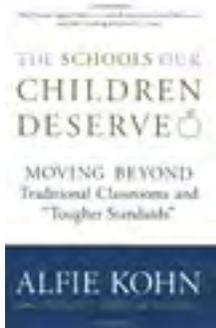


Want to see what sustainable scaleable school reform looks like where children are treated as competent? [\*The Big Picture: Education Is Everyone's Business\*](#) by Dennis Littky with Samantha Grabelle describes urban high schools with small classes, consistent student teacher relationships and an educational program based on apprenticeship. Students don't go to "school" on Tuesdays and Thursdays. They engage in internship experiences in the community in any field that interests them. The other days of the week, the curriculum is based on whatever the students need to learn to enhance their internships. This is not vocational. It prepares students for university or any other choice they make. [\*The Big Picture model\*](#) has spread across the United States with impressive results.

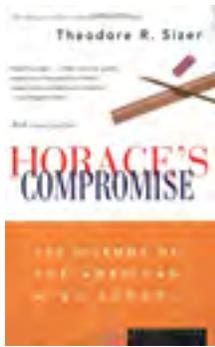
The biography of Big Picture Schools co-founder Dennis Littky, [\*Doc: The Story Of Dennis Littky And His Fight For A Better School\*](#), by Susan Kammeraad-Campbell may be the first school reform thriller. The book chronicles how Littky transformed a failing school and was wrongfully fired the second political winds changed. Anyone interested in “reforming” public education would be well advised to read this exciting page-turner.



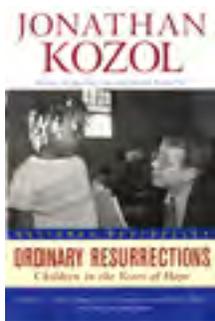
MacArthur Genius [Deborah Meier](#) has forgotten more about effective teaching and urban school reform than today’s entire generation of “reformers” ever knew. Meier is often considered the mother of the small school movement and her work as the founder of the Central Park East Schools and Mission Hill in Boston remain influential inspiration for parents and educators committed to the preparation of learners with the habits of mind required for a healthy democracy. Her book, [\*In Schools We Trust: Creating Communities of Learning in an Era of Testing and Standardization\*](#), is a masterpiece sharing the wisdom developed over more than a half century of teaching and school leadership. You should also read Meier’s weekly online discussion with Diane Ravitch, the [Bridging Differences](#) blog.



[\*The Schools our Children Deserve: Moving Beyond Traditional Classrooms and “Tougher Standards”\*](#) is but one of the [many terrific books](#) by Alfie Kohn in which he challenges conventional wisdom on sacrosanct topics like homework, grades, standardized testing and rewards with clarity and evidence. His books are fearless and make you think. His articles are collected at [AlfieKohn.com](#). Alfie’s small book, [\*The Case Against Standardized Testing: Raising the Scores, Ruining the Schools\*](#) should be on the kitchen table of every parent and teacher. If you’re tired of reading, you may watch two terrific Kohn lectures on the DVD, [\*No Grades + No Homework = Better Learning\*](#).



Dr. Theodore Sizer was a school principal, Dean of the Harvard Graduate School of Education and unofficial leader of the high school reform movement over the past twenty-five years. His intellect, calm demeanor and practicality led to the creation of the Coalition of Essential Schools and a template by which any secondary school could improve from within. The first book in his “Horace trilogy,” [Horace's Compromise](#), tells the story of American high schools, warts and all, through the eyes of a fictional English teacher, Horace Smith. This book and the two that follow share Horace’s epiphanies about the shortcoming of American high schools, their strengths and how he and his colleagues can make their school better. The organization Sizer founded, [The Coalition of Essential Schools](#), continues to inspire such local reform efforts one school at a time.



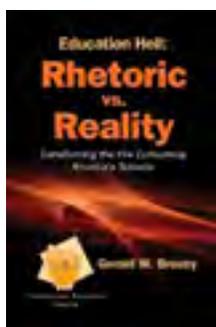
National Book Award-winning author, educator and civil rights activist has been giving voice to the poorest children in our nation and the injustice they face since the 1960s. [All of Kozol's books](#) are equal-parts profound, infuriating and inspirational, but the tender and beautifully written, [Ordinary Resurrections: Children in the Rooms of Hope](#), reminds us why we should care about public education.



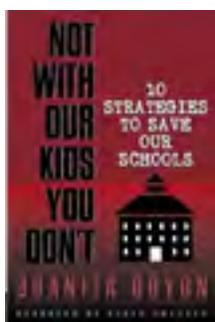
Herbert Kohl has shared his insights as a teacher and teacher educator in dozens of brilliant books. His recent anthology, [The Herb Kohl Reader: Awakening the Heart of Teaching](#), should whet your appetite for reading many more of [his books](#).



There is no more fierce or tireless critic of the higher tougher meaner standards and accountability movement than [Susan Ohanian](#). The book she co-authored with Kathy Emery, [Why is Corporate America Bashing Our Public Schools?](#) engages in the old-fashioned “follow the money” journalism we keep waiting for from news organizations. This book will help you understand how we got to reform being defined and advanced by billionaire bullies.



Right before he died last year, respected scholar, Gerald Bracey published, [Education Hell: Rhetoric vs. Reality - Transforming the Fire Consuming America's Schools](#). This book disembowels many of the premises and data used to justify the high-stakes accountability rhetoric and school reform strategies currently being advanced. It's a must read!



[Not With Our Kids You Don't! Ten Strategies to Save Our Schools](#) by Juanita Doyon is a short must-read book for parents tired of their schools being turned into little more than Dickensian test-prep sweatshops. The book was written by a fed-up mom, turned activist from Washington who has upended her state's political establishment in defense of the sort of high quality education Americans came to expect before No Child Left Behind.

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*Veteran educator Dr. Gary Stager is co-author of [Invent To Learn—Making, Tinkering, and Engineering in the Classroom](#) and the founder of the [Constructing Modern Knowledge](#) summer institute. Learn more about Gary [here](#).*



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FRANCISCO FERRER.

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH REPRODUCED FROM "THE LITERARY GUIDE."

The  
Origin and Ideals  
of the  
Modern School

By  
Francisco Ferrer

Translated by Joseph McCabe

G. P. Putnam's Sons  
New York and London  
The Knickerbocker Press

1913

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The Knickerbocker Press, New York

## INTRODUCTION

ON October 12, 1909, Francisco Ferrer y Guardia was shot in the trenches of the Montjuich Fortress at Barcelona. A Military Council had found him guilty of being "head of the insurrection" which had, a few months before, lit the flame of civil war in the city and province. The clergy had openly petitioned the Spanish Premier, when Ferrer was arrested, to look to the Modern School and its founder for the source of the revolutionary feeling; and the Premier had, instead of rebuking them, promised to do so. When Ferrer was arrested, the prosecution spent many weeks in collecting evidence against him, and granted a free pardon to several men who *were* implicated in the riot, for testifying against him. These three or four men were the only witnesses out of fifty who would have been heard patiently in a civil court of justice, and even their testimony would at once have crumbled under cross-examination. But

there was no cross-examination, and no witnesses were brought before the court. Five weeks were occupied in compiling an enormously lengthy indictment of Ferrer; then twenty-four hours were given to an inexperienced officer, chosen at random, to analyse it and prepare a defence. Evidence sent in Ferrer's favour was confiscated by the police; the witnesses who could have disproved the case against him were kept in custody miles away from Barcelona; and documents which would have tended to show his innocence were refused to the defending officer. And after the mere hearing of the long and hopelessly bewildering indictment (in which the evidence was even falsified), and in spite of the impassioned protest of the defending officer against the brutal injustice of the proceedings, the military judges found Ferrer guilty, and he was shot.

Within a month of the judicial murder of Ferrer, I put the whole abominable story before the British public. I showed the deep corruption of Church and politics in Spain, and proved that clergy and politicians had conspired to use the gross and pliable machinery of "military justice" to remove a man

whose sole aim was to open the eyes of the Spanish people. A prolonged and passionate controversy followed. That controversy has not altered a line of my book. Mr. William Archer, in a cold and impartial study of the matter, has fully supported my indictment of the prosecution of Ferrer; and Professor Simarro, of Madrid University, has, in a voluminous study of the trial (*El Proceso Ferrer*—two large volumes), quoted whole chapters of my little work. When, in 1912, the Supreme Military Council of Spain was forced to declare that no single act of violence could be directly or indirectly traced to Ferrer (whereas the chief witness for the prosecution had sworn that he saw Ferrer leading a troop of rioters), and ordered the restoration of his property, the case for his innocence was closed. It remains only for Spain to wipe the foul stain from its annals by removing the bones of the martyred teacher from the trenches of Montjuich, and to declare, with *real* Spanish pride, that a grave injustice has been done.

Meantime, the restoration of Ferrer's property enabled his trustees to resume his work. Among his papers they found a manuscript

account, from his own pen, of the origin and ideals of the Modern School, and their first act is to give it to the world. In 1906, Ferrer had been arrested on the charge of complicity in the attempt of Morral to assassinate the King. He was kept in jail for a year, and the most scandalous efforts were made, in the court and the country, to secure a judicial murder; but it was a civil (or civilised) trial, and the charge was contemptuously rejected. Going to the Pyrenees in the early summer of 1908 to recuperate, Ferrer determined to write the simple story of his school, and it is this I now offer to English readers.

In this work Ferrer depicts himself more truly and vividly than any friend of his has ever done. For my part, I had never seen Ferrer, and never seen Spain; but I was acquainted with Spanish life and letters, and knew that there had been committed in the twentieth century one of those old-world crimes by which the children of darkness seek to arrest the advance of man. I interpreted Ferrer from his work, his letters, a few journalistic articles he had written—he had never published a book—and the impressions of his friends and pupils. In this book the

man portrays himself, and describes his aims with a candour that all will appreciate. The less foolish of his enemies have ceased to assert that he organised or led the riot at Barcelona in 1909. It was, they say, the tendency, the subtle aim, of his work which made him responsible. It may be remembered that the *Saturday Review* and other journals published the most unblushingly mendacious letters, from anonymous correspondents, saying that they had seen posters on the walls of Ferrer's schools inciting children to violence. As the very zealous police did not at the trial even mention Ferrer's schools, or the text-books used in them, these lies need no further exposure. But many persist in thinking, since there is now nothing further to think to the disadvantage of Ferrer, that his schools were really hotbeds of rebellion and were very naturally suppressed.

Here is the full story of the Modern School told in transparently simple language. Here is the whole man, with all his ideals, aims, and resentments. It shows, as we well knew, and could have proved with overwhelming force at his trial had we been permitted, that he was absolutely opposed to violence ever

since, in his youth, he had taken part in an abortive revolution. It tells how he came to distrust violence and those who used it; how he concluded that the moral and intellectual training of children was to be the sole work of his career; how, when he obtained the funds, he turned completely from politics, and devoted himself to educating children in knowledge of science and in sentiments of peace and brotherhood.

It tells also, with the same transparent plainness, why his noble-minded work incurred such violent enmity. He naïvely boasts that the education in the Modern School was free from dogmas. It was not, and cannot be in any school, free from dogmas, for dogma means "teaching," and he gave teaching of a very definite character. Mr. Belloc's indictment of his schools is, like Mr. Belloc's indictment of his character and guilt, evidently based on complete ignorance of the facts and a very extensive knowledge of the recklessly mendacious literature of his opponents. Even Mr. Archer's account of his school is grossly misleading. The Modern School was "avowedly a nursery of rebellious citizens" only in the same sense as is any

Socialist Sunday-school in England or Germany; and the Spanish Government has never claimed, and could not claim, for a moment the right to close it, except in so far as it falsely charged the founder with crime and confiscated his property.

Ferrer's school was thoroughly rationalistic, and this embittered the clergy—for his system was spreading rapidly through Spain—without in the least infringing Spanish law. Further, Ferrer's school explicitly taught children that militarism was a crime, that the unequal distribution of wealth was a thing to be abhorred, that the capitalist system was bad for the workers, and that political government is an evil. He had a perfect right under Spanish law to found a school to teach his ideas; as any man has under English or German law. The prohibited and damnable thing would be even to hint to children that, when they grew up, they might look forward to altering the industrial and political system by violence. This Ferrer not only did not teach, but strenuously opposed. We have overwhelming proof of this at every step of his later career. But he was a child of the workers, and he had

a passionate and noble resentment of the ignorance, poverty, and squalor of the lives of so large a proportion of the workers. He was also an Anarchist, in the sense of Tolstoi; he believed that liberty was essential to the development of man, and central government an evil. But, as rigorously as Tolstoi, he relied on persuasion and abhorred violence. I would call attention to Chapter VI of this book, in which he pleads for "the co-education of the rich and poor"; and there were children of middle-class parents, even of university professors, in his school. Most decidedly he preached no class-hatred or violence. I do not share his academic and innocent Anarchist ideal—which is far nearer to Conservatism than to Socialism—but I share to the full that intense and passionate longing for the uplifting and brightening of the poor, and for the destruction of superstition, which was the supreme ideal of his life and of his work. For that he was shot.

Finally, the reader must strictly bear in mind the Spanish atmosphere of this tragedy. When Ferrer describes "existing schools," he means the schools of Spain, which are, for the most part, a mockery and a shame.

When he talks of "ruling powers," he has in mind the politicians of Spain, my indictment of whom, in their own language, has never been questioned. When he talks of "superstition," he means primarily Spanish superstition; he refers to a priesthood that still makes millions every year by the sale of indulgences. If you remember these things, you will, however you dissent from his teaching in parts, appreciate the burning and unselfish idealism of the man, and understand why some of us see the brand of Cain on the fair brow of Spain for extinguishing that idealism in blood.

J. M.

*February, 1913.*



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**The Origin and Ideals of the  
Modern School**



# The Origin and Ideals of The Modern School

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## CHAPTER I

### THE BIRTH OF MY IDEALS

THE share which I had in the political struggles of the last part of the nineteenth century put my early convictions to a severe test. I was a revolutionary in the cause of justice; I was convinced that liberty, equality, and fraternity were the legitimate fruit to be expected of a republic. Seeing, therefore, no other way to attain this ideal but a political agitation for a change of the form of government, I devoted myself entirely to the republican propaganda.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>This was in the early eighties, when Ferrer, then in his early twenties, was secretary to the republican leader Ruiz Zorrilla. To this phase of his career, which he rapidly

My relations with D. Manuel Ruiz Zorrilla, who was one of the leading figures in the revolutionary movement, brought me into contact with a number of the Spanish revolutionaries and some prominent French agitators, and my intercourse with them led to a sharp disillusion. I detected in many of them an egoism which they sought hypocritically to conceal, while the ideals of others, who were more sincere, seemed to me inadequate. In none of them did I perceive a design to bring about a radical improvement—a reform which should go to the roots of disorder and afford some security of a perfect social regeneration.

The experience I acquired during my fifteen years' residence at Paris, in which I witnessed the crises of Boulangism, Dreyfusism, and Nationalism, and the menace they offered to the Republic, convinced me that the problem of popular education was not solved; and, if it were not solved in France, there was little hope of Spanish republicanism settling it, especially as the

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outgrew, belongs the revolutionary document which was malignantly and dishonestly used against him twenty-five years afterwards.—J. M.

party had always betrayed a lamentable inappreciation of the need of a system of general education.

Consider what the condition of the present generation would be if the Spanish republican party had, after the banishment of Ruiz Zorrilla [1885], devoted itself to the establishment of Rationalist schools in connection with each committee, each group of Free-thinkers, or each Masonic lodge; if, instead of the presidents, secretaries, and members of the committees thinking only of the office they were to hold in the future Republic, they had entered upon a vigorous campaign for the instruction of the people. In the thirty years that have elapsed, considerable progress would have been made in founding day-schools for children and night-schools for adults.

Would the general public, educated in this way, be content to send members to Parliament who would accept an Associations Law presented by the monarchists? Would the people confine itself to holding meetings to demand a reduction of the price of bread, instead of resenting the privations imposed on the worker by the superfluous luxuries of

the wealthy? Would they waste their time in futile indignation meetings, instead of organising their forces for the removal of all unjust privileges?

My position as professor of Spanish at the Philotechnic Association and in the Grand Orient of France brought me into touch with people of every class, both in regard to character and social position; and, when I considered them from the point of view of their possible influence on the race, I found that they were all bent upon making the best they could of life in a purely individualist sense. Some studied Spanish with a view to advancing in their profession, others in order to master Spanish literature and promote their careers, and others for the purpose of obtaining further pleasure by travelling in countries where Spanish was spoken.

No one felt the absurdity of the contradictions between belief and knowledge; hardly one cared to give a just and rational form to human society, in order that all the members of each generation might have a proportionate share in the advantages created by earlier generations. Progress was conceived as a

kind of fatalism, independent of the knowledge and the goodwill of men, subject to vacillations and accidents in which the conscience and energy of man had no part. The individual, reared in a family circle, with its inveterate atavism and its traditional illusions maintained by ignorant mothers, and in the school with something worse than error—the sacramental untruth imposed by men who spoke in the name of a divine revelation—was deformed and degenerate at his entrance into society; and, if there is any logical relation between cause and effect, nothing could be expected of him but irrational and pernicious results.

I spoke constantly to those whom I met with a view to proselytism, seeking to ascertain the use of each of them for the purpose of my ideal, and soon realised that nothing was to be expected of the politicians who surrounded Ruiz Zorrilla; they were, in my opinion, with a few honourable exceptions, impenitent adventurers. This gave rise to a certain expression which the judicial authorities sought to use to my disadvantage in circumstances of great gravity and peril. Zorrilla, a man of lofty views and not sufficiently on

his guard against human malice, used to call me an "anarchist" when he heard me put forward a logical solution of a problem; at all times he regarded me as a deep radical, opposed to the opportunist views and the showy radicalism of the Spanish revolutionaries who surrounded and even exploited him, as well as the French republicans, who held a policy of middle-class government and avoided what might benefit the disinherited proletariat, on the pretext of distrusting utopias.

In a word, during the early years of the restoration there were men conspiring with Ruiz Zorrilla who have since declared themselves convinced monarchists and conservatives; and that worthy man, who protested earnestly against the *coup d'État* of January 3, 1874, confided in his false friends, with the result, not uncommon in the political world, that most of them abandoned the republican party for the sake of some office. In the end he could count only on the support of those who were too honourable to sell themselves, though they lacked the logic to develop his ideas and the energy to carry out his work.

In consequence of this I restricted myself

to my pupils, and selected for my purposes those whom I thought more appropriate and better disposed. Having now a clear idea of the aim which I proposed to myself, and a certain prestige from my position as teacher and my expansive character, I discussed various subjects with my pupils when the lessons were over; sometimes we spoke of Spanish customs, sometimes of politics, religion, art, or philosophy. I sought always to correct the exaggerations of their judgments, and to show clearly how mischievous it is to subordinate one's own judgment to the dogma of a sect, school, or party, as is so frequently done. In this way I succeeded in bringing about a certain agreement among men who differed in their creeds and views, and induced them to master the beliefs which they had hitherto held unquestioningly by faith, obedience, or sheer indolence. My friends and pupils found themselves happy in thus abandoning some ancient error and opening their minds to truths which uplifted and ennobled them.

A rigorous logic, applied with discretion, removed fanatical bitterness, established intellectual harmony, and gave, to some extent

at least, a progressive disposition to their wills. Freethinkers who opposed the Church and rejected the legends of *Genesis*, the imperfect morality of the Gospels, and the ecclesiastical ceremonies; more or less opportunist republicans or radicals who were content with the futile equality conferred by the title of citizen, without in the least affecting class distinctions; philosophers who fancied they had discovered the first cause of things in their metaphysical labyrinths and established truth in their empty phrases—all were enabled to see the errors of others as well as their own, and they leaned more and more to the side of common sense.

When the further course of my life separated me from these friends and brought on me an unmerited imprisonment, I received many expressions of confidence and friendship from them. From all of them I anticipate useful work in the cause of progress, and I congratulate myself that I had some share in the direction of their thoughts and endeavours.

## CHAPTER II

### MLLE. MEUNIER

AMONG my pupils was a certain Mlle. Meunier, a wealthy old lady with no dependents, who was fond of travel, and studied Spanish with the object of visiting my country. She was a convinced Catholic and a very scrupulous observer of the rules of her Church. To her, religion and morality were the same thing, and unbelief—or “impiety,” as the faithful say—was an evident sign of vice and crime.

She detested revolutionaries, and she regarded with impulsive and indiscriminating aversion every display of popular ignorance. This was due, not only to her education and social position, but to the circumstance that during the period of the Commune she had been insulted by children in the streets of Paris as she went to church with her mother. Ingenuous and sympathetic, without regard

to antecedents, accessories, or consequences, she always expressed her dogmatic convictions without reserve, and I had many opportunities to open her eyes to the inaccuracy of her opinions.

In our many conversations I refrained from taking any definite side; so that she did not recognise me as a partisan of any particular belief, but as a careful reasoner with whom it was a pleasure to confer. She formed so flattering an opinion of me, and was so solitary, that she gave me her full confidence and friendship, and invited me to accompany her on her travels. I accepted the offer, and we travelled in various countries. My conduct and our constant conversation compelled her to recognise the error of thinking that every unbeliever was perverse and every atheist a hardened criminal, since I, a convinced atheist, manifested symptoms very different from those which her religious prejudice had led her to expect.

She thought, however, that my conduct was exceptional, and reminded me that the exception proves the rule. In the end the persistency and logic of my arguments forced

her to yield to the evidence, and, when her prejudice was removed, she was convinced that a rational and scientific education would preserve children from error, inspire men with a love of good conduct, and reorganise society in accord with the demands of justice. She was deeply impressed by the reflection that she might have been on a level with the children who had insulted her if, at their age, she had been reared in the same conditions as they. When she had given up her belief in innate ideas, she was greatly preoccupied with the following problem: If a child were educated without hearing anything about religion, what idea of the Deity would it have on reaching the age of reason?

After a while, it seemed to me that we were wasting time if we were not prepared to go on from words to deeds. To be in possession of an important privilege through the imperfect organisation of society and by the accident of birth, to conceive ideas of reform, and to remain inactive or indifferent amid a life of pleasure, seemed to me to incur a responsibility similar to that of a man who refused to lend a hand to a person whom he

could save from danger. One day, therefore, I said to Mlle. Meunier:

“Mlle., we have reached a point at which it is necessary to reconsider our position. The world appeals to us for our assistance, and we cannot honestly refuse it. It seems to me that to expend entirely on comforts and pleasures resources which form part of the general patrimony, and which would suffice to establish a useful institution, is to commit a fraud; and that would be sanctioned neither by a believer nor an unbeliever. I must warn you, therefore, that you must not count on my company in your further travels. I owe myself to my ideas and to humanity, and I think that you ought to have the same feeling now that you have exchanged your former faith for rational principles.”

She was surprised, but recognised the justice of my decision, and, without other stimulus than her own good nature and fine feeling, she gave me the funds for the establishment of an institute of rational education. The Modern School, which already existed in my mind, was thus ensured of realisation by this generous act.

All the malicious statements that have been

made in regard to this matter—for instance, that I had to submit to a judicial interrogation—are sheer calumnies. It has been said that I used a power of suggestion over Mlle. Meunier for my own purposes. This statement, which is as offensive to me as it is insulting to the memory of that worthy and excellent lady, is absolutely false. I do not need to justify myself; I leave my vindication to my acts, my life, and the impartial judgment of my contemporaries. But Mlle. Meunier is entitled to the respect of all men of right feeling, of all those who have been delivered from the despotism of sect and dogma, who have broken all connection with error, who no longer submit the light of reason to the darkness of faith, nor the dignity of freedom to the yoke of obedience.

She believed with honest faith. She had been taught that between the Creator and the creature there is a hierarchy of intermediaries whom one must obey, and that one must bow to a series of mysteries contained in the dogmas imposed by a divinely instituted Church. In that belief she remained perfectly tranquil. The remarks I made and advice I offered her were not spontaneous

commentaries on her belief, but natural replies to her efforts to convert me; and, from her want of logic, her feeble reasoning broke down under the strength of my arguments, instead of her persuading me to put faith before reason. She could not regard me as a tempting spirit, since it was always she who attacked my convictions; and she was in the end vanquished by the struggle of her faith and her own reason, which was aroused by her indiscretion in assailing the faith of one who opposed her beliefs.

She now ingenuously sought to exonerate the Communist boys as poor and uneducated wretches, the offspring of crime, disturbers of the social order, on account of the injustice which, in face of such a disgrace, permits others, equal disturbers of the social order, to live unproductive lives, enjoy great wealth, exploit ignorance and misery, and trust that they will continue throughout eternity to enjoy their pleasures on account of their compliance with the rites of the Church and their works of charity. The idea of a reward of easy virtue and punishment of unavoidable sin shocked her conscience and moderated her religious feeling, and, seeking

to break the atavistic chain which so much hampers any attempt at reform, she decided to contribute to the founding of a useful work which would educate the young in a natural way and in conditions which would help them to use to the full the treasures of knowledge which humanity has acquired by labour, study, observation, and the methodical arrangement of its general conclusions.

In this way, she thought, with the aid of a supreme intelligence which veils itself in mystery from the mind of man, or by the knowledge which humanity has gained by suffering, contradiction, and doubt, the future will be realised; and she found an inner contentment and vindication of her conscience in the idea of contributing, by the bestowal of her property, to a work of transcendent importance.

## CHAPTER III

### I ACCEPT THE RESPONSIBILITY

ONCE I was in possession of the means of attaining my object, I determined to put my hand to the task without delay.<sup>1</sup> It was now time to give a precise shape to the vague aspiration that had long haunted my imagination; and to that end, conscious of my imperfect knowledge of the art of pedagogy, I sought the counsel of others. I had not a great confidence in the official pedagogists, as they seemed to me to be largely hampered by prejudices in regard to their subject or other matters, and I looked out for some competent person whose views and conduct would accord with my ideals. With his assistance I would formulate the programme of the Modern School which I had already conceived.

<sup>1</sup> Mlle. Meunier died, leaving about £30,000 unconditionally to Ferrer, before he returned to Spain in 1900.  
—J. M.

In my opinion it was to be, not the perfect type of the future school of a rational state of society, but a precursor of it, the best possible adaptation of our means; that is to say, an emphatic rejection of the ancient type of school which still survives, and a careful experiment in the direction of imbuing the children of the future with the substantial truths of science.

I was convinced that the child comes into the world without innate ideas, and that during the course of his life he gathers the ideas of those nearest to him, modifying them according to his own observation and reading. If this is so, it is clear that the child should receive positive and truthful ideas of all things, and be taught that, to avoid error, it is essential to admit nothing on faith, but only after experience or rational demonstration. With such a training the child will become a careful observer, and will be prepared for all kinds of studies.

When I had found a competent person, and while the first lines were being traced of the plan we were to follow, the necessary steps were taken in Barcelona for the founding of the establishment; the building was chosen

and prepared, and the furniture, staff, advertisements, prospectuses, leaflets, etc., were secured. In less than a year all was ready, though I was put to great loss through the betrayal of my confidence by a certain person. It was clear that we should at once have to contend with many difficulties, not only on the part of those who were hostile to rational education, but partly on account of a certain class of theorists, who urged on me, as the outcome of their knowledge and experience, advice which I could regard only as the fruit of their prejudices. One man, for instance, who was afflicted with a zeal for local patriotism, insisted that the lessons should be given in Catalan [the dialect of the province of Barcelona], and would thus confine humanity and the world within the narrow limits of the region between the Ebro and the Pyrenees. I would not, I told the enthusiast, even adopt Spanish as the language of the school if a universal language had already advanced sufficiently to be of practical use. I would a hundred times rather use Esperanto than Catalan.

The incident confirmed me in my resolution not to submit the settlement of my plan to

the authority of distinguished men who, with all their repute, do not take a single voluntary step in the direction of reform. I felt the burden of the responsibility I had accepted, and I endeavoured to discharge it as my conscience directed. Resenting the marked social inequalities of the existing order as I did, I could not be content to deplore their effects; I must attack them in their causes, and appeal to the principle of justice—to that ideal equality which inspires all sound revolutionary feeling.

If matter is one, uncreated, and eternal—if we live on a relatively small body in space, a mere speck in comparison with the innumerable globes about us, as is taught in the universities, and may be learned by the privileged few who share the monopoly of science—we have no right to teach, and no excuse for teaching, in the primary schools to which the people go when they have the opportunity, that God made the world out of nothing in six days, and all the other absurdities of the ancient legends. Truth is universal, and we owe it to everybody. To put a price on it, to make it the monopoly of a privileged few, to detain the lowly in

systematic ignorance, and—what is worse—impose on them a dogmatic and official doctrine in contradiction with the teaching of science, in order that they may accept with docility their low and deplorable condition, is to me an intolerable indignity. For my part, I consider that the most effective protest and the most promising form of revolutionary action consist in giving the oppressed, the disinherited, and all who are conscious of a demand for justice, as much truth as they can receive, trusting that it will direct their energies in the great work of the regeneration of society.

Hence the terms of the first announcement of the Modern School that was issued to the public. It ran as follows:

#### PROGRAMME.

The mission of the Modern School is to secure that the boys and girls who are entrusted to it shall become well-instructed, truthful, just, and free from all prejudice.

To that end the rational method of the natural sciences will be substituted for the old dogmatic teaching. It will stimulate, develop, and direct the natural ability of each pupil, so that he or

she will not only become a useful member of society, with his individual value fully developed, but will contribute, as a necessary consequence, to the uplifting of the whole community.

It will instruct the young in sound social duties, in conformity with the just principle that "there are no duties without rights, and no rights without duties."

In view of the good results that have been obtained abroad by mixed education, and especially in order to realise the great aim of the Modern School—the formation of an entirely fraternal body of men and women, without distinction of sex or class—children of both sexes, from the age of five upward, will be received.

For the further development of its work, the Modern School will be opened on Sunday mornings, when there will be classes on the sufferings of mankind throughout the course of history, and on the men and women who have distinguished themselves in science, art, or the fight for progress. The parents of the children may attend these classes.

In the hope that the intellectual work of the Modern School will be fruitful, we have, besides securing hygienic conditions in the institution and its dependencies, arranged to have a medical inspection of children at their entrance into the

school. The result of this will be communicated to the parents if it is deemed necessary; and others will be held periodically, in order to prevent the spread of contagious diseases during the school hours.

During the week which preceded the opening of the Modern School I invited the representatives of the press to visit the institution and make it known, and some of the journals inserted appreciative notices of the work. It may be of historical interest to quote a few paragraphs from *El Diluvio*.

The future is budding in the school. To build on any other foundation is to build on sand. Unhappily, the school may serve either the purposes of tyranny or the cause of liberty, and may thus serve either barbarism or civilisation.

We are therefore pleased to see certain patriots and humanitarians, who grasp the transcendent importance of this social function, which our Government systematically overlooks, hasten to meet this pressing need by founding a Modern School; a school which will not seek to promote the interests of sect and to move in the old ruts, as has been done hitherto, but will create an intellectual environment in which the new gen-

eration will absorb the ideas and the impulses which the stream of progress unceasingly brings.

This end can be attained only by private enterprise. Our existing institutions, tainted with all the vices of the past and weakened by all the trivialities of the present, cannot discharge this useful function. It is reserved for men of noble mind and unselfish feeling to open up the new path by which succeeding generations will rise to higher destinies.

This has been done, or will be done, by the founders of the modest Modern School which we have visited at the courteous invitation of its directors and those who are interested in its development. This school is not a commercial enterprise, like most scholastic institutions, but a pedagogical experiment, of which only one other specimen exists in Spain (the Free Institution of Education at Madrid).

Sr. Salas Antón brilliantly expounded the programme of the school to the small audience of journalists and others who attended the modest opening-festival, and descanted on the design of educating children in the *whole* truth and *nothing but* the truth, or what is proved to be such. His chief theme was that the founders do not propose to add one more to the number of what are known as "Lay Schools," with their

impassioned dogmatism, but a serene observatory, open to the four winds of heaven, with no cloud darkening the horizon and interposing between the light and the mind of man.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE EARLY PROGRAMME

THE time had come to think of the inauguration of the Modern School. Some time previously I had invited a number of gentlemen of great distinction and of progressive sentiments to assist me with their advice and form a kind of Committee of Consultation. My intercourse with them at Barcelona was of great value to me, and many of them remained in permanent relation with me, for which I may express my gratitude. They were of opinion that the Modern School should be opened with some display—invitation cards, a circular to the press, a large hall, music, and oratorical addresses by distinguished Liberal politicians. It would have been easy to do this, and we would have attracted an audience of hundreds of people who would have applauded with that momentary enthusiasm which characterises our

public functions. But I was not seduced by the idea. As a Positivist and an idealist I was convinced that a simple modesty best befitted the inauguration of a work of reform. Any other method seemed to me disingenuous, a concession to enervating conventions and to the very evil which I was setting out to reform. The proposal of the Committee was, therefore, repugnant to my conscience and my sentiments, and I was, in that and all other things relating to the Modern School, the executive power.

In the first number of the *Bulletin of the Modern School*, issued on October 30, 1901, I gave a general exposition of the fundamental principles of the School, which I may repeat here:

Those imaginary products of the mind, *a priori* ideas, and all the absurd and fantastical fictions hitherto regarded as truth and imposed as directive principles of human conduct, have for some time past incurred the condemnation of reason and the resentment of conscience. The sun no longer merely touches the tips of the mountains; it floods the valleys, and we enjoy the light of noon. Science is no longer the patrimony of a small group of privileged individu-

als; its beneficent rays more or less consciously penetrate every rank of society. On all sides traditional errors are being dispelled by it; by the confident procedure of experience and observation it enables us to attain accurate knowledge and criteria in regard to natural objects and the laws which govern them. With indisputable authority it bids men lay aside for ever their exclusivisms and privileges, and it offers itself as the controlling principle of human life, seeking to imbue all with a common sentiment of humanity.

Relying on modest resources, but with a robust and rational faith and a spirit that will not easily be intimidated, whatever obstacles arise in our path, we have founded the Modern School. Its aim is to convey, without concession to traditional methods, an education based on the natural sciences. This new method, though the only sound and positive method, has spread throughout the civilised world, and has innumerable supporters of intellectual distinction and lofty principles.

We are aware how many enemies there are about us. We are conscious of the innumerable prejudices which oppress the social conscience of our country. This is the outcome of a medieval, subjective, dogmatic education, which makes ridiculous pretensions to the possession of

an infallible criterion. We are further aware that, in virtue of the law of heredity, strengthened by the influences of the environment, the tendencies which are connatural and spontaneous in the young child are still more pronounced in adolescence. The struggle will be severe, the work difficult; but with a constant and unwavering will, the sole providence of the moral world, we are confident that we shall win the victory to which we aspire. We shall develop living brains, capable of reacting on our instruction. We shall take care that the minds of our pupils will sustain, when they leave the control of their teachers, a stern hostility to prejudice; that they will be solid minds, capable of forming their own rational convictions on every subject.

This does not mean that we shall leave the child at the very outset of its education, to form its own ideas. The Socratic procedure is wrong, if it is taken too literally. The very constitution of the mind, at the commencement of its development, demands that at this stage the child shall be receptive. The teacher must implant the germs of ideas. These will, when age and strength invigorate the brain, bring forth corresponding flowers and fruit, in accordance with the degree of initiative and the characteristic features of the pupil's mind.

On the other hand, we may say that we regard

as absurd the widespread notion that an education based on natural science stunts the organ of the idealist faculty. We are convinced that the contrary is true. What science does is to correct and direct it, and give it a wholesome sense of reality. The work of man's cerebral energy is to create the *ideal*, with the aid of art and philosophy. But in order that the ideal shall not degenerate into fables, or mystic and unsubstantial dreams, and the structure be not built on sand, it is absolutely necessary to give it a secure and unshakable foundation in the exact and positive teaching of the natural sciences.

Moreover, the education of a man does not consist merely in the training of his intelligence, without having regard to the heart and the will. Man is a complete and unified whole, in spite of the variety of his functions. He presents various facets, but is at the bottom a single energy, which sees, loves, and applies a will to the prosecution of what he has conceived or affected. It is a morbid condition, an infringement of the laws of the human organism, to establish an abyss where there ought to be a sane and harmonious continuity. The divorce between thought and will is an unhappy feature of our time. To what fatal consequences it has led! We need only refer to our political leaders and to the various orders of social life; they are deeply infected

with this pernicious dualism. Many of them are assuredly powerful enough in respect of their mental faculties, and have an abundance of ideas; but they lack a sound orientation and the fine thoughts which science applies to the life of individuals and of peoples. Their restless egoism and the wish to accommodate their relatives, together with their leaven of traditional sentiments, form an impermeable barrier round their hearts and prevent the infiltration of progressive ideas and the formation of that sap of sentiment which is the impelling and determining power in the conduct of man. Hence the attempt to obstruct progress and put obstacles in the way of new ideas; hence, as a result of these attempts, the scepticism of multitudes, the death of nations, and the inevitable despair of the oppressed.

We regard it as one of the first principles of our pedagogical mission that there is no such duality of character in any individual—one which sees and appreciates truth and goodness, and one which follows evil. And, since we take natural science as our guide in education, a further consequence will be recognised; we shall endeavour to secure that the intellectual impressions which science conveys to the pupil shall be converted into the sap of sentiment and shall be intensely loved. When sentiment is strong it penetrates

and diffuses itself through the deepest recesses of a man's being, pervading and giving a special colour to his character.

And as a man's conduct must revolve within the circle of his character, it follows that a youth educated in the manner we have indicated will, when he comes to rule himself, recognise science as the one helpful master of his life.

The school was opened on September 8, 1901, with thirty pupils—twelve girls and eighteen boys. These sufficed for the purpose of our experiment, and we had no intention of increasing the number for a time, so that we might keep a more effective watch on the pupils. The enemies of the new school would take the first opportunity to criticise our work in co-educating boys and girls.

The people present at the opening were partly attracted by the notices of our work published in the press, and partly consisted of the parents of the pupils and delegates of various working-class societies who had been invited on account of their assistance to me. I was supported in the chair by the teachers and the Committee of Consultation, two of whom expounded the system and aim of the

school. In this quiet fashion we inaugurated a work that was destined to last. We created the Modern, Scientific, and Rational School, the fame of which soon spread in Europe and America. Time may witness a change of its name—the “Modern” School—but the description “scientific and rational” will be more and more fully vindicated.

## CHAPTER V

### THE CO-EDUCATION OF THE SEXES

THE most important point in our programme of rational education, in view of the intellectual condition of the country, and the feature which was most likely to shock current prejudices and habits, was the co-education of boys and girls.

The idea was not absolutely new in Spain. As a result of necessity and of primitive conditions, there were villages in remote valleys and on the mountains where some good-natured neighbour, or the priest or sacristan, used to teach the catechism, and sometimes elementary letters, to boys and girls in common. In fact, it is sometimes legally authorised, or at least tolerated, by the State among small populations which have not the means to pay both a master and mistress. In such cases, either a master or mistress gives common lessons to boys and girls, as

I had myself seen in a village not far from Barcelona. In towns and cities, however, mixed education was not recognised. One read sometimes of the occurrence of it in foreign countries, but no one proposed to adopt it in Spain, where such a proposal would have been deemed an innovation of the most utopian character.

Knowing this, I refrained from making any public propaganda on the subject, and confined myself to private discussion with individuals. We asked every parent who wished to send a boy to the school if there were girls in the family, and it was necessary to explain to each the reasons for co-education. Wherever we did this, the result was satisfactory. If we had announced our intention publicly, it would have raised a storm of prejudice. There would have been a discussion in the press, conventional feeling would have been aroused, and the fear of "what people would say"—that paralysing obstacle to good intentions—would have been stronger than reason. Our project would have proved exceedingly difficult, if not impossible. Whereas, proceeding as we did, we were able to open with a sufficient number

of boys and girls, and the number steadily increased, as the *Bulletin* of the school shows.

In my own mind, co-education was of vital importance. It was not merely an indispensable condition of realising what I regard as the ideal result of rational education; it was the ideal itself, initiating its life in the Modern School, developing progressively without any form of exclusion, inspiring a confidence of attaining our end. Natural science, philosophy, and history unite in teaching, in face of all prejudice to the contrary, that man and woman are two complementary aspects of human nature, and the failure to recognise this essential and important truth has had the most disastrous consequences.

In the second number of the *Bulletin*, therefore, I published a careful vindication of my ideas:

Mixed education [I said] is spreading among civilised nations. In many places it has already had excellent results. The principle of this new scheme of education is that children of both sexes shall receive the same lessons; that their minds shall be developed, their hearts purified, and their wills strengthened in precisely the same

manner; that the sexes shall be in touch with each other from infancy, so that woman shall be, not in name only, but in reality and truth, the companion of man.

A venerable institution which dominates the thoughts of our people declares, at one of the most solemn moments of life, when, with ceremonious pomp, man and woman are united in matrimony, that woman is the companion of man. These are hollow words, void of sense, without vital and rational significance in life, since what we witness in the Christian Church, in Catholicism particularly, is the exact opposite of this idea. Not long ago a Christian woman of fine feeling and great sincerity complained bitterly of the moral debasement which is put upon her sex in the bosom of the Church: "It would be impious audacity for a woman to aspire in the Church even to the position of the lowest sacristan."

A man must suffer from ophthalmia of the mind not to see that, under the inspiration of Christianity, the position of woman is no better than it was under the ancient civilisations; it is, indeed, worse, and has aggravating circumstances. It is a conspicuous fact in our modern Christian society that, as a result and culmination of our patriarchal development, the woman does not belong to herself; she is neither more

nor less than an adjunct of man, subject constantly to his absolute dominion, bound to him—it may be—by chains of gold. Man has made her a perpetual minor. Once this was done, she was bound to experience one of two alternatives: man either oppresses and silences her, or treats her as a child to be coaxed—according to the mood of the master. If at length we note in her some sign of the new spirit, if she begins to assert her will and claim some share of independence, if she is passing, with irritating slowness, from the state of slave to the condition of a respected ward, she owes it to the redeeming spirit of science, which is dominating the customs of races and the designs of our social rulers.

The work of man for the greater happiness of the race has hitherto been defective; in future it must be a joint action of the sexes; it is incumbent on both man and woman, according to the point of view of each. It is important to realise that, in face of the purposes of life, man is neither inferior nor (as we affect to think) superior to woman. They have different qualities, and no comparison is possible between diverse things.

As many psychologists and sociologists observe, the human race displays two funda-

mental aspects. Man typifies the dominion of thought and of the progressive spirit; woman bears in her moral nature the characteristic note of intense sentiment and of the conservative spirit. But this view of the sexes gives no encouragement whatever to the ideas of reactionaries. If the predominance of the conservative element and of the emotions is ensured in woman by natural law, this does not make her the less fitted to be the companion of man. She is not prevented by the constitution of her nature from reflecting on things of importance, nor is it necessary that she should use her mind in contradiction to the teaching of science and absorb all kinds of superstitions and fables. The possession of a conservative disposition does not imply that one is bound to crystallise in a certain stage of thought, or that one must be obsessed with prejudice in all that relates to reality.

“To conserve” merely means “to retain,” to keep what has been given us, or what we have ourselves produced. The author of *The Religion of the Future* says, referring to woman in this respect: “The conservative spirit may be applied to truth as well as to

error; it all depends what it is you conserve. If woman is instructed in philosophical and scientific matters, her conservative power will be to the advantage, not to the disadvantage, of progressive thought."

On the other hand, it is pointed out that woman is emotional. She does not selfishly keep to herself what she receives; she spreads abroad her beliefs, her ideas, and all the good and evil that form her moral treasures. She insists on sharing them with all those who are, by the mysterious power of emotion, identified with her. With exquisite art, with invariable unconsciousness, her whole moral physiognomy, her whole soul, so to say, impresses itself on the soul of those she loves.

If the first ideas implanted in the mind of the child by the teacher are germs of truth and of positive knowledge; if the teacher himself is in touch with the scientific spirit of the time, the result will be good from every point of view. But if a man be fed in the first stage of his mental development with fables, errors, and all that is contrary to the spirit of science, what can be expected of his future? When the boy becomes a man he will be an obstacle to progress. The human

conscience is in infancy of the same natural texture as the bodily organism; it is tender and pliant. It readily accepts what comes to it from without. In the course of time this plasticity gives place to rigidity; it loses its pliancy and becomes relatively fixed. From that time the ideas communicated to it by the mother will be encrusted and identified with the youth's conscience.

The acid of the more rational ideas which the youth acquires by social intercourse or private study may in cases relieve the mind of the erroneous ideas implanted in childhood. But what is likely to be the practical outcome of this transformation of the mind in the sphere of conduct? We must not forget that in most cases the emotions associated with the early ideas remain in the deeper folds of the heart. Hence it is that we find in so many men such a flagrant and lamentable antithesis between the thought and the deed, the intelligence and the will; and this often leads to an eclipse of good conduct and a paralysis of progress.

This primary sediment which we owe to our mothers is so tenacious and enduring—it passes so intimately into the very marrow of

our being—that even energetic characters, which have effected a sincere reform of mind and will, have the mortification of discovering this Jesuitical element, derived from their mothers, when they turn to make an inventory of their ideas.

Woman must not be restricted to the home. The sphere of her activity must go out far beyond her home; it must extend to the very confines of society. But in order to ensure a helpful result from her activity we must not restrict the amount of knowledge we communicate to her; she must learn, both in regard to quantity and quality, the same things as man. When science enters the mind of woman it will direct her rich vein of emotion, the characteristic element of her nature, the glad harbinger of peace and happiness among men.

It has been said that woman represents *continuity*, and man represents change: man is the individual, woman is the species. Change, however, would be useless, fugitive, and inconstant, with no solid foundation of reality, if the work of woman did not strengthen and consolidate the achievements of man. The individual, as such, is the

flower of a day, a thing of ephemeral significance in life. Woman, who represents the species, has the function of retaining within the species the elements which improve its life, and to discharge this function adequately she needs scientific instruction.

Humanity will advance more rapidly and confidently in the path of progress and increase its resources a hundredfold if it combines the ideas acquired by science with the emotional strength of woman. Ribot observes that an idea is merely an idea, an act of intelligence, incapable of producing or doing anything, unless it is accompanied by an emotional state, a motive element. Hence it is conceived as a scientific truth that, to the advantage of progress, an idea does not long remain in a purely contemplative condition when it appears. This is obviated by associating the idea with emotion and love, which do not fail to convert it into vital action.

When will all this be accomplished? When shall we see the marriage of ideas with the impassioned heart of woman? From that date we shall have a moral matriarchate among civilised nations. Then, on the one

hand, humanity, considered in the home circle, will have the proper teacher to direct the new generations in the sense of the ideal; and, on the other hand, it will have an apostle and enthusiastic propagandist who will impress the value of liberty on the minds of men and the need of co-operation upon the peoples of the world.

## CHAPTER VI

### CO-EDUCATION OF THE SOCIAL CLASSES

THERE must be a co-education of the different social classes as well as of the two sexes. I might have founded a school giving lessons gratuitously; but a school for poor children only would not be a rational school, since, if they were not taught submission and credulity as in the old type of school, they would have been strongly disposed to rebel, and would instinctively cherish sentiments of hatred.

There is no escape from the dilemma. There is no middle term in the school for the disinherited class alone; you have either a systematic insistence, by means of false teaching, on error and ignorance, or hatred of those who domineer and exploit. It is a delicate point, and needs stating clearly. Rebellion against oppression is merely a question of statics, of equilibrium. Between

one man and another who are perfectly equal, as is said in the immortal first clause of the famous Declaration of the French Revolution ("Men are born and remain free and equal in rights"), there can be no social inequality. If there is such inequality, some will tyrannise, the others protest and hate. Rebellion is a levelling tendency, and to that extent natural and rational, however much it may be discredited by justice and its evil companions, law and religion.

I venture to say quite plainly: the oppressed and the exploited have a right to rebel, because they have to reclaim their rights until they enjoy their full share in the common patrimony. The Modern School, however, has to deal with children, whom it prepares by instruction for the state of manhood, and it must not anticipate the cravings and hatreds, the adhesions and rebellions, which may be fitting sentiments in the adult. In other words, it must not seek to gather fruit until it has been produced by cultivation, nor must it attempt to implant a sense of responsibility until it has equipped the conscience with the fundamental conditions of such responsibility. Let it teach the children

to be men; when they are men, they may declare themselves rebels against injustice.

It needs very little reflection to see that a school for rich children only cannot be a rational school. From the very nature of things it will tend to insist on the maintenance of privilege and the securing of their advantages. The only sound and enlightened form of school is that which co-educates the poor and the rich, which brings the one class into touch with the other in the innocent equality of childhood, by means of the systematic equality of the rational school.

With this end in view I decided to secure pupils of every social rank and include them in a common class, adopting a system accommodated to the circumstances of the parents or guardians of the children; I would not have a fixed and invariable fee, but a kind of sliding scale, with free lessons for some and different charges for others. I later published the following article on the subject in the *Bulletin* (May 10, 1905):

Our friend D. R. C. gave a lecture last Sunday at the Republican Club on the subject of "Modern Pedagogy," explaining to his audience

what we mean by modern education and what advantages society may derive from it. As I think that the subject is one of very great interest and most proper to receive public attention, I offer the following reflections and considerations on it. It seems to me that the lecturer was happy in his exposition of the ideal, but not in the suggestions he made with a view to realising it, nor in bringing forward the schools of France and Belgium as models to be imitated.

Señor C., in fact, relies upon the State, upon Parliament or municipalities, for the building, equipment, and management of scholastic institutions. This seems to me a great mistake. If modern pedagogy means an effort towards the realisation of a new and more just form of society; if it means that we propose to instruct the rising generation in the causes which have brought about and maintain the lack of social equilibrium; if it means that we are anxious to prepare the race for better days, freeing it from religious fiction and from all idea of submission to an inevitable socio-economic inequality; we cannot entrust it to the State or to other official organisms which necessarily maintain existing privileges and support the laws which at present consecrate the exploitation of one man by another, the pernicious source of the worst abuses.

Evidence of the truth of this is so abundant

that any person can obtain it by visiting the factories and workshops and other centres of paid workers, by inquiring what is the manner of life of those in the higher and those in the lower social rank, by frequenting what are called courts of justice, and by asking the prisoners in our penal institutions what were the motives for their misconduct. If all this does not suffice to prove that the State favours those who are in possession of wealth and frowns on those who rebel against injustice, it may be useful to notice what has happened in Belgium. Here, according to Señor C., the government is so attentive to education and conducts it so excellently that private schools are impossible. In the official schools, he says, the children of the rich mingle with the children of the poor, and one may at times see the child of wealthy parents arm in arm with a poor and lowly companion. It is true, I admit, that children of all classes may attend the Belgian schools; but the instruction that is given in them is based on the supposed eternal necessity for a division of rich and poor, and on the principle that social harmony consists in the fulfilment of the laws.

It is natural enough that the masters should like to see this kind of education given on every side. It is a means of bringing to reason those who might one day be tempted to rebel. Not

long ago, in Brussels and other Belgian towns, the sons of the rich, armed and organised in national troops, shot down the sons of the poor who were claiming universal suffrage. On the other hand, my acquaintance with the quality of Belgian education differs considerably from that of the lecturer. I have before me various issues of a Belgian journal (*L'Exprès de Liège*) which devotes an article to the subject, entitled "The Destruction of our National System of Education." The facts given are, unfortunately, very similar to the facts about education in Spain, though in this country there has been a great development of education by religious orders, which is, as everybody knows, the systematisation of ignorance. In fine, it is not for nothing that a violently clerical government rules in Belgium.

As to the modern education which is given in French schools, we may say that not a single one of the books used in them serves the purpose of a really secular education. On the very day on which Señor C. was lecturing in Gracia the Parisian journal *L'Action* published an article, with the title "How Secular Morality is Taught," in regard to the book *Recueil de maximes et pensées morales*, and quoted from it certain ridiculously anachronistic ideas which offend the most elementary common sense.

We shall be asked, What are we to do if we cannot rely on the aid of the State, of Parliament, or municipalities? We must appeal to those whose interest it is to bring about a reform; to the workers, in the first place, then to the cultivated and privileged people who cherish sentiments of justice. They may not be numerous, but there are such. I am personally acquainted with several. The lecturer complained that the civic authorities were so dilatory in granting the reforms that are needed. I feel sure that he would do better not to waste his time on them, but appeal directly to the working class.

The field has been well prepared. Let him visit the various working-men's societies, the Republican Fraternities, the Centres of Instruction, the Workers' Athenæums, and all the bodies which are working for reform,<sup>1</sup> and let him give ear to the language of truth, the exhortations to union and courage. Let him observe the attention given to the problem of rational and scientific instruction, a kind of instruction which shows the injustice of privilege and the possibility of reforms. If individuals and societies continue thus to combine their endeavours

<sup>1</sup>These societies are particularly numerous in Spain, where the government system of education is deplorable, and schools are often established in connection with them.  
—J. M.

to secure the emancipation of those who suffer—for it is not the workers only who suffer—Señor C. may rest assured of a positive, sound, and speedy result, while whatever may be obtained of the government will be dilatory, and will tend only to stupefy, to confuse ideas, and to perpetuate the domination of one class over another.

## CHAPTER VII

### SCHOOL HYGIENE

IN regard to hygiene we are, in Spain, dominated by the abominable ideas of the Catholic Church. Saint Aloysius and Saint Benedict J. Labré are not the only, or the most characteristic, saints in the list of the supposed citizens of the kingdom of heaven, but they are the most popular with the masters of uncleanness. With such types of perfection,<sup>1</sup> in an atmosphere of ignorance, cleverly and maliciously sustained by the clergy and the middle-class Liberals, it was to be expected that the children who would come to our school would be wanting in cleanliness; dirt is traditional in their world.

We began a discreet and systematic campaign against it, showing the children how a

<sup>1</sup>It is especially commended in the life of Benedict J. Labré and others that they deliberately cultivated filthiness of person.—J. M.

dirty person or object inspires repugnance, and how cleanliness attracts esteem and sympathy; how one instinctively moves towards the cleanly person and away from the dirty and malodorous; and how we should be pleased to win the regard of those who see us and ashamed to excite their disgust.

We then explained cleanliness as an aspect of beauty, and uncleanness as a part of ugliness; and we at length entered expressly into the province of hygiene, pointing out that dirt was a cause of disease and a constant possible source of infection and epidemic, while cleanliness was one of the chief conditions of health. We thus soon succeeded in disposing the children in favour of cleanliness, and making them understand the scientific principles of hygiene.

The influence of these lessons spread to their families, as the new demands of the children disturbed traditional habits. One child would ask urgently for its feet to be washed, another would ask to be bathed, another wanted a brush and powder for its teeth, another new clothes or boots, and so on. The poor mothers, burdened with their daily tasks, sometimes crushed by the hardness of

the circumstances in which their life was passed, and probably under the influence of religious teaching, endeavoured to stop their petitions; but in the end the new life introduced into the home by the child triumphed, a welcome presage of the regeneration which rational education will one day accomplish.

I entrusted the expounding of the principles of scholastic hygiene to competent men, and Dr. Martínez Vargas and others wrote able and detailed articles on the subject in the *Bulletin*. Other articles were written on the subject of games and play, on the lines of modern pedagogy.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>These articles are reproduced in the Spanish edition. As they are not from Ferrer's pen, I omit them.—J. M.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE TEACHERS

THE choice of teachers was another point of great difficulty. The tracing of a programme of rational instruction once accomplished, it remained to choose teachers who were competent to carry it out, and I found that in fact no such persons existed. We were to illustrate once more that a need creates its own organs.

Certainly there were plenty of teachers. Teaching, though not very lucrative, is a profession by which a man can support himself. There is not a universal truth in the popular proverb which says of an unfortunate man: "He is hungrier than a schoolmaster."<sup>1</sup> The truth is that in many parts of Spain the schoolmaster forms part of the local govern-

<sup>1</sup>£20 a year is a not uncommon salary of masters and mistresses in Spain, and many cannot obtain even that.—J. M.

ing clique, with the priest, the doctor, the shopkeeper, and the money-lender (who is often one of the richest men in the place, though he contributes least to its welfare). The master receives a municipal salary, and has a certain influence which may at times secure material advantages. In larger towns the master, if he is not content with his salary, may give lessons in private schools, where, in accord with the provincial institute, he prepares young men for the University. Even if he does not obtain a position of distinction, he lives as well as the generality of his fellow-townsmen.

There are, moreover, teachers in what are called "secular schools"—a name imported from France, where it arose because the schooling was formerly exclusively clerical and conducted by religious bodies. This is not the case in Spain; however Christian the teaching is, it is always given by lay masters. However, the Spanish lay teachers, inspired by sentiments of freethought and political radicalism, were rather anti-Catholic and anti-clerical than Rationalist, in the best sense of the word.

Professional teachers have to undergo a

special preparation for the task of imparting scientific and rational instruction. This is difficult in all cases, and is sometimes rendered impossible by the difficulties caused by habits of routine. On the other hand, those who had had no pedagogical experience, and offered themselves for the work out of pure enthusiasm for the idea, stood in even greater need of preparatory study. The solution of the problem was very difficult, because there was no other place but the rational school itself for making this preparation.

The excellence of the system saved us. Once the Modern School had been established by private initiative, with a firm determination to be guided by the ideal, the difficulties began to disappear. Every dogmatic imposition was detected and rejected, every excursion or deviation in the direction of metaphysics was at once abandoned, and experience gradually formed a new and salutary pedagogical science. This was due, not merely to my zeal and vigilance, but to my earliest teachers, and to some extent to the naïve expressions of the pupils themselves. We may certainly say that if a need creates an organ, the organ speedily meets the need.

Nevertheless, in order to complete my work, I established a Rationalist Normal School for the education of teachers, under the direction of an experienced master and with the co-operation of the teachers in the Modern School. In this a number of young people of both sexes were trained, and they worked excellently until the despotic authorities, yielding to our obscure and powerful enemies, put a stop to our work, and flattered themselves that they had destroyed it for ever.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE REFORM OF THE SCHOOL

THERE are two ways open to those who seek to reform the education of children. They may seek to transform the school by studying the child and proving scientifically that the actual scheme of instruction is defective, and must be modified; or they may found new schools in which principles may be directly applied in the service of that ideal which is formed by all who reject the conventions, the cruelty, the trickery, and the untruth which enter into the bases of modern society.

The first method offers great advantages, and is in harmony with the evolutionary conception which men of science regard as the only effective way of attaining the end. They are right in theory, as we fully admit. It is evident that the progress of psychology and physiology must lead to important changes in educational methods; that the

teachers, being now in a better position to understand the child, will make their teaching more in conformity with natural laws. I further grant that this evolution will proceed in the direction of greater liberty, as I am convinced that violence is the method of ignorance, and that the educator who is really worthy of the name will gain everything by spontaneity; he will know the child's needs, and will be able to promote its development by giving it the greatest possible satisfaction.

In point of fact, however, I do not think that those who are working for the regeneration of humanity have much to hope from this side. Rulers have always taken care to control the education of the people; they know better than any that their power is based entirely on the school, and they therefore insist on retaining their monopoly of it. The time has gone by when rulers could oppose the spread of instruction and put limits to the education of the masses. Such a policy was possible formerly because economic life was consistent with general ignorance, and this ignorance facilitated despotism. The circumstances have changed, however. The progress of science and our

repeated discoveries have revolutionised the conditions of labour and production. It is no longer possible for the people to remain ignorant; education is absolutely necessary for a nation to maintain itself and make headway against its economic competitors. Recognising this, the rulers have sought to give a more and more complete organisation to the school, not because they look to education to regenerate society, but because they need more competent workers to sustain industrial enterprises and enrich their cities. Even the most reactionary rulers have learned this lesson; they clearly understand that the old policy was dangerous to the economic life of nations, and that it was necessary to adapt popular education to the new conditions.

It would be a serious mistake to think that the ruling classes have not foreseen the danger to themselves of the intellectual development of the people, and have not understood that it was necessary to change their methods. In fact, their methods have been adapted to the new conditions of life; they have sought to gain control of the ideas which are in course of evolution. They have endeavoured to

preserve the beliefs on which social discipline had been grounded, and to give to the results of scientific research and the ideas involved in them a meaning which will not be to the disadvantage of existing institutions; and it is this that has induced them to assume control of the school. In every country the governing classes, which formerly left the education of the people to the clergy, as these were quite willing to educate in a sense of obedience to authority, have now themselves undertaken the direction of the schools.

The danger to them consists in the stimulation of the human mind by the new spectacle of life and the possible rise of thoughts of emancipation in the depths of their hearts. It would have been folly to struggle against the evolving forces; the effect would be only to inflame them, and, instead of adhering to earlier methods of government, they would adopt new and more effective methods. It did not require any extraordinary genius to discover the solution. The course of events itself suggested to those who were in power the way in which they were to meet the difficulties which threatened; they built schools, they sought generously to extend

the sphere of education, and if there were at one point a few who resisted this impulse—as certain tendencies favoured one or other of the political parties—all soon understood that it was better to yield, and that the best policy was to find some new way of defending their interests and principles. There were then sharp struggles for the control of the schools, and these struggles continue to-day in every civilised country; sometimes the republican middle-class triumphs, sometimes the clergy. All parties appreciate the importance of the issue, and they shrink from no sacrifice to win the victory. “The school” is the cry of every party. The public good must be recognised in this zeal. Everybody seeks to raise himself and improve his condition by education. In former times it might have been said: “Those people want to keep thee in ignorance in order the better to exploit thee: we want to see thee educated and free.” That is no longer possible; schools of all kinds rise on every side.

In regard to this general change of ideas among the governing classes as to the need of schools, I may state certain reasons for distrusting their intentions and doubting the

efficacy of the means of reform which are advocated by certain writers. As a rule, these reformers care little about the social significance of education; they are men who eagerly embrace scientific truth, but eliminate all that is foreign to the object of their studies. They are patiently endeavouring to understand the child, and are eager to know—though their science is young, it must be remembered—what are the best methods to promote its intellectual development.

This kind of professional indifference is, in my opinion, very prejudicial to the cause they seek to serve. I do not in the least think them insensible of the realities of the social world, and I know that they believe that the public welfare will be greatly furthered by their labours. "Seeking to penetrate the secrets of the life of man," they reflect, "and unravelling the normal process of his physical and psychic development, we shall direct education into a channel which will be favourable to the liberation of energy. We are not immediately concerned with the reform of the school, and indeed we are unable to say exactly what lines it should follow. We

will proceed slowly, knowing that, from the very nature of things, the reform of the school will result from our research. If you ask us what are our hopes, we will grant that, like you, we foresee a revolution in the sense of a placing of the child and humanity under the direction of science; yet even in this case we are persuaded that our work makes for that object, and will be the speediest and surest means of promoting it."

This reasoning is evidently logical. No one could deny this, yet there is a considerable degree of fallacy in it, and we must make this clear. If the ruling classes have the same ideas as the reformers, if they are really impelled by a zeal for the continuous reorganisation of society until poverty is at last eliminated, we might recognise that the power of science is enough to improve the lot of peoples. Instead of this, however, we see clearly that the sole aim of those who strive to attain power is the defence of their own interests, their own advantage, and the satisfaction of their personal desires. For some time now we have ceased to accept the phrases with which they disguise their ambitions. It is true that there are some in

whom we may find a certain amount of sincerity, and who imagine at times that they are impelled by a zeal for the good of their fellows. But these become rarer and rarer, and the positivism of the age is very severe in raising doubts as to the real intentions of those who govern us.

And just as they contrived to adapt themselves when the necessity arose, and prevented education from becoming a danger, they also succeeded in organising the school in accord with the new scientific ideas in such a way that nothing should endanger their supremacy. These ideas are difficult to accept, and one needs to keep a sharp lookout for successful methods and see how things are arranged so as to avoid verbal traps. How much has been, and is, expected of education! Most progressive people expect everything of it, and, until recent years, many did not understand that instruction alone leads to illusions. Much of the knowledge actually imparted in schools is useless; and the hope of reformers has been void because the organisation of the school, instead of serving an ideal purpose, has become one of the most powerful instruments of servitude in

the hands of the ruling class. The teachers are merely conscious or unconscious organs of their will, and have been trained on their principles. From their tenderest years, and more drastically than anybody, they have endured the discipline of authority. Very few have escaped this despotic domination; they are generally powerless against it, because they are oppressed by the scholastic organisation to such an extent that they have nothing to do but obey. It is unnecessary here to describe that organisation. One word will suffice to characterise it—Violence. The school dominates the children physically, morally, and intellectually, in order to control the development of their faculties in the way desired, and deprives them of contact with nature in order to modify them as required. This is the explanation of the failure; the eagerness of the ruling class to control education and the bankruptcy of the hopes of reformers. "Education" means in practice domination or domestication. I do not imagine that these systems have been put together with the deliberate aim of securing the desired results. That would be a work of genius. But things have happened just as

if the actual scheme of education corresponded to some vast and deliberate conception; it could not have been done better. To attain it teachers have inspired themselves solely with the principles of discipline and authority, which always appeal to social organisers; such men have only one clear idea and one will—the children must learn to obey, to believe, and to think according to the prevailing social dogmas. If this were the aim, education could not be other than we find it to-day. There is no question of promoting the spontaneous development of the child's faculties, or encouraging it to seek freely the satisfaction of its physical, intellectual, and moral needs. There is question only of imposing ready-made ideas on it, of preventing it from ever thinking otherwise than is required for the maintenance of existing social institutions—of making it, in a word, an individual rigorously adapted to the social mechanism.

It cannot be expected that this kind of education will have any influence on the progress of humanity. I repeat that it is merely an instrument of domination in the hands of the ruling classes, who have never

sought to uplift the individual, and it is quite useless to expect any good from the schools of the present day. What they have done up to the present they will continue to do in the future. There is no reason whatever why they should adopt a different system; they have resolved to use education for their purposes, and they will take advantage of every improvement of it. If only they preserve the spirit of the school and the authoritative discipline which rules it, every innovation will tend to their advantage. For this they will keep a constant watch, and take care that their interests are secured.

I would fix the attention of my readers on this point: the whole value of education consists in respect for the physical, intellectual, and moral faculties of the child. As in science, the only possible demonstration is demonstration by facts; education is not worthy of the name unless it be stripped of all dogmatism, and unless it leaves to the child the direction of its powers and is content to support them in their manifestations. But nothing is easier than to alter this meaning of education, and nothing more difficult than to respect it. The teacher is always

imposing, compelling, and using violence; the true educator is the man who does not impose his own ideas and will on the child, but appeals to its own energies.

From this we can understand how easily education is conducted, and how light is the task of those who seek to dominate the individual. The best conceivable methods become in their hands so many new and more effective means of despotism. Our ideal is that of science; we appeal to it in demanding the power to educate the child by fostering its development and procuring a satisfaction of its needs as they manifest themselves.

We are convinced that the education of the future will be entirely spontaneous. It is plain that we cannot wholly realise this, but the evolution of methods in the direction of a broader comprehension of life and the fact that all improvement involves the suppression of violence indicate that we are on solid ground when we look to science for the liberation of the child.

Is this the ideal of those who actually control the scholastic system? Is this what they propose to bring about? Are they eager to abandon violence? Only in the sense that

they employ new and more effective methods to attain the same end—that is to say, the formation of individuals who will accept all the conventions, all the prejudices, and all the untruths on which society is based.

We do not hesitate to say that we want men who will continue unceasingly to develop; men who are capable of constantly destroying and renewing their surroundings and renewing themselves; men whose intellectual independence is their supreme power, which they will yield to none; men always disposed for things that are better, eager for the triumph of new ideas, anxious to crowd many lives into the one life they have. Society fears such men; you cannot expect it to set up a system of education which will produce them.

What, then, is our mission? What is the policy we must adopt in order to contribute to the reform of the school?

Let us follow closely the work of the experts who are engaged in the study of the child, and let us endeavour to find a way of applying their principles to the education we seek to establish, aiming at an increasingly complete emancipation of the individual. But

how are we to do this? By putting our hand energetically to the work, by promoting the establishment of new schools in which, as far as possible, there shall rule this spirit of freedom which, we feel, will colour the whole education of the future.

We have already had proof that it leads to excellent results. We can destroy whatever there is in the actual school that savours of violence, all the artificial devices by which the children are estranged from nature and life, the intellectual and moral discipline which has been used to impose ready-made thoughts, all beliefs which deprave and enervate the will. Without fear of injury we may place the child in a proper and natural environment, in which it will find itself in contact with all that it loves, and where vital impressions will be substituted for the wearisome reading of books. If we do no more than this, we shall have done much towards the emancipation of the child.

In such an environment we may freely make use of the data of science and work with profit. It is true that we could not realise all our hopes; that often we shall find ourselves compelled, from lack of knowledge, to

use the wrong means. But we shall be sustained by the confident feeling that, without having achieved our entire aim, we shall have done a great deal more than is being done by the actual school. I would rather have the free spontaneity of a child who knows nothing than the verbal knowledge and intellectual deformation of one that has experienced the existing system of education.

What we have sought to do in Barcelona is being done by others in various places. All of us saw that the work was possible. Dedicate yourself to it at once. We do not hope that the studies of children will be suspended that we may regenerate the school. Let us apply what we know, and go on learning and applying. A scheme of rational education is already possible, and, in such schools as we advocate, the children may develop freely according to their aspirations. Let us endeavour to improve and extend the work.

Those are our aims. We know well the difficulties we have to face; but we have made a beginning in the conviction that we shall be assisted in our task by those who work

in their various spheres to deliver men from the dogmas and conventions which secure the prolongation of the present unjust arrangement of society.

## CHAPTER X

### NO REWARD OR PUNISHMENT

RATIONAL education is, above all things, a means of defence against error and ignorance. To ignore truth and accept absurdities is, unhappily, a common feature in our social order; to that we owe the distinction of classes and the persistent antagonism of interests. Having admitted and practised the co-education of boys and girls, of rich and poor—having, that is to say, started from the principle of solidarity and equality—we are not prepared to create a new inequality. Hence in the Modern School there will be no rewards and no punishments; there will be no examinations to puff up some children with the flattering title of “excellent,” to give others the vulgar title of “good,” and make others unhappy with a consciousness of incapacity and failure.

These features of the existing official and

religious schools, which are quite in accord with their reactionary environment and aim, cannot, for the reasons I have given, be admitted into the Modern School. Since we are not educating for a specific purpose, we cannot determine the capacity or incapacity of the child. When we teach a science, or art, or trade, or some subject requiring special conditions, an examination may be useful, and there may be reason to give a diploma or refuse one; I neither affirm nor deny it. But there is no such specialism in the Modern School. The characteristic note of the school, distinguishing it even from some which pass as progressive models, is that in it the faculties of the children shall develop freely without subjection to any dogmatic patron, not even to what it may consider the body of convictions of the founder and teachers; every pupil shall go forth from it into social life with the ability to be his own master and guide his own life in all things.

Hence, if we were rationally prevented from giving prizes, we could not impose penalties, and no one would have dreamed of doing so in our school if the idea had not been suggested from without. Sometimes parents

came to me with the rank proverb, "Letters go in with blood," on their lips, and begged me to punish their children. Others who were charmed with the precocious talent of their children wanted to see them shine in examinations and exhibit medals. We refused to admit either prizes or punishments, and sent the parents away. If any child were conspicuous for merit, application, laziness, or bad conduct, we pointed out to it the need of accord, or the unhappiness of lack of accord, with its own welfare and that of others, and the teacher might give a lecture on the subject. Nothing more was done, and the parents were gradually reconciled to the system, though they often had to be corrected in their errors and prejudices by their own children.

Nevertheless, the old prejudice was constantly recurring, and I saw that I had to repeat my arguments with the parents of new pupils. I therefore wrote the following article in the *Bulletin*:—

The conventional examinations which we usually find held at the end of a scholastic year, to which our fathers attached so much import-

ance, have had no result at all; or, if any result, a bad one. These functions and their accompanying solemnities seem to have been instituted for the sole purpose of satisfying the vanity of parents and the selfish interests of many teachers, and in order to put the children to torture before the examination and make them ill afterwards. Each father wants his child to be presented in public as one of the prodigies of the college, and regards him with pride as a learned man in miniature. He does not notice that for a fortnight or so the child suffers exquisite torture. As things are judged by external appearances, it is not thought that there is any real torture, as there is not the least scratch visible on the skin. . . .

The parent's lack of acquaintance with the natural disposition of the child, and the iniquity of putting it in false conditions so that its intellectual powers, especially in the sphere of memory, are artificially stimulated, prevent the parent from seeing that this measure of personal gratification may, as has happened in many cases, lead to illness and to the moral, if not the physical, death of the child.

On the other hand, the majority of teachers, being mere stereotypers of ready-made phrases and mechanical inoculators, rather than *moral fathers* of their pupils, are concerned in these examinations with their own personality and

their economic interests. Their object is to let the parents and the others who are present at the public display see that, under their guidance, the child has learned a good deal, that its knowledge is greater in quantity and quality than could have been expected of its tender years and in view of the short time that it has been under the charge of this very skilful teacher.

In addition to this wretched vanity, which is satisfied at the cost of the moral and physical life of the child, the teachers are anxious to elicit compliments from the parents and the rest of the audience, who know nothing of the real state of things, as a kind of advertisement of the prestige of their particular school.

Briefly, we are inexorably opposed to holding public examinations. In our school everything must be done for the advantage of the pupil. Everything that does not conduce to this end must be recognised as opposed to the natural spirit of positive education. Examinations do no good, and they do much harm to the child. Besides the illness of which we have already spoken, the nervous system of the child suffers, and a kind of temporary paralysis is inflicted on its conscience by the immoral features of the examination: the vanity provoked in those who are placed highest, envy and humiliation, grave obstacles to sound growth, in those who have

failed, and in all of them the germs of most of the sentiments which go to the making of egoism.

In a later number of the *Bulletin* I found it necessary to return to the subject:—

We frequently receive letters from Workers' Educational Societies and Republican Fraternities asking that the teachers shall chastise the children in our schools. We ourselves have been disgusted, during our brief excursions, to find material proofs of the fact which is at the base of this request; we have seen children on their knees, or in other attitudes of punishment.

These irrational and atavistic practices must disappear. Modern pedagogy entirely discredits them. The teachers who offer their services to the Modern School, or ask our recommendation to teach in similar schools, must refrain from any moral or material punishment, under penalty of being disqualified permanently. Scolding, impatience, and anger ought to disappear with the ancient title of "master." In free schools all should be peace, gladness, and fraternity. We trust that this will suffice to put an end to these practices, which are most improper in people whose sole ideal is the training of a generation fitted to establish a really fraternal, harmonious, and just state of society.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE GENERAL PUBLIC AND THE LIBRARY

IN setting out to establish a rational school for the purpose of preparing children for their entry into free solidarity of humanity, the first problem that confronted us was the selection of books. The whole educational luggage of the ancient system was an incoherent mixture of science and faith, reason and unreason, good and evil, human experience and revelation, truth and error; in a word, totally unsuited to meet the new needs that arose with the formation of a new school.

If the school has been from remote antiquity equipped not for teaching in the broad sense of communicating to the rising generation the gist of the knowledge of previous generations, but for teaching on the basis of authority and the convenience of the ruling classes, for the purpose of making children humble and submissive, it is clear

that none of the books hitherto used would suit us. But the severe logic of this position did not at once convince me. I refused to believe that the French democracy, which worked so zealously for the separation of Church and State, incurred the anger of the clericals, and adopted obligatory secular instruction, would resign itself to a semi-education or a sophisticated education. I had, however, to yield to the evidence, against my prejudice. I first read a large number of works in the French code of secular instruction, and found that God was replaced by the State, Christian virtue by civic duty, religion by patriotism, submission to the king, the aristocracy, and the clergy by subservience to the official, the proprietor, and the employer. Then I consulted an eminent Free-thinker who held high office in the Ministry of Public Instruction, and, when I had told him my desire to see the books they used, which I understood to be purged of traditional errors, and explained my design and ideal to him, he told me frankly that they had nothing of the sort; all their books were, more or less cleverly and insidiously, tainted with untruth, which is the indispensable cement of social

inequality. When I further asked if, seeing that they had replaced the decaying idol of deity by the idol of oligarchic despotism, they had not at least some book dealing with the origin of religion, he said that there was none; but he knew one which would suit me—Malvert's *Science and Religion*. In point of fact, this was already translated into Spanish, and was used as a reading-book in the Modern School, with the title *Origin of Christianity*.

In Spanish literature I found several works written by a distinguished author, of some eminence in science, who had produced them rather in the interest of the publishers than with a view to the education of children. Some of these were at first used in the Modern School, but, though one could not accuse them of error, they lacked the inspiration of an ideal and were poor in method. I communicated with this author with a view to interesting him in my plans and inducing him to write books for me, but his publishers held him to a certain contract and he could not oblige me.

In brief, the Modern School was opened before a single work had been chosen for its library, but it was not long before the first

appeared—a brilliant book by Jean Grave, which has had a considerable influence on our schools. His work, *The Adventures of Nono*, is a kind of poem in which a certain phase of the happier future is ingeniously and dramatically contrasted with the sordid realities of the present social order; the delights of the land of Autonomy are contrasted with the horrors of the kingdom of Argirocracy. The genius of Grave has raised the work to a height at which it escapes the strictures of the sceptical and conservative; he has depicted the social evils of the present truthfully and without exaggeration. The reading of the book enchanted the children, and the profundity of his thought suggested many opportune comments to the teachers. In their play the children used to act scenes from Autonomy, and their parents detected the causes of their hardships in the constitution of the kingdom of Argirocracy.

It was announced in the *Bulletin* and other journals that prizes were offered for the best manuals of rational instruction, but no writers came forward. I confine myself to recording the fact without going into the causes of it. Two books were afterwards adopted for read-

ing in school. They were not written for school, but they were translated for the Modern School and were very useful. One was called *The Note Book*, the other *Colonisation and Patriotism*. Both were collections of passages from writers of every country on the injustices connected with patriotism, the horrors of war, and the iniquity of conquest. The choice of these works was vindicated by the excellent influence they had on the minds of the children, as we shall see from the little essays of the children which appeared in the *Bulletin*, and the fury with which they were denounced by the reactionary press and politicians.

Many think that there is not much difference between secular and rationalist education, and in various articles and propagandist speeches the two were taken to be synonymous. In order to correct this error I published the following article in the *Bulletin*:—

The word *education* should not be accompanied by any qualification. It means simply the need and duty of the generation which is in the full development of its powers to prepare the rising generation and admit it to the patrimony of human knowledge. This is an entirely rational

ideal, and it will be fully realised in some future age, when men are wholly freed from their prejudices and superstitions.

In our efforts to realise this ideal we find ourselves confronted with religious education and political education: to these we must oppose rational and scientific instruction. The type of religious education is that given in the clerical and convent schools of all countries; it consists of the smallest possible quantity of useful knowledge and a good deal of Christian doctrine and sacred history. Political education is the kind established some time ago in France, after the fall of the Empire, the object of which is to exalt patriotism and represent the actual public administration as the instrument of the common welfare.

Sometimes the qualification *free* or *secular* is applied abusively and maliciously to education, in order to distract or alienate public opinion. Orthodox people, for instance, call *free schools* certain schools which they establish in opposition to the really free tendency of modern pedagogy; and many are called *secular schools* which are really political, patriotic, and anti-humanitarian.

Rational education is lifted above these illiberal forms. It has, in the first place, no regard to religious education, because science has shown that the story of creation is a myth and the gods

legendary; and therefore religious education takes advantage of the credulity of the parents and the ignorance of the children, maintaining the belief in a supernatural being to whom people may address all kinds of prayers. This ancient belief, still unfortunately widespread, has done a great deal of harm, and will continue to do so as long as it persists. The mission of education is to show the child, by purely scientific methods, that the more knowledge we have of natural products, their qualities, and the way to use them, the more industrial, scientific, and artistic commodities we shall have for the support and comfort of life, and men and women will issue in larger numbers from our schools with a determination to cultivate every branch of knowledge and action, under the guidance of reason and the inspiration of science and art, which will adorn life and reform society.

*We will not, therefore, lose our time praying to an imaginary God for things which our own exertions alone can procure.*

On the other hand, our teaching has nothing to do with politics. It is our work to form individuals in the full possession of all their faculties, while politics would subject their faculties to other men. While religion has, with its divine power, created a positively abusive power and retarded the development of humanity, political

systems also retard it by encouraging men to depend for everything on the will of others, on what are supposed to be men of a superior character—on those, in a word, who, from tradition or choice, exercise the profession of politics. It must be the aim of the rational schools to show the children that there will be tyranny and slavery as long as one man depends upon another, to study the causes of the prevailing ignorance, to learn the origin of all the traditional practices which give life to the existing social system, and to direct the attention of the pupils to these matters.

*We will not, therefore, lose our time seeking from others what we can get for ourselves.*

In a word, our business is to imprint on the minds of the children the idea that their condition in the social order will improve in proportion to their knowledge and to the strength they are able to develop; and that the era of general happiness will be the more sure to dawn when they have discarded all religious and other superstitions, which have up to the present done so much harm. On that account there are no rewards or punishments in our schools; no alms, no medals or badges in imitation of the religious and patriotic schools, which might encourage the children to believe in talismans instead of in the individual and collective power of beings who are conscious of their ability and knowledge.

Rational and scientific knowledge must persuade the men and women of the future that they have to expect nothing from any privileged being (fictitious or real); and that they may expect all that is reasonable from themselves and from a freely organised and accepted social order.

I then appealed in the *Bulletin* and the local press to scientific writers who were eager for the progress of the race to supply us with text-books on these lines. They were, I said, "to deliver the minds of the pupils from all the errors of our ancestors, encourage them in the love of truth and beauty, and keep from them the authoritarian dogmas, venerable sophisms, and ridiculous conventionalities which at present disgrace our social life." A special note was added in regard to the teaching of arithmetic:—

The way in which arithmetic has hitherto been generally taught has made it a powerful instrument for impressing the pupils with the false ideals of the capitalist régime which at present presses so heavily on society. The Modern School, therefore, invites essays on the subject of the reform of the teaching of arith-

metic, and requests those friends of rational and scientific instruction who are especially occupied with mathematics to draw up a series of easy and practical problems, in which there shall be no reference to wages, economy, and profit. These exercises must deal with agricultural and industrial production, the just distribution of the raw material and the manufactured articles, the means of communication, the transport of merchandise, the comparison of human labour with mechanical, the benefits of machinery, public works, etc. In a word, the Modern School wants a number of problems showing what arithmetic really ought to be—the science of the social economy (taking the word *economy* in its etymological sense of “good distribution”).

The exercises will deal with the four fundamental operations (integrals, decimals, and fractions), the metrical system, proportion, compounds and alloys, the squares and cubes of numbers, and the extraction of square and cube roots. As those who respond to this appeal are, it is hoped, inspired rather with the ideal of a right education of children than with the desire of profit, and as we wish to avoid the common practice in such circumstances, we shall not appoint judges or offer any prizes. The Modern School will publish the Arithmetic which best serves its purpose, and will come to an

amicable agreement with the author as to his fee.

A later note in the *Bulletin* was addressed to teachers:—

We would call the attention of all who dedicate themselves to the noble ideal of the rational teaching of children and the preparation of the young to take a fitting share in life to the announcements of a *Compendium of Universal History* by Clémence Jacquinet, and *The Adventures of Nono* by Jean Grave, which will be found on the cover.<sup>1</sup> The works which the Modern School has published or proposes to publish are intended for all free and rational teaching institutions, centres of social study, and parents, who resent the intellectual restrictions which dogma of all kinds—religious, political, and social—imposes in order to maintain privilege at the expense of the ignorant. All who are op-

<sup>1</sup> It should be stated that both the writers are Anarchists, in the sense I have indicated in the Preface. Except on special subjects—the famous geographer Odón de Buen, for instance, co-operated with Ferrer in regard to geography—no other writers were likely to embody Ferrer's ideals. All, however, were as opposed to violence as Ferrer himself, and Mr. W. Archer has shown in his life of Ferrer that the charges brought against Mme. Jacquinet by Ferrer's persecutors at his trial are officially denied by our Egyptian authorities.—J. M.

posed to Jesuitism and to conventional lies, and to the errors transmitted by tradition and routine, will find in our publications truth based upon evidence. As we have no desire of profit, the price of the works represents almost their intrinsic value or material cost; if there is any profit from the sale of them, it will be spent upon subsequent publications.

In a later number of the *Bulletin* (No. 6, second year) the distinguished geographer Elisée Reclus wrote, at my request, a lengthy article on the teaching of geography. In a letter which Reclus afterwards wrote me from the Geographical Institute at Brussels, replying to my request that he should recommend a text-book, he said that there was "no text-book for the teaching of geography in elementary schools"; he "did not know one that was not tainted with religious or patriotic poison, or, what is worse, administrative routine." He recommended that the teachers should use no manual in the Modern School, which he cordially commended (February 26, 1903).

In the following number (7) of the *Bulletin* I published the following note on the origin of Christianity:—

The older pedagogy, the real, if unavowed, aim of which was to impress children with the uselessness of knowledge, in order that they might be reconciled to their hard conditions and seek consolation in a supposed future life, used reading-books in the elementary school which swarmed with stories, anecdotes, accounts of travels, gems of classical literature, etc. There was a good deal of error mixed with what was sound and useful in this, and the aim was not just. The mystical idea predominated, representing that a relation could be established between a Supreme Being and men by means of priests, and this priesthood was the chief foundation of the existence of both the privileged and the disinherited, and the cause of much of the evil that they endured.

Among other books of this class, all tainted with the same evil, we remember one which inserted an academic discourse, a marvel of Spanish eloquence, in praise of the Bible. The gist of it is expressed in the barbarous declaration of Omar when he condemned the Library of Alexandria to the flames: "The whole truth is contained in the sacred book. If those other books are true, they are superfluous; if they are not true, they should be burned."

The Modern School, which seeks to form free minds, with a sense of responsibility, fitted to

experience a complete development of their powers, which is the one aim of life, must necessarily adopt a very different kind of reading-book, in harmony with its method of teaching. For this reason, as it teaches established truth and is interested in the struggle between light and darkness, it has deemed it necessary to produce a critical work which will enlighten the mind of the child with positive facts. These may not be appreciated in childhood, but will later, in manhood, when the child takes its place in social life and in the struggle against the errors, conventions, hypocrisies, and infamies which conceal themselves under the cloak of mysticism. This work reminds us that our books are not merely intended for children; they are destined also for the use of the Adult Schools which are being founded on every side by associations of workers, Freethinkers, Co-operators, social students, and other progressive bodies who are eager to correct the illiteracy of our nation, and remove that great obstacle to progress.

We believe that the section of Malvert's work (*Science and Religion*) which we have entitled "The Origin of Christianity" will be useful for this purpose. It shows the myths, dogmas, and ceremonies of the Christian religion in their original form; sometimes as exoteric symbols

concealing a truth known to the initiated, sometimes as adaptations of earlier beliefs, imposed by sheer routine and preserved by malice. As we are convinced and have ample evidence of the usefulness of our work, we offer it to the public with the hope that it will bear the fruit which we anticipate. We have only to add that certain passages which are unsuitable for children have been omitted; the omissions are indicated, and adults may consult the passages in the complete edition.

## CHAPTER XII

### SUNDAY LECTURES

THE Modern School did not confine itself to the instruction of children. Without for a moment sacrificing its predominant character and its chief object, it also undertook the instruction of the people. We arranged a series of public lectures on Sundays, and they were attended by the pupils and other members of their families, and a large number of workers who were anxious to learn.

The earlier lectures were wanting in method and continuity, as we had to employ lecturers who were quite competent in regard to their own subjects, but gave each lecture without regard to what preceded or followed. On other occasions, when we had no lecturer, we substituted useful readings. The general public attended assiduously, and our advertisements in the Liberal press of the district were eagerly scanned.

In view of these results, and in order to encourage the disposition of the general public, I held a consultation with Dr. Andrés Martínez Vargas and Dr. Odón de Buen, Professors at the Barcelona University, on the subject of creating a popular university in the Modern School. In this the science which is given—or, rather, sold—by the State to a privileged few in the universities should be given gratuitously to the general public, by way of restitution, as every human being has a right to know, and science, which is produced by observers and workers of all ages and countries, ought not to be restricted to a class.

From that time the lectures became continuous and regular, having regard to the different branches of knowledge of the two lecturers. Dr. Martínez Vargas expounded physiology and hygiene, and Dr. Odón de Buen geography and natural science, on alternate Sundays, until we began to be persecuted. Their teaching was eagerly welcomed by the pupils of the Modern School, and the large audiences of mixed children and adults. One of the Liberal journals of Barcelona, in giving an account of the

work, spoke of the function as "the scientific Mass."

The eternal light-haters, who maintain their privileges on the ignorance of the people, were greatly exasperated to see this centre of enlightenment shining so vigorously, and did not delay long to urge the authorities, who were at their disposal, to extinguish it brutally. For my part, I resolved to put the work on the firmest foundation I could conceive.

I recall with the greatest pleasure that hour we devoted once a week to the confraternity of culture. I inaugurated the lectures on December 15, 1901, when Don Ernesto Vendrell spoke of Hypatia as a martyr to the ideals of science and beauty, the victim of the fanatical Bishop Cyril of Alexandria. Other lectures were given on subsequent Sundays, as I said, until, on October 5, 1902, the lectures were organised in regular courses of science. On that day Dr. Andrés Martínez Vargas, Professor of the Faculty of Medicine (child diseases) at Barcelona University, gave his first lecture. He dealt with the hygiene of the school, and expounded its principles in plain terms adapted to the minds

of his hearers. Dr. Odón de Buen, Professor of the Faculty of Science, dealt with the usefulness of the study of natural history.

The press was generally in sympathy with the Modern School, but when the programme of the third scholastic year appeared some of the local journals, the *Noticiero Universal* and the *Diario de Barcelona*, broke out. Here is a passage that deserves recording as an illustration of the way in which conservative journals dealt with progressive subjects:—

We have seen the prospectus of an educational centre established in this city, which professes to have nothing to do with “dogmas and systems.” It proposes to liberate everybody from “authoritarian dogmas, venerable sophisms, and ridiculous conventions.” It seems to us that this means that the first thing to do is to tell the boys and girls—it is a mixed school—that there is no God, an admirable way of forming good children, especially young women who are destined to be wives and mothers.

The writer continues in this ironical manner for some time, and ends as follows:—

This school has the support of a professor of Natural Science (Dr. Odón de Buen) and another

of the Faculty of Medicine. We do not name the latter, as there may be some mistake in including him among the men who lend their support to such a work.

These insidious clerical attacks were answered by the anti-clerical journals of Barcelona at the time.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE RESULTS

AT the beginning of the second scholastic year I once more drew up a programme. Let us, I said, confirm our earlier programme; vindicated by results, approved in theory and practice, the principle which from the first informed our work and governs the Modern School is now unshakable.

*Science is the sole mistress of our life.* Inspired with this thought, the Modern School proposes to give the children entrusted to it *a mental vitality of their own*, so that when they leave our control they will continue to be the mortal enemies of all kinds of prejudices and will form their own ideas, individually and seriously, on all subjects.

Further, as education does not consist

merely in the training of the mind, but must include the emotions and the will, we shall take the utmost care in the training of the child that its intellectual impressions are converted into the sap of sentiment. When this attains a certain degree of intensity, it spreads through the whole being, colouring and refining the individual character. And as the conduct of the youth revolves entirely in the sphere of character, he must learn to adopt science as the sole mistress of his life.

To complete our principle we must state that we are enthusiastically in favour of mixed education, so that, having the same education, the woman may become the real companion of man, and work with him for the regeneration of society. This task has hitherto been confined to man; it is time that the moral influence of woman was enlisted in it. Science will illumine and guide her rich vein of sentiment, and utilise her character for the welfare of the race. Knowing that the chief need in this country is a knowledge of natural science and hygiene, the Modern School intends to help to supply it. In this it has the support of Dr. de Buen and Dr. Vargas,

who lecture, alternately, on their respective subjects.

On June 30, 1903, I published in the *Bulletin* the following declaration:—

We have now passed two years in expounding our principles, justifying them by our practice, and enjoying the esteem of all who have co-operated in our work. We do not see in this any other triumph than that we are able to confirm confidently all that we have proclaimed. We have overcome the obstacles which were put in our way by interest and prejudice, and we intend to persevere in it, counting always on that progressive comradeship which dispels the darkness of ignorance with its strong light. We resume work next September, after the autumn vacation. We are delighted to be able to repeat what we said last year. The Modern School and its *Bulletin* renew their life, for they have filled, with some measure of satisfaction, a deeply-felt need. Without making promises or programmes, we will persevere to the limit of our powers.

In the same number of the *Bulletin* was published the following list of the pupils who had attended the school during the first two years:—

MONTHS.	GIRLS.		BOYS.		TOTAL.	
	1901-2, 1902-3.		1901-2, 1902-3.		1st Yr.	2nd Yr.
Opening day	12	—	18	—	30	—
September	16	23	23	40	39	63
October	18	28	25	40	43	68
November	21	31	29	40	50	71
December	22	31	30	40	52	71
January	22	31	32	44	54	75
February	23	31	32	48	55	79
March	25	33	34	47	59	80
April	26	32	37	48	63	80
May	30	33	38	48	68	81
June	32	34	38	48	70	82

At the beginning of the third year I published with special pleasure the following article in the *Bulletin* on the progress of the School:—

On the eighth of the present month we opened the new scholastic year. A large number of pupils, their relatives, and members of the general public who were in sympathy with our work and lectures, filled the recently enlarged rooms, and, before the commencement of the function, inspected the collections which give the school the appearance of a museum of

science. The function began with a short address from the director, who formally declared the opening of the third year of school life, and said that, as they now had more experience and were encouraged by success, they would carry out energetically the ideal of the Modern School.

Dr. de Buen congratulated us on the enlargement of the School, and supported its aims. Education should, he said, reflect nature, as knowledge can only consist in our perception of what actually exists. On the part of his children, who study at the School and live in the neighbourhood, he paid a tribute to the good-comradeship among the pupils, with whom they played and studied in a perfectly natural way. He said that even in orthodox education, or rather on the part of the professors engaged in it, there were, for all its archaic features, certain tendencies similar to those embodied in the Modern School. This might be gathered from his own presence, and that of Dr. Vargas and other professors. He announced that there was already a similar school at Guadalajara, or that one would shortly be opened there, built by means of a legacy left for the purpose by a humanitarian. He wished to contribute to the redemption of children and their liberation from ignorance and superstition; and he expressed a hope and very strong wish that wealthy people would, at their

death, restore their goods in this way to the social body, instead of leaving them to secure an imaginary happiness beyond the grave.

Dr. Martínez Vargas maintained, against all who thought otherwise, that the purely scientific and rational education given in the Modern School is the proper basis of instruction; no better can be conceived for maintaining the relations of the children with their families and society, and it is the only way to form, morally and intellectually, the men of the future. He was glad to hear that the scholastic hygiene which had been practised in the Modern School during the previous two years, involving a periodical examination of the children, and expounded in the public lectures, had received the solemn sanction of the Hygienic Congress lately held at Brussels.

Going on to resume his lectures, and as a means of enforcing oral instruction by visual perception, he exhibited a series of lantern-slides illustrating various hygienic exercises, certain types of disease, unhealthy organs, etc., which the speaker explained in detail. An accident to the lantern interrupted the pictures; but the professor continued his explanations, speaking of the mischievous effects of corsets, the danger of microbic infection by trailing dresses or by children playing with soil, by insanitary

houses and workshops, etc., and promised to continue his medical explanations during the coming year.

The audience expressed its pleasure at the close of the meeting, and the sight of the great joy of the pupils was some consolation amid the hardships of the present, and a good augury for the future.

## CHAPTER XIV

### A DEFENSIVE CHAPTER

OUR programme for the third scholastic year (1903-4) was as follows:—

To promote the progressive evolution of childhood by avoiding all anachronistic practices, which are merely obstacles placed by the past to any real advance towards the future, is, in sum, the predominant aim of the Modern School. Neither dogmas nor systems, moulds which confine vitality to the narrow exigencies of a transitory form of society, will be taught. Only solutions approved by the facts, theories accepted by reason, and truths confirmed by evidence, shall be included in our lessons, so that each mind shall be trained to control a will, and truths shall irradiate the intelligence, and, when applied in practice, benefit the whole of humanity without any unworthy and disgraceful exclusiveness.

Two years of success are a sufficient guarantee

to us. They prove, in the first place, the excellence of mixed education, the brilliant result—the triumph, we would almost say—of an elementary common sense over prejudice and tradition. As we think it advisable, especially that the child may know what is happening about it, that physical and natural science and hygiene should be taught, the Modern School will continue to have the services of Dr. de Buen and Dr. Vargas. They will lecture on alternate Sundays, from eleven to twelve, on their respective subjects in the school-room. These lectures will complete and further explain the classes in science held during the week.

It remains only to say that, always solicitous for the success of our work of reform, we have enriched our scholastic material by the acquisition of new collections which will at once assist the understanding and give an attractiveness to scientific knowledge; and that, as our rooms are now not large enough for the pupils, we have acquired other premises in order to have more room and give a favourable reply to the petitions for admission which we have received.

The publication of this programme attracted the attention of the reactionary press, as I said. In order to give them a proof of the logical strength of the position of the

Modern School, I inserted the following article in the *Bulletin*:—

Modern pedagogy, relieved of traditions and conventions, must raise itself to the height of the rational conception of man, the actual state of knowledge, and the consequent ideal of mankind. If from any cause whatever a different tendency is given to education, and the master does not do his duty, it would be just to describe him as an impostor; education must not be a means of dominating men for the advantage of their rulers. Unhappily, this is exactly what happens. Society is organised, not in response to a general need and for the realisation of an ideal, but as an institution with a strong determination to maintain its primitive forms, defending them vigorously against every reform, however reasonable it may be.

This element of immobility gives the ancient errors the character of sacred beliefs, invests them with great prestige and a dogmatic authority, and arouses conflicts and disturbances which deprive scientific truths of their due efficacy or keep them in suspense. Instead of being enabled to illumine the minds of all and realise themselves in institutions and customs of general utility, they are unhappily restricted to the sphere of a privileged few. The effect is that,

as in the days of the Egyptian theocracy, there is an esoteric doctrine for the cultivated and an exoteric doctrine for the lower classes—the classes destined to labour, defence, and misery.

On this account we set aside the mystic and mythical doctrine, the domination and spread of which only befits the earlier ages of human history, and embrace scientific teaching, according to its evidence. This is at present restricted to the narrow sphere of the intellectuals, or is at the most accepted in secret by certain hypocrites who, so that their position may not be endangered, make a public profession of the contrary. Nothing could make this absurd antagonism clearer than the following parallel, in which we see the contrast between the imaginative dreams of the ignorant believer and the rational simplicity of the scientist:—

THE BIBLE.

ANTHROPISM.

The Bible contains the annals of the heavens, the earth, and the human race; like the Deity himself, it contains all that was, is, and will be. On its first page we read of

One of the main supports of the reactionary system is what we may call "anthropism." I designate by this term that powerful and world-wide group of erroneous

the beginning of time and of things, and on its last page the end of time and of things. It begins with *Genesis*, which is an idyll, and ends with *Revelation*, which is a funeral chant. *Genesis* is as beautiful as the fresh breeze which sweeps over the world; as the first dawn of light in the heavens; as the first flower that opens in the meadows; as the first word of love spoken by men; as the first appearance of the sun in the east. *Revelation* is as sad as the last palpitation of nature; as the last ray of the sun; as the last breath of a dying man. And between the funeral chant and the idyll there pass in succession before the eyes of God

opinions which opposes the human organism to the whole of the rest of nature, and represents it as the pre-ordained end of organic creation, an entity essentially distinct from it, a god-like being. Closer examination of this group of ideas shows it to be made up of three different dogmas, which we may distinguish as the *anthropocentric*, the *anthropomorphic*, and the *anthropolatrous*.

I. The *anthropocentric* dogma culminates in the idea that man is the preordained centre and aim of all terrestrial life—or, in a wider sense, of the whole universe. As this error is extremely conducive to man's interest, and as it is

all generations and all peoples. The tribes and the patriarchs go by; the republics and the magistrates; the monarchies and their kings; the empires and their emperors. Babylon and all its abominations go by; Nineveh and all its pomps; Memphis and its priests; Jerusalem and its prophets and temple; Athens and its arts and heroes; Rome and its diadem of conqueror of the world. Nothing lasts but God; all else passes and dies, like the froth that tips the wave.

. . . . .

A prodigious book, which mankind began to read three and thirty centuries ago, and of which, if it read all day

intimately connected with the creation-myth of the three great Mediterranean religions, and with the dogmas of the Mosaic, Christian, and Mohammedan theologies, it still dominates the greater part of the civilised world.

2. The *anthropomorphic* dogma, also, is connected with the creation-myth of the three aforesaid religions and of many others. It likens the creation and control of the world by God to the artificial creation of an able engineer or mechanic, and to the administration of a wise ruler. God, as creator, sustainer, and ruler of the world, is thus represented after a purely human fashion in his thought and

and night, it would not exhaust the wealth. A prodigious book in which all was calculated before the science of arithmetic was invented; in which the origin of language is told without any knowledge of philology; in which the revolutions of the stars are described without any knowledge of astronomy; in which history is recorded without any documents of history; in which the laws of nature are unveiled without any knowledge of physics. A prodigious book, that sees everything and knows everything; that knows the thoughts hidden in the hearts of men and those in the mind of God; that sees what is happening in the

work. Hence it follows that man in turn is godlike. "God made man to his own image and likeness." The older, naïve theology is pure "homotheism," attributing human shape, flesh, and blood to the gods. It is more intelligible than the modern mystic theosophy which adores a personal God as an invisible—properly speaking, gaseous—being, yet makes him think, speak, and act in human fashion; it offers us the paradoxical picture of a gaseous vertebrate.

3. The *anthropolatric* dogma naturally results from this comparison of the activity of God and man; it ends in the apotheosis of human nature. A

abysses of the sea and in the bowels of the earth; that records or foretells all the catastrophes of nations, and in which are accumulated all the treasures of mercy, of justice, and of vengeance. A book, in fine, which, when the heavens are folded like a gigantic fan, and the earth sinks and the sun withdraws its light, and the stars are extinguished, will remain with God, because it is his eternal word, echoing for ever in the heights.<sup>1</sup>

further result is the belief in the personal immortality of the soul and the dualistic dogma of the twofold nature of man, whose "immortal" soul is conceived as the temporary inhabitant of a mortal frame. Thus these three anthropistic dogmas, variously adapted to the respective professions of the different religions, came at length to be vested with extraordinary importance, and proved to be the source of the most dangerous errors.<sup>2</sup>

In face of this antagonism, maintained by ignorance and self-interest, positive education, which proposes to teach truths that issue in practical justice, must arrange and systematise the established results of natural research, com-

<sup>1</sup> Extract from a speech delivered by Donoso Cortés at his admission into the Academy.

<sup>2</sup> Haeckel's *Riddle of the Universe*, chap. i.

municate them to children, and thus prepare the way for a more equitable state of society, in which, as an exact expression of sociology, it must work for the benefit of all as well as of the individual. Moses, or whoever was the author of *Genesis*, and all the dogmatisers, with their six days of creation out of nothing after the Creator has passed an eternity in doing nothing, must give place to Copernicus, who showed the revolution of the planets round the sun; to Galileo, who proclaimed that the sun, not the earth, is the centre of the planetary universe; to Columbus and others who, believing the earth to be a sphere, set out in search of other peoples, and gave a practical basis to the doctrine of human brotherhood; to Linnæus and Cuvier, the founders of natural history; to Laplace, the inventor of the established cosmogony; to Darwin, the author of the evolutionary doctrine, which explains the formation of species by natural selection; and to all who, by means of observation and experiment, have discredited the supposed revelation, and tell us the real nature of the universe, the earth, and life.

Against the evils engendered by generations sunk in ignorance and superstition, from which so many are now delivered, only to fall into an anti-social scepticism, the best remedy, without excluding others, is to instruct the rising genera-

tion in purely humanist principles and in the positive and rational knowledge provided by science. Women educated thus will be mothers in the true sense of the word, not transmitters of traditional superstitions; they will teach their children integrity of life, the dignity of life, social solidarity, instead of a medley of outworn and sterile dogmas and submission to illegitimate hierarchies. Men thus emancipated from mystery, miracle, and distrust of themselves and their fellows, and convinced that they were born, not to die, as the wretched teaching of the mystics says, but to live, will hasten to bring about such social conditions as will give to life its greatest possible development. In this way, preserving the memory of former generations and other frames of mind as a lesson and a warning, we will once for all close the religious period, and enter definitely into that of reason and nature.

In June, 1904, the *Bulletin* published the following figures in regard to the attendance at school. At that time the publications of the Modern School were in use in thirty-two other schools throughout the country, and its influence was thus felt in Seville and Malaga, Tarragona and Cordova, and other towns, as well as Barcelona and the vicinity. The

number of scholars in our schools was also steadily rising, as the following table shows:—

LIST OF THE PUPILS IN THE MODERN SCHOOL  
DURING THE FIRST THREE YEARS.

MONTHS.	GIRLS.			BOYS.			TOTALS.		
	1901-2.	1902-3.	1903-4.	1901-2.	1902-3.	1903-4.	1st year.	2nd year.	3rd year.
Opening day	12	—	—	18	—	—	30	—	—
September	16	23	24	23	40	40	39	63	64
October	18	28	43	25	40	59	43	68	102
November	21	31	44	29	40	59	50	71	103
December	22	31	45	30	40	59	52	71	104
January	22	31	47	32	44	60	54	75	107
February	23	31	47	32	48	61	55	79	108
March	25	33	49	34	47	61	59	80	110
April	26	32	50	37	48	61	63	80	111
May	30	33	51	38	48	62	68	81	113
June	32	34	51	38	48	63	70	82	114

## CHAPTER XV

### THE INGENUOUSNESS OF THE CHILD

IN the *Bulletin* of September 30, 1903, we published the work of the pupils in the various classes of the Modern School, which had been read on the closing day of the second scholastic year. In these writings, in which the children are requested to apply their dawning judgment to some particular subject, the influence of mind over the inexperienced, ingenuous reasoning power, inspired by the sentiment of justice, is more apparent than the observance of rules. The judgments are not perfect from the logical point of view, only because the child has not the knowledge necessary for the formation of a perfectly sound opinion. This is the opposite of what we usually find, as opinions are generally founded only on prejudice arising from traditions, interests, and dogmas.

A boy of twelve, for instance, gave the following principle for judging the value of nations:—

To be called civilised, a nation or State must be free from the following—

Let me interrupt for a moment to point out that the young author identifies “civilised” with “just,” and especially that, putting aside prejudice, he describes certain evils as curable, and regards the healing of them as an essential condition of justice. These evils are:—

1. The co-existence of poor and rich, and the resultant exploitation.
2. Militarism, a means of destruction employed by one nation against another, due to the bad organisation of society.
3. Inequality, which allows some to rule and command, and obliges others to humble themselves and obey.

This principle is fundamental and simple, as we should expect to find in an imperfectly informed mind, and it would not enable one to solve a complete sociological problem; but it has the advantage of keeping the mind open

to fresh knowledge. It is as if one asked: What does a sick man need to recover health? And the reply is: His suffering must disappear. This is a naïve and natural reply, and would certainly not be given by a child brought up in the ordinary way; such a child would be taught first to consider the will of supposed supernatural beings. It is clear that this simple way of putting the problem of life does not shut out the hope of a reasonable solution; indeed, the one logically demands the other, as the same child's essay shows:—

I do not mean that, if there were no rich, or soldiers, or rulers, or wages, people would abuse their liberty and welfare, but that, with everybody enjoying a high degree of civilisation, there would be universal cordiality and friendship, and science would make much greater progress, not being interrupted by wars and political stagnation.

A girl of nine made the following sensible observation, which we leave in her own incorrect language:—

A criminal is condemned to death; if the

murderer deserves this punishment, the man who condemns him and the man who kills him are also murderers; logically, they ought to die as well, and so humanity would come to an end. It would be better, instead of punishing a criminal by committing another crime, to give him good advice, so that he will not do it again. Besides, if we are all equal, there would be no thieves, or assassins, or rich people, or poor, but all would be equal and love work and liberty.

The simplicity, clearness, and soundness of this observation need no commentary. One can understand our astonishment to hear it from the lips of a tender and very pretty little girl, who looked more like a symbolical representation of truth and justice than a living reality.

A boy of twelve deals with sincerity, and says:—

The man who is not sincere does not live peacefully; he is always afraid of being discovered: when one is sincere, if one has done wrong, the sincere declaration relieves the conscience. If a man begins to tell lies in childhood, he will tell bigger lies when he grows up, and may do much harm. There are cases in which one need not be sincere. For instance, if a man comes to

our house, flying from the police, and we are asked afterwards if we have seen him, we must deny it; the contrary would be treachery and cowardice.

It is sad that the mind of a child who regards truth as an incomparable good, "without which it is impossible to live," is induced by certain grave abuses to consider lying a virtue in some cases.

A girl of thirteen writes of fanaticism, and, regarding it as a characteristic of backward countries, she goes on to seek the cause:—

Fanaticism is the outcome of the state of ignorance and backwardness of women; on that account Catholics do not want to see women educated, as they are the chief support of their system.

A profound observation on the causes of fanaticism, and the cause of the causes. Another girl of thirteen indicates the best remedy of the evil in the following lines:—

The mixed school, for both sexes, is supremely necessary. The boy who studies, works, and plays in the society of girls learns gradually to respect and help her, and the girl reciprocally;

whereas, if they are educated separately, and the boy is told that the girl is not a good companion and she is worse than he, the boy will not respect women when he is a man, and will regard her as a subject or a slave, and that is the position in which we find women. So we must all work for the foundation of mixed schools, wherever it is possible, and where it is not possible we must try to remove the difficulties.

A boy of twelve regards the school as worthy of all respect, because we learn in it to read, write, and think, and it is the basis of morality and science; he adds:—

If it were not for the school we should live like savages, walk naked, eat herbs and raw flesh, and dwell in caves and trees; that is to say, we should live a brutal life. In time, as a result of the school, everybody will be more intelligent, and there will be no wars or inflamed populations and people will look back on war with horror as a work of death and destruction. It is a great disgrace that there are children who wander in the streets and do not go to school, and when they become men it is more disgraceful. So let us be grateful to our teachers for the patience they show in instructing us, and let us regard the school with respect.

If that child preserves and develops the faculties it exhibits, it will know how to harmonise egoism and altruism for its own good and that of society. A girl of eleven deplors that nations destroy each other in war, and laments the difference of social classes and that the rich live on the work and privation of the poor. She ends:—

Why do not men, instead of killing each other in wars and hating each other for class-differences, devote themselves cheerfully to work and the discovery of things for the good of mankind? Men ought to unite to love each other and live fraternally.<sup>1</sup>

A child of ten, in an essay which is so good that I would insert it whole if space permitted and if it were not for the identity in sentiment with the previous passages, says of the school and the pupil:—

Reunited under one roof, eager to learn what

<sup>1</sup> I omit some of Ferrer's short comments on these specimens of reasoning and sentiment, as he regards them. One can recognise the echo of the teacher's words. The children were repeating their catechism. But (1) this is no catechism of violence and class-hatred, and (2) there is a distinct appreciation of the ideas and sentiments on the part of the children. I translate the passages as literally as possible.—J. M.

we do not know, without distinction of classes [there were children of university professors among them, it will be remembered], we are children of one family guided to the same end. . . . The ignorant man is a nullity; little or nothing can be expected of him. He is a warning to us not to waste time; on the contrary, let us profit by it, and in due course we shall be rewarded. Let us not miss the fruits of a good school, and, honouring our teachers, our family, and society, we shall live happily.

A child of ten philosophises on the faults of mankind, which, in her opinion, can be avoided by instruction and goodwill:—

Among the faults of mankind are lying, hypocrisy, and egoism. If men, and especially women, were better instructed, and women were entirely equal to men, these faults would disappear. Parents would not send their children to religious schools, which inculcate false ideas, but to rational schools, where there is no teaching of the supernatural, which does not exist; nor to make war; but to live in solidarity and work in common.

We will close with the following essay, written by a young lady of sixteen, which is correct enough in form and substance to quote in entirety:—

What inequality there is in the present social order! Some working from morning to night without more profit than enough to buy their insufficient food; others receiving the products of the workers in order to enjoy themselves with the superfluous. Why is this so? Are we not all equal? Undoubtedly we are; but society does not recognise it, while some are destined to work and suffering, and others to idleness and enjoyment. If a worker shows that he realises the exploitation to which he is subject, he is blamed and cruelly punished, while others suffer the inequality with patience. The worker must educate himself; and in order to do this it is necessary to found free schools, maintained by the wages which the rich give. In this way the worker will advance more and more, until he is regarded as he deserves, since the most useful mission of society depends on him.

Whatever be the logical value of these ideas, this collection shows the chief aim of the Modern School—namely, that the mind of the child, influenced by what it sees and informed by the positive knowledge it acquires, shall work freely, without prejudice or submission to any kind of sect, with perfect autonomy and no other guide but reason, equal in all, and sanctioned by the

cogency of evidence, before which the darkness of sophistry and dogmatic imposition is dispelled.

In December, 1903, the Congress of Railway Workers, which was then held at Barcelona, informed us that, as a part of its programme, the delegates would visit the Modern School. The pupils were delighted, and we invited them to write essays to be read on the occasion of the visit. The visit was prevented by unforeseen circumstances; but we published in the *Bulletin* the children's essays, which exhaled a delicate perfume of sincerity and unbiassed judgment, graced by the naïve ingenuousness of the writers. No suggestion was made to them, and they did not compare notes, yet there was a remarkable agreement in their sentiments. At another time the pupils of the Workers' School at Badalona sent a greeting to our pupils, and they again wrote essays, from which we compiled a return letter of greeting.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This letter and the preceding essays are given in the Spanish edition. As they are a repetition of the sentiments expressed in the extracts already given, it is unnecessary to reproduce them here. Except that I have omitted papers incorporated by Ferrer, but not written by him, this is the only modification I have allowed myself.—J. M.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE "BULLETIN"

THE Modern School needed and found its organ in the Press. The political and ordinary press, which at one time favoured us and at another time denounced us as dangerous, cannot maintain an impartial attitude. It either gives exaggerated or unmerited praise, or calumnious censures. The only remedy for this was the sincerity and clearness of our own indications. To allow these libels to pass without correction would have done us considerable harm, and the *Bulletin* enabled us to meet them.

The directors published in it the programme of the school, interesting notes about it, statistical details, original pedagogical articles by the teachers, accounts of the progress of rational education in our own and other countries, translations of important

articles from foreign reviews and periodicals which were in harmony with the main character of our work, reports of the Sunday lectures, and announcements of the public competitions for the engagement of teachers and of our library.

One of the most successful sections of the *Bulletin* was that devoted to the publication of the ideas of the pupils. Besides showing their individual ideas it revealed the spontaneous manifestation of common sense. Girls and boys, with no appreciable difference in intellect according to sex, in contact with the realities of life as indicated by the teachers, expressed themselves in simple essays which, though sometimes immature in judgment, more often showed the clear logic with which they conceived philosophical, political, or social questions of some importance. The journal was at first distributed without charge among the pupils, and was exchanged with other periodicals; but there was soon a demand for it, and a public subscription had to be opened. When this was done, the *Bulletin* became a philosophical review, as well as organ of the Modern School; and it retained this character until the persecution

began and the school was closed. An instance of the important mission of the *Bulletin* will be found in the following article, which I wrote in No. 5 of the fourth year, in order to correct certain secular teachers who had gone astray:—

A certain Workers' School has introduced the novelty of establishing a savings-bank, administered by the pupils. This piece of information, reproduced in terms of great praise by the press as a thing to be imitated, induces us to express our opinion on the subject. While others have their own right to decide and act, we have the same right to criticise, and thus to create a rational public opinion.

In the first place we would observe that the word *economy* is very different from, if not the opposite of, the idea of *saving*. One may teach children the knowledge and practice of economy without necessarily teaching them to save. *Economy* means a prudent and methodical use of one's goods: *saving* means a restriction of one's use of one's goods. By economising, we avoid waste; by saving, the man who has nothing superfluous deprives himself of what is necessary.

Have the children who are taught to save any superfluous property? The very name of the society in question assures us that they have not.

The workers who send their children to this school live on their wages, the minimum sum, determined by the laws of supply and demand, which is paid for their work by the employers; and as this wage gives them nothing superfluous, and the social wealth is monopolised by the privileged classes, the workers are far from obtaining enough to live a life in harmony with the progress of civilisation. Hence, when these children of workers, and future workers themselves, are taught to save—which is a voluntary privation under the appearance of interest—they are taught to prepare themselves to submit to privilege. While the intention is to initiate them to the practice of economy, what is really done is to convert them into victims and accomplices of the present unjust order.

The working-class child is a human child, and, as such, it has a right to the development of all its faculties, the satisfaction of all its needs, moral and physical. For that purpose society was instituted. It is not its function to repress or subject the individual, as is selfishly pretended by the privileged and reactionary class, and all who enjoy what others produce; it has to hold the balance justly between the rights and duties of all members of the commonwealth.

As it is, the individual is asked to sacrifice his rights, needs, and pleasures to society; and, as

this disorder demands patience, suffering, and sophistical reasoning, let us commend economy and blame saving. We do not think it right to teach children to look forward to being workers in a social order in which the average mortality of the poor, who live without freedom, instruction, or joy, reaches an appalling figure in comparison with that of the class which lives in triumph on their labour. Those who, from sociolatry, would derogate in the least from the rights of man, should read the fine and vigorous words of Pi y Margall: "Who art thou to prevent my use of my human rights? Perfidious and tyrannical society, thou wert created to defend, not to coerce us. Go back to the abyss whence thou camest."

Starting from these principles, and applying them to pedagogy, we think it necessary to teach children that to waste any class of objects is contrary to the general welfare; that if a child spoils paper, loses pens, or destroys books, it does an injustice to its parents and the school. Assuredly one may impress on the child the need of prudence in order to avoid getting imperfect things, and remind it of lack of employment, illness, or age; but it is not right to insist that a provision be made out of a salary which does not suffice to meet the needs of life. That is bad arithmetic.

The workers have no university training; they do not go to the theatre or to concerts; they never go into ecstasies before the marvels of art, industry, or nature; they have no holiday in which to fill their lungs with life-giving oxygen; they are never uplifted by reading books or reviews. On the contrary, they suffer all kinds of privations, and may have to endure crises due to excessive production. It is not the place of teachers to hide these sad truths from the children and to tell them that a smaller quantity is equal to, if not better than, a larger. In order that the power of science and industry be shared by all, and all be invited to partake of the banquet of life, we must not teach in the school, in the interest of privilege, that the poor should organise the advantages of crumbs and leavings. We must not prostitute education.

On another occasion I had to censure a different departure from our principles:—

We were distressed and indignant on reading the list of contributions voted by the Council of Barcelona for certain popular societies which are interested in education. We read of sums offered to Republican Fraternities and similar societies; and we find that, instead of rejecting

them, they forwarded votes of thanks to the Council.

The meaning of these things in a Catholic and ultra-conservative nation is clear. The Church and the capitalist system only maintain their ascendancy by a judicious system of charity and protection. With this they gratify the disinherited class, and continue to enjoy its respect. But we cannot see republicans acting as if they were humble Christians without raising a cry of alarm.

Beware, we repeat, beware! You are educating your children badly, and taking the wrong path towards reform, in accepting alms. You will neither emancipate yourselves nor your children if you trust in the strength of others, and rely on official or private support. Let the Catholics, ignorant of the realities of life, expect everything of God, or St. Joseph, or some similar being, and, as they have no security that their prayers will be heard in this life, trust to receive a reward after death. Let gamblers in the lottery fail to see that they are morally and materially victimised by their rulers, and trust to receive by chance what they do not earn by energy. But it is sad to see men hold out the hand of a beggar, who are united in a revolutionary protest against the present system; to see them admitting and giving thanks for humiliating gifts,

instead of trusting their own energy, intellect, and ability.

Beware, then, all men of good faith! That is not the way to set up a true education of children, but the way to enslave them.

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE CLOSING OF THE MODERN SCHOOL

I HAVE reached the culmination of my life and my work. My enemies, who are all the reactionaries in the world, represented by the reactionaries of Barcelona and of Spain, believed that they had triumphed by involving me in a charge of attempted assassination. But their triumph proved to be only an episode in the struggle of practical Rationalism against reaction. The shameful audacity with which they claimed sentence of death against me (a claim that was refused on account of my transparent innocence rather than on account of the justice of the court) drew on me the sympathy of all liberal men—all true progressives—in all parts of the world, and fixed attention on the meaning and ideal of the Rational School. There was a universal and uninterrupted movement of protest and admiration for a whole year—from

May, 1906, to May and June, 1907—echoed in the Press of every civilised country, and in meetings and other popular manifestations.

It proved in the end that the mortal enemies of our work were its most effective supporters, as they led to the establishment of international Rationalism.

I felt my own littleness in face of this mighty manifestation. Led always by the light of the ideal, I conceived and carried out the International League for the Rational Education of Children, in the various branches of which, scattered over the world, are found men in the front ranks of culture [Anatole France, Ernst Haeckel, etc.]. It has three organs, *L'École Rénovée* in France, the *Bulletin* in Barcelona, and *La Scuola Laica* at Rome, which expound, discuss, and spread all the latest efforts of pedagogy to purify science from all defilement of error, to dispel all credulity, to bring about a perfect harmony between belief and knowledge, and to destroy that privileged esoteric system which has always left an exoteric doctrine to the masses.

This great concentration of knowledge and research must lead to a vigorous action which will give to the future revolution the char-

acter of practical manifestation of applied sociology, without passion or demand of revenge, with no terrible tragedies or heroic sacrifices, no sterile movements, no disillusion of zealots, no treacherous returns to reaction. For scientific and rational education will have pervaded the masses, making each man and woman a self-conscious, active, and responsible being, guiding his will according to his judgment, free for ever from the passions inspired by those who exploit respect for tradition and for the charlatantry of the modern framers of political programmes.

If progress thus loses this dramatic character of revolution, it will gain in firmness, stability, and continuity, as evolution. The vision of a rational society, which revolutionaries foresaw in all ages, and which sociologists confidently promise, will rise before the eyes of our successors, not as the mirage of dreamy utopians, but as the positive and merited triumph won by the revolutionary power of reason and science.

The new repute of the educational work of the Modern School attracted the attention of all who appreciated the value of sound

instruction. There was a general demand for knowledge of the system. There were numbers of private secular schools, or similar institutions supported by societies, and their directors made inquiry concerning the difference of our methods from theirs. There were constant requests to visit the school and consult me. I gladly satisfied them, removed their doubts, and pressed them to enter on the new way; and at once efforts were made to reform the existing schools, and to create others on the model of the Modern School.

There was great enthusiasm and the promise of mighty things; but one serious difficulty stood in the way: we were short of teachers, and had no means of creating them. Professional teachers had two disadvantages—traditional habits and dread of the contingencies of the future. There were very few who, in an unselfish love of the ideal, would devote themselves to the progressive cause. Instructed young men and women might be found to fill the gap; but how were we to train them? Where could they pass their apprenticeship? Now and again I heard from workers' or political societies that they had decided to open a school; they would find

## Closing of the Modern School 141

rooms and appliances, and we could count upon their using our school manuals. But whenever I asked if they had teachers, they replied in the negative, and thought it would be easy to supply the want. I had to give in.

Circumstances had made me the director of rationalist education, and I had constant consultations and demands on the part of aspirants for the position of teacher. This made me realise the defect, and I endeavoured to meet it by private advice and by admitting young assistants in the Modern School. The result was naturally mixed. There are now worthy teachers who will carry on the work of rational education elsewhere; others failed from moral or intellectual incapacity.

Not feeling that the pupils of the Modern School who devoted themselves to teaching would find time for their work, I established a Normal School, of which I have already spoken. I was convinced that, if the key of the social problem is in the scientific and rational school, it is essential, to make a proper use of the key, that fitting teachers be trained for so great a destiny.

As the practical and positive result of my work, I may say that the Modern School of

Barcelona was a most successful experiment, and that it was distinguished for two characteristics:—

1. While open to successive improvements, it set up a standard of what education should be in a reformed state of society.

2. It gave an impulse to the spread of this kind of education.

There was up to that time no education in the true sense of the word. There were, for the privileged few in the universities, traditional errors and prejudices, authoritarian dogmas, mixed up with the truths which modern research has brought to light. For the people there was primary instruction, which was, and is, a method of taming children. The school was a sort of riding-school, where natural energies were subdued in order that the poor might suffer their hard lot in silence. Real education, separated from faith—education that illumines the mind with the light of evidence—is the creation of the Modern School.

During its ephemeral existence<sup>1</sup> it did a marvellous amount of good. The child

<sup>1</sup> The Modern School was closed after Ferrer's arrest in 1906.—J. M.

admitted to the school and kept in contact with its companions rapidly changed its habits, as I have observed. It cultivated cleanliness, avoided quarrels, ceased to be cruel to animals, took no notice in its games of the barbarous spectacle which we call the national entertainment [bull-fight], and, as its mind was uplifted and its sentiments purified, it deplored the social injustices which abound on the very face of life. It detested war, and would not admit that national glory, instead of consisting in the highest possible moral development and happiness of a people, should be placed in conquest and violence.

The influence of the Modern School, extended to other schools which had been founded on its model and were maintained by various working-men societies, penetrated the families by means of the children. Once they were touched by the influence of reason and science they were unconsciously converted into teachers of their own parents, and these in turn diffused the better standards among their friends and relatives.

This spread of our influence drew on us the hatred of Jesuitism of all kinds and in all places, and this hatred inspired the design

which ended in the closing of the Modern School. It is closed; but in reality it is concentrating its forces, defining and improving its plan, and gathering the strength for a fresh attempt to promote the true cause of progress.

That is the story of what the Modern School was, is, and ought to be.

## EPILOGUE

By J. M.

“THAT is the story of what the Modern School was, is, and ought to be.” When Ferrer wrote this, in the summer of 1908, he was full of plans for the continuation of his work in various ways. He was fostering such free schools as the Government still permitted. He was promoting his “popular university,” and multiplying works of science and sociology for the million. His influence was growing, and he saw with glad eyes the light breaking on the ignorant masses of his fellows. In the summer of 1909 he came to England to study the system of moral instruction which, under the inspiration of the Moral Instruction League, is used in thousands of English schools. A friend in London begged him never to return to Spain, as his life was sought. He knew it, but nothing would divert him from his ideal. And three

months later he was shot, among the graves of criminals, in the trenches of Montjuich.

Form your own opinion of him from his words. He conceals nothing. He was a rebel against religious traditions and social inequalities; he wished children to become as resentful of poverty and superstition as he. There is no law of Spain, or of any other country, that forbids such enterprise as his. He might be shot in Russia, of course; for the law has been suspended there for more than a decade. In Spain men had to lie in order to take his life.

With the particular value of his scheme of education I am not concerned. He was well acquainted with pedagogical literature, and there were few elementary schools in Spain to equal his. Writers who have spoken slightly of his school, apart from its social dogmas, know little or nothing about it. Ferrer was in close and constant association with two of the ablest professors in the University of Barcelona, one of whom sent his children to the school, and with distinguished scholars in other lands. There was more stimulating work done in the Modern School than, probably, in any other elementary

school in Spain, if not elsewhere. All that can be questioned is the teaching of an explicit social creed to the children. Ferrer would have rejoined that there was not a school in Europe that does not teach an explicit social creed. But, however we may differ from his creed, we cannot fail to recognise the elevated and unselfish idealism of the man, and deplore the brutality and illegality with which his genial life was prematurely brought to a close.

**THE END**



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Author of "The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind"

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FRANCISCO FERRER.

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The  
Origin and Ideals  
of the  
Modern School

By  
Francisco Ferrer

Translated by Joseph McCabe

G. P. Putnam's Sons  
New York and London  
The Knickerbocker Press

1913

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## INTRODUCTION

ON October 12, 1909, Francisco Ferrer y Guardia was shot in the trenches of the Montjuich Fortress at Barcelona. A Military Council had found him guilty of being "head of the insurrection" which had, a few months before, lit the flame of civil war in the city and province. The clergy had openly petitioned the Spanish Premier, when Ferrer was arrested, to look to the Modern School and its founder for the source of the revolutionary feeling; and the Premier had, instead of rebuking them, promised to do so. When Ferrer was arrested, the prosecution spent many weeks in collecting evidence against him, and granted a free pardon to several men who *were* implicated in the riot, for testifying against him. These three or four men were the only witnesses out of fifty who would have been heard patiently in a civil court of justice, and even their testimony would at once have crumbled under cross-examination. But

there was no cross-examination, and no witnesses were brought before the court. Five weeks were occupied in compiling an enormously lengthy indictment of Ferrer; then twenty-four hours were given to an inexperienced officer, chosen at random, to analyse it and prepare a defence. Evidence sent in Ferrer's favour was confiscated by the police; the witnesses who could have disproved the case against him were kept in custody miles away from Barcelona; and documents which would have tended to show his innocence were refused to the defending officer. And after the mere hearing of the long and hopelessly bewildering indictment (in which the evidence was even falsified), and in spite of the impassioned protest of the defending officer against the brutal injustice of the proceedings, the military judges found Ferrer guilty, and he was shot.

Within a month of the judicial murder of Ferrer, I put the whole abominable story before the British public. I showed the deep corruption of Church and politics in Spain, and proved that clergy and politicians had conspired to use the gross and pliable machinery of "military justice" to remove a man

whose sole aim was to open the eyes of the Spanish people. A prolonged and passionate controversy followed. That controversy has not altered a line of my book. Mr. William Archer, in a cold and impartial study of the matter, has fully supported my indictment of the prosecution of Ferrer; and Professor Simarro, of Madrid University, has, in a voluminous study of the trial (*El Proceso Ferrer*—two large volumes), quoted whole chapters of my little work. When, in 1912, the Supreme Military Council of Spain was forced to declare that no single act of violence could be directly or indirectly traced to Ferrer (whereas the chief witness for the prosecution had sworn that he saw Ferrer leading a troop of rioters), and ordered the restoration of his property, the case for his innocence was closed. It remains only for Spain to wipe the foul stain from its annals by removing the bones of the martyred teacher from the trenches of Montjuich, and to declare, with *real* Spanish pride, that a grave injustice has been done.

Meantime, the restoration of Ferrer's property enabled his trustees to resume his work. Among his papers they found a manuscript

account, from his own pen, of the origin and ideals of the Modern School, and their first act is to give it to the world. In 1906, Ferrer had been arrested on the charge of complicity in the attempt of Morral to assassinate the King. He was kept in jail for a year, and the most scandalous efforts were made, in the court and the country, to secure a judicial murder; but it was a civil (or civilised) trial, and the charge was contemptuously rejected. Going to the Pyrenees in the early summer of 1908 to recuperate, Ferrer determined to write the simple story of his school, and it is this I now offer to English readers.

In this work Ferrer depicts himself more truly and vividly than any friend of his has ever done. For my part, I had never seen Ferrer, and never seen Spain; but I was acquainted with Spanish life and letters, and knew that there had been committed in the twentieth century one of those old-world crimes by which the children of darkness seek to arrest the advance of man. I interpreted Ferrer from his work, his letters, a few journalistic articles he had written—he had never published a book—and the impressions of his friends and pupils. In this book the

man portrays himself, and describes his aims with a candour that all will appreciate. The less foolish of his enemies have ceased to assert that he organised or led the riot at Barcelona in 1909. It was, they say, the tendency, the subtle aim, of his work which made him responsible. It may be remembered that the *Saturday Review* and other journals published the most unblushingly mendacious letters, from anonymous correspondents, saying that they had seen posters on the walls of Ferrer's schools inciting children to violence. As the very zealous police did not at the trial even mention Ferrer's schools, or the textbooks used in them, these lies need no further exposure. But many persist in thinking, since there is now nothing further to think to the disadvantage of Ferrer, that his schools were really hotbeds of rebellion and were very naturally suppressed.

Here is the full story of the Modern School told in transparently simple language. Here is the whole man, with all his ideals, aims, and resentments. It shows, as we well knew, and could have proved with overwhelming force at his trial had we been permitted, that he was absolutely opposed to violence ever

since, in his youth, he had taken part in an abortive revolution. It tells how he came to distrust violence and those who used it; how he concluded that the moral and intellectual training of children was to be the sole work of his career; how, when he obtained the funds, he turned completely from politics, and devoted himself to educating children in knowledge of science and in sentiments of peace and brotherhood.

It tells also, with the same transparent plainness, why his noble-minded work incurred such violent enmity. He naïvely boasts that the education in the Modern School was free from dogmas. It was not, and cannot be in any school, free from dogmas, for dogma means "teaching," and he gave teaching of a very definite character. Mr. Belloc's indictment of his schools is, like Mr. Belloc's indictment of his character and guilt, evidently based on complete ignorance of the facts and a very extensive knowledge of the recklessly mendacious literature of his opponents. Even Mr. Archer's account of his school is grossly misleading. The Modern School was "avowedly a nursery of rebellious citizens" only in the same sense as is any

Socialist Sunday-school in England or Germany; and the Spanish Government has never claimed, and could not claim, for a moment the right to close it, except in so far as it falsely charged the founder with crime and confiscated his property.

Ferrer's school was thoroughly rationalistic, and this embittered the clergy—for his system was spreading rapidly through Spain—without in the least infringing Spanish law. Further, Ferrer's school explicitly taught children that militarism was a crime, that the unequal distribution of wealth was a thing to be abhorred, that the capitalist system was bad for the workers, and that political government is an evil. He had a perfect right under Spanish law to found a school to teach his ideas; as any man has under English or German law. The prohibited and damnable thing would be even to hint to children that, when they grew up, they might look forward to altering the industrial and political system by violence. This Ferrer not only did not teach, but strenuously opposed. We have overwhelming proof of this at every step of his later career. But he was a child of the workers, and he had

a passionate and noble resentment of the ignorance, poverty, and squalor of the lives of so large a proportion of the workers. He was also an Anarchist, in the sense of Tolstoi; he believed that liberty was essential to the development of man, and central government an evil. But, as rigorously as Tolstoi, he relied on persuasion and abhorred violence. I would call attention to Chapter VI of this book, in which he pleads for "the co-education of the rich and poor"; and there were children of middle-class parents, even of university professors, in his school. Most decidedly he preached no class-hatred or violence. I do not share his academic and innocent Anarchist ideal—which is far nearer to Conservatism than to Socialism—but I share to the full that intense and passionate longing for the uplifting and brightening of the poor, and for the destruction of superstition, which was the supreme ideal of his life and of his work. For that he was shot.

Finally, the reader must strictly bear in mind the Spanish atmosphere of this tragedy. When Ferrer describes "existing schools," he means the schools of Spain, which are, for the most part, a mockery and a shame.

When he talks of "ruling powers," he has in mind the politicians of Spain, my indictment of whom, in their own language, has never been questioned. When he talks of "superstition," he means primarily Spanish superstition; he refers to a priesthood that still makes millions every year by the sale of indulgences. If you remember these things, you will, however you dissent from his teaching in parts, appreciate the burning and unselfish idealism of the man, and understand why some of us see the brand of Cain on the fair brow of Spain for extinguishing that idealism in blood.

J. M.

*February, 1913.*



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**The Origin and Ideals of the  
Modern School**



# The Origin and Ideals of The Modern School

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## CHAPTER I

### THE BIRTH OF MY IDEALS

THE share which I had in the political struggles of the last part of the nineteenth century put my early convictions to a severe test. I was a revolutionary in the cause of justice; I was convinced that liberty, equality, and fraternity were the legitimate fruit to be expected of a republic. Seeing, therefore, no other way to attain this ideal but a political agitation for a change of the form of government, I devoted myself entirely to the republican propaganda.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>This was in the early eighties, when Ferrer, then in his early twenties, was secretary to the republican leader Ruiz Zorrilla. To this phase of his career, which he rapidly

My relations with D. Manuel Ruiz Zorrilla, who was one of the leading figures in the revolutionary movement, brought me into contact with a number of the Spanish revolutionaries and some prominent French agitators, and my intercourse with them led to a sharp disillusion. I detected in many of them an egoism which they sought hypocritically to conceal, while the ideals of others, who were more sincere, seemed to me inadequate. In none of them did I perceive a design to bring about a radical improvement—a reform which should go to the roots of disorder and afford some security of a perfect social regeneration.

The experience I acquired during my fifteen years' residence at Paris, in which I witnessed the crises of Boulangism, Dreyfusism, and Nationalism, and the menace they offered to the Republic, convinced me that the problem of popular education was not solved; and, if it were not solved in France, there was little hope of Spanish republicanism settling it, especially as the

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outgrew, belongs the revolutionary document which was malignantly and dishonestly used against him twenty-five years afterwards.—J. M.

party had always betrayed a lamentable inappreciation of the need of a system of general education.

Consider what the condition of the present generation would be if the Spanish republican party had, after the banishment of Ruiz Zorrilla [1885], devoted itself to the establishment of Rationalist schools in connection with each committee, each group of Free-thinkers, or each Masonic lodge; if, instead of the presidents, secretaries, and members of the committees thinking only of the office they were to hold in the future Republic, they had entered upon a vigorous campaign for the instruction of the people. In the thirty years that have elapsed, considerable progress would have been made in founding day-schools for children and night-schools for adults.

Would the general public, educated in this way, be content to send members to Parliament who would accept an Associations Law presented by the monarchists? Would the people confine itself to holding meetings to demand a reduction of the price of bread, instead of resenting the privations imposed on the worker by the superfluous luxuries of

the wealthy? Would they waste their time in futile indignation meetings, instead of organising their forces for the removal of all unjust privileges?

My position as professor of Spanish at the Philotechnic Association and in the Grand Orient of France brought me into touch with people of every class, both in regard to character and social position; and, when I considered them from the point of view of their possible influence on the race, I found that they were all bent upon making the best they could of life in a purely individualist sense. Some studied Spanish with a view to advancing in their profession, others in order to master Spanish literature and promote their careers, and others for the purpose of obtaining further pleasure by travelling in countries where Spanish was spoken.

No one felt the absurdity of the contradictions between belief and knowledge; hardly one cared to give a just and rational form to human society, in order that all the members of each generation might have a proportionate share in the advantages created by earlier generations. Progress was conceived as a

kind of fatalism, independent of the knowledge and the goodwill of men, subject to vacillations and accidents in which the conscience and energy of man had no part. The individual, reared in a family circle, with its inveterate atavism and its traditional illusions maintained by ignorant mothers, and in the school with something worse than error—the sacramental untruth imposed by men who spoke in the name of a divine revelation—was deformed and degenerate at his entrance into society; and, if there is any logical relation between cause and effect, nothing could be expected of him but irrational and pernicious results.

I spoke constantly to those whom I met with a view to proselytism, seeking to ascertain the use of each of them for the purpose of my ideal, and soon realised that nothing was to be expected of the politicians who surrounded Ruiz Zorrilla; they were, in my opinion, with a few honourable exceptions, impenitent adventurers. This gave rise to a certain expression which the judicial authorities sought to use to my disadvantage in circumstances of great gravity and peril. Zorrilla, a man of lofty views and not sufficiently on

his guard against human malice, used to call me an "anarchist" when he heard me put forward a logical solution of a problem; at all times he regarded me as a deep radical, opposed to the opportunist views and the showy radicalism of the Spanish revolutionaries who surrounded and even exploited him, as well as the French republicans, who held a policy of middle-class government and avoided what might benefit the disinherited proletariat, on the pretext of distrusting utopias.

In a word, during the early years of the restoration there were men conspiring with Ruiz Zorrilla who have since declared themselves convinced monarchists and conservatives; and that worthy man, who protested earnestly against the *coup d'État* of January 3, 1874, confided in his false friends, with the result, not uncommon in the political world, that most of them abandoned the republican party for the sake of some office. In the end he could count only on the support of those who were too honourable to sell themselves, though they lacked the logic to develop his ideas and the energy to carry out his work.

In consequence of this I restricted myself

to my pupils, and selected for my purposes those whom I thought more appropriate and better disposed. Having now a clear idea of the aim which I proposed to myself, and a certain prestige from my position as teacher and my expansive character, I discussed various subjects with my pupils when the lessons were over; sometimes we spoke of Spanish customs, sometimes of politics, religion, art, or philosophy. I sought always to correct the exaggerations of their judgments, and to show clearly how mischievous it is to subordinate one's own judgment to the dogma of a sect, school, or party, as is so frequently done. In this way I succeeded in bringing about a certain agreement among men who differed in their creeds and views, and induced them to master the beliefs which they had hitherto held unquestioningly by faith, obedience, or sheer indolence. My friends and pupils found themselves happy in thus abandoning some ancient error and opening their minds to truths which uplifted and ennobled them.

A rigorous logic, applied with discretion, removed fanatical bitterness, established intellectual harmony, and gave, to some extent

at least, a progressive disposition to their wills. Freethinkers who opposed the Church and rejected the legends of *Genesis*, the imperfect morality of the Gospels, and the ecclesiastical ceremonies; more or less opportunist republicans or radicals who were content with the futile equality conferred by the title of citizen, without in the least affecting class distinctions; philosophers who fancied they had discovered the first cause of things in their metaphysical labyrinths and established truth in their empty phrases—all were enabled to see the errors of others as well as their own, and they leaned more and more to the side of common sense.

When the further course of my life separated me from these friends and brought on me an unmerited imprisonment, I received many expressions of confidence and friendship from them. From all of them I anticipate useful work in the cause of progress, and I congratulate myself that I had some share in the direction of their thoughts and endeavours.

## CHAPTER II

### MLLE. MEUNIER

AMONG my pupils was a certain Mlle. Meunier, a wealthy old lady with no dependents, who was fond of travel, and studied Spanish with the object of visiting my country. She was a convinced Catholic and a very scrupulous observer of the rules of her Church. To her, religion and morality were the same thing, and unbelief—or “impiety,” as the faithful say—was an evident sign of vice and crime.

She detested revolutionaries, and she regarded with impulsive and indiscriminating aversion every display of popular ignorance. This was due, not only to her education and social position, but to the circumstance that during the period of the Commune she had been insulted by children in the streets of Paris as she went to church with her mother. Ingenuous and sympathetic, without regard

to antecedents, accessories, or consequences, she always expressed her dogmatic convictions without reserve, and I had many opportunities to open her eyes to the inaccuracy of her opinions.

In our many conversations I refrained from taking any definite side; so that she did not recognise me as a partisan of any particular belief, but as a careful reasoner with whom it was a pleasure to confer. She formed so flattering an opinion of me, and was so solitary, that she gave me her full confidence and friendship, and invited me to accompany her on her travels. I accepted the offer, and we travelled in various countries. My conduct and our constant conversation compelled her to recognise the error of thinking that every unbeliever was perverse and every atheist a hardened criminal, since I, a convinced atheist, manifested symptoms very different from those which her religious prejudice had led her to expect.

She thought, however, that my conduct was exceptional, and reminded me that the exception proves the rule. In the end the persistency and logic of my arguments forced

her to yield to the evidence, and, when her prejudice was removed, she was convinced that a rational and scientific education would preserve children from error, inspire men with a love of good conduct, and reorganise society in accord with the demands of justice. She was deeply impressed by the reflection that she might have been on a level with the children who had insulted her if, at their age, she had been reared in the same conditions as they. When she had given up her belief in innate ideas, she was greatly preoccupied with the following problem: If a child were educated without hearing anything about religion, what idea of the Deity would it have on reaching the age of reason?

After a while, it seemed to me that we were wasting time if we were not prepared to go on from words to deeds. To be in possession of an important privilege through the imperfect organisation of society and by the accident of birth, to conceive ideas of reform, and to remain inactive or indifferent amid a life of pleasure, seemed to me to incur a responsibility similar to that of a man who refused to lend a hand to a person whom he

could save from danger. One day, therefore, I said to Mlle. Meunier:

“Mlle., we have reached a point at which it is necessary to reconsider our position. The world appeals to us for our assistance, and we cannot honestly refuse it. It seems to me that to expend entirely on comforts and pleasures resources which form part of the general patrimony, and which would suffice to establish a useful institution, is to commit a fraud; and that would be sanctioned neither by a believer nor an unbeliever. I must warn you, therefore, that you must not count on my company in your further travels. I owe myself to my ideas and to humanity, and I think that you ought to have the same feeling now that you have exchanged your former faith for rational principles.”

She was surprised, but recognised the justice of my decision, and, without other stimulus than her own good nature and fine feeling, she gave me the funds for the establishment of an institute of rational education. The Modern School, which already existed in my mind, was thus ensured of realisation by this generous act.

All the malicious statements that have been

made in regard to this matter—for instance, that I had to submit to a judicial interrogation—are sheer calumnies. It has been said that I used a power of suggestion over Mlle. Meunier for my own purposes. This statement, which is as offensive to me as it is insulting to the memory of that worthy and excellent lady, is absolutely false. I do not need to justify myself; I leave my vindication to my acts, my life, and the impartial judgment of my contemporaries. But Mlle. Meunier is entitled to the respect of all men of right feeling, of all those who have been delivered from the despotism of sect and dogma, who have broken all connection with error, who no longer submit the light of reason to the darkness of faith, nor the dignity of freedom to the yoke of obedience.

She believed with honest faith. She had been taught that between the Creator and the creature there is a hierarchy of intermediaries whom one must obey, and that one must bow to a series of mysteries contained in the dogmas imposed by a divinely instituted Church. In that belief she remained perfectly tranquil. The remarks I made and advice I offered her were not spontaneous

commentaries on her belief, but natural replies to her efforts to convert me; and, from her want of logic, her feeble reasoning broke down under the strength of my arguments, instead of her persuading me to put faith before reason. She could not regard me as a tempting spirit, since it was always she who attacked my convictions; and she was in the end vanquished by the struggle of her faith and her own reason, which was aroused by her indiscretion in assailing the faith of one who opposed her beliefs.

She now ingenuously sought to exonerate the Communist boys as poor and uneducated wretches, the offspring of crime, disturbers of the social order, on account of the injustice which, in face of such a disgrace, permits others, equal disturbers of the social order, to live unproductive lives, enjoy great wealth, exploit ignorance and misery, and trust that they will continue throughout eternity to enjoy their pleasures on account of their compliance with the rites of the Church and their works of charity. The idea of a reward of easy virtue and punishment of unavoidable sin shocked her conscience and moderated her religious feeling, and, seeking

to break the atavistic chain which so much hampers any attempt at reform, she decided to contribute to the founding of a useful work which would educate the young in a natural way and in conditions which would help them to use to the full the treasures of knowledge which humanity has acquired by labour, study, observation, and the methodical arrangement of its general conclusions.

In this way, she thought, with the aid of a supreme intelligence which veils itself in mystery from the mind of man, or by the knowledge which humanity has gained by suffering, contradiction, and doubt, the future will be realised; and she found an inner contentment and vindication of her conscience in the idea of contributing, by the bestowal of her property, to a work of transcendent importance.

## CHAPTER III

### I ACCEPT THE RESPONSIBILITY

ONCE I was in possession of the means of attaining my object, I determined to put my hand to the task without delay.<sup>1</sup> It was now time to give a precise shape to the vague aspiration that had long haunted my imagination; and to that end, conscious of my imperfect knowledge of the art of pedagogy, I sought the counsel of others. I had not a great confidence in the official pedagogists, as they seemed to me to be largely hampered by prejudices in regard to their subject or other matters, and I looked out for some competent person whose views and conduct would accord with my ideals. With his assistance I would formulate the programme of the Modern School which I had already conceived.

<sup>1</sup> Mlle. Meunier died, leaving about £30,000 unconditionally to Ferrer, before he returned to Spain in 1900.  
—J. M.

In my opinion it was to be, not the perfect type of the future school of a rational state of society, but a precursor of it, the best possible adaptation of our means; that is to say, an emphatic rejection of the ancient type of school which still survives, and a careful experiment in the direction of imbuing the children of the future with the substantial truths of science.

I was convinced that the child comes into the world without innate ideas, and that during the course of his life he gathers the ideas of those nearest to him, modifying them according to his own observation and reading. If this is so, it is clear that the child should receive positive and truthful ideas of all things, and be taught that, to avoid error, it is essential to admit nothing on faith, but only after experience or rational demonstration. With such a training the child will become a careful observer, and will be prepared for all kinds of studies.

When I had found a competent person, and while the first lines were being traced of the plan we were to follow, the necessary steps were taken in Barcelona for the founding of the establishment; the building was chosen

and prepared, and the furniture, staff, advertisements, prospectuses, leaflets, etc., were secured. In less than a year all was ready, though I was put to great loss through the betrayal of my confidence by a certain person. It was clear that we should at once have to contend with many difficulties, not only on the part of those who were hostile to rational education, but partly on account of a certain class of theorists, who urged on me, as the outcome of their knowledge and experience, advice which I could regard only as the fruit of their prejudices. One man, for instance, who was afflicted with a zeal for local patriotism, insisted that the lessons should be given in Catalan [the dialect of the province of Barcelona], and would thus confine humanity and the world within the narrow limits of the region between the Ebro and the Pyrenees. I would not, I told the enthusiast, even adopt Spanish as the language of the school if a universal language had already advanced sufficiently to be of practical use. I would a hundred times rather use Esperanto than Catalan.

The incident confirmed me in my resolution not to submit the settlement of my plan to

the authority of distinguished men who, with all their repute, do not take a single voluntary step in the direction of reform. I felt the burden of the responsibility I had accepted, and I endeavoured to discharge it as my conscience directed. Resenting the marked social inequalities of the existing order as I did, I could not be content to deplore their effects; I must attack them in their causes, and appeal to the principle of justice—to that ideal equality which inspires all sound revolutionary feeling.

If matter is one, uncreated, and eternal—if we live on a relatively small body in space, a mere speck in comparison with the innumerable globes about us, as is taught in the universities, and may be learned by the privileged few who share the monopoly of science—we have no right to teach, and no excuse for teaching, in the primary schools to which the people go when they have the opportunity, that God made the world out of nothing in six days, and all the other absurdities of the ancient legends. Truth is universal, and we owe it to everybody. To put a price on it, to make it the monopoly of a privileged few, to detain the lowly in

systematic ignorance, and—what is worse—impose on them a dogmatic and official doctrine in contradiction with the teaching of science, in order that they may accept with docility their low and deplorable condition, is to me an intolerable indignity. For my part, I consider that the most effective protest and the most promising form of revolutionary action consist in giving the oppressed, the disinherited, and all who are conscious of a demand for justice, as much truth as they can receive, trusting that it will direct their energies in the great work of the regeneration of society.

Hence the terms of the first announcement of the Modern School that was issued to the public. It ran as follows:

#### PROGRAMME.

The mission of the Modern School is to secure that the boys and girls who are entrusted to it shall become well-instructed, truthful, just, and free from all prejudice.

To that end the rational method of the natural sciences will be substituted for the old dogmatic teaching. It will stimulate, develop, and direct the natural ability of each pupil, so that he or

she will not only become a useful member of society, with his individual value fully developed, but will contribute, as a necessary consequence, to the uplifting of the whole community.

It will instruct the young in sound social duties, in conformity with the just principle that "there are no duties without rights, and no rights without duties."

In view of the good results that have been obtained abroad by mixed education, and especially in order to realise the great aim of the Modern School—the formation of an entirely fraternal body of men and women, without distinction of sex or class—children of both sexes, from the age of five upward, will be received.

For the further development of its work, the Modern School will be opened on Sunday mornings, when there will be classes on the sufferings of mankind throughout the course of history, and on the men and women who have distinguished themselves in science, art, or the fight for progress. The parents of the children may attend these classes.

In the hope that the intellectual work of the Modern School will be fruitful, we have, besides securing hygienic conditions in the institution and its dependencies, arranged to have a medical inspection of children at their entrance into the

school. The result of this will be communicated to the parents if it is deemed necessary; and others will be held periodically, in order to prevent the spread of contagious diseases during the school hours.

During the week which preceded the opening of the Modern School I invited the representatives of the press to visit the institution and make it known, and some of the journals inserted appreciative notices of the work. It may be of historical interest to quote a few paragraphs from *El Diluvio*.

The future is budding in the school. To build on any other foundation is to build on sand. Unhappily, the school may serve either the purposes of tyranny or the cause of liberty, and may thus serve either barbarism or civilisation.

We are therefore pleased to see certain patriots and humanitarians, who grasp the transcendent importance of this social function, which our Government systematically overlooks, hasten to meet this pressing need by founding a Modern School; a school which will not seek to promote the interests of sect and to move in the old ruts, as has been done hitherto, but will create an intellectual environment in which the new gen-

eration will absorb the ideas and the impulses which the stream of progress unceasingly brings.

This end can be attained only by private enterprise. Our existing institutions, tainted with all the vices of the past and weakened by all the trivialities of the present, cannot discharge this useful function. It is reserved for men of noble mind and unselfish feeling to open up the new path by which succeeding generations will rise to higher destinies.

This has been done, or will be done, by the founders of the modest Modern School which we have visited at the courteous invitation of its directors and those who are interested in its development. This school is not a commercial enterprise, like most scholastic institutions, but a pedagogical experiment, of which only one other specimen exists in Spain (the Free Institution of Education at Madrid).

Sr. Salas Antón brilliantly expounded the programme of the school to the small audience of journalists and others who attended the modest opening-festival, and descanted on the design of educating children in the *whole* truth and *nothing but* the truth, or what is proved to be such. His chief theme was that the founders do not propose to add one more to the number of what are known as "Lay Schools," with their

impassioned dogmatism, but a serene observatory, open to the four winds of heaven, with no cloud darkening the horizon and interposing between the light and the mind of man.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE EARLY PROGRAMME

THE time had come to think of the inauguration of the Modern School. Some time previously I had invited a number of gentlemen of great distinction and of progressive sentiments to assist me with their advice and form a kind of Committee of Consultation. My intercourse with them at Barcelona was of great value to me, and many of them remained in permanent relation with me, for which I may express my gratitude. They were of opinion that the Modern School should be opened with some display—invitation cards, a circular to the press, a large hall, music, and oratorical addresses by distinguished Liberal politicians. It would have been easy to do this, and we would have attracted an audience of hundreds of people who would have applauded with that momentary enthusiasm which characterises our

public functions. But I was not seduced by the idea. As a Positivist and an idealist I was convinced that a simple modesty best befitted the inauguration of a work of reform. Any other method seemed to me disingenuous, a concession to enervating conventions and to the very evil which I was setting out to reform. The proposal of the Committee was, therefore, repugnant to my conscience and my sentiments, and I was, in that and all other things relating to the Modern School, the executive power.

In the first number of the *Bulletin of the Modern School*, issued on October 30, 1901, I gave a general exposition of the fundamental principles of the School, which I may repeat here:

Those imaginary products of the mind, *a priori* ideas, and all the absurd and fantastical fictions hitherto regarded as truth and imposed as directive principles of human conduct, have for some time past incurred the condemnation of reason and the resentment of conscience. The sun no longer merely touches the tips of the mountains; it floods the valleys, and we enjoy the light of noon. Science is no longer the patrimony of a small group of privileged individu-

als; its beneficent rays more or less consciously penetrate every rank of society. On all sides traditional errors are being dispelled by it; by the confident procedure of experience and observation it enables us to attain accurate knowledge and criteria in regard to natural objects and the laws which govern them. With indisputable authority it bids men lay aside for ever their exclusivisms and privileges, and it offers itself as the controlling principle of human life, seeking to imbue all with a common sentiment of humanity.

Relying on modest resources, but with a robust and rational faith and a spirit that will not easily be intimidated, whatever obstacles arise in our path, we have founded the Modern School. Its aim is to convey, without concession to traditional methods, an education based on the natural sciences. This new method, though the only sound and positive method, has spread throughout the civilised world, and has innumerable supporters of intellectual distinction and lofty principles.

We are aware how many enemies there are about us. We are conscious of the innumerable prejudices which oppress the social conscience of our country. This is the outcome of a medieval, subjective, dogmatic education, which makes ridiculous pretensions to the possession of

an infallible criterion. We are further aware that, in virtue of the law of heredity, strengthened by the influences of the environment, the tendencies which are connatural and spontaneous in the young child are still more pronounced in adolescence. The struggle will be severe, the work difficult; but with a constant and unwavering will, the sole providence of the moral world, we are confident that we shall win the victory to which we aspire. We shall develop living brains, capable of reacting on our instruction. We shall take care that the minds of our pupils will sustain, when they leave the control of their teachers, a stern hostility to prejudice; that they will be solid minds, capable of forming their own rational convictions on every subject.

This does not mean that we shall leave the child at the very outset of its education, to form its own ideas. The Socratic procedure is wrong, if it is taken too literally. The very constitution of the mind, at the commencement of its development, demands that at this stage the child shall be receptive. The teacher must implant the germs of ideas. These will, when age and strength invigorate the brain, bring forth corresponding flowers and fruit, in accordance with the degree of initiative and the characteristic features of the pupil's mind.

On the other hand, we may say that we regard

as absurd the widespread notion that an education based on natural science stunts the organ of the idealist faculty. We are convinced that the contrary is true. What science does is to correct and direct it, and give it a wholesome sense of reality. The work of man's cerebral energy is to create the *ideal*, with the aid of art and philosophy. But in order that the ideal shall not degenerate into fables, or mystic and unsubstantial dreams, and the structure be not built on sand, it is absolutely necessary to give it a secure and unshakable foundation in the exact and positive teaching of the natural sciences.

Moreover, the education of a man does not consist merely in the training of his intelligence, without having regard to the heart and the will. Man is a complete and unified whole, in spite of the variety of his functions. He presents various facets, but is at the bottom a single energy, which sees, loves, and applies a will to the prosecution of what he has conceived or affected. It is a morbid condition, an infringement of the laws of the human organism, to establish an abyss where there ought to be a sane and harmonious continuity. The divorce between thought and will is an unhappy feature of our time. To what fatal consequences it has led! We need only refer to our political leaders and to the various orders of social life; they are deeply infected

with this pernicious dualism. Many of them are assuredly powerful enough in respect of their mental faculties, and have an abundance of ideas; but they lack a sound orientation and the fine thoughts which science applies to the life of individuals and of peoples. Their restless egoism and the wish to accommodate their relatives, together with their leaven of traditional sentiments, form an impermeable barrier round their hearts and prevent the infiltration of progressive ideas and the formation of that sap of sentiment which is the impelling and determining power in the conduct of man. Hence the attempt to obstruct progress and put obstacles in the way of new ideas; hence, as a result of these attempts, the scepticism of multitudes, the death of nations, and the inevitable despair of the oppressed.

We regard it as one of the first principles of our pedagogical mission that there is no such duality of character in any individual—one which sees and appreciates truth and goodness, and one which follows evil. And, since we take natural science as our guide in education, a further consequence will be recognised; we shall endeavour to secure that the intellectual impressions which science conveys to the pupil shall be converted into the sap of sentiment and shall be intensely loved. When sentiment is strong it penetrates

and diffuses itself through the deepest recesses of a man's being, pervading and giving a special colour to his character.

And as a man's conduct must revolve within the circle of his character, it follows that a youth educated in the manner we have indicated will, when he comes to rule himself, recognise science as the one helpful master of his life.

The school was opened on September 8, 1901, with thirty pupils—twelve girls and eighteen boys. These sufficed for the purpose of our experiment, and we had no intention of increasing the number for a time, so that we might keep a more effective watch on the pupils. The enemies of the new school would take the first opportunity to criticise our work in co-educating boys and girls.

The people present at the opening were partly attracted by the notices of our work published in the press, and partly consisted of the parents of the pupils and delegates of various working-class societies who had been invited on account of their assistance to me. I was supported in the chair by the teachers and the Committee of Consultation, two of whom expounded the system and aim of the

school. In this quiet fashion we inaugurated a work that was destined to last. We created the Modern, Scientific, and Rational School, the fame of which soon spread in Europe and America. Time may witness a change of its name—the “Modern” School—but the description “scientific and rational” will be more and more fully vindicated.

## CHAPTER V

### THE CO-EDUCATION OF THE SEXES

THE most important point in our programme of rational education, in view of the intellectual condition of the country, and the feature which was most likely to shock current prejudices and habits, was the co-education of boys and girls.

The idea was not absolutely new in Spain. As a result of necessity and of primitive conditions, there were villages in remote valleys and on the mountains where some good-natured neighbour, or the priest or sacristan, used to teach the catechism, and sometimes elementary letters, to boys and girls in common. In fact, it is sometimes legally authorised, or at least tolerated, by the State among small populations which have not the means to pay both a master and mistress. In such cases, either a master or mistress gives common lessons to boys and girls, as

I had myself seen in a village not far from Barcelona. In towns and cities, however, mixed education was not recognised. One read sometimes of the occurrence of it in foreign countries, but no one proposed to adopt it in Spain, where such a proposal would have been deemed an innovation of the most utopian character.

Knowing this, I refrained from making any public propaganda on the subject, and confined myself to private discussion with individuals. We asked every parent who wished to send a boy to the school if there were girls in the family, and it was necessary to explain to each the reasons for co-education. Wherever we did this, the result was satisfactory. If we had announced our intention publicly, it would have raised a storm of prejudice. There would have been a discussion in the press, conventional feeling would have been aroused, and the fear of "what people would say"—that paralysing obstacle to good intentions—would have been stronger than reason. Our project would have proved exceedingly difficult, if not impossible. Whereas, proceeding as we did, we were able to open with a sufficient number

of boys and girls, and the number steadily increased, as the *Bulletin* of the school shows.

In my own mind, co-education was of vital importance. It was not merely an indispensable condition of realising what I regard as the ideal result of rational education; it was the ideal itself, initiating its life in the Modern School, developing progressively without any form of exclusion, inspiring a confidence of attaining our end. Natural science, philosophy, and history unite in teaching, in face of all prejudice to the contrary, that man and woman are two complementary aspects of human nature, and the failure to recognise this essential and important truth has had the most disastrous consequences.

In the second number of the *Bulletin*, therefore, I published a careful vindication of my ideas:

Mixed education [I said] is spreading among civilised nations. In many places it has already had excellent results. The principle of this new scheme of education is that children of both sexes shall receive the same lessons; that their minds shall be developed, their hearts purified, and their wills strengthened in precisely the same

manner; that the sexes shall be in touch with each other from infancy, so that woman shall be, not in name only, but in reality and truth, the companion of man.

A venerable institution which dominates the thoughts of our people declares, at one of the most solemn moments of life, when, with ceremonious pomp, man and woman are united in matrimony, that woman is the companion of man. These are hollow words, void of sense, without vital and rational significance in life, since what we witness in the Christian Church, in Catholicism particularly, is the exact opposite of this idea. Not long ago a Christian woman of fine feeling and great sincerity complained bitterly of the moral debasement which is put upon her sex in the bosom of the Church: "It would be impious audacity for a woman to aspire in the Church even to the position of the lowest sacristan."

A man must suffer from ophthalmia of the mind not to see that, under the inspiration of Christianity, the position of woman is no better than it was under the ancient civilisations; it is, indeed, worse, and has aggravating circumstances. It is a conspicuous fact in our modern Christian society that, as a result and culmination of our patriarchal development, the woman does not belong to herself; she is neither more

nor less than an adjunct of man, subject constantly to his absolute dominion, bound to him—it may be—by chains of gold. Man has made her a perpetual minor. Once this was done, she was bound to experience one of two alternatives: man either oppresses and silences her, or treats her as a child to be coaxed—according to the mood of the master. If at length we note in her some sign of the new spirit, if she begins to assert her will and claim some share of independence, if she is passing, with irritating slowness, from the state of slave to the condition of a respected ward, she owes it to the redeeming spirit of science, which is dominating the customs of races and the designs of our social rulers.

The work of man for the greater happiness of the race has hitherto been defective; in future it must be a joint action of the sexes; it is incumbent on both man and woman, according to the point of view of each. It is important to realise that, in face of the purposes of life, man is neither inferior nor (as we affect to think) superior to woman. They have different qualities, and no comparison is possible between diverse things.

As many psychologists and sociologists observe, the human race displays two funda-

mental aspects. Man typifies the dominion of thought and of the progressive spirit; woman bears in her moral nature the characteristic note of intense sentiment and of the conservative spirit. But this view of the sexes gives no encouragement whatever to the ideas of reactionaries. If the predominance of the conservative element and of the emotions is ensured in woman by natural law, this does not make her the less fitted to be the companion of man. She is not prevented by the constitution of her nature from reflecting on things of importance, nor is it necessary that she should use her mind in contradiction to the teaching of science and absorb all kinds of superstitions and fables. The possession of a conservative disposition does not imply that one is bound to crystallise in a certain stage of thought, or that one must be obsessed with prejudice in all that relates to reality.

“To conserve” merely means “to retain,” to keep what has been given us, or what we have ourselves produced. The author of *The Religion of the Future* says, referring to woman in this respect: “The conservative spirit may be applied to truth as well as to

error; it all depends what it is you conserve. If woman is instructed in philosophical and scientific matters, her conservative power will be to the advantage, not to the disadvantage, of progressive thought."

On the other hand, it is pointed out that woman is emotional. She does not selfishly keep to herself what she receives; she spreads abroad her beliefs, her ideas, and all the good and evil that form her moral treasures. She insists on sharing them with all those who are, by the mysterious power of emotion, identified with her. With exquisite art, with invariable unconsciousness, her whole moral physiognomy, her whole soul, so to say, impresses itself on the soul of those she loves.

If the first ideas implanted in the mind of the child by the teacher are germs of truth and of positive knowledge; if the teacher himself is in touch with the scientific spirit of the time, the result will be good from every point of view. But if a man be fed in the first stage of his mental development with fables, errors, and all that is contrary to the spirit of science, what can be expected of his future? When the boy becomes a man he will be an obstacle to progress. The human

conscience is in infancy of the same natural texture as the bodily organism; it is tender and pliant. It readily accepts what comes to it from without. In the course of time this plasticity gives place to rigidity; it loses its pliancy and becomes relatively fixed. From that time the ideas communicated to it by the mother will be encrusted and identified with the youth's conscience.

The acid of the more rational ideas which the youth acquires by social intercourse or private study may in cases relieve the mind of the erroneous ideas implanted in childhood. But what is likely to be the practical outcome of this transformation of the mind in the sphere of conduct? We must not forget that in most cases the emotions associated with the early ideas remain in the deeper folds of the heart. Hence it is that we find in so many men such a flagrant and lamentable antithesis between the thought and the deed, the intelligence and the will; and this often leads to an eclipse of good conduct and a paralysis of progress.

This primary sediment which we owe to our mothers is so tenacious and enduring—it passes so intimately into the very marrow of

our being—that even energetic characters, which have effected a sincere reform of mind and will, have the mortification of discovering this Jesuitical element, derived from their mothers, when they turn to make an inventory of their ideas.

Woman must not be restricted to the home. The sphere of her activity must go out far beyond her home; it must extend to the very confines of society. But in order to ensure a helpful result from her activity we must not restrict the amount of knowledge we communicate to her; she must learn, both in regard to quantity and quality, the same things as man. When science enters the mind of woman it will direct her rich vein of emotion, the characteristic element of her nature, the glad harbinger of peace and happiness among men.

It has been said that woman represents *continuity*, and man represents change: man is the individual, woman is the species. Change, however, would be useless, fugitive, and inconstant, with no solid foundation of reality, if the work of woman did not strengthen and consolidate the achievements of man. The individual, as such, is the

flower of a day, a thing of ephemeral significance in life. Woman, who represents the species, has the function of retaining within the species the elements which improve its life, and to discharge this function adequately she needs scientific instruction.

Humanity will advance more rapidly and confidently in the path of progress and increase its resources a hundredfold if it combines the ideas acquired by science with the emotional strength of woman. Ribot observes that an idea is merely an idea, an act of intelligence, incapable of producing or doing anything, unless it is accompanied by an emotional state, a motive element. Hence it is conceived as a scientific truth that, to the advantage of progress, an idea does not long remain in a purely contemplative condition when it appears. This is obviated by associating the idea with emotion and love, which do not fail to convert it into vital action.

When will all this be accomplished? When shall we see the marriage of ideas with the impassioned heart of woman? From that date we shall have a moral matriarchate among civilised nations. Then, on the one

hand, humanity, considered in the home circle, will have the proper teacher to direct the new generations in the sense of the ideal; and, on the other hand, it will have an apostle and enthusiastic propagandist who will impress the value of liberty on the minds of men and the need of co-operation upon the peoples of the world.

## CHAPTER VI

### CO-EDUCATION OF THE SOCIAL CLASSES

THERE must be a co-education of the different social classes as well as of the two sexes. I might have founded a school giving lessons gratuitously; but a school for poor children only would not be a rational school, since, if they were not taught submission and credulity as in the old type of school, they would have been strongly disposed to rebel, and would instinctively cherish sentiments of hatred.

There is no escape from the dilemma. There is no middle term in the school for the disinherited class alone; you have either a systematic insistence, by means of false teaching, on error and ignorance, or hatred of those who domineer and exploit. It is a delicate point, and needs stating clearly. Rebellion against oppression is merely a question of statics, of equilibrium. Between

one man and another who are perfectly equal, as is said in the immortal first clause of the famous Declaration of the French Revolution ("Men are born and remain free and equal in rights"), there can be no social inequality. If there is such inequality, some will tyrannise, the others protest and hate. Rebellion is a levelling tendency, and to that extent natural and rational, however much it may be discredited by justice and its evil companions, law and religion.

I venture to say quite plainly: the oppressed and the exploited have a right to rebel, because they have to reclaim their rights until they enjoy their full share in the common patrimony. The Modern School, however, has to deal with children, whom it prepares by instruction for the state of manhood, and it must not anticipate the cravings and hatreds, the adhesions and rebellions, which may be fitting sentiments in the adult. In other words, it must not seek to gather fruit until it has been produced by cultivation, nor must it attempt to implant a sense of responsibility until it has equipped the conscience with the fundamental conditions of such responsibility. Let it teach the children

to be men; when they are men, they may declare themselves rebels against injustice.

It needs very little reflection to see that a school for rich children only cannot be a rational school. From the very nature of things it will tend to insist on the maintenance of privilege and the securing of their advantages. The only sound and enlightened form of school is that which co-educates the poor and the rich, which brings the one class into touch with the other in the innocent equality of childhood, by means of the systematic equality of the rational school.

With this end in view I decided to secure pupils of every social rank and include them in a common class, adopting a system accommodated to the circumstances of the parents or guardians of the children; I would not have a fixed and invariable fee, but a kind of sliding scale, with free lessons for some and different charges for others. I later published the following article on the subject in the *Bulletin* (May 10, 1905):

Our friend D. R. C. gave a lecture last Sunday at the Republican Club on the subject of "Modern Pedagogy," explaining to his audience

what we mean by modern education and what advantages society may derive from it. As I think that the subject is one of very great interest and most proper to receive public attention, I offer the following reflections and considerations on it. It seems to me that the lecturer was happy in his exposition of the ideal, but not in the suggestions he made with a view to realising it, nor in bringing forward the schools of France and Belgium as models to be imitated.

Señor C., in fact, relies upon the State, upon Parliament or municipalities, for the building, equipment, and management of scholastic institutions. This seems to me a great mistake. If modern pedagogy means an effort towards the realisation of a new and more just form of society; if it means that we propose to instruct the rising generation in the causes which have brought about and maintain the lack of social equilibrium; if it means that we are anxious to prepare the race for better days, freeing it from religious fiction and from all idea of submission to an inevitable socio-economic inequality; we cannot entrust it to the State or to other official organisms which necessarily maintain existing privileges and support the laws which at present consecrate the exploitation of one man by another, the pernicious source of the worst abuses.

Evidence of the truth of this is so abundant

that any person can obtain it by visiting the factories and workshops and other centres of paid workers, by inquiring what is the manner of life of those in the higher and those in the lower social rank, by frequenting what are called courts of justice, and by asking the prisoners in our penal institutions what were the motives for their misconduct. If all this does not suffice to prove that the State favours those who are in possession of wealth and frowns on those who rebel against injustice, it may be useful to notice what has happened in Belgium. Here, according to Señor C., the government is so attentive to education and conducts it so excellently that private schools are impossible. In the official schools, he says, the children of the rich mingle with the children of the poor, and one may at times see the child of wealthy parents arm in arm with a poor and lowly companion. It is true, I admit, that children of all classes may attend the Belgian schools; but the instruction that is given in them is based on the supposed eternal necessity for a division of rich and poor, and on the principle that social harmony consists in the fulfilment of the laws.

It is natural enough that the masters should like to see this kind of education given on every side. It is a means of bringing to reason those who might one day be tempted to rebel. Not

long ago, in Brussels and other Belgian towns, the sons of the rich, armed and organised in national troops, shot down the sons of the poor who were claiming universal suffrage. On the other hand, my acquaintance with the quality of Belgian education differs considerably from that of the lecturer. I have before me various issues of a Belgian journal (*L'Exprès de Liège*) which devotes an article to the subject, entitled "The Destruction of our National System of Education." The facts given are, unfortunately, very similar to the facts about education in Spain, though in this country there has been a great development of education by religious orders, which is, as everybody knows, the systematisation of ignorance. In fine, it is not for nothing that a violently clerical government rules in Belgium.

As to the modern education which is given in French schools, we may say that not a single one of the books used in them serves the purpose of a really secular education. On the very day on which Señor C. was lecturing in Gracia the Parisian journal *L'Action* published an article, with the title "How Secular Morality is Taught," in regard to the book *Recueil de maximes et pensées morales*, and quoted from it certain ridiculously anachronistic ideas which offend the most elementary common sense.

We shall be asked, What are we to do if we cannot rely on the aid of the State, of Parliament, or municipalities? We must appeal to those whose interest it is to bring about a reform; to the workers, in the first place, then to the cultivated and privileged people who cherish sentiments of justice. They may not be numerous, but there are such. I am personally acquainted with several. The lecturer complained that the civic authorities were so dilatory in granting the reforms that are needed. I feel sure that he would do better not to waste his time on them, but appeal directly to the working class.

The field has been well prepared. Let him visit the various working-men's societies, the Republican Fraternities, the Centres of Instruction, the Workers' Athenæums, and all the bodies which are working for reform,<sup>1</sup> and let him give ear to the language of truth, the exhortations to union and courage. Let him observe the attention given to the problem of rational and scientific instruction, a kind of instruction which shows the injustice of privilege and the possibility of reforms. If individuals and societies continue thus to combine their endeavours

<sup>1</sup>These societies are particularly numerous in Spain, where the government system of education is deplorable, and schools are often established in connection with them.  
—J. M.

to secure the emancipation of those who suffer—for it is not the workers only who suffer—Señor C. may rest assured of a positive, sound, and speedy result, while whatever may be obtained of the government will be dilatory, and will tend only to stupefy, to confuse ideas, and to perpetuate the domination of one class over another.

## CHAPTER VII

### SCHOOL HYGIENE

IN regard to hygiene we are, in Spain, dominated by the abominable ideas of the Catholic Church. Saint Aloysius and Saint Benedict J. Labré are not the only, or the most characteristic, saints in the list of the supposed citizens of the kingdom of heaven, but they are the most popular with the masters of uncleanness. With such types of perfection,<sup>1</sup> in an atmosphere of ignorance, cleverly and maliciously sustained by the clergy and the middle-class Liberals, it was to be expected that the children who would come to our school would be wanting in cleanliness; dirt is traditional in their world.

We began a discreet and systematic campaign against it, showing the children how a

<sup>1</sup>It is especially commended in the life of Benedict J. Labré and others that they deliberately cultivated filthiness of person.—J. M.

dirty person or object inspires repugnance, and how cleanliness attracts esteem and sympathy; how one instinctively moves towards the cleanly person and away from the dirty and malodorous; and how we should be pleased to win the regard of those who see us and ashamed to excite their disgust.

We then explained cleanliness as an aspect of beauty, and uncleanness as a part of ugliness; and we at length entered expressly into the province of hygiene, pointing out that dirt was a cause of disease and a constant possible source of infection and epidemic, while cleanliness was one of the chief conditions of health. We thus soon succeeded in disposing the children in favour of cleanliness, and making them understand the scientific principles of hygiene.

The influence of these lessons spread to their families, as the new demands of the children disturbed traditional habits. One child would ask urgently for its feet to be washed, another would ask to be bathed, another wanted a brush and powder for its teeth, another new clothes or boots, and so on. The poor mothers, burdened with their daily tasks, sometimes crushed by the hardness of

the circumstances in which their life was passed, and probably under the influence of religious teaching, endeavoured to stop their petitions; but in the end the new life introduced into the home by the child triumphed, a welcome presage of the regeneration which rational education will one day accomplish.

I entrusted the expounding of the principles of scholastic hygiene to competent men, and Dr. Martínez Vargas and others wrote able and detailed articles on the subject in the *Bulletin*. Other articles were written on the subject of games and play, on the lines of modern pedagogy.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>These articles are reproduced in the Spanish edition. As they are not from Ferrer's pen, I omit them.—J. M.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE TEACHERS

THE choice of teachers was another point of great difficulty. The tracing of a programme of rational instruction once accomplished, it remained to choose teachers who were competent to carry it out, and I found that in fact no such persons existed. We were to illustrate once more that a need creates its own organs.

Certainly there were plenty of teachers. Teaching, though not very lucrative, is a profession by which a man can support himself. There is not a universal truth in the popular proverb which says of an unfortunate man: "He is hungrier than a schoolmaster."<sup>1</sup> The truth is that in many parts of Spain the schoolmaster forms part of the local govern-

<sup>1</sup>£20 a year is a not uncommon salary of masters and mistresses in Spain, and many cannot obtain even that.—J. M.

ing clique, with the priest, the doctor, the shopkeeper, and the money-lender (who is often one of the richest men in the place, though he contributes least to its welfare). The master receives a municipal salary, and has a certain influence which may at times secure material advantages. In larger towns the master, if he is not content with his salary, may give lessons in private schools, where, in accord with the provincial institute, he prepares young men for the University. Even if he does not obtain a position of distinction, he lives as well as the generality of his fellow-townsmen.

There are, moreover, teachers in what are called "secular schools"—a name imported from France, where it arose because the schooling was formerly exclusively clerical and conducted by religious bodies. This is not the case in Spain; however Christian the teaching is, it is always given by lay masters. However, the Spanish lay teachers, inspired by sentiments of freethought and political radicalism, were rather anti-Catholic and anti-clerical than Rationalist, in the best sense of the word.

Professional teachers have to undergo a

special preparation for the task of imparting scientific and rational instruction. This is difficult in all cases, and is sometimes rendered impossible by the difficulties caused by habits of routine. On the other hand, those who had had no pedagogical experience, and offered themselves for the work out of pure enthusiasm for the idea, stood in even greater need of preparatory study. The solution of the problem was very difficult, because there was no other place but the rational school itself for making this preparation.

The excellence of the system saved us. Once the Modern School had been established by private initiative, with a firm determination to be guided by the ideal, the difficulties began to disappear. Every dogmatic imposition was detected and rejected, every excursion or deviation in the direction of metaphysics was at once abandoned, and experience gradually formed a new and salutary pedagogical science. This was due, not merely to my zeal and vigilance, but to my earliest teachers, and to some extent to the naïve expressions of the pupils themselves. We may certainly say that if a need creates an organ, the organ speedily meets the need.

Nevertheless, in order to complete my work, I established a Rationalist Normal School for the education of teachers, under the direction of an experienced master and with the co-operation of the teachers in the Modern School. In this a number of young people of both sexes were trained, and they worked excellently until the despotic authorities, yielding to our obscure and powerful enemies, put a stop to our work, and flattered themselves that they had destroyed it for ever.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE REFORM OF THE SCHOOL

THERE are two ways open to those who seek to reform the education of children. They may seek to transform the school by studying the child and proving scientifically that the actual scheme of instruction is defective, and must be modified; or they may found new schools in which principles may be directly applied in the service of that ideal which is formed by all who reject the conventions, the cruelty, the trickery, and the untruth which enter into the bases of modern society.

The first method offers great advantages, and is in harmony with the evolutionary conception which men of science regard as the only effective way of attaining the end. They are right in theory, as we fully admit. It is evident that the progress of psychology and physiology must lead to important changes in educational methods; that the

teachers, being now in a better position to understand the child, will make their teaching more in conformity with natural laws. I further grant that this evolution will proceed in the direction of greater liberty, as I am convinced that violence is the method of ignorance, and that the educator who is really worthy of the name will gain everything by spontaneity; he will know the child's needs, and will be able to promote its development by giving it the greatest possible satisfaction.

In point of fact, however, I do not think that those who are working for the regeneration of humanity have much to hope from this side. Rulers have always taken care to control the education of the people; they know better than any that their power is based entirely on the school, and they therefore insist on retaining their monopoly of it. The time has gone by when rulers could oppose the spread of instruction and put limits to the education of the masses. Such a policy was possible formerly because economic life was consistent with general ignorance, and this ignorance facilitated despotism. The circumstances have changed, however. The progress of science and our

repeated discoveries have revolutionised the conditions of labour and production. It is no longer possible for the people to remain ignorant; education is absolutely necessary for a nation to maintain itself and make headway against its economic competitors. Recognising this, the rulers have sought to give a more and more complete organisation to the school, not because they look to education to regenerate society, but because they need more competent workers to sustain industrial enterprises and enrich their cities. Even the most reactionary rulers have learned this lesson; they clearly understand that the old policy was dangerous to the economic life of nations, and that it was necessary to adapt popular education to the new conditions.

It would be a serious mistake to think that the ruling classes have not foreseen the danger to themselves of the intellectual development of the people, and have not understood that it was necessary to change their methods. In fact, their methods have been adapted to the new conditions of life; they have sought to gain control of the ideas which are in course of evolution. They have endeavoured to

preserve the beliefs on which social discipline had been grounded, and to give to the results of scientific research and the ideas involved in them a meaning which will not be to the disadvantage of existing institutions; and it is this that has induced them to assume control of the school. In every country the governing classes, which formerly left the education of the people to the clergy, as these were quite willing to educate in a sense of obedience to authority, have now themselves undertaken the direction of the schools.

The danger to them consists in the stimulation of the human mind by the new spectacle of life and the possible rise of thoughts of emancipation in the depths of their hearts. It would have been folly to struggle against the evolving forces; the effect would be only to inflame them, and, instead of adhering to earlier methods of government, they would adopt new and more effective methods. It did not require any extraordinary genius to discover the solution. The course of events itself suggested to those who were in power the way in which they were to meet the difficulties which threatened; they built schools, they sought generously to extend

the sphere of education, and if there were at one point a few who resisted this impulse—as certain tendencies favoured one or other of the political parties—all soon understood that it was better to yield, and that the best policy was to find some new way of defending their interests and principles. There were then sharp struggles for the control of the schools, and these struggles continue to-day in every civilised country; sometimes the republican middle-class triumphs, sometimes the clergy. All parties appreciate the importance of the issue, and they shrink from no sacrifice to win the victory. “The school” is the cry of every party. The public good must be recognised in this zeal. Everybody seeks to raise himself and improve his condition by education. In former times it might have been said: “Those people want to keep thee in ignorance in order the better to exploit thee: we want to see thee educated and free.” That is no longer possible; schools of all kinds rise on every side.

In regard to this general change of ideas among the governing classes as to the need of schools, I may state certain reasons for distrusting their intentions and doubting the

efficacy of the means of reform which are advocated by certain writers. As a rule, these reformers care little about the social significance of education; they are men who eagerly embrace scientific truth, but eliminate all that is foreign to the object of their studies. They are patiently endeavouring to understand the child, and are eager to know—though their science is young, it must be remembered—what are the best methods to promote its intellectual development.

This kind of professional indifference is, in my opinion, very prejudicial to the cause they seek to serve. I do not in the least think them insensible of the realities of the social world, and I know that they believe that the public welfare will be greatly furthered by their labours. "Seeking to penetrate the secrets of the life of man," they reflect, "and unravelling the normal process of his physical and psychic development, we shall direct education into a channel which will be favourable to the liberation of energy. We are not immediately concerned with the reform of the school, and indeed we are unable to say exactly what lines it should follow. We

will proceed slowly, knowing that, from the very nature of things, the reform of the school will result from our research. If you ask us what are our hopes, we will grant that, like you, we foresee a revolution in the sense of a placing of the child and humanity under the direction of science; yet even in this case we are persuaded that our work makes for that object, and will be the speediest and surest means of promoting it."

This reasoning is evidently logical. No one could deny this, yet there is a considerable degree of fallacy in it, and we must make this clear. If the ruling classes have the same ideas as the reformers, if they are really impelled by a zeal for the continuous reorganisation of society until poverty is at last eliminated, we might recognise that the power of science is enough to improve the lot of peoples. Instead of this, however, we see clearly that the sole aim of those who strive to attain power is the defence of their own interests, their own advantage, and the satisfaction of their personal desires. For some time now we have ceased to accept the phrases with which they disguise their ambitions. It is true that there are some in

whom we may find a certain amount of sincerity, and who imagine at times that they are impelled by a zeal for the good of their fellows. But these become rarer and rarer, and the positivism of the age is very severe in raising doubts as to the real intentions of those who govern us.

And just as they contrived to adapt themselves when the necessity arose, and prevented education from becoming a danger, they also succeeded in organising the school in accord with the new scientific ideas in such a way that nothing should endanger their supremacy. These ideas are difficult to accept, and one needs to keep a sharp lookout for successful methods and see how things are arranged so as to avoid verbal traps. How much has been, and is, expected of education! Most progressive people expect everything of it, and, until recent years, many did not understand that instruction alone leads to illusions. Much of the knowledge actually imparted in schools is useless; and the hope of reformers has been void because the organisation of the school, instead of serving an ideal purpose, has become one of the most powerful instruments of servitude in

the hands of the ruling class. The teachers are merely conscious or unconscious organs of their will, and have been trained on their principles. From their tenderest years, and more drastically than anybody, they have endured the discipline of authority. Very few have escaped this despotic domination; they are generally powerless against it, because they are oppressed by the scholastic organisation to such an extent that they have nothing to do but obey. It is unnecessary here to describe that organisation. One word will suffice to characterise it—Violence. The school dominates the children physically, morally, and intellectually, in order to control the development of their faculties in the way desired, and deprives them of contact with nature in order to modify them as required. This is the explanation of the failure; the eagerness of the ruling class to control education and the bankruptcy of the hopes of reformers. "Education" means in practice domination or domestication. I do not imagine that these systems have been put together with the deliberate aim of securing the desired results. That would be a work of genius. But things have happened just as

if the actual scheme of education corresponded to some vast and deliberate conception; it could not have been done better. To attain it teachers have inspired themselves solely with the principles of discipline and authority, which always appeal to social organisers; such men have only one clear idea and one will—the children must learn to obey, to believe, and to think according to the prevailing social dogmas. If this were the aim, education could not be other than we find it to-day. There is no question of promoting the spontaneous development of the child's faculties, or encouraging it to seek freely the satisfaction of its physical, intellectual, and moral needs. There is question only of imposing ready-made ideas on it, of preventing it from ever thinking otherwise than is required for the maintenance of existing social institutions—of making it, in a word, an individual rigorously adapted to the social mechanism.

It cannot be expected that this kind of education will have any influence on the progress of humanity. I repeat that it is merely an instrument of domination in the hands of the ruling classes, who have never

sought to uplift the individual, and it is quite useless to expect any good from the schools of the present day. What they have done up to the present they will continue to do in the future. There is no reason whatever why they should adopt a different system; they have resolved to use education for their purposes, and they will take advantage of every improvement of it. If only they preserve the spirit of the school and the authoritative discipline which rules it, every innovation will tend to their advantage. For this they will keep a constant watch, and take care that their interests are secured.

I would fix the attention of my readers on this point: the whole value of education consists in respect for the physical, intellectual, and moral faculties of the child. As in science, the only possible demonstration is demonstration by facts; education is not worthy of the name unless it be stripped of all dogmatism, and unless it leaves to the child the direction of its powers and is content to support them in their manifestations. But nothing is easier than to alter this meaning of education, and nothing more difficult than to respect it. The teacher is always

imposing, compelling, and using violence; the true educator is the man who does not impose his own ideas and will on the child, but appeals to its own energies.

From this we can understand how easily education is conducted, and how light is the task of those who seek to dominate the individual. The best conceivable methods become in their hands so many new and more effective means of despotism. Our ideal is that of science; we appeal to it in demanding the power to educate the child by fostering its development and procuring a satisfaction of its needs as they manifest themselves.

We are convinced that the education of the future will be entirely spontaneous. It is plain that we cannot wholly realise this, but the evolution of methods in the direction of a broader comprehension of life and the fact that all improvement involves the suppression of violence indicate that we are on solid ground when we look to science for the liberation of the child.

Is this the ideal of those who actually control the scholastic system? Is this what they propose to bring about? Are they eager to abandon violence? Only in the sense that

they employ new and more effective methods to attain the same end—that is to say, the formation of individuals who will accept all the conventions, all the prejudices, and all the untruths on which society is based.

We do not hesitate to say that we want men who will continue unceasingly to develop; men who are capable of constantly destroying and renewing their surroundings and renewing themselves; men whose intellectual independence is their supreme power, which they will yield to none; men always disposed for things that are better, eager for the triumph of new ideas, anxious to crowd many lives into the one life they have. Society fears such men; you cannot expect it to set up a system of education which will produce them.

What, then, is our mission? What is the policy we must adopt in order to contribute to the reform of the school?

Let us follow closely the work of the experts who are engaged in the study of the child, and let us endeavour to find a way of applying their principles to the education we seek to establish, aiming at an increasingly complete emancipation of the individual. But

how are we to do this? By putting our hand energetically to the work, by promoting the establishment of new schools in which, as far as possible, there shall rule this spirit of freedom which, we feel, will colour the whole education of the future.

We have already had proof that it leads to excellent results. We can destroy whatever there is in the actual school that savours of violence, all the artificial devices by which the children are estranged from nature and life, the intellectual and moral discipline which has been used to impose ready-made thoughts, all beliefs which deprave and enervate the will. Without fear of injury we may place the child in a proper and natural environment, in which it will find itself in contact with all that it loves, and where vital impressions will be substituted for the wearisome reading of books. If we do no more than this, we shall have done much towards the emancipation of the child.

In such an environment we may freely make use of the data of science and work with profit. It is true that we could not realise all our hopes; that often we shall find ourselves compelled, from lack of knowledge, to

use the wrong means. But we shall be sustained by the confident feeling that, without having achieved our entire aim, we shall have done a great deal more than is being done by the actual school. I would rather have the free spontaneity of a child who knows nothing than the verbal knowledge and intellectual deformation of one that has experienced the existing system of education.

What we have sought to do in Barcelona is being done by others in various places. All of us saw that the work was possible. Dedicate yourself to it at once. We do not hope that the studies of children will be suspended that we may regenerate the school. Let us apply what we know, and go on learning and applying. A scheme of rational education is already possible, and, in such schools as we advocate, the children may develop freely according to their aspirations. Let us endeavour to improve and extend the work.

Those are our aims. We know well the difficulties we have to face; but we have made a beginning in the conviction that we shall be assisted in our task by those who work

in their various spheres to deliver men from the dogmas and conventions which secure the prolongation of the present unjust arrangement of society.

## CHAPTER X

### NO REWARD OR PUNISHMENT

RATIONAL education is, above all things, a means of defence against error and ignorance. To ignore truth and accept absurdities is, unhappily, a common feature in our social order; to that we owe the distinction of classes and the persistent antagonism of interests. Having admitted and practised the co-education of boys and girls, of rich and poor—having, that is to say, started from the principle of solidarity and equality—we are not prepared to create a new inequality. Hence in the Modern School there will be no rewards and no punishments; there will be no examinations to puff up some children with the flattering title of “excellent,” to give others the vulgar title of “good,” and make others unhappy with a consciousness of incapacity and failure.

These features of the existing official and

religious schools, which are quite in accord with their reactionary environment and aim, cannot, for the reasons I have given, be admitted into the Modern School. Since we are not educating for a specific purpose, we cannot determine the capacity or incapacity of the child. When we teach a science, or art, or trade, or some subject requiring special conditions, an examination may be useful, and there may be reason to give a diploma or refuse one; I neither affirm nor deny it. But there is no such specialism in the Modern School. The characteristic note of the school, distinguishing it even from some which pass as progressive models, is that in it the faculties of the children shall develop freely without subjection to any dogmatic patron, not even to what it may consider the body of convictions of the founder and teachers; every pupil shall go forth from it into social life with the ability to be his own master and guide his own life in all things.

Hence, if we were rationally prevented from giving prizes, we could not impose penalties, and no one would have dreamed of doing so in our school if the idea had not been suggested from without. Sometimes parents

came to me with the rank proverb, "Letters go in with blood," on their lips, and begged me to punish their children. Others who were charmed with the precocious talent of their children wanted to see them shine in examinations and exhibit medals. We refused to admit either prizes or punishments, and sent the parents away. If any child were conspicuous for merit, application, laziness, or bad conduct, we pointed out to it the need of accord, or the unhappiness of lack of accord, with its own welfare and that of others, and the teacher might give a lecture on the subject. Nothing more was done, and the parents were gradually reconciled to the system, though they often had to be corrected in their errors and prejudices by their own children.

Nevertheless, the old prejudice was constantly recurring, and I saw that I had to repeat my arguments with the parents of new pupils. I therefore wrote the following article in the *Bulletin*:—

The conventional examinations which we usually find held at the end of a scholastic year, to which our fathers attached so much import-

ance, have had no result at all; or, if any result, a bad one. These functions and their accompanying solemnities seem to have been instituted for the sole purpose of satisfying the vanity of parents and the selfish interests of many teachers, and in order to put the children to torture before the examination and make them ill afterwards. Each father wants his child to be presented in public as one of the prodigies of the college, and regards him with pride as a learned man in miniature. He does not notice that for a fortnight or so the child suffers exquisite torture. As things are judged by external appearances, it is not thought that there is any real torture, as there is not the least scratch visible on the skin. . . .

The parent's lack of acquaintance with the natural disposition of the child, and the iniquity of putting it in false conditions so that its intellectual powers, especially in the sphere of memory, are artificially stimulated, prevent the parent from seeing that this measure of personal gratification may, as has happened in many cases, lead to illness and to the moral, if not the physical, death of the child.

On the other hand, the majority of teachers, being mere stereotypers of ready-made phrases and mechanical inoculators, rather than *moral fathers* of their pupils, are concerned in these examinations with their own personality and

their economic interests. Their object is to let the parents and the others who are present at the public display see that, under their guidance, the child has learned a good deal, that its knowledge is greater in quantity and quality than could have been expected of its tender years and in view of the short time that it has been under the charge of this very skilful teacher.

In addition to this wretched vanity, which is satisfied at the cost of the moral and physical life of the child, the teachers are anxious to elicit compliments from the parents and the rest of the audience, who know nothing of the real state of things, as a kind of advertisement of the prestige of their particular school.

Briefly, we are inexorably opposed to holding public examinations. In our school everything must be done for the advantage of the pupil. Everything that does not conduce to this end must be recognised as opposed to the natural spirit of positive education. Examinations do no good, and they do much harm to the child. Besides the illness of which we have already spoken, the nervous system of the child suffers, and a kind of temporary paralysis is inflicted on its conscience by the immoral features of the examination: the vanity provoked in those who are placed highest, envy and humiliation, grave obstacles to sound growth, in those who have

failed, and in all of them the germs of most of the sentiments which go to the making of egoism.

In a later number of the *Bulletin* I found it necessary to return to the subject:—

We frequently receive letters from Workers' Educational Societies and Republican Fraternities asking that the teachers shall chastise the children in our schools. We ourselves have been disgusted, during our brief excursions, to find material proofs of the fact which is at the base of this request; we have seen children on their knees, or in other attitudes of punishment.

These irrational and atavistic practices must disappear. Modern pedagogy entirely discredits them. The teachers who offer their services to the Modern School, or ask our recommendation to teach in similar schools, must refrain from any moral or material punishment, under penalty of being disqualified permanently. Scolding, impatience, and anger ought to disappear with the ancient title of "master." In free schools all should be peace, gladness, and fraternity. We trust that this will suffice to put an end to these practices, which are most improper in people whose sole ideal is the training of a generation fitted to establish a really fraternal, harmonious, and just state of society.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE GENERAL PUBLIC AND THE LIBRARY

IN setting out to establish a rational school for the purpose of preparing children for their entry into free solidarity of humanity, the first problem that confronted us was the selection of books. The whole educational luggage of the ancient system was an incoherent mixture of science and faith, reason and unreason, good and evil, human experience and revelation, truth and error; in a word, totally unsuited to meet the new needs that arose with the formation of a new school.

If the school has been from remote antiquity equipped not for teaching in the broad sense of communicating to the rising generation the gist of the knowledge of previous generations, but for teaching on the basis of authority and the convenience of the ruling classes, for the purpose of making children humble and submissive, it is clear

that none of the books hitherto used would suit us. But the severe logic of this position did not at once convince me. I refused to believe that the French democracy, which worked so zealously for the separation of Church and State, incurred the anger of the clericals, and adopted obligatory secular instruction, would resign itself to a semi-education or a sophisticated education. I had, however, to yield to the evidence, against my prejudice. I first read a large number of works in the French code of secular instruction, and found that God was replaced by the State, Christian virtue by civic duty, religion by patriotism, submission to the king, the aristocracy, and the clergy by subservience to the official, the proprietor, and the employer. Then I consulted an eminent Free-thinker who held high office in the Ministry of Public Instruction, and, when I had told him my desire to see the books they used, which I understood to be purged of traditional errors, and explained my design and ideal to him, he told me frankly that they had nothing of the sort; all their books were, more or less cleverly and insidiously, tainted with untruth, which is the indispensable cement of social

inequality. When I further asked if, seeing that they had replaced the decaying idol of deity by the idol of oligarchic despotism, they had not at least some book dealing with the origin of religion, he said that there was none; but he knew one which would suit me—Malvert's *Science and Religion*. In point of fact, this was already translated into Spanish, and was used as a reading-book in the Modern School, with the title *Origin of Christianity*.

In Spanish literature I found several works written by a distinguished author, of some eminence in science, who had produced them rather in the interest of the publishers than with a view to the education of children. Some of these were at first used in the Modern School, but, though one could not accuse them of error, they lacked the inspiration of an ideal and were poor in method. I communicated with this author with a view to interesting him in my plans and inducing him to write books for me, but his publishers held him to a certain contract and he could not oblige me.

In brief, the Modern School was opened before a single work had been chosen for its library, but it was not long before the first

appeared—a brilliant book by Jean Grave, which has had a considerable influence on our schools. His work, *The Adventures of Nono*, is a kind of poem in which a certain phase of the happier future is ingeniously and dramatically contrasted with the sordid realities of the present social order; the delights of the land of Autonomy are contrasted with the horrors of the kingdom of Argirocracy. The genius of Grave has raised the work to a height at which it escapes the strictures of the sceptical and conservative; he has depicted the social evils of the present truthfully and without exaggeration. The reading of the book enchanted the children, and the profundity of his thought suggested many opportune comments to the teachers. In their play the children used to act scenes from Autonomy, and their parents detected the causes of their hardships in the constitution of the kingdom of Argirocracy.

It was announced in the *Bulletin* and other journals that prizes were offered for the best manuals of rational instruction, but no writers came forward. I confine myself to recording the fact without going into the causes of it. Two books were afterwards adopted for read-

ing in school. They were not written for school, but they were translated for the Modern School and were very useful. One was called *The Note Book*, the other *Colonisation and Patriotism*. Both were collections of passages from writers of every country on the injustices connected with patriotism, the horrors of war, and the iniquity of conquest. The choice of these works was vindicated by the excellent influence they had on the minds of the children, as we shall see from the little essays of the children which appeared in the *Bulletin*, and the fury with which they were denounced by the reactionary press and politicians.

Many think that there is not much difference between secular and rationalist education, and in various articles and propagandist speeches the two were taken to be synonymous. In order to correct this error I published the following article in the *Bulletin*:—

The word *education* should not be accompanied by any qualification. It means simply the need and duty of the generation which is in the full development of its powers to prepare the rising generation and admit it to the patrimony of human knowledge. This is an entirely rational

ideal, and it will be fully realised in some future age, when men are wholly freed from their prejudices and superstitions.

In our efforts to realise this ideal we find ourselves confronted with religious education and political education: to these we must oppose rational and scientific instruction. The type of religious education is that given in the clerical and convent schools of all countries; it consists of the smallest possible quantity of useful knowledge and a good deal of Christian doctrine and sacred history. Political education is the kind established some time ago in France, after the fall of the Empire, the object of which is to exalt patriotism and represent the actual public administration as the instrument of the common welfare.

Sometimes the qualification *free* or *secular* is applied abusively and maliciously to education, in order to distract or alienate public opinion. Orthodox people, for instance, call *free schools* certain schools which they establish in opposition to the really free tendency of modern pedagogy; and many are called *secular schools* which are really political, patriotic, and anti-humanitarian.

Rational education is lifted above these illiberal forms. It has, in the first place, no regard to religious education, because science has shown that the story of creation is a myth and the gods

legendary; and therefore religious education takes advantage of the credulity of the parents and the ignorance of the children, maintaining the belief in a supernatural being to whom people may address all kinds of prayers. This ancient belief, still unfortunately widespread, has done a great deal of harm, and will continue to do so as long as it persists. The mission of education is to show the child, by purely scientific methods, that the more knowledge we have of natural products, their qualities, and the way to use them, the more industrial, scientific, and artistic commodities we shall have for the support and comfort of life, and men and women will issue in larger numbers from our schools with a determination to cultivate every branch of knowledge and action, under the guidance of reason and the inspiration of science and art, which will adorn life and reform society.

*We will not, therefore, lose our time praying to an imaginary God for things which our own exertions alone can procure.*

On the other hand, our teaching has nothing to do with politics. It is our work to form individuals in the full possession of all their faculties, while politics would subject their faculties to other men. While religion has, with its divine power, created a positively abusive power and retarded the development of humanity, political

systems also retard it by encouraging men to depend for everything on the will of others, on what are supposed to be men of a superior character—on those, in a word, who, from tradition or choice, exercise the profession of politics. It must be the aim of the rational schools to show the children that there will be tyranny and slavery as long as one man depends upon another, to study the causes of the prevailing ignorance, to learn the origin of all the traditional practices which give life to the existing social system, and to direct the attention of the pupils to these matters.

*We will not, therefore, lose our time seeking from others what we can get for ourselves.*

In a word, our business is to imprint on the minds of the children the idea that their condition in the social order will improve in proportion to their knowledge and to the strength they are able to develop; and that the era of general happiness will be the more sure to dawn when they have discarded all religious and other superstitions, which have up to the present done so much harm. On that account there are no rewards or punishments in our schools; no alms, no medals or badges in imitation of the religious and patriotic schools, which might encourage the children to believe in talismans instead of in the individual and collective power of beings who are conscious of their ability and knowledge.

Rational and scientific knowledge must persuade the men and women of the future that they have to expect nothing from any privileged being (fictitious or real); and that they may expect all that is reasonable from themselves and from a freely organised and accepted social order.

I then appealed in the *Bulletin* and the local press to scientific writers who were eager for the progress of the race to supply us with text-books on these lines. They were, I said, "to deliver the minds of the pupils from all the errors of our ancestors, encourage them in the love of truth and beauty, and keep from them the authoritarian dogmas, venerable sophisms, and ridiculous conventionalities which at present disgrace our social life." A special note was added in regard to the teaching of arithmetic:—

The way in which arithmetic has hitherto been generally taught has made it a powerful instrument for impressing the pupils with the false ideals of the capitalist régime which at present presses so heavily on society. The Modern School, therefore, invites essays on the subject of the reform of the teaching of arith-

metic, and requests those friends of rational and scientific instruction who are especially occupied with mathematics to draw up a series of easy and practical problems, in which there shall be no reference to wages, economy, and profit. These exercises must deal with agricultural and industrial production, the just distribution of the raw material and the manufactured articles, the means of communication, the transport of merchandise, the comparison of human labour with mechanical, the benefits of machinery, public works, etc. In a word, the Modern School wants a number of problems showing what arithmetic really ought to be—the science of the social economy (taking the word *economy* in its etymological sense of “good distribution”).

The exercises will deal with the four fundamental operations (integrals, decimals, and fractions), the metrical system, proportion, compounds and alloys, the squares and cubes of numbers, and the extraction of square and cube roots. As those who respond to this appeal are, it is hoped, inspired rather with the ideal of a right education of children than with the desire of profit, and as we wish to avoid the common practice in such circumstances, we shall not appoint judges or offer any prizes. The Modern School will publish the Arithmetic which best serves its purpose, and will come to an

amicable agreement with the author as to his fee.

A later note in the *Bulletin* was addressed to teachers:—

We would call the attention of all who dedicate themselves to the noble ideal of the rational teaching of children and the preparation of the young to take a fitting share in life to the announcements of a *Compendium of Universal History* by Clémence Jacquinet, and *The Adventures of Nono* by Jean Grave, which will be found on the cover.<sup>1</sup> The works which the Modern School has published or proposes to publish are intended for all free and rational teaching institutions, centres of social study, and parents, who resent the intellectual restrictions which dogma of all kinds—religious, political, and social—imposes in order to maintain privilege at the expense of the ignorant. All who are op-

<sup>1</sup> It should be stated that both the writers are Anarchists, in the sense I have indicated in the Preface. Except on special subjects—the famous geographer Odón de Buen, for instance, co-operated with Ferrer in regard to geography—no other writers were likely to embody Ferrer's ideals. All, however, were as opposed to violence as Ferrer himself, and Mr. W. Archer has shown in his life of Ferrer that the charges brought against Mme. Jacquinet by Ferrer's persecutors at his trial are officially denied by our Egyptian authorities.—J. M.

posed to Jesuitism and to conventional lies, and to the errors transmitted by tradition and routine, will find in our publications truth based upon evidence. As we have no desire of profit, the price of the works represents almost their intrinsic value or material cost; if there is any profit from the sale of them, it will be spent upon subsequent publications.

In a later number of the *Bulletin* (No. 6, second year) the distinguished geographer Elisée Reclus wrote, at my request, a lengthy article on the teaching of geography. In a letter which Reclus afterwards wrote me from the Geographical Institute at Brussels, replying to my request that he should recommend a text-book, he said that there was "no text-book for the teaching of geography in elementary schools"; he "did not know one that was not tainted with religious or patriotic poison, or, what is worse, administrative routine." He recommended that the teachers should use no manual in the Modern School, which he cordially commended (February 26, 1903).

In the following number (7) of the *Bulletin* I published the following note on the origin of Christianity:—

The older pedagogy, the real, if unavowed, aim of which was to impress children with the uselessness of knowledge, in order that they might be reconciled to their hard conditions and seek consolation in a supposed future life, used reading-books in the elementary school which swarmed with stories, anecdotes, accounts of travels, gems of classical literature, etc. There was a good deal of error mixed with what was sound and useful in this, and the aim was not just. The mystical idea predominated, representing that a relation could be established between a Supreme Being and men by means of priests, and this priesthood was the chief foundation of the existence of both the privileged and the disinherited, and the cause of much of the evil that they endured.

Among other books of this class, all tainted with the same evil, we remember one which inserted an academic discourse, a marvel of Spanish eloquence, in praise of the Bible. The gist of it is expressed in the barbarous declaration of Omar when he condemned the Library of Alexandria to the flames: "The whole truth is contained in the sacred book. If those other books are true, they are superfluous; if they are not true, they should be burned."

The Modern School, which seeks to form free minds, with a sense of responsibility, fitted to

experience a complete development of their powers, which is the one aim of life, must necessarily adopt a very different kind of reading-book, in harmony with its method of teaching. For this reason, as it teaches established truth and is interested in the struggle between light and darkness, it has deemed it necessary to produce a critical work which will enlighten the mind of the child with positive facts. These may not be appreciated in childhood, but will later, in manhood, when the child takes its place in social life and in the struggle against the errors, conventions, hypocrisies, and infamies which conceal themselves under the cloak of mysticism. This work reminds us that our books are not merely intended for children; they are destined also for the use of the Adult Schools which are being founded on every side by associations of workers, Freethinkers, Co-operators, social students, and other progressive bodies who are eager to correct the illiteracy of our nation, and remove that great obstacle to progress.

We believe that the section of Malvert's work (*Science and Religion*) which we have entitled "The Origin of Christianity" will be useful for this purpose. It shows the myths, dogmas, and ceremonies of the Christian religion in their original form; sometimes as exoteric symbols

concealing a truth known to the initiated, sometimes as adaptations of earlier beliefs, imposed by sheer routine and preserved by malice. As we are convinced and have ample evidence of the usefulness of our work, we offer it to the public with the hope that it will bear the fruit which we anticipate. We have only to add that certain passages which are unsuitable for children have been omitted; the omissions are indicated, and adults may consult the passages in the complete edition.

## CHAPTER XII

### SUNDAY LECTURES

THE Modern School did not confine itself to the instruction of children. Without for a moment sacrificing its predominant character and its chief object, it also undertook the instruction of the people. We arranged a series of public lectures on Sundays, and they were attended by the pupils and other members of their families, and a large number of workers who were anxious to learn.

The earlier lectures were wanting in method and continuity, as we had to employ lecturers who were quite competent in regard to their own subjects, but gave each lecture without regard to what preceded or followed. On other occasions, when we had no lecturer, we substituted useful readings. The general public attended assiduously, and our advertisements in the Liberal press of the district were eagerly scanned.

In view of these results, and in order to encourage the disposition of the general public, I held a consultation with Dr. Andrés Martínez Vargas and Dr. Odón de Buen, Professors at the Barcelona University, on the subject of creating a popular university in the Modern School. In this the science which is given—or, rather, sold—by the State to a privileged few in the universities should be given gratuitously to the general public, by way of restitution, as every human being has a right to know, and science, which is produced by observers and workers of all ages and countries, ought not to be restricted to a class.

From that time the lectures became continuous and regular, having regard to the different branches of knowledge of the two lecturers. Dr. Martínez Vargas expounded physiology and hygiene, and Dr. Odón de Buen geography and natural science, on alternate Sundays, until we began to be persecuted. Their teaching was eagerly welcomed by the pupils of the Modern School, and the large audiences of mixed children and adults. One of the Liberal journals of Barcelona, in giving an account of the

work, spoke of the function as "the scientific Mass."

The eternal light-haters, who maintain their privileges on the ignorance of the people, were greatly exasperated to see this centre of enlightenment shining so vigorously, and did not delay long to urge the authorities, who were at their disposal, to extinguish it brutally. For my part, I resolved to put the work on the firmest foundation I could conceive.

I recall with the greatest pleasure that hour we devoted once a week to the confraternity of culture. I inaugurated the lectures on December 15, 1901, when Don Ernesto Vendrell spoke of Hypatia as a martyr to the ideals of science and beauty, the victim of the fanatical Bishop Cyril of Alexandria. Other lectures were given on subsequent Sundays, as I said, until, on October 5, 1902, the lectures were organised in regular courses of science. On that day Dr. Andrés Martínez Vargas, Professor of the Faculty of Medicine (child diseases) at Barcelona University, gave his first lecture. He dealt with the hygiene of the school, and expounded its principles in plain terms adapted to the minds

of his hearers. Dr. Odón de Buen, Professor of the Faculty of Science, dealt with the usefulness of the study of natural history.

The press was generally in sympathy with the Modern School, but when the programme of the third scholastic year appeared some of the local journals, the *Noticiero Universal* and the *Diario de Barcelona*, broke out. Here is a passage that deserves recording as an illustration of the way in which conservative journals dealt with progressive subjects:—

We have seen the prospectus of an educational centre established in this city, which professes to have nothing to do with “dogmas and systems.” It proposes to liberate everybody from “authoritarian dogmas, venerable sophisms, and ridiculous conventions.” It seems to us that this means that the first thing to do is to tell the boys and girls—it is a mixed school—that there is no God, an admirable way of forming good children, especially young women who are destined to be wives and mothers.

The writer continues in this ironical manner for some time, and ends as follows:—

This school has the support of a professor of Natural Science (Dr. Odón de Buen) and another

of the Faculty of Medicine. We do not name the latter, as there may be some mistake in including him among the men who lend their support to such a work.

These insidious clerical attacks were answered by the anti-clerical journals of Barcelona at the time.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE RESULTS

AT the beginning of the second scholastic year I once more drew up a programme. Let us, I said, confirm our earlier programme; vindicated by results, approved in theory and practice, the principle which from the first informed our work and governs the Modern School is now unshakable.

*Science is the sole mistress of our life.* Inspired with this thought, the Modern School proposes to give the children entrusted to it *a mental vitality of their own*, so that when they leave our control they will continue to be the mortal enemies of all kinds of prejudices and will form their own ideas, individually and seriously, on all subjects.

Further, as education does not consist

merely in the training of the mind, but must include the emotions and the will, we shall take the utmost care in the training of the child that its intellectual impressions are converted into the sap of sentiment. When this attains a certain degree of intensity, it spreads through the whole being, colouring and refining the individual character. And as the conduct of the youth revolves entirely in the sphere of character, he must learn to adopt science as the sole mistress of his life.

To complete our principle we must state that we are enthusiastically in favour of mixed education, so that, having the same education, the woman may become the real companion of man, and work with him for the regeneration of society. This task has hitherto been confined to man; it is time that the moral influence of woman was enlisted in it. Science will illumine and guide her rich vein of sentiment, and utilise her character for the welfare of the race. Knowing that the chief need in this country is a knowledge of natural science and hygiene, the Modern School intends to help to supply it. In this it has the support of Dr. de Buen and Dr. Vargas,

who lecture, alternately, on their respective subjects.

On June 30, 1903, I published in the *Bulletin* the following declaration:—

We have now passed two years in expounding our principles, justifying them by our practice, and enjoying the esteem of all who have co-operated in our work. We do not see in this any other triumph than that we are able to confirm confidently all that we have proclaimed. We have overcome the obstacles which were put in our way by interest and prejudice, and we intend to persevere in it, counting always on that progressive comradeship which dispels the darkness of ignorance with its strong light. We resume work next September, after the autumn vacation. We are delighted to be able to repeat what we said last year. The Modern School and its *Bulletin* renew their life, for they have filled, with some measure of satisfaction, a deeply-felt need. Without making promises or programmes, we will persevere to the limit of our powers.

In the same number of the *Bulletin* was published the following list of the pupils who had attended the school during the first two years:—

MONTHS.	GIRLS.		BOYS.		TOTAL.	
	1901-2, 1902-3.		1901-2, 1902-3.		1st Yr.	2nd Yr.
Opening day	12	—	18	—	30	—
September	16	23	23	40	39	63
October	18	28	25	40	43	68
November	21	31	29	40	50	71
December	22	31	30	40	52	71
January	22	31	32	44	54	75
February	23	31	32	48	55	79
March	25	33	34	47	59	80
April	26	32	37	48	63	80
May	30	33	38	48	68	81
June	32	34	38	48	70	82

At the beginning of the third year I published with special pleasure the following article in the *Bulletin* on the progress of the School:—

On the eighth of the present month we opened the new scholastic year. A large number of pupils, their relatives, and members of the general public who were in sympathy with our work and lectures, filled the recently enlarged rooms, and, before the commencement of the function, inspected the collections which give the school the appearance of a museum of

science. The function began with a short address from the director, who formally declared the opening of the third year of school life, and said that, as they now had more experience and were encouraged by success, they would carry out energetically the ideal of the Modern School.

Dr. de Buen congratulated us on the enlargement of the School, and supported its aims. Education should, he said, reflect nature, as knowledge can only consist in our perception of what actually exists. On the part of his children, who study at the School and live in the neighbourhood, he paid a tribute to the good-comradeship among the pupils, with whom they played and studied in a perfectly natural way. He said that even in orthodox education, or rather on the part of the professors engaged in it, there were, for all its archaic features, certain tendencies similar to those embodied in the Modern School. This might be gathered from his own presence, and that of Dr. Vargas and other professors. He announced that there was already a similar school at Guadalajara, or that one would shortly be opened there, built by means of a legacy left for the purpose by a humanitarian. He wished to contribute to the redemption of children and their liberation from ignorance and superstition; and he expressed a hope and very strong wish that wealthy people would, at their

death, restore their goods in this way to the social body, instead of leaving them to secure an imaginary happiness beyond the grave.

Dr. Martínez Vargas maintained, against all who thought otherwise, that the purely scientific and rational education given in the Modern School is the proper basis of instruction; no better can be conceived for maintaining the relations of the children with their families and society, and it is the only way to form, morally and intellectually, the men of the future. He was glad to hear that the scholastic hygiene which had been practised in the Modern School during the previous two years, involving a periodical examination of the children, and expounded in the public lectures, had received the solemn sanction of the Hygienic Congress lately held at Brussels.

Going on to resume his lectures, and as a means of enforcing oral instruction by visual perception, he exhibited a series of lantern-slides illustrating various hygienic exercises, certain types of disease, unhealthy organs, etc., which the speaker explained in detail. An accident to the lantern interrupted the pictures; but the professor continued his explanations, speaking of the mischievous effects of corsets, the danger of microbic infection by trailing dresses or by children playing with soil, by insanitary

houses and workshops, etc., and promised to continue his medical explanations during the coming year.

The audience expressed its pleasure at the close of the meeting, and the sight of the great joy of the pupils was some consolation amid the hardships of the present, and a good augury for the future.

## CHAPTER XIV

### A DEFENSIVE CHAPTER

OUR programme for the third scholastic year (1903-4) was as follows:—

To promote the progressive evolution of childhood by avoiding all anachronistic practices, which are merely obstacles placed by the past to any real advance towards the future, is, in sum, the predominant aim of the Modern School. Neither dogmas nor systems, moulds which confine vitality to the narrow exigencies of a transitory form of society, will be taught. Only solutions approved by the facts, theories accepted by reason, and truths confirmed by evidence, shall be included in our lessons, so that each mind shall be trained to control a will, and truths shall irradiate the intelligence, and, when applied in practice, benefit the whole of humanity without any unworthy and disgraceful exclusiveness.

Two years of success are a sufficient guarantee

to us. They prove, in the first place, the excellence of mixed education, the brilliant result—the triumph, we would almost say—of an elementary common sense over prejudice and tradition. As we think it advisable, especially that the child may know what is happening about it, that physical and natural science and hygiene should be taught, the Modern School will continue to have the services of Dr. de Buen and Dr. Vargas. They will lecture on alternate Sundays, from eleven to twelve, on their respective subjects in the school-room. These lectures will complete and further explain the classes in science held during the week.

It remains only to say that, always solicitous for the success of our work of reform, we have enriched our scholastic material by the acquisition of new collections which will at once assist the understanding and give an attractiveness to scientific knowledge; and that, as our rooms are now not large enough for the pupils, we have acquired other premises in order to have more room and give a favourable reply to the petitions for admission which we have received.

The publication of this programme attracted the attention of the reactionary press, as I said. In order to give them a proof of the logical strength of the position of the

Modern School, I inserted the following article in the *Bulletin*:—

Modern pedagogy, relieved of traditions and conventions, must raise itself to the height of the rational conception of man, the actual state of knowledge, and the consequent ideal of mankind. If from any cause whatever a different tendency is given to education, and the master does not do his duty, it would be just to describe him as an impostor; education must not be a means of dominating men for the advantage of their rulers. Unhappily, this is exactly what happens. Society is organised, not in response to a general need and for the realisation of an ideal, but as an institution with a strong determination to maintain its primitive forms, defending them vigorously against every reform, however reasonable it may be.

This element of immobility gives the ancient errors the character of sacred beliefs, invests them with great prestige and a dogmatic authority, and arouses conflicts and disturbances which deprive scientific truths of their due efficacy or keep them in suspense. Instead of being enabled to illumine the minds of all and realise themselves in institutions and customs of general utility, they are unhappily restricted to the sphere of a privileged few. The effect is that,

as in the days of the Egyptian theocracy, there is an esoteric doctrine for the cultivated and an exoteric doctrine for the lower classes—the classes destined to labour, defence, and misery.

On this account we set aside the mystic and mythical doctrine, the domination and spread of which only befits the earlier ages of human history, and embrace scientific teaching, according to its evidence. This is at present restricted to the narrow sphere of the intellectuals, or is at the most accepted in secret by certain hypocrites who, so that their position may not be endangered, make a public profession of the contrary. Nothing could make this absurd antagonism clearer than the following parallel, in which we see the contrast between the imaginative dreams of the ignorant believer and the rational simplicity of the scientist:—

THE BIBLE.

ANTHROPISM.

The Bible contains the annals of the heavens, the earth, and the human race; like the Deity himself, it contains all that was, is, and will be. On its first page we read of

One of the main supports of the reactionary system is what we may call "anthropism." I designate by this term that powerful and world-wide group of erroneous

the beginning of time and of things, and on its last page the end of time and of things. It begins with *Genesis*, which is an idyll, and ends with *Revelation*, which is a funeral chant. *Genesis* is as beautiful as the fresh breeze which sweeps over the world; as the first dawn of light in the heavens; as the first flower that opens in the meadows; as the first word of love spoken by men; as the first appearance of the sun in the east. *Revelation* is as sad as the last palpitation of nature; as the last ray of the sun; as the last breath of a dying man. And between the funeral chant and the idyll there pass in succession before the eyes of God

opinions which opposes the human organism to the whole of the rest of nature, and represents it as the pre-ordained end of organic creation, an entity essentially distinct from it, a god-like being. Closer examination of this group of ideas shows it to be made up of three different dogmas, which we may distinguish as the *anthropocentric*, the *anthropomorphic*, and the *anthropolatrous*.

1. The *anthropocentric* dogma culminates in the idea that man is the preordained centre and aim of all terrestrial life—or, in a wider sense, of the whole universe. As this error is extremely conducive to man's interest, and as it is

all generations and all peoples. The tribes and the patriarchs go by; the republics and the magistrates; the monarchies and their kings; the empires and their emperors. Babylon and all its abominations go by; Nineveh and all its pomps; Memphis and its priests; Jerusalem and its prophets and temple; Athens and its arts and heroes; Rome and its diadem of conqueror of the world. Nothing lasts but God; all else passes and dies, like the froth that tips the wave.

. . . . .

A prodigious book, which mankind began to read three and thirty centuries ago, and of which, if it read all day

intimately connected with the creation-myth of the three great Mediterranean religions, and with the dogmas of the Mosaic, Christian, and Mohammedan theologies, it still dominates the greater part of the civilised world.

2. The *anthropomorphic* dogma, also, is connected with the creation-myth of the three aforesaid religions and of many others. It likens the creation and control of the world by God to the artificial creation of an able engineer or mechanic, and to the administration of a wise ruler. God, as creator, sustainer, and ruler of the world, is thus represented after a purely human fashion in his thought and

and night, it would not exhaust the wealth. A prodigious book in which all was calculated before the science of arithmetic was invented; in which the origin of language is told without any knowledge of philology; in which the revolutions of the stars are described without any knowledge of astronomy; in which history is recorded without any documents of history; in which the laws of nature are unveiled without any knowledge of physics. A prodigious book, that sees everything and knows everything; that knows the thoughts hidden in the hearts of men and those in the mind of God; that sees what is happening in the

work. Hence it follows that man in turn is godlike. "God made man to his own image and likeness." The older, naïve theology is pure "homotheism," attributing human shape, flesh, and blood to the gods. It is more intelligible than the modern mystic theosophy which adores a personal God as an invisible—properly speaking, gaseous—being, yet makes him think, speak, and act in human fashion; it offers us the paradoxical picture of a gaseous vertebrate.

3. The *anthropolatric* dogma naturally results from this comparison of the activity of God and man; it ends in the apotheosis of human nature. A

abysses of the sea and in the bowels of the earth; that records or foretells all the catastrophes of nations, and in which are accumulated all the treasures of mercy, of justice, and of vengeance. A book, in fine, which, when the heavens are folded like a gigantic fan, and the earth sinks and the sun withdraws its light, and the stars are extinguished, will remain with God, because it is his eternal word, echoing for ever in the heights.<sup>1</sup>

further result is the belief in the personal immortality of the soul and the dualistic dogma of the twofold nature of man, whose "immortal" soul is conceived as the temporary inhabitant of a mortal frame. Thus these three anthropistic dogmas, variously adapted to the respective professions of the different religions, came at length to be vested with extraordinary importance, and proved to be the source of the most dangerous errors.<sup>2</sup>

In face of this antagonism, maintained by ignorance and self-interest, positive education, which proposes to teach truths that issue in practical justice, must arrange and systematise the established results of natural research, com-

<sup>1</sup> Extract from a speech delivered by Donoso Cortés at his admission into the Academy.

<sup>2</sup> Haeckel's *Riddle of the Universe*, chap. i.

municate them to children, and thus prepare the way for a more equitable state of society, in which, as an exact expression of sociology, it must work for the benefit of all as well as of the individual. Moses, or whoever was the author of *Genesis*, and all the dogmatisers, with their six days of creation out of nothing after the Creator has passed an eternity in doing nothing, must give place to Copernicus, who showed the revolution of the planets round the sun; to Galileo, who proclaimed that the sun, not the earth, is the centre of the planetary universe; to Columbus and others who, believing the earth to be a sphere, set out in search of other peoples, and gave a practical basis to the doctrine of human brotherhood; to Linnæus and Cuvier, the founders of natural history; to Laplace, the inventor of the established cosmogony; to Darwin, the author of the evolutionary doctrine, which explains the formation of species by natural selection; and to all who, by means of observation and experiment, have discredited the supposed revelation, and tell us the real nature of the universe, the earth, and life.

Against the evils engendered by generations sunk in ignorance and superstition, from which so many are now delivered, only to fall into an anti-social scepticism, the best remedy, without excluding others, is to instruct the rising genera-

tion in purely humanist principles and in the positive and rational knowledge provided by science. Women educated thus will be mothers in the true sense of the word, not transmitters of traditional superstitions; they will teach their children integrity of life, the dignity of life, social solidarity, instead of a medley of outworn and sterile dogmas and submission to illegitimate hierarchies. Men thus emancipated from mystery, miracle, and distrust of themselves and their fellows, and convinced that they were born, not to die, as the wretched teaching of the mystics says, but to live, will hasten to bring about such social conditions as will give to life its greatest possible development. In this way, preserving the memory of former generations and other frames of mind as a lesson and a warning, we will once for all close the religious period, and enter definitely into that of reason and nature.

In June, 1904, the *Bulletin* published the following figures in regard to the attendance at school. At that time the publications of the Modern School were in use in thirty-two other schools throughout the country, and its influence was thus felt in Seville and Malaga, Tarragona and Cordova, and other towns, as well as Barcelona and the vicinity. The

number of scholars in our schools was also steadily rising, as the following table shows:—

LIST OF THE PUPILS IN THE MODERN SCHOOL  
DURING THE FIRST THREE YEARS.

MONTHS.	GIRLS.			BOYS.			TOTALS.		
	1901-2.	1902-3.	1903-4.	1901-2.	1902-3.	1903-4.	1st year.	2nd year.	3rd year.
Opening day	12	—	—	18	—	—	30	—	—
September	16	23	24	23	40	40	39	63	64
October	18	28	43	25	40	59	43	68	102
November	21	31	44	29	40	59	50	71	103
December	22	31	45	30	40	59	52	71	104
January	22	31	47	32	44	60	54	75	107
February	23	31	47	32	48	61	55	79	108
March	25	33	49	34	47	61	59	80	110
April	26	32	50	37	48	61	63	80	111
May	30	33	51	38	48	62	68	81	113
June	32	34	51	38	48	63	70	82	114

## CHAPTER XV

### THE INGENUOUSNESS OF THE CHILD

IN the *Bulletin* of September 30, 1903, we published the work of the pupils in the various classes of the Modern School, which had been read on the closing day of the second scholastic year. In these writings, in which the children are requested to apply their dawning judgment to some particular subject, the influence of mind over the inexperienced, ingenuous reasoning power, inspired by the sentiment of justice, is more apparent than the observance of rules. The judgments are not perfect from the logical point of view, only because the child has not the knowledge necessary for the formation of a perfectly sound opinion. This is the opposite of what we usually find, as opinions are generally founded only on prejudice arising from traditions, interests, and dogmas.

A boy of twelve, for instance, gave the following principle for judging the value of nations:—

To be called civilised, a nation or State must be free from the following—

Let me interrupt for a moment to point out that the young author identifies “civilised” with “just,” and especially that, putting aside prejudice, he describes certain evils as curable, and regards the healing of them as an essential condition of justice. These evils are:—

1. The co-existence of poor and rich, and the resultant exploitation.
2. Militarism, a means of destruction employed by one nation against another, due to the bad organisation of society.
3. Inequality, which allows some to rule and command, and obliges others to humble themselves and obey.

This principle is fundamental and simple, as we should expect to find in an imperfectly informed mind, and it would not enable one to solve a complete sociological problem; but it has the advantage of keeping the mind open

to fresh knowledge. It is as if one asked: What does a sick man need to recover health? And the reply is: His suffering must disappear. This is a naïve and natural reply, and would certainly not be given by a child brought up in the ordinary way; such a child would be taught first to consider the will of supposed supernatural beings. It is clear that this simple way of putting the problem of life does not shut out the hope of a reasonable solution; indeed, the one logically demands the other, as the same child's essay shows:—

I do not mean that, if there were no rich, or soldiers, or rulers, or wages, people would abuse their liberty and welfare, but that, with everybody enjoying a high degree of civilisation, there would be universal cordiality and friendship, and science would make much greater progress, not being interrupted by wars and political stagnation.

A girl of nine made the following sensible observation, which we leave in her own incorrect language:—

A criminal is condemned to death; if the

murderer deserves this punishment, the man who condemns him and the man who kills him are also murderers; logically, they ought to die as well, and so humanity would come to an end. It would be better, instead of punishing a criminal by committing another crime, to give him good advice, so that he will not do it again. Besides, if we are all equal, there would be no thieves, or assassins, or rich people, or poor, but all would be equal and love work and liberty.

The simplicity, clearness, and soundness of this observation need no commentary. One can understand our astonishment to hear it from the lips of a tender and very pretty little girl, who looked more like a symbolical representation of truth and justice than a living reality.

A boy of twelve deals with sincerity, and says:—

The man who is not sincere does not live peacefully; he is always afraid of being discovered: when one is sincere, if one has done wrong, the sincere declaration relieves the conscience. If a man begins to tell lies in childhood, he will tell bigger lies when he grows up, and may do much harm. There are cases in which one need not be sincere. For instance, if a man comes to

our house, flying from the police, and we are asked afterwards if we have seen him, we must deny it; the contrary would be treachery and cowardice.

It is sad that the mind of a child who regards truth as an incomparable good, "without which it is impossible to live," is induced by certain grave abuses to consider lying a virtue in some cases.

A girl of thirteen writes of fanaticism, and, regarding it as a characteristic of backward countries, she goes on to seek the cause:—

Fanaticism is the outcome of the state of ignorance and backwardness of women; on that account Catholics do not want to see women educated, as they are the chief support of their system.

A profound observation on the causes of fanaticism, and the cause of the causes. Another girl of thirteen indicates the best remedy of the evil in the following lines:—

The mixed school, for both sexes, is supremely necessary. The boy who studies, works, and plays in the society of girls learns gradually to respect and help her, and the girl reciprocally;

whereas, if they are educated separately, and the boy is told that the girl is not a good companion and she is worse than he, the boy will not respect women when he is a man, and will regard her as a subject or a slave, and that is the position in which we find women. So we must all work for the foundation of mixed schools, wherever it is possible, and where it is not possible we must try to remove the difficulties.

A boy of twelve regards the school as worthy of all respect, because we learn in it to read, write, and think, and it is the basis of morality and science; he adds:—

If it were not for the school we should live like savages, walk naked, eat herbs and raw flesh, and dwell in caves and trees; that is to say, we should live a brutal life. In time, as a result of the school, everybody will be more intelligent, and there will be no wars or inflamed populations and people will look back on war with horror as a work of death and destruction. It is a great disgrace that there are children who wander in the streets and do not go to school, and when they become men it is more disgraceful. So let us be grateful to our teachers for the patience they show in instructing us, and let us regard the school with respect.

If that child preserves and develops the faculties it exhibits, it will know how to harmonise egoism and altruism for its own good and that of society. A girl of eleven deplors that nations destroy each other in war, and laments the difference of social classes and that the rich live on the work and privation of the poor. She ends:—

Why do not men, instead of killing each other in wars and hating each other for class-differences, devote themselves cheerfully to work and the discovery of things for the good of mankind? Men ought to unite to love each other and live fraternally.<sup>1</sup>

A child of ten, in an essay which is so good that I would insert it whole if space permitted and if it were not for the identity in sentiment with the previous passages, says of the school and the pupil:—

Reunited under one roof, eager to learn what

<sup>1</sup> I omit some of Ferrer's short comments on these specimens of reasoning and sentiment, as he regards them. One can recognise the echo of the teacher's words. The children were repeating their catechism. But (1) this is no catechism of violence and class-hatred, and (2) there is a distinct appreciation of the ideas and sentiments on the part of the children. I translate the passages as literally as possible.—J. M.

we do not know, without distinction of classes [there were children of university professors among them, it will be remembered], we are children of one family guided to the same end. . . . The ignorant man is a nullity; little or nothing can be expected of him. He is a warning to us not to waste time; on the contrary, let us profit by it, and in due course we shall be rewarded. Let us not miss the fruits of a good school, and, honouring our teachers, our family, and society, we shall live happily.

A child of ten philosophises on the faults of mankind, which, in her opinion, can be avoided by instruction and goodwill:—

Among the faults of mankind are lying, hypocrisy, and egoism. If men, and especially women, were better instructed, and women were entirely equal to men, these faults would disappear. Parents would not send their children to religious schools, which inculcate false ideas, but to rational schools, where there is no teaching of the supernatural, which does not exist; nor to make war; but to live in solidarity and work in common.

We will close with the following essay, written by a young lady of sixteen, which is correct enough in form and substance to quote in entirety:—

What inequality there is in the present social order! Some working from morning to night without more profit than enough to buy their insufficient food; others receiving the products of the workers in order to enjoy themselves with the superfluous. Why is this so? Are we not all equal? Undoubtedly we are; but society does not recognise it, while some are destined to work and suffering, and others to idleness and enjoyment. If a worker shows that he realises the exploitation to which he is subject, he is blamed and cruelly punished, while others suffer the inequality with patience. The worker must educate himself; and in order to do this it is necessary to found free schools, maintained by the wages which the rich give. In this way the worker will advance more and more, until he is regarded as he deserves, since the most useful mission of society depends on him.

Whatever be the logical value of these ideas, this collection shows the chief aim of the Modern School—namely, that the mind of the child, influenced by what it sees and informed by the positive knowledge it acquires, shall work freely, without prejudice or submission to any kind of sect, with perfect autonomy and no other guide but reason, equal in all, and sanctioned by the

cogency of evidence, before which the darkness of sophistry and dogmatic imposition is dispelled.

In December, 1903, the Congress of Railway Workers, which was then held at Barcelona, informed us that, as a part of its programme, the delegates would visit the Modern School. The pupils were delighted, and we invited them to write essays to be read on the occasion of the visit. The visit was prevented by unforeseen circumstances; but we published in the *Bulletin* the children's essays, which exhaled a delicate perfume of sincerity and unbiassed judgment, graced by the naïve ingenuousness of the writers. No suggestion was made to them, and they did not compare notes, yet there was a remarkable agreement in their sentiments. At another time the pupils of the Workers' School at Badalona sent a greeting to our pupils, and they again wrote essays, from which we compiled a return letter of greeting.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This letter and the preceding essays are given in the Spanish edition. As they are a repetition of the sentiments expressed in the extracts already given, it is unnecessary to reproduce them here. Except that I have omitted papers incorporated by Ferrer, but not written by him, this is the only modification I have allowed myself.—J. M.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE "BULLETIN"

THE Modern School needed and found its organ in the Press. The political and ordinary press, which at one time favoured us and at another time denounced us as dangerous, cannot maintain an impartial attitude. It either gives exaggerated or unmerited praise, or calumnious censures. The only remedy for this was the sincerity and clearness of our own indications. To allow these libels to pass without correction would have done us considerable harm, and the *Bulletin* enabled us to meet them.

The directors published in it the programme of the school, interesting notes about it, statistical details, original pedagogical articles by the teachers, accounts of the progress of rational education in our own and other countries, translations of important

articles from foreign reviews and periodicals which were in harmony with the main character of our work, reports of the Sunday lectures, and announcements of the public competitions for the engagement of teachers and of our library.

One of the most successful sections of the *Bulletin* was that devoted to the publication of the ideas of the pupils. Besides showing their individual ideas it revealed the spontaneous manifestation of common sense. Girls and boys, with no appreciable difference in intellect according to sex, in contact with the realities of life as indicated by the teachers, expressed themselves in simple essays which, though sometimes immature in judgment, more often showed the clear logic with which they conceived philosophical, political, or social questions of some importance. The journal was at first distributed without charge among the pupils, and was exchanged with other periodicals; but there was soon a demand for it, and a public subscription had to be opened. When this was done, the *Bulletin* became a philosophical review, as well as organ of the Modern School; and it retained this character until the persecution

began and the school was closed. An instance of the important mission of the *Bulletin* will be found in the following article, which I wrote in No. 5 of the fourth year, in order to correct certain secular teachers who had gone astray:—

A certain Workers' School has introduced the novelty of establishing a savings-bank, administered by the pupils. This piece of information, reproduced in terms of great praise by the press as a thing to be imitated, induces us to express our opinion on the subject. While others have their own right to decide and act, we have the same right to criticise, and thus to create a rational public opinion.

In the first place we would observe that the word *economy* is very different from, if not the opposite of, the idea of *saving*. One may teach children the knowledge and practice of economy without necessarily teaching them to save. *Economy* means a prudent and methodical use of one's goods: *saving* means a restriction of one's use of one's goods. By economising, we avoid waste; by saving, the man who has nothing superfluous deprives himself of what is necessary.

Have the children who are taught to save any superfluous property? The very name of the society in question assures us that they have not.

The workers who send their children to this school live on their wages, the minimum sum, determined by the laws of supply and demand, which is paid for their work by the employers; and as this wage gives them nothing superfluous, and the social wealth is monopolised by the privileged classes, the workers are far from obtaining enough to live a life in harmony with the progress of civilisation. Hence, when these children of workers, and future workers themselves, are taught to save—which is a voluntary privation under the appearance of interest—they are taught to prepare themselves to submit to privilege. While the intention is to initiate them to the practice of economy, what is really done is to convert them into victims and accomplices of the present unjust order.

The working-class child is a human child, and, as such, it has a right to the development of all its faculties, the satisfaction of all its needs, moral and physical. For that purpose society was instituted. It is not its function to repress or subject the individual, as is selfishly pretended by the privileged and reactionary class, and all who enjoy what others produce; it has to hold the balance justly between the rights and duties of all members of the commonwealth.

As it is, the individual is asked to sacrifice his rights, needs, and pleasures to society; and, as

this disorder demands patience, suffering, and sophistical reasoning, let us commend economy and blame saving. We do not think it right to teach children to look forward to being workers in a social order in which the average mortality of the poor, who live without freedom, instruction, or joy, reaches an appalling figure in comparison with that of the class which lives in triumph on their labour. Those who, from sociolatry, would derogate in the least from the rights of man, should read the fine and vigorous words of Pi y Margall: "Who art thou to prevent my use of my human rights? Perfidious and tyrannical society, thou wert created to defend, not to coerce us. Go back to the abyss whence thou camest."

Starting from these principles, and applying them to pedagogy, we think it necessary to teach children that to waste any class of objects is contrary to the general welfare; that if a child spoils paper, loses pens, or destroys books, it does an injustice to its parents and the school. Assuredly one may impress on the child the need of prudence in order to avoid getting imperfect things, and remind it of lack of employment, illness, or age; but it is not right to insist that a provision be made out of a salary which does not suffice to meet the needs of life. That is bad arithmetic.

The workers have no university training; they do not go to the theatre or to concerts; they never go into ecstasies before the marvels of art, industry, or nature; they have no holiday in which to fill their lungs with life-giving oxygen; they are never uplifted by reading books or reviews. On the contrary, they suffer all kinds of privations, and may have to endure crises due to excessive production. It is not the place of teachers to hide these sad truths from the children and to tell them that a smaller quantity is equal to, if not better than, a larger. In order that the power of science and industry be shared by all, and all be invited to partake of the banquet of life, we must not teach in the school, in the interest of privilege, that the poor should organise the advantages of crumbs and leavings. We must not prostitute education.

On another occasion I had to censure a different departure from our principles:—

We were distressed and indignant on reading the list of contributions voted by the Council of Barcelona for certain popular societies which are interested in education. We read of sums offered to Republican Fraternities and similar societies; and we find that, instead of rejecting

them, they forwarded votes of thanks to the Council.

The meaning of these things in a Catholic and ultra-conservative nation is clear. The Church and the capitalist system only maintain their ascendancy by a judicious system of charity and protection. With this they gratify the disinherited class, and continue to enjoy its respect. But we cannot see republicans acting as if they were humble Christians without raising a cry of alarm.

Beware, we repeat, beware! You are educating your children badly, and taking the wrong path towards reform, in accepting alms. You will neither emancipate yourselves nor your children if you trust in the strength of others, and rely on official or private support. Let the Catholics, ignorant of the realities of life, expect everything of God, or St. Joseph, or some similar being, and, as they have no security that their prayers will be heard in this life, trust to receive a reward after death. Let gamblers in the lottery fail to see that they are morally and materially victimised by their rulers, and trust to receive by chance what they do not earn by energy. But it is sad to see men hold out the hand of a beggar, who are united in a revolutionary protest against the present system; to see them admitting and giving thanks for humiliating gifts,

instead of trusting their own energy, intellect, and ability.

Beware, then, all men of good faith! That is not the way to set up a true education of children, but the way to enslave them.

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE CLOSING OF THE MODERN SCHOOL

I HAVE reached the culmination of my life and my work. My enemies, who are all the reactionaries in the world, represented by the reactionaries of Barcelona and of Spain, believed that they had triumphed by involving me in a charge of attempted assassination. But their triumph proved to be only an episode in the struggle of practical Rationalism against reaction. The shameful audacity with which they claimed sentence of death against me (a claim that was refused on account of my transparent innocence rather than on account of the justice of the court) drew on me the sympathy of all liberal men—all true progressives—in all parts of the world, and fixed attention on the meaning and ideal of the Rational School. There was a universal and uninterrupted movement of protest and admiration for a whole year—from

May, 1906, to May and June, 1907—echoed in the Press of every civilised country, and in meetings and other popular manifestations.

It proved in the end that the mortal enemies of our work were its most effective supporters, as they led to the establishment of international Rationalism.

I felt my own littleness in face of this mighty manifestation. Led always by the light of the ideal, I conceived and carried out the International League for the Rational Education of Children, in the various branches of which, scattered over the world, are found men in the front ranks of culture [Anatole France, Ernst Haeckel, etc.]. It has three organs, *L'École Rénovée* in France, the *Bulletin* in Barcelona, and *La Scuola Laica* at Rome, which expound, discuss, and spread all the latest efforts of pedagogy to purify science from all defilement of error, to dispel all credulity, to bring about a perfect harmony between belief and knowledge, and to destroy that privileged esoteric system which has always left an exoteric doctrine to the masses.

This great concentration of knowledge and research must lead to a vigorous action which will give to the future revolution the char-

## Closing of the Modern School 139

acter of practical manifestation of applied sociology, without passion or demand of revenge, with no terrible tragedies or heroic sacrifices, no sterile movements, no disillusion of zealots, no treacherous returns to reaction. For scientific and rational education will have pervaded the masses, making each man and woman a self-conscious, active, and responsible being, guiding his will according to his judgment, free for ever from the passions inspired by those who exploit respect for tradition and for the charlatantry of the modern framers of political programmes.

If progress thus loses this dramatic character of revolution, it will gain in firmness, stability, and continuity, as evolution. The vision of a rational society, which revolutionaries foresaw in all ages, and which sociologists confidently promise, will rise before the eyes of our successors, not as the mirage of dreamy utopians, but as the positive and merited triumph won by the revolutionary power of reason and science.

The new repute of the educational work of the Modern School attracted the attention of all who appreciated the value of sound

instruction. There was a general demand for knowledge of the system. There were numbers of private secular schools, or similar institutions supported by societies, and their directors made inquiry concerning the difference of our methods from theirs. There were constant requests to visit the school and consult me. I gladly satisfied them, removed their doubts, and pressed them to enter on the new way; and at once efforts were made to reform the existing schools, and to create others on the model of the Modern School.

There was great enthusiasm and the promise of mighty things; but one serious difficulty stood in the way: we were short of teachers, and had no means of creating them. Professional teachers had two disadvantages—traditional habits and dread of the contingencies of the future. There were very few who, in an unselfish love of the ideal, would devote themselves to the progressive cause. Instructed young men and women might be found to fill the gap; but how were we to train them? Where could they pass their apprenticeship? Now and again I heard from workers' or political societies that they had decided to open a school; they would find

## Closing of the Modern School 141

rooms and appliances, and we could count upon their using our school manuals. But whenever I asked if they had teachers, they replied in the negative, and thought it would be easy to supply the want. I had to give in.

Circumstances had made me the director of rationalist education, and I had constant consultations and demands on the part of aspirants for the position of teacher. This made me realise the defect, and I endeavoured to meet it by private advice and by admitting young assistants in the Modern School. The result was naturally mixed. There are now worthy teachers who will carry on the work of rational education elsewhere; others failed from moral or intellectual incapacity.

Not feeling that the pupils of the Modern School who devoted themselves to teaching would find time for their work, I established a Normal School, of which I have already spoken. I was convinced that, if the key of the social problem is in the scientific and rational school, it is essential, to make a proper use of the key, that fitting teachers be trained for so great a destiny.

As the practical and positive result of my work, I may say that the Modern School of

Barcelona was a most successful experiment, and that it was distinguished for two characteristics:—

1. While open to successive improvements, it set up a standard of what education should be in a reformed state of society.

2. It gave an impulse to the spread of this kind of education.

There was up to that time no education in the true sense of the word. There were, for the privileged few in the universities, traditional errors and prejudices, authoritarian dogmas, mixed up with the truths which modern research has brought to light. For the people there was primary instruction, which was, and is, a method of taming children. The school was a sort of riding-school, where natural energies were subdued in order that the poor might suffer their hard lot in silence. Real education, separated from faith—education that illumines the mind with the light of evidence—is the creation of the Modern School.

During its ephemeral existence<sup>1</sup> it did a marvellous amount of good. The child

<sup>1</sup> The Modern School was closed after Ferrer's arrest in 1906.—J. M.

admitted to the school and kept in contact with its companions rapidly changed its habits, as I have observed. It cultivated cleanliness, avoided quarrels, ceased to be cruel to animals, took no notice in its games of the barbarous spectacle which we call the national entertainment [bull-fight], and, as its mind was uplifted and its sentiments purified, it deplored the social injustices which abound on the very face of life. It detested war, and would not admit that national glory, instead of consisting in the highest possible moral development and happiness of a people, should be placed in conquest and violence.

The influence of the Modern School, extended to other schools which had been founded on its model and were maintained by various working-men societies, penetrated the families by means of the children. Once they were touched by the influence of reason and science they were unconsciously converted into teachers of their own parents, and these in turn diffused the better standards among their friends and relatives.

This spread of our influence drew on us the hatred of Jesuitism of all kinds and in all places, and this hatred inspired the design

which ended in the closing of the Modern School. It is closed; but in reality it is concentrating its forces, defining and improving its plan, and gathering the strength for a fresh attempt to promote the true cause of progress.

That is the story of what the Modern School was, is, and ought to be.

## EPILOGUE

By J. M.

“THAT is the story of what the Modern School was, is, and ought to be.” When Ferrer wrote this, in the summer of 1908, he was full of plans for the continuation of his work in various ways. He was fostering such free schools as the Government still permitted. He was promoting his “popular university,” and multiplying works of science and sociology for the million. His influence was growing, and he saw with glad eyes the light breaking on the ignorant masses of his fellows. In the summer of 1909 he came to England to study the system of moral instruction which, under the inspiration of the Moral Instruction League, is used in thousands of English schools. A friend in London begged him never to return to Spain, as his life was sought. He knew it, but nothing would divert him from his ideal. And three

months later he was shot, among the graves of criminals, in the trenches of Montjuich.

Form your own opinion of him from his words. He conceals nothing. He was a rebel against religious traditions and social inequalities; he wished children to become as resentful of poverty and superstition as he. There is no law of Spain, or of any other country, that forbids such enterprise as his. He might be shot in Russia, of course; for the law has been suspended there for more than a decade. In Spain men had to lie in order to take his life.

With the particular value of his scheme of education I am not concerned. He was well acquainted with pedagogical literature, and there were few elementary schools in Spain to equal his. Writers who have spoken slightly of his school, apart from its social dogmas, know little or nothing about it. Ferrer was in close and constant association with two of the ablest professors in the University of Barcelona, one of whom sent his children to the school, and with distinguished scholars in other lands. There was more stimulating work done in the Modern School than, probably, in any other elementary

school in Spain, if not elsewhere. All that can be questioned is the teaching of an explicit social creed to the children. Ferrer would have rejoined that there was not a school in Europe that does not teach an explicit social creed. But, however we may differ from his creed, we cannot fail to recognise the elevated and unselfish idealism of the man, and deplore the brutality and illegality with which his genial life was prematurely brought to a close.

**THE END**



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# A SCHOOLMASTER OF THE GREAT CITY

## CHAPTER I

### THE BACKGROUND

#### I

I REMEMBER sitting with the family and the neighbours' families about the fireplace, while father, night after night, told us stories of the Knights of the Crusades or recounted the glories of the heroes of proud Italy.

How he could tell a story! His voice was strong, and soft, and soothing, and he had just sufficient power of exaggeration to increase the attractiveness of the tale. We could see the soldiers he told us about pass before us in all their struggles and sorrows and triumphs. Back and forth he marched them into Asia Minor, across Sicily, and into the castles of France, Germany and England. We listened eagerly and came back each night ready to be thrilled and inspired again by the spirit of the good and the great.

Then came the journey over the sea, and the family

with the neighbours' families were part of the life of New York. We were Little Italy.

I was eleven before I went to a city school. All the English I knew had been learned in the street. I knew Italian. From the time I was seven I had written letters for the neighbours. Especially the women folk took me off to a corner and asked me to write letters to their friends in Italy. As they told me the story I wrote it down. I thus learned the beat of plain folks' hearts.

My uncle from whom I had learned Italian went back to Italy and I was left without a teacher, so one day I attached myself to a playmate and went to school; an "American" school. I gave my name and my age and was told to sit in a long row of benches with some sixty other children. The teacher stood at the blackboard and wrote "March 5, 1887." We all read it after her; chanting the sing song with the teacher. Each morning we did the same thing, that is, repeated lessons after the teacher. That first day and the second day were alike, and so were the years that followed. "If one yard of goods cost three cents how much will twenty-five yards cost?" If one yard costs three cents then twenty-five yards will cost twenty-five times three cents or seventy-five cents. The explanation could not vary or it might not be true or logical.

But there was one thing that was impressed more

strongly than this routine. I had always been a sickly, thin, pale-faced child. I did not like to sit still. I wanted to play, to talk, to move about. But if I did any of these things, I was kept after school as a punishment. This would not do. I had to get out of the room and frequently I endured agonies because the teacher would not permit me to leave the room whenever I wanted to. Many times I went home sick and lay abed.

Soon I discovered that the boys who sat quietly, looked straight ahead and folded their arms behind their backs, and even refused to talk to their neighbours, were allowed the special privilege of leaving the room for one minute, not longer. So I sat still, very still, for hours and hours so that I might have the one minute. Throughout my whole school life this picture remains uppermost. I sat still, repeated words, and then obtained my minute allowance.

For ten years I did this, and because I learned words I was able to go from the first year of school through the last year of college. My illness and the school discipline had helped after all. They had made my school life shorter by several years than it otherwise might have been.

The colony life of the city's immigrants is an attempt to continue the village traditions of the mother country. In our neighbourhood there were hundreds of families that had come from the same part

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of Italy. On summer nights they gathered in groups on the sidewalks, the stoops, the court-yards, and talked and sang and dreamed. In winter the men and boys built Roman arches out of the snow.

But gradually the families grew in size. The neighbourhood became congested. A few families moved away. Ours was one of them. We began to be a part of the new mass instead of the old. The city with its tremendous machinery, its many demands, its constant calling, calling, began to take hold. What had been intimate, quaint, beautiful, ceased to appeal.

I went to school, father went to work, mother looked after the house. When evening came, instead of sitting about the fire, talking and reliving the day, we sat, each in his own corner. One nursed his tired bones, another prepared his lessons for the morrow. The demands of the school devoured me; the work world exhausted my father. The long evenings of close contact with my home people were becoming rare. I was slipping away from my home; home was slipping away from me.

Yet my father knew what he was about. While the fathers of most of the boys about me were putting their money into business or into their houses, mine put his strength, his love, his money, his comforts into making me better than himself. The spirit of the crusaders should live again in his son.

He wanted me to become a priest: I wanted to become a doctor.

During all the years that he worked for me, I worked for myself. While his hopes were centred in the family, mine were extending beyond it. I worked late into the nights, living a life of which my father was not a part. This living by myself tended to make me forget, indeed to undervalue, the worth of my people. I was ashamed sometimes because my folk did not look or talk like Americans.

When most depressed by the feeling of living crudely and poorly, I would go out to see my father at work. I would see him high up on a scaffold a hundred feet in the air and my head would get dizzy and my heart would rise to my throat. Then I would think of him once more as the poet story teller with the strong, soothing voice and the far off visioned eye, and the poet in his soul would link itself to mine, and would see why on two-dollar-a-day wages he sent me to college.

Proud of his strength I would strengthen my moral fibre and respond to his dream. Yet not as he dreamed, for when he fell fifty feet down a ladder and was ill for a whole year I went to work at teaching.

## II

The principal under whom I did my first teaching was one with whom I had studied as a pupil in the grades. He was opening a new school and welcomed me cordially. Leading me to a classroom he opened the door and pushed me in, saying, "This is your class." Then he vanished.

There were sixty-six children in that room. Their ages ran from eight to fifteen. They had been sitting there daily annoying the substitutes who were sent to the room and driving them out of school. The cordial reception I had been given by the principal held more of relief for himself than of kindness for me.

That first day passed. The last few straggling boys filed out an hour or so after school hours. One of the biggest boys whom I had detained for disorder stopped long enough on his way out to ask, "Coming back to-morrow?"

"Yes, of course I am coming back. Why do you ask?"

"Well, some of them come one day and some come two days. To-morrow will be two days."

This boy did not know me. My one strong point was discipline. I knew little of subject matter, pedagogy or psychology, except a number of words that had never become a part of me. I had one notion

that was strong — discipline. That was the idea. Had I not been kept after hours to study my lessons, slapped for asking my neighbour for a pencil, made to kneel for hours for absenting myself from school, for defending my rights to the teacher? Had I not been marked, rated, percented all the ten years of my life in school?

Discipline then was the basic idea in teaching. You made pupils do what you wanted; you must be the master. Memory, and those who ought to have known, preached discipline. It was the standard for judging my work as a teacher. My continuance in the profession depended upon discipline.

At least there was no conflict of aim. Since discipline was the thing, I would discipline, and I did. I oppressed; I went to the homes; I sent registered letters. I followed up each infraction of rules relentlessly. There was no getting away from me. I was making sure that the children were punished for their misdeeds.

I followed the truants into their homes because I wanted relief from a principal who sent me a note every time my attendance fell below a certain per cent. I visited the parents to complain of the work the children were doing, because the principal said I must hold their noses to the grindstone.

I seemed to say to the children, in the words of Edmond Holmes, "You are to model yourself, or

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rather I will model you, on me. What I do, you are to learn to do. What I think, you are to learn to think. What I believe, you are to learn to believe. What I admire, you are to learn to admire. What I aim at, you are to learn to aim at. What I am, you are to learn to be."

At the end of my first month I was an assured success. My discipline of the class and the promptness with which I followed up the absentees gained recognition. I was promoted from teaching a fourth-year class to a fifth-year class. The new class was made for me especially because I was efficient. It was composed of all the children that the other teachers in approximate grades did not want. They were fifty misfits.

The room given me was the corner of an assembly room, shut in by rolling doors. The benches were long affairs and were not screwed to the floor. A writing lesson could be conducted only when the desk which formed part of the seat in front was turned up, so that it became the desk for the seat behind. No hour went by but some boy or girl of the fifty managed to upset one of the desks; then the papers would scatter, and the ink would flow on the new floor. Some of the children would laugh; others would howl, and my best friend in the front seat would stand on his head. This he said was in preparation for the time when he was to become a

tumbler at the circus. Judging from the hardness of the bumps his head got he was undergoing rather severe training.

Discipline — my favourite word — why, discipline was failing, failing terribly. If I kept the children after hours they would not come to school the next day until they had made up the time that I had taken from them. If I went to their parents, the parents simply said they could not help it; they knew that these were bad children. They seemed to feel sorry for this mere slip of a boy who used up his afternoons and evenings calling upon them.

Discipline, discipline! It was no use. I tried to say again, "You are to model yourself, or rather I will model you, on me. What I do you are to learn to do, etc." But somehow the words would not come. Discipline, my great stronghold, had failed for I had come into contact with those who defied discipline.

What was I to do? I began to tell over again the stories I faintly remembered having heard in the days when father sat and talked and we listened, not daring to move lest we lose a syllable of what he said. I told them about my own childhood in the mountains of Italy, about midnight expeditions when we loaded the mules with provisions and carried food to our friends, the last of the Bourbon adherents. I told them about a wolf that attacked the sheep at

night until my father seized and killed it bare-handed.

When I related these stories they listened. They hardly breathed. Each day I would end so that more could be expected. Then I began to bargain with them, trading what they liked for what the schools said they should have. I bribed them with promises of more stories to come if they would be "good" and do the work assigned.

The struggle was between the child and the teacher, and the struggle was over the facts of the curriculum — the children refusing to learn and the teacher insisting that they must. But discipline was restored, and victory won, by bargaining.

Woe to the boy or girl who transgressed and thus prevented the telling of the story. No arithmetic, no story! No silence, no story! The children from other classes asked to be changed. They too wanted stories. I had them by the hundreds, for as soon as I had caught the interest of the children the stories of adventure gave place to the old hero tales.

Discipline once more was my watchword.

Then a new trouble arose. I had been teaching a year when "Methods" became the school watchword, and everybody set about learning how to teach arithmetic, spelling, history and geography. Each teacher had his own methods and supervisors going

from one room to another were puzzled by the variety.

The principal restored order out of chaos. A method book was written. Every subject was treated and the steps of procedure in each were carefully marked out. A programme of the day's work was prescribed and we were expected to follow the stated order. Inspection by the principal and other supervisors was based on these.

I heard the teachers talk of these things as impositions. When I failed to follow directions I was severely criticised. I began asking the reason for it all.

Why should I teach history in the prescribed way?

"Class, open books to page 37. Study the first paragraph."

Two minutes later.

"Close books. Tell me what you learned."

In such instruction there was no stopping, no questioning, no valuation: nothing but deadly, mechanical grind. Every teacher and every class had to do these things in just this way.

The spelling routine was worst. Twenty new words were to be assigned each day for study. The words had to be difficult, too, for through them the children were to train their memories — their minds, as the principal put it. The next day at a signal the children wrote the twenty words in the order in

which they had been assigned, from memory, if they could. Papers were exchanged and the children were asked to correct them. If a child failed to discover an error it was a point against him. The names of those who "missed" were written on the board with a check for each mistake. The pupils who failed had to remain after hours and repeat the list from memory, accurately as to its spelling and sequence.

This was a fixed procedure which no teacher dared modify because the supervisor came around and questioned the children as to the accuracy of the records on the boards.

Instead of protesting, the teacher set about acquiring devices which would give the desired results with the minimum of effort on the part of the teacher and pupils. It was no longer a question of teaching. It was simply a question of getting the better of the supervisor.

My method was simple and efficacious. There was no place where I could get twenty new words with so little expenditure of time and effort as in the dictionary. The dictionary arrangement offered a valuable aid in itself. I selected two a's, two b's, etc., until I had the desired twenty.

The advantages of this scheme were apparent to the children. They could more easily remember and check up their list when it was based upon alpha-

betical arrangement. The per cent. of my returns then became high, and the mental strain on the class and teacher was reduced to the minimum.

Still the question arose in my mind — "Why must I do this sort of thing?"

Another year passed before I realised that my fellow teachers were talking about Education, the Science of Education and its principles. It appeared that in the universities were men who could teach a man why he taught and how to do it. There was one thing I had learned and that was the insufficiency of my equipment as a teacher. Discipline, boss standard, was nerve taxing and not altogether productive.

### III

After two years of teaching I found myself nowhere, and was depressed. I questioned the value of my services to the children. The work I did was not its own criticism but was judged by some one else whose standard seemed to be capricious, depending upon his humour and my relation to him. I felt the need of new ideas and convictions, and I decided to go to the university to see what those who were supposed to know had to tell.

I wondered if my return to college with the deliberate purpose of learning what I wanted definitely to know, would prove profitable.

Toward the close of the year's work I summed it up. First one institution and then another! From this professor, and a little later from that, came words, words, words. They were all so far away, so ineffectual, so dead. I was disheartened.

The next year, however, I came upon the thing I needed. This was a course with Dr. McMurry and the text-book used as a basis of discussion, was Dewey's Essay on "Ethical Principles."

Here were strange and new words to use in relation to teaching. Conduct was the way people behaved, and it had little to do with learning, as such. But conduct, not ability to recite lessons, was the real test of learning and the sign of culture.

Conduct furnished the key as to whether the child had real social interests and intelligence and power. Conduct meant action, whereas school meant passivity. Conduct meant individual freedom and not blind adherence to formulated dogma. The knowledge gained had to be used immediately and the worth of the knowledge judged by its fitness to the immediate needs of the child.

The greatest fallacy of the child education was the "training-for-the-future" idea. Training for the future meant dying for the present.

Conduct said the child was a being constantly active, rarely silent, never a purely parrot-like creature. Conduct said the teacher must keep his hands

off; he must watch and guide; he could not force; he could not drive. He could put the problems but the children themselves must solve them.

The disciplinary habit was a matter of action on the part of the children rather than one of silent obedience; judgment was a matter of applied knowledge and not word juggling.

Social sympathy was the result of close contact, mutual help, common work, common play, judicious leadership. Laughing, talking, dreaming even, were part of school life, the give and take of the group. Conduct always carried the idea of some one else; no isolation, no selfishness.

Then the whole system of marking and punishment and rewards was wrong. It was putting the child on the lowest plane possible. It was preventing him from working in response to an ideal.

I realised then that the child must move and not sit still: that he must make mistakes and not merely repeat perfect forms: that he must be himself and not a miniature reproduction of the teacher. The sacredness of the child's individuality must be the moving passion of the teacher.

These things I learned from my masters. It was a wholesome reaction against my disciplinary idea, and a healthy soul-giving impetus to my daily teaching.

I had come in contact with the personality of a

great teacher, fearless, candid, and keen, with nothing dogmatic in his nature. Under this leadership I came in touch with vital ideas and I began to work, not in the spirit of passive obedience, but in one of mental emancipation.

There was a new pleasure and much more freedom in my teaching. I went back to the children ready to challenge their intelligence, keen to see them grapple and solve problems set for them, eager to watch them carry into their daily lives the ideas of the school.

I looked back into my own experiences, analysed them, built them up, and through them interpreted the struggles of the children before me. The God of Discipline was replaced by the God of Watchfulness.

I tried to carry over into classroom practice the results of what I had learned. I tried to teach in the light of the saner point of view. My supervisors objected to the variations I was trying to introduce into the teaching of history, spelling and the rest.

"You'll find those things may be all right in theory but they will not do in practice," they said. But I refused to compromise, to yield to beliefs merely because I was told to do so or because others about me yielded to beliefs and policies.

Just when the feeling came upon me that I was

really beginning to enter into the secret of child training the principal came to me and said, "You are wasting your time. You are wasting the children's time. You are totally unfit for this work. If I had a son he should not be put in your class."

His idea was that, unless you ground children down and made them do as you wanted them to, they would have no fear and respect for you. It was the master and the slave idea. When the teacher rebelled the scourge of sarcasm was relentless.

There were times when I felt that he would have been pleased to have lowered my "ratings" to the point where I would have been compelled to retire from the profession, yet he refrained because he too, was compromising with himself.

When I changed from his educational philosophy to mine, his comment was, "Why is it you will not do as I tell you?"

What he did not know was that if he had treated me kindly and asked for co-operation, allowed me some form of self expression, he would have had a wealth of enthusiasm to call upon.

Self respect compelled me to change schools, and I went away, every fibre of my being indignant at his oppression.

## IV

The next principal I found lived the doctrine, "I serve children."

Here was a man who actually loved school children; who enjoyed coming into personal contact with them in the classroom, the yards, the streets and their occupations. He helped clothe the poor children and feed them, washed the dirty faces when he found them, and all with the utmost kindness and in the belief that such service was a wonderful privilege that had been granted him. All about him was the radiance and glow of progress.

He always told this story with sadness as one of the incidents of his school life. A boy had been brought to him for habitual lateness and without stopping to question him he berated him for his laziness while the child stood silent and patient. When the principal awoke to the situation he asked, "Why were you late, anyway?"

The boy replied that he had to work till three o'clock each morning in order to help the family. The principal apologised and made the boy feel that he understood and sympathised with his struggles.

So he was with the teachers, and with me.

To each of us he seemed to say, "You are tired,

brother, come to me and let me hold your quivering hands in my strong, steady ones. Come to me and let me stroke your hot, tired eyes with my cool fingers. I know what makes you tired for I, too, have been tired and worn out.

“Sometimes even now, I get tired when I forget the bigness of the things I want to do. Those faces that you see in the classroom are not set against you, my brother. They are set against the things that bind you and prevent your mind from mingling freely with others.

“You must not think too much of arithmetic, and rules and dates and examinations, for these are not teaching; the children don't grow because of them. They grow because of their contact with you, the best that you know and feel.

“Come with me to the open country and let us live together for awhile. There we will be silent and look into the hearts of children as we do into the heart of nature.

“When we come back the school will be as a new world and you will work with the earnestness of a discoverer patiently awaiting revelations.”

The thought of him always makes me feel strong and fresh as a boy who runs shouting through the cool air of a spring morning. I stretch my arms and open wide my eyes and shout the faith that he gave me.

Promotion came and I found myself in another school. There was little of special interest in my experience in this place. Placed in charge of a graduating class, I was supposed to teach science to the boys of the seventh and eighth grades. The only way I could do this was to carry whatever apparatus I needed from room to room. Batteries, tubes, jars, pails, water, gas burners followed me about. As I passed down the stairs and through the halls I looked like a small moving van. In this departmental system the teacher moved, not the children, because the movement of the children would cause too much noise, too much confusion. School was the place for silence!

At the end of two months I moved again. This time it was a graduating class in a school on the lower west side of the city. The building was more than fifty years old. It fitted well with the general neighbourhood picture. It was all run down. There was a miscellaneous sort of population, a mixture of races and colour. The boys lived along the docks, in the rear of factory yards where the men found employment.

The first morning, when I announced to the principal that I was a new teacher, he looked at me doubtfully and said, "Why, this won't do, you don't want to come here. You are only a boy. You are not old enough nor strong enough! The boys in

that corner room broke the teacher's eyeglasses and he was a bigger man than you are. They threw the ink wells and the books out of the window. You don't want to come here."

When I saw the assembly a few minutes later I agreed with him. I did not want to be there.

I sat on the platform while the principal conducted the exercises. There was scarcely a child in the room who was not either talking or chewing gum, or slouching in his seat. There was a spirit of unrest throughout the monotonous assembly. There was nothing about the general exercises that could offer the slightest inspiration to either children or teacher. Two or three of the men walked up and down the room eyeing the boys, and the women, each at her place, had their eyes riveted on their classes.

Yet, in spite of all this close supervision, the children were not behaving as if they were happy or as if they liked school. At the end of fifteen minutes they were sent to their rooms and the work of the day began. What work that was no one could appreciate unless he had gone through the halls of the building and felt the struggle that was going on in each room. The very walls seemed to speak of tension and battle.

The antagonism between the children and teachers was far stronger than I had ever seen it before. The antagonism between the school and the neigh-

bourhood was intense. Both came from mutual distrust founded on mutual misunderstanding. The children were afraid of the teachers, and the teachers feared the children.

The neighbourhood was a place from which the teacher escaped, and into which the children burrowed. One never knew as he went through the streets what missile or epithet might greet him. One or the other was certain.

I do not remember a period in my life when I was more silent and soberminded than during the first six months of my career in this school. Day in and day out I sat quietly scarcely saying an unnecessary word and by gestures rather than speech indicating to the children what I wanted done.

I went through the building silent, rarely speaking. I looked out upon the streets, silent. I visited the shops and listened to the talk of the fathers. I visited some of the homes. Here too, I talked little, trying to get people to talk to me.

The school was failing. I was failing and my whole mind was concentrated upon finding the cause and the remedy.

After school hours I would stare out of the windows and look out upon the strange mixture of people with their prejudices, their sensitiveness and their shiftlessness and ponder upon the gulf between them and me.

There was no attempt on the part of the school to understand the problem and to direct the lives of the pupils. In fact, teaching the curriculum was the routine business of the day — no more. There was apparently little affection for the children, and no interest in the parents as co-workers in their education.

When the principal assigned the assembly exercises and the discipline of the school to me, I was glad. I had learned to believe in children. I had begun to analyse my own childhood more carefully. Here was an opportunity to test my knowledge in a larger way than the classroom offered.

I began by telling the boys what a fine assembly was like in other schools. Once more I resorted to stories. They never failed. Father had done his share nobly. The big restless crowd settled down and listened. As each day went by, cautiously I put the problem of school discipline before them and they responded by taking over much of the responsibility for it themselves. A sort of council was held in my room each week at which the problems of the school were discussed. From fifty to one hundred of the most responsible boys in the school attended and as there were only about twelve hundred in all, the representatives were fairly adequate to the need.

This experience helped me wonderfully. Through it I gained, increased confidence in the children, in the power of the school, in myself.

## CHAPTER II

### IN THE SCHOOL

#### I

Now came my appointment as principal. I stretched my arms and said, "Free at last, my own master! I am limited only by my own vision."

I entered the new school, "My school," as I proudly called it. There it was, a big, massive structure towering like a fortress above the elevated lines, fronting a large public park, the airy rooms full of sunshine.

It did not look out into the back-yards of tenements. No smell of leaking gas stoves came in through the open windows. In other days, if I gazed out of a school window I looked into the homes of the neighbours — squalid, noisy homes they were. Whenever there was a quarrel, the loud shrieks and the bad language broke in upon the classroom recitation, and made the children blush and break into nervous laughter. They were ashamed of their parents and their neighbourhood.

This new school of mine seemed altogether dif-

ferent. I looked out of my office window at the trees on the hill beyond and watched them sway in the wind, like the restless backs of many elephants. I saw the open spaces, the sunlight, the park, and I rejoiced. These, I knew, were the teacher's best friends.

The day after my installation I went to my office ready to begin on "my school" and carry it up to the heights of power and efficiency. "My school" should come into its own. I do not remember now whether I intended to accomplish this in a day or a month, or a year, for as I sat thinking about it the half-past eight gong rang sharply, insistently. It brought me up-standing in the office door. I heard bell after bell beginning in the first room and follow in order from floor to floor, shrill out its call, cease, pass on its message to its neighbour in the next classroom to pass it along to the next, like a chain of energy linking up the classrooms for the day's work. I had never heard anything quite like that before.

Then came the measured rhythm of many feet. From six entrances the children surged through the halls and into their classrooms. I had a blurred impression of sound, and colour and motion and many, many children and teachers all going swiftly by. I saw no individual faces, no distinct forms, just the great mass surging past. Stunned and bewildered I

stood where I was until I realised that a great silence had settled over the building. The big school had begun its day's work and begun it without me.

I sat down at my desk because I didn't know what else to do. The clerk came in with the mail. The former principal who was still in the building with the fifteen hundred children he was to take to the new school came in to arrange some details of administration. With him I went over the number of classes in the school, the teachers who were to go and stay, the district lines and the number of children to be transferred in and out. This done he walked out of the office.

I was about to gather myself together and take hold of "my school," and then the gong rang again. I heard doors roll, bells trill, sharp commands, rhythmic footsteps, and the great surge of sound and colour and motion passed me again, children going in, children going out. They moved in classes, eyes front, hats off. A mass of children coming in to take the places of the mass that was going out. There was no time lost, just a tramp, tramp, a roll of a door, as it opened, a click as it shut and then silence as before.

The next day was the same — and the next! I had not taken hold. I left the office and walked through the school, corridors, classrooms and play-

grounds listening and watching, trying to get an idea here and there.

I passed the open door of a classroom and saw a teacher smiling down at a little boy and all the other little boys smiling sympathetically at both. I was glad and walked towards the teacher. Instantly the smile disappeared, her body grew tense, the little boy sat down and all the other little boys sat up stiff and straight and put their hands behind them.

I tried to say something pleasant but I saw they were afraid of me and I went away.

I went into another room and the teacher was intent upon a little book, she was marking, and at the same time telling a boy that she hoped he'd learn something about grammar before he died, but she doubted it.

Without lifting her eyes and so missing seeing me, she said, "Walter, analyse, 'Come here.'"

A boy whose thoughts were a long way off jumped up and said—"Simple declarative, Come is the subject—here is the predicate verb," and sat down.

The class laughed heartily and the teacher said as she marked his failure, "Fine—But you forgot something—Come is the subject, here is the predicate, the period is the object."

Everybody laughed. Walter shook himself and analysed the sentence correctly. Then they realised my presence and froze over. The teacher apolo-

gised for not having noticed my entrance saying she thought it was one of the boys and asking me to be seated but I saw she was uncomfortable and I left.

A teacher brought me a disciplinary case. Before she could tell me the trouble she burst into tears. When I tried to tell her there was nothing to cry about she but cried the harder.

Was she afraid of the new principal? Why should she be afraid of him? Yet the scene was somewhat familiar. Oh, I remembered — “You are wasting your time. You are wasting the children’s time. You are totally unfit for this work. If I had a son he should not be in your class.”

Was that it?

This was bad. The teachers did not want me in the classrooms. They cried when they came to the office.

I’d make friends with the children. But I could not get at them. They were in classes in the rooms — in masses in the yards and corridors. Only the occasional bad one stood out as an individual with whom I could come in personal contact.

“My Dream School” was not so easy.

I thought a great deal about the situation. I know now that in those first days I interpreted the school through my finger tips and eyes and ears rather than through my intellect. I saw and heard the disorderly boy. I ached physically and mentally

over the weak teacher, I saw every mistake she made, I heard every faulty intonation of her voice and felt a sense of personal injury. Why was she like that? Why couldn't she be big and fine? And the strong teacher! Why weren't they all like that? That was the way I wanted them. They must all measure up to the best. I rather felt than saw the peaks and hollows.

But in this restless, uncertain sea of motion, noise, colour and gongs; of constant going up-stairs and down-stairs, one learned to "go slow" and watch and wait for his opportunity.

In my discouragement I told an older principal about my efforts and failures.

"What do you mean?" he said in a puzzled fashion. "I don't understand you."

"I've tried to have the teachers and children feel that I'm their friend, that I'm eager to help them but I don't seem to be able to get them to speak or act freely in my presence. They are afraid of me!"

"Afraid of you? Of course they are and they ought to be. The teachers and children are all right. You'll find them well trained. They will do your bidding without question. Take my advice if you want any peace of mind and keep them under your thumb."

These were not the exact words that had disheartened me years before, but the idea was the same,

and I remembered and understood. There was little danger of forgetting, I came upon this blind obedience repeatedly. Obedience, the loyal obedience that was school tradition.

"Let's try to have the children come to school fresh and clean," said I one day to a group of teachers. "Praise those who come in clean blouses and with well brushed hair."

Shortly after this a mother came in to see me. She laid a little package on my desk.

"Please, I bring you back this shirt."

Startled, I echoed, "Shirt? What shirt?"

"This shirt that the teacher gave my Jonas."

"Tell me about it," I said.

"The teacher said if they were good and sat up tall so that they got 'A' from the Lady Principal she would give them a blouse. Jonas told me and I told him he should try hard and get a blouse. So he did. He tried and tried and got one. But this blouse I don't like. Never I put a thin blouse on Jonas in February — only in April. I want you should take this back and give him a flannel one — a red one he likes."

Here she pulled the wrapping off a pretty little blue and white cotton blouse, and beamingly presented it to me.

Turning over her story in my mind I remembered she had said the "Lady Principal." I went in search

of my assistant and handing her the blouse I said, "Do you know anything about that?"

"No, but maybe I would understand if you told me how you came by it."

I told her and she chuckled.

"Surely that's Miss North. You said to get the children to come in clean blouses so she talked to them daily and when I visited the room she showed me the boys I was to commend for neat appearance and encourage for their efforts to clean up."

"Let's go in and see the teacher," I suggested, still in the dark.

As we entered each little boy sat in the middle of his tiny bench, each held a primer carefully covered in brown paper with a red edged name-paster precisely fixed in the centre of the front cover; each wore a light coloured wash blouse—(I counted seven of the same sort as the one on my desk).

The sunshine came in through the windows and made little rainbows dance above the aquarium where the fishes looked as if they'd just been polished and put in their places.

"How fine you look," said the Lady Principal.

"Yes, we're all dressed for school. Do you think we can have A to-day?" asked the smiling teacher.

"I surely do. They're the cleanest boys in town."

"How do you manage about Jonas?" I asked.

"He came without his new blouse and I had an

extra one, so I just slipped it over his other one so they'd all be alike. I'll take it off when he goes out and keep it for him."

The teacher had done her level best to carry out the principal's wishes. If the children would not wear clean blouses she would go out and buy them herself. If Jonas left his at home she would give him an extra one. At all events the principal must be obeyed and the class get an "A" rating.

"The teachers and children are all right. You'll find them well trained. They will do your bidding without question."

## II

I could not accept that point of view. When the other principal and the group of fifteen hundred children with their teachers went to the new building I said to myself, "Now I can do it. We'll have more room, we'll have fewer children to a teacher, I can get closer to them all."

What a relief from the hurry, the mass movement. Twenty-five hundred children in place of four thousand. The school seemed half empty. School hours were again normal, five hours a day, each teacher in her own room, no hurry to get out so that the next class might come in. Nine o'clock to three and as long after three as the teachers cared to stay. There was plenty of room to work and

plenty of opportunity for the teachers to meet and plan and develop.

I called the teachers together and tried to tell them what I believed a good school meant in terms of children and teachers. I tried to make them feel that I was going to take my share of every hard problem in the school day. The bad child, the slow one, the dirty one, were my responsibility as well as the teacher's and I wanted to help each teacher with each one of her difficulties. I told them of the finer things I had seen about the school and asked for more and more of them until the whole school should become a fine place for children and teachers to live in.

The first response to my offer of help was an appeal from a teacher to discipline a boy.

The teacher came to the office before the work of the day had begun. She entered nervously and stood before me like a prisoner awaiting sentence.

Haltingly she began, "You said I could come to you with a bad boy. Here he is, I can't do anything with him. He's awful."

Then the tears came. I took the boy out of the office and waited long enough to give the teacher a chance to recover.

"Now tell me about it."

"He's a very bad boy. I've had him now a term and a half almost. He won't work and he won't let

anybody else work. I've kept him in every day until five o'clock but it does no good. He swears in the classroom and yesterday he threatened to hit me. He's an orphan. He's been in the Protectory and he's on parole now. If he goes on I'll be home sick and it's too bad!" Here she almost cried again.

"Never mind now, I'm glad you brought him to me. He won't give you any more trouble. But tell me — Why did you stand this so long? Why didn't you refer him to the office long ago?"

She hesitated for a minute then said, "I was afraid it would be counted against my record and I'm up for my permanent license."

"Well, it won't count against you and I think this particular boy won't bother you again."

Smiling faintly she thanked me and went to her room, but I noticed it was weeks before the worried expression left her face and she could smile without effort.

In every class there is one, at least one, so called "bad child." He comes to the classroom, his brain teeming with the experiences of street life. He lives at top speed during the hours that he is not in school. He is master in the street and in the home, and he would be master in the school. He looks at his classmates with sophisticated scorn and at his teacher with open contempt. The whole machinery of the class-

room must stop while he holds the centre of the stage. The teacher struggles desperately to hold the class. From the moment the first recitation bell rings in the morning until the last pupil closes the door behind him at night she must strive by every ruse known to the teacher to keep the bad child under while she teaches the good children. The strain is terrible and out of all proportion. But why doesn't the teacher send the child out of the room and continue the work in peace? Why should a whole class suffer for one child?

I made it a point to visit each room at least twice a day. As I went the rounds I saw the "bad boy" standing in the corner or by the teacher's desk or sitting sullenly by himself where there happened to be room.

"What can I do for you this morning?" I asked as I entered each room.

"I wish you would attend to John. I can't get along with him. He is a constant source of annoyance. He talks and interrupts the lesson. He has talked four times in the last hour. I do not want him in my room any more."

"John, come with me." John came and I led him to the office.

"What did you do?" I asked.

"I talked to the boy next to me. He asked me a question and I answered."

"How many times did you do this?"

"I don't know. I talked a lot, I guess."

"Why did you disturb the lesson?"

"I don't know."

That is the most persistent answer a "bad boy" gives. No matter what the question or how strong the evidence against him he holds on as long as he can to "I don't know."

"You have got to stop this nonsense," I said finally. "There is only one way to get back to your class. You interrupted the class work. First you must make good your work. Second you must make up your mind not to be disorderly again. You're wasting your time and that of your teacher and classmates. Sit down there and think it over. When you have made up your mind let me know."

When John agreed that he had been foolish I went back to the room with him and told the class how sorry I was that they had lost any part of their time and work through John's disorder. I hoped that they would not be troubled again in such a way. John had agreed that he had no right to use his time and theirs in such a silly fashion. He had agreed to make good his work and he would apologise to the class for wasting their time.

A boy, especially a boy who has been master in the street and in the home and would be master in the school, will not risk being humbled before his class-

mates. Just as long as his offence is an offence against the teacher it is an heroic offence, but when it is an offence against the group, the heroism disappears.

But just to see what might happen next, John refused to "make good." The parent was called in. It was the father because where John was concerned the mother would not do. . . .

"I can't come here about this boy. This is the second complaint in three weeks. First my wife and now myself. I have lost a day from my work and I can't afford it. What's the matter now? Your teachers are constantly nagging my boy. Why don't you leave him alone? First one teacher and then another. This never happened until you came to this school. I am a taxpayer and I know my rights. I want you to put that boy back in his class, and if you don't, I'll go higher up."

"As a taxpayer you should be the last one to encourage wasting school money."

"I am, I won't stand for it. I'm telling you, I'm going to the commissioner."

"But your son is wasting it. He's been left back twice now. If we cannot get him to get down to work he'll be left back again, which means you've paid three times for something for your boy and haven't received it yet. Besides that, he's wasting other boys' time and they'll be left back and you'll

have to pay your share for them and get nothing either. I'm trying to save John's school time and your money, but if you and I together can't make John see it, I am afraid I won't be able to do it alone."

"I can't make him see it? See here, young man, I'm the father of six and I've made them all see it. Send that boy down here."

"No more trouble with John," I said to myself.

Sometimes I found a child under discipline for a trifling offence. I discovered Mary standing in front of the room making believe she liked it.

I asked the teacher what was the trouble.

"Chewing gum," she answered. "I've said they must not bring it into the room and this morning right in the middle of the arithmetic lesson I looked down at Mary and her jaws were going sixty to the minute so I just stood her there. You can sit down now, Mary."

When I got a chance I asked the teacher if she hadn't got the gum chewing a bit out of perspective.

"What do you mean?" she asked.

"Mary lost her arithmetic lesson, didn't she?"

"She surely did and part of her spelling lesson."

"Weren't her lessons very important? — Weren't they what she had come to school for that day?"

"Of course."

"Wouldn't your end have been accomplished if

you had signalled to Mary to get rid of the gum and handed her an example to work on the board putting the emphasis on the duty in hand rather than on her little offence?"

"Maybe you're right," she said, smiling, "I'll think about it that way."

When the disciplinary cases had been systematically looked after some of the pressure was removed from the teacher's life. Less and less frequently did I hear the teacher's voice pitched to the breaking point as she said, "Why don't you behave?"

Gradually the children began to feel that the school was with them and for them and began to assume responsibility for it. They economised school time by arranging and distributing material for the day's work. They began to take care of themselves in the halls relieving the teachers of that duty. They ceased marking the walls and picked up the scattered papers without being told to do so.

I saw Peter walk across the yard and pick up a lollipop wrapper and put it in the can and I remembered the day when the yard teacher had ordered Peter to pick up his own luncheon paper and Peter had said, "That's what the janitor's for," and remembering I thought, "My school is moving on."

Whenever a problem arose that concerned the school as a whole, I put the problem at the school assembly and whenever a child responded to the

school need I spoke of him as one who was serving the school. Gradually this thought of being "square" with one's classmates was carried out of the classroom till it became the thought of being "square" with the school.

Henry came to school with his face and body bruised. I asked him what was the matter. He answered some boys had hit him. Upon investigation Henry had been present when the "Flannigans" had tried to search some of our smaller children. Henry had protested and then followed up his protest with force and while the smaller children got away Henry "had stayed on the job" as he put it and "been beaten up for his trouble."

"My school is getting on," I thought.

But was it? That day I stopped to talk to a group of teachers who were chatting with my assistant.

"Well, at last I've got discipline." One of the fifth grade teachers was talking. "I've got that class of mine to understand what orders mean. This morning the clerk came in to ask about the transfers of some of the children and said, 'Those living south of the park raise hands!' I counted them. Then I talked to the clerk about William's absence. She was in my room at least seven minutes. When she left I turned to the class and there were those boys still holding their hands up — you know the way I

have them do it, elbow bent and hand close to the shoulder. I said, 'Hands down' just as if I hadn't forgotten them and went ahead. But I certainly was pleased. That's what I call discipline."

Discipline indeed!

Although the emphasis of the discipline was being put largely on the individual as against the group, what each child owed to the class, what each child owed to the school, much of it was still a discipline forced by the conditions of the school. The rod idea was at work. Books, benches, crowded rooms, sitting still, listening; talking only when called upon to recite, teaching where the teacher did the thinking; these conditions have meant and always will mean an imposed discipline, an imposed routine, whereas real discipline is a personal thing, a part of the understanding soul. To replace discipline of teacher-responsibility by the discipline of child-responsibility is a long, slow process.

"My school" had only begun.

### III

It was late one afternoon and I walked from room to room through the big silent school building. This was a habit of mine. I was thinking over the events of the day and wondering whether I could ever make the school move, really move. An empty school

building and a tired mind! No wonder I felt depressed.

In one of the classrooms I saw a teacher still at work. She was huddled over her desk, her elbows resting on either side of a pile of work, her chin in her hands, weariness and depression in every line of her body.

She looked up at the sound of my step and said in answer to my quizzical smile, "I'm going over the work that has been returned from the office."

"Let's look at it," I said. "It must be very important to keep you like this."

"Oh, no, I must fix it first."

"Fix it? Why you're through with it, aren't you? The work's been done, examined, and returned and that's the end of it. What more can you do with it? You received some criticism upon it, I suppose?"

"That's just it. That's why I must fix it."

"Let me see it," I persisted.

Reluctantly she pushed the pile of compositions toward me.

On the inner top sheet, in the assistant's neat penmanship the criticism was inscribed:

1. No. of Specimens.....	48
Attendance .....	49
Why is one missing?	

2. 3 blotted papers. Never accept a blotted paper. It shows bad discipline.
3. Many of the e's in this set are closed. Drill on this point.
4. 56 mis-spelled words. Drill on these.
5. Seven children have too many paragraphs. Only three paragraphs in this grade.
6. Be more particular about margins. One inch in for paragraphs, one-half inch for sentences.  
"Trifles make perfection and perfection is no trifle."  
Do this set over.

I looked up and grinned. A bit relieved the teacher pushed another pile of papers toward me.

"That's my map. It's Manhattan and I did work hard on it."

Carefully ruled along the sides of each white sheet of drawing paper was a red ink border. Neatly set within this frame was a map of the borough. In the lower right hand corner was a little compass sign to indicate the directions. All was very, very neat, and very, very dead. On the top sheet in the neat penmanship was written, "This is excellent work. A great improvement over last month's set."

Upon close examination the compositions were all alike. They were written on the same topic. They had the same number of paragraphs. They had the same sentences. It was a story on plants; plants generally, roots, stem, leaves, as close an imitation of a scientific deduction on the abstract life of plants

as it was possible for the teacher to make it. Why had they been written at all? There they were, as perfect as could be. Not one of them had the child's language or the child's point of view. Composition is thought and then expression. Here there was no thinking, no child thinking, just a striving for perfect forms. There was neither thought nor language.

I told the teacher to put the papers away, all of them, and go home. She needed the air and the sunshine and what she was doing was of little value to the children.

I determined to look more carefully at this finished work of the classroom.

Some of it I found good. Here and there were signs of life, but most of it was deadly perfect. I remember one set of drawings in particular, a set of cylinders. Each drawing was exactly like the other and what attracted my attention most, was the fact that they were placed in exactly the same place on each paper. A faint memory of the Dictionary stirred within me and I chuckled to myself.

I sent for the teacher. She was a young teacher in her first year of service. There were about thirty such in the school and upon them I had set my hope for the school's growth.

"These are fine drawings," I said, "very neat and carefully drawn."

She looked pleased.

"I wish you'd tell me how you did them."

"Why, the children did them."

"Of course, I just wanted to know how you managed to get the children to get them all the same size and placed so well on the paper."

"Oh, yes. You know first they made them all ways. Some very long and thin and some short and fat and the sides all crooked. And they were not in the middle of the paper; just a little up or down or sideways, you know?"

"Yes," I agreed. "I know."

"Well, the drawing supervisor told me they must all be the same size and placed correctly on the paper so I thought out a way.

"I took a big needle and pricked little holes in the places where the four corners of the cylinder were to be and there you are. The rest was easy."

"Anyway," I said to myself as she left me, "she told me."

It was difficult to get teachers away from subject matter, from machinery, and toward children. How could it be otherwise? Had not the teachers been trained to think arithmetic per cents., language per cents., spelling per cents., geography per cents.? Was not their world a word-world and their thinking a word-thinking?

I tried to improve the teaching by getting away

from the accepted treatment of the three R's. These subjects were so thoroughly formalised and logically arranged that no new viewpoint could be carried over through them.

I began by emphasising subjects that held emotional values, drawing, composition, music, nature, literature. I wanted drawing that expressed the child and not drawing that was made to order. I wanted ideas expressed in colour, movement, fun and not lines, ideas and not perfect papers, every one alike. I wanted composition that expressed the child and was not made to order; two sentences for the third grade, two paragraphs for the fourth grade, simple sentences in the fifth grade, complex sentences in the sixth grade and so on indefinitely. I wanted nature that would make the child's heart warm with sympathy, that would make the child dig and plant and be glad of the earth smells, that would make him talk to the dumb beasts and yearn to care for them, that would make him laugh to feel the snow and the rain and the wind beating on his face.

The feeling for the things that I wanted was rather more definite than the knowledge of how to attain the desired results. I planned, however, as best I knew how. I watched my opportunities. I went into the classrooms and helped the teachers with their work and the teachers, it seemed to me, responded. They smiled. They were interested.

They showed confidence in the newer point of view.

"We are getting on," I thought.

Then something happened. One of the assistants came to me and said, "I want to talk to you." Her tone signified the unusual and I listened intently.

"I must leave this school. You and I do not agree. You are putting the whole weight of the school on the non-essentials. The teachers are putting all their energy on music, nature, composition and drawing. I can't get the arithmetic up to the standard in the time that's left."

"Aren't the teachers giving the allotted time to the arithmetic?"

"Yes, but they give just that and no more. I mean that they do not bring the pressure to bear on it that they did and the work is falling off. It's according to your direction and as you and I cannot agree on that point I am going to another school."

"I'm not getting on," said another teacher. "I don't know what to do. The Superintendent is coming and I'm afraid we won't be ready, especially in Nature Study. You tell us to work for the children and forget ourselves but we can't forget the Superintendent. I can't get the facts he wants without drill and I can't drill and teach the way you say."

"But I believe you can teach, really teach the child

to think and enjoy the work, and at the same time give the examiner the kind of work he wants," I said.

"Will you come and hear my nature lesson on the Robin?"

"Gladly," I said.

"I give it first thing in the morning," she told me.

I was on hand promptly. There was no sign of anything in the room that looked like a robin unless it was the plump little lad in the first seat who kept looking up eagerly, open mouthed, into the teacher's face, ready to catch each word.

"Now, children, we are going to talk about a bird. One you all like to hear about. He's a cheerful little fellow with a brown coat and a red breast, and two bright eyes, and he sings, cheerily, cheerily! What's his name?"

Silence.

"I'm afraid you're not thinking hard, children. Think hard. What's his name? He has a brown coat, a red vest, two bright eyes and he sings cheerily, cheerily — What do you call him?"

Then the boy in the first seat spoke up.

"Tony," he said.

Tony was an Italian sweeper, who unfortunately for the smooth progress of the lesson answered the description to a nicety.

The teacher turned to me, her face flushed and

her eyes shining. "There, you see—I tried to make the lesson interesting and that's what happens. I can't do it your way."

"But maybe that isn't my way."

"Why, that's what you told me to do. I'm sure I don't know what you mean."

"If you'll come to me during the day, I'll try to tell you."

When she came, I said, "There are robins in the park just across the street?"

"Yes, lots of them."

"Suppose you meet the class under the big Oak Tree in the morning and look for robins. Watch them until you and the children know as much about them as one can learn by looking—size, colour, bill, food, the funny little tripping walk, the cock of the eye and the turn of the head; the nest and the babies you'll have to get from pictures, but having real birds in your mind, that will come easy. Then talk over what you've seen and learned. Let everybody say his say sometime or other. Tell them a story, have them sing a song about Robin Red Breast.

"Then when you have all the facts about him select those that are most worth while, and present them as the Robin story. You'll find you'll need very little drill."

Doubtfully she shook her head.

As she started to walk out of the room I could

see the shadow of the coming examination still in her countenance.

“And by the way — you know it’s Tony that wears the vest — not Robin Redbreast. Don’t worry. Outline the lesson again and then come back and let me go over it with you.”

#### IV

The average parent thinks of education largely in terms of books. The poorer the people are the more apt they are to over-value the traditional work of the school. The school is the place to learn from books and the child must not waste time doing anything else. Time spent in play is waste. Time spent on music, cooking, stories, dramatics, dancing, wood, clay, is waste. These are the fads and frills and while desirable are altogether unnecessary. What the child needs is to get on in the world, to get a job that gets him away from hard work. To do that the child must know how to read, to write, to spell, to count. He need not know anything about music, hammers, needles, food.

Parents have been trained as have the teachers, to think of school as a place where the children are made to obey, to memorise, made to repeat lessons.

I felt that we had to win the parents as well as

the teachers if the changes we were making, our emphasis on the "fads and frills" of education, were to be accepted in the homes.

I should have known that the people believed in the sufficiency of the three R's. They had not realised that the children of the city were losing all chance of first hand experience with life. They had not realised that the schools must hasten to furnish the opportunity for them on the playground and in the shops. Only when there was a better public conception of what the schools should do would school life really change.

When I cut down home study so as to give the child some relief from the pressure of the curriculum and thus allow them more time to grow, Sam's mother came to me, wrath in her eyes.

"Good morning. I've just run in for a minute this morning to ask how it is that Sam has no home work to speak of. Just a few examples and five words and a little reading. Sometimes he has a couple of sentences. He does them in no time. Now in the last school he was in he used to have work enough to keep him a couple of hours. He'd come in from school, do his errands, wash up for supper. After supper he'd work until it was time to go to bed."

But I protested, "We think Sam is doing very

well. There is no need for his working two hours at home. If he works to his full capacity for five hours a day, that is enough for a little fellow ten years old. Don't you think so?"

"Well, I don't know. He doesn't have enough to do to keep him quiet. He bothers the family and we don't like it at all. Last night he bothered me until I had to get up and get him stuff to make an air thing. I don't know what it is — something he wants to make fly. Now he'd be better off doing some long division examples, and I think the teacher ought to have more to do than tell him stories about flying machines anyway. He can learn that when he's older if he wants to."

"I'm sorry you feel that way about it. The child has all the book study he needs, I think, and if anything, too much homework. I think Sam needs sunshine and clean sports and a chance in the open. He is going to fly kites to get ready for the kite flying to be held in the park next month."

"I want you to give me a transfer," she said with decision. "My boy needs an education. I can't afford to waste time like a rich man's. I'll put him in another school where he can get something."

Nothing I could say would change her belief. Her imagination was too far from the three R's for her to be must stay nearer the earth.

Even the babies in the first grade, the infant class, did not escape.

“Don't you find Aaron ahead of his class?” an aggressive mother asked me.

“I find him a very bright little boy.”

“Yes, I knew you would. I taught him myself. He can read the whole of ‘The Red Hen’ and count to one hundred without a mistake. When are you going to promote him?”

I temporised. “I rather think Aaron can go ahead with his class next January.” (It was September.) “Yes, if he grows as he promises to, he will be ready for promotion with his class.”

“But he can read the whole of ‘The Red —’”

“Yes, I know, but, you see, the school stands for more than just the few intellectual facts that the curriculum imposes upon your child. He needs time to live, to grow, to be a child with other children. He needs time to sense the curriculum as well as memorise it. That can only be done by living it with his teacher and his classmates. If to teach the few facts of the curriculum were all we were here for, the school would better be closed.”

By this time the mother began to feel maybe she hadn't it right, after all, and went away shaking her head and sighing.

“School was different in my time. *We learned.* We got ‘what for’ if we didn't.”

"This is the principal?" puffed a little ball of a man as he rolled into the office. "I came to see about my boy's, Fred's teacher. Maybe you think she is a good teacher. I don't know it. She keeps my boy in. She tells him stories. Fred comes home. He walks round and round the rooms and says words like the actors. Tell her to please stop — I don't like it. I don't like it."

"Does Fred like it?" I asked.

"He likes?" and there was fire in his eyes. "Yes, he likes it like anything. That he likes and nothing else. Why, if she wants to teach Fred extra, don't she give him more arithmetic. That is good for Fred when he grows up. He goes then to business and he knows nothing. Whose fault? Fred is not good in his lessons. My brother's son is two classes ahead and he is the same age. Fred should study hard. He should not waste his brain on humbug. Tell her to please stop. Fred needs his senses for reading and writing."

"Would you like to see the teacher? She might explain," I suggested.

"Yes, I will see her. She must not tell stories. She must not waste time. Fred will be big soon, very soon."

The teacher came.

"You Fred's teacher?" he said as soon as he saw her. "Well, you must not tell stories, I don't

like it. I want an education for my boy, not foolishness. Stories are humbug."

"But we have these stories after school hours when all the required work is done," pleaded the teacher.

"Yes, yes, but give him some more examples if you want to help him along — but please, my dear young lady, don't tell stories. I don't like it."

Then the grandmother of Katherine came in, a hearty, cheery, plump-cheeked, steel bowed spectacled grandmother, who seated herself with firmness and began without preface:

"Why doesn't your teacher teach the children to spell?"

Her eyes were challenging — the clear, clipped tones hinted, "No nonsense now, I'm here to be shown."

"What class is Katherine in?"

"First grade, room 7."

"Oh, we do not teach spelling in 1A."

"And well I know you don't. I'm glad you're truthful. Why don't you? Here Katherine can read the whole of 'The Red Hen' and not a word can the poor child spell, much less know a letter. Every night I'm trying to pound it into her, and we're as far from it now as when we began. What's wrong, anyway?"

"You see," I tried to explain, "we don't teach reading just that way. Suppose you spend an hour in the classroom and see how we do it?"

"Surely, surely, I want you to show me."

At the end of the period, grandmother came back.

"Well, that's a fine young woman,— and healthy, I'll say that for her. And the children do read well. But *I* learned to spell when I was six, and it never hurt me."

"Or helped you," I thought, but silence was better than speech this time, and grandmother went home silenced but not convinced.

The next complaint came from an entirely different source. This time it was Mary Ann's mother who spoke. Mary Ann was in the "Defectives' Class" and would stay in that class outside and inside school until the earth closed over her.

Mary Ann's mother was a picturesque figure in her sport skirt, an antiquated basque with a brave row of steel buttons down the front, a pert sailor hat sailing under an aggressive quill. In her earnestness she went directly to the teacher.

"Teacher dear, Mary Ann's doing foine, foine. She hasn't tore the baby since I don't know whin, and she's getting that civil you wouldn't believe it. Hardly a bad word out of her mouth now, and she goes to Sunday School with Bettie. I'm proud and

thankful to ye. But that's not what I came to ask ye. Just drop them bastits you're having her makin', and them drills she fiddles her time away in and teach her to read. Teach her to read so she can learn her catechism and save her immortal soul and then I don't care. But in God's name, teach her to read."

And Mary Ann's mother broke down and wept.

There you are. From the highest to lowest, the book and the book knowledge shall save you. It shall even save your soul.

Many parents believe that this is education. They covet knowledge, book knowledge for their children. Rich and poor alike want their children done up in little packages, ready to show, ready to boast of. They fear freedom, they fear to let the child grow by himself. Because the parents want this sort of thing, the school is built to suit — a book school — one room like another, one seat like another, each child like his neighbour.

## CHAPTER III

### OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL

#### I

At the end of the first term the school was promoted. A mass of children went from our sixth year grade to the seventh grade of a neighbouring school. A new group from the fifth grade of our neighbour's school was promoted to our sixth grade.

At the end of the second term the school was promoted again. We lost the older children upon whom the responsibility for school spirit depended and we got the younger children in exchange. The two groups crossed and re-crossed on their way to and from the two schools.

What could we do with a shifting school population?

A mother came into the school one morning. She wanted "to see the principal." I was then on my rounds of the building. She waited because she wanted "to see the principal on very important business." When I came she began. It was the concrete presentation of the protest that the teachers and I had been feeling.

"I'm sick of the name of school. Just see this for yourself. Is it reasonable? Is it just? And to think that I should live to say such a thing with two of my boys graduates of public school and one now in high school. But I must say it, I've stood it long enough. Something has got to be done or I shall go crazy.

"It's this way. I ask you to do something for me. Thomas goes to the Jefferson Avenue School. He is in 8A. Mary goes to the First Avenue School and John, the smallest, comes here.

"When they come home there is a fight. Each one cheers for his own. Last night Mary came home with her school colours and Thomas said they were no good. Then there was talking and crying and Mary lost her temper and she had to be put to bed. The father blames me. It's the same with all the mothers on the block. With the children here and there we don't know what to do."

Here she stopped and felt nervously about for her handkerchief.

I recalled the visits of the other parents who had come objecting to this same condition.

"Now I want them to go altogether," she resumed. "One school is as good as another, but three is too many. The big child could keep an eye on the little one and help her across the car tracks. The little one is a bit slow in lessons and if the big

boy tries to help him he says, 'We don't do it that way in our school,' and then there is more fighting. If they went to the same school they could help each other.

"Now I want you to stop this foolishness and put them all in the same school. What kind of a family will this be, I'm asking you? And that's not all. They go at different times,—I'm getting meals all day long. No use going to see teachers. It's a day's trip. Please transfer them to one school."

Here the mother collapsed. This was the longest speech she had ever made.

She was right. The time had come to put a stop to this "foolishness."

"Please transfer these children to the same school" and "Keep them there!" was a good slogan. If that could be done we would save the changes of both children and teachers.

Surely there must be some mistake. It was never intended that the smallest children should be shifted about in this way. It was never intended that this school should be the helpless thing that it was.

I said to those whom I could get to listen, "Unity and continuity are the two potent elements in the life of the school. The tendency to break up the school is not wholesome. I believe the full graded school where the school life of the child is continuous is the best school for children. I believe the children stay

longer in such a school and do the work faster and more thoroughly.

"Do you know," I went on, "that this school has at present six different distinct, district lines? Is there any good reason why this school should not retain its children through all its grades and prevent the waste that comes through needless transfers?"

The kindly old janitor of the school advised me when he saw what I was about.

"Don't stir them up," he said; "don't stir them up. I have been in this business for thirty years and I have found stirring them up won't do. If they say it is raining, put up your umbrella, but don't stir them up."

I did not think the janitor was right. When I failed to get my point over I said, "They do not understand."

When parents came to me with complaints, I sent them on to the school authorities. "The people will explain and the explanation will help," I thought. But the authorities resented being stirred up and they did nothing.

A member of the local board came to see me.

"What's the matter with you anyway?" he said rather sharply. "You're not playing the game. You knew this was a six year school when you came to it. Then as soon as you get here you begin stir-

ring up trouble. You're only a beginner, you'll get your full school when your turn comes. If you can't wait, get a transfer."

"You don't understand," I said, taken aback. "It's for the children I'm asking this, not for myself. This organisation is bad for them. Adjust it and I'll take any school you like."

"That's all in your eye. I know better," he said.

The protest was useless. I felt that school people were not going to help me, either by convincing me that I was wrong or by active assistance when I was right. Was I facing the same conditions as a principal that I had faced as a teacher? "Do what you are told to do. Do what the rest are doing."

Strangest of all was the fact that they were thoroughly honest in their position. It was the point of view. They saw a school for administration. I saw a school for the "All Around" development of children.

I wanted opportunity for the masses, the best schools for the crowds, the best teachers for the heaviest load. I thought in terms of service, they in terms of tradition.

The changes that had been made in the school organisation had been made to benefit the older children. The best teachers, the best buildings, the smallest classes, the finest equipment were provided for the few at the top. There was no top to my

school, and there were no facilities of equipment, no shops, no gymnasium, no playground — only classrooms. It did not matter whether our children stayed in our school or were transferred out of it. It did not matter much what happened to the youngest children. The tradition in school management was and still is that the older children are the ones most worth while; that the teachers of these older children are the superior teachers; that the principal of a full graded school has a higher standing than one of a six year school; that the president of a college is superior to the principal of a high school.

Soon the teachers who sought promotion went into the high school or the full graded school, because these schools offered higher salaries and larger opportunities for professional growth.

What chance then had this school of becoming a real school? What chance had this school for continuity of life? What influence could its training show upon the conduct of children?

What was I to do?

## II

The daily disciplinary records had begun to show up the few steady offenders. The same names appeared with almost the same complaint.

The worst among them was the leader with his

gang. I found they had headquarters in a forsaken mansion. They had stripped it of any saleable fixtures and used the money for cigarettes, candy, soda, carfare and shows.

Sometimes they had a fight with some of the other boys in the neighbourhood. The pitched battles took place in the vacant lots and frequently in the park. Then there would be a rush of protesting parents to the school and the station house. The police would charge down upon the contending armies and they would disappear across the lots into cellars and over roofs.

What was school to them, when, armed with stones and carrying shields made of pot covers or old wash boilers pounded flat, they sallied forth to attack a neighbouring gang!

The leader had caught my notice by having had numerous charges of fighting made against him. He had carried his street battles into the school and the teacher and the class had to suffer the consequent annoyance and inconvenience.

The freight yard with its busy traffic had the greatest attraction for him. Something was going on there all the time. The cars clanging, grinding, bumping! The brakemen running along the top of the cars, shouting and waving their arms! The trucks, the horses, the thrill of an accident, and the crowd that gathered about the swift rushing ambu-

lance — here was life. Expeditions, thefts, stolen rides, broken limbs, what chances for adventure!

One night there was nothing to do,—no fruit stand to turn over, no pedlar to bait, so he led his friends to the freight yard. A mass of bulging bags containing malt was discovered. These were cut and some of the malt carried away to a cellar “Den.”

The police traced the miscreants to a fifth year class. The officer who came took the ring leader and started off. Before they had gone ten feet there was a flash of grey, and the boy flew down the hall scarcely making a sound and a hurtling mass of blue pounded after him. The prisoner was gone.

A tearful youngster appealed to me, “Will you please make the Flannigans let us alone?” he wailed.

“Who are the Flannigans?” I asked.

“They are a gang of Irishers that fight us. Every day they fight us. Last night they lassooed my brother and took him to their den and my father and the police had to get him out. My father says you should get the leader. His name is Flannigan. That ain’t his real name either. It’s Arente. He is in 2 A.”

“In grade 2 A and you are in 6 B?”

“Yes, sir. He is big and his gang is bigger. They even work. We haven’t any show with them.”

"I'll have to see about them," I comforted him. "It's too bad."

During the day this lad's mother came in to see me. "I thought you were going to see about the Flannigans? Issie told you about them this morning," she said.

"Yes," I returned, "but I've been very busy today and haven't had a chance to see Arente yet."

"Then that's why. On the way out at noon he licked Issie for telling you and says he'll do him something if he tells any more."

I sent for Arente who promptly dissolved into tears. That didn't help any. Tears came easily to him. I sent him home for his mother and asked Issie's mother to wait. In a short time mother and son appeared, and I told the story.

"Well," she said aggressively, "this happened on the street, didn't it? What have you got to do with it? I guess if you attend to your job inside school it will give you enough to do."

"But," interrupted the other mother, "he licked my Issie."

"Sure he did," responded the plumed lady, "and serve himself well right. Let Issie fight his own battles. I don't come here about what happens my son. If he gets a black eye that's his bad luck. What happens on the street is none of the school's

business. You needn't send for me to settle your son's scraps," and she swept grandly out.

"No wonder he licks Issie," gasped the remaining visitor. "She's fierce. Try and do your best for my boy that he isn't killed."

I agreed to try and showed Issie's mother out. Then I sat down to think it over. I consulted Arente's teacher about the street fights. She laughed heartily at me—"What, a sixth year boy complaining about a second year boy! He doesn't belong in a public school with the boys. He needs a nurse and a perambulator."

"But for some reason or other," I interposed, "Arente is backed up by some older boys, really young men, and it isn't exactly a fair fight, you see."

"It happened on the street, didn't it?" she inquired in a puzzled tone. "What have we to do with it? We can't control the street life of these children. We couldn't if we wished to, and it's really none of our business."

"I'll speak to Arente but it won't do much good. If Arente doesn't beat Issie somebody else will. On the street, it's lick or be licked. How's the school going to help it?"

"How indeed," I wondered. "It's not the school's business. We stop at the street door. It's not the home's business. That stops at the door."

The street is the third powerful factor in Education and we know nothing about it."

Turning over the leaves of my Happenings Book I selected the following:

"Complaint of candy pedlar. Boys pulled his beard and took some candy."

"Mrs. Wellon reported that a little girl went into her house by fire escape window and took eleven cents out of a teacup."

"Janitor of apartment house says boys tipped ash can down cellar stairs."

"Sign painter — very angry — charged boys with taking away ladder and leaving him perched thirty feet above sidewalk."

"A letter from a lady suggesting that I stand at the front door of my school to receive the children as they enter and praise those who have clean faces, well brushed hair and boots. She has noticed children entering our school who were not well groomed. There are thirteen entrances to this school and four thousand children."

"Edison company requests us to co-operate in the protection of their light globes."

"The delicatessen man says Rachel steals a dill pickle every day."

"Received an official circular asking our help in the protection of public property, street, lights, parks, public buildings, books, etc.

"Mrs. Wenc wants Fritz to come in the front door so Michael can't punch him."

"So," I said to myself, "My school" is different? Well, it isn't. It's the same old school. The teachers and children — the streets and the troubles have different names but they're the same all over the world. Home shuts the door and by that simple action closes out the world. School shuts the door and concerns itself no further. But the street roars on, its life at full tide, sweeping the children by our closed doors."

Ethical Principles! The old questions clung to me with all the tenacity of a first impression, "Is the teacher responsible for what the child does out of school? If this is not the teacher's province how can the teacher ever know that her work counts in the life of the child?"

### III

I had met a few, a very few parents who had come into the school on rare occasions. They had come for the most part objecting to something the school was doing. But what of the great mass, who were they?

There were parents who were ignorant, almost, of the school's existence. Some of them did not know the teacher's name, nor the child's class, nor

the number of the school. They hardly knew where the school was. Perhaps they had sent a neighbour to register the child in the "baby" class and had never been near the school. What did they know of the school? What did they care?

What did we know of their homes? What did we care?

We would know, we would care, I determined. We would go to them and learn what was beyond their closed doors.

There was Hyman. He was dirty, more than dirty. Word was sent home that Hyman should have a bath. No bath was given. Dirt reaches a climax. It did in this case.

Then the teacher said, "Hyman, if no one else will wash you, I will. But washed you must be."

Hyman led the way cheerfully. There was a short journey through crowded streets, a dark hallway, long flights of stairs, then Hyman's home. The living room was kitchen and dining-room as well. Hyman's mother was at the tubs. On the table in one corner was a cut up chicken, the night's dinner; close to the chicken was a pair of newly mended shoes. There was a loaf of bread with the heart pulled out of it and a dish of butter showing finger marks. Odd dishes, a coffee pot with streaks of coffee down its sides and some freshly washed

clothes filled the rest of the table. Children's clothes were all about.

There were five school children in this family. Each on his way from school dropped his belongings, helped himself to a chunk of bread and a dab of butter and made for the street, the only available place to pursue his right to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

"Yes, I know, teacher," said the mother limply, "I know Hyman is dirty. He won't wash for me. Maybe he will for you."

Through the kitchen into the bathroom went Hyman and his teacher. The bathroom was the family store-room. Everything was there that anybody discarded — a couple of hats, an empty box or two, shoes, old clothes. These were piled on the floor, the tub cleaned and Hyman with the teacher's help got into the bath, the first in many days.

Then the teacher went home, thinking, "What's the good of school, just school, to Hyman? He needs to grow. He needs to learn to be clean more than he needs to learn to spell. Congestion, tenements, dirt, neglect! What chance has Hyman to be a fine American citizen?"

"I want to tell you about a home I visited yesterday," a teacher said. "Percy hasn't done any real

work since he entered my class so I thought I'd call on his mother. She made an appointment for me and I went. She was dressed as though for a party and when I apologised for detaining her she said, 'Oh, not at all. It's my bridge club day but it's early yet. What about Percy? Bothering you? Children are a bother, aren't they? How do you ever get on with forty or fifty of them? One kills me.'

" 'Percy isn't doing any school work,' I said bluntly. 'He acts as if he needed sleep too. He never does his homework.'

" 'Oh, Mercy! What's homework? Lessons? Of course he doesn't do any at home. Isn't school enough?'

" 'It is for some boys who work. But Percy works neither at home nor at school.'

" 'M'm. It's too bad. You see we entertain a lot. We are fond of having our friends about us; good for children to meet people, don't you think? Gives them an air.'

" 'But does the child sleep?'

" 'Oh, of course, you silly child, he sleeps. Let me give you a cup of tea. No? Maybe you'd have a cocktail? What can one offer a school marm? So glad to have seen you. Thanks so much for your interest in Percy! He comes from a good family. He'll come out all right. Don't worry. So glad. Good-bye.' "

Then there was Ruth. The teachers found her untractable at times because of an overwhelming desire to take control of the classroom. On the whole she was worth while and intelligent. What was the trouble with Ruth?

Ruth was ten and very, very wise. She had glorious red hair, braided and bound like a coronet. She looked at you out of beautiful, green eyes and talked in slow, monotonous tones, the result of much experience with the direct facts of life. Once Ruth had taken off her little red flannel petticoat and waved it in the faces of the Cossacks who had come to search the house for revolutionary literature. This little demonstration had hurried the family's departure from Russia. Somehow she had grasped the idea of going straight to headquarters when she wanted anything.

"I hope you won't mind, but I want to ask your advice," she announced one day. "It isn't about school."

Ruth really never wanted advice. She always felt competent to give it so I waited in silence.

"Well, you see, it's this way. There are eight of us at home and father, he sits home and won't go to work only when he likes it and then he gives my mother only two dollars a week. That isn't much for a room and meals, especially now. Well, I wouldn't mind his not paying more money, if he

would only leave my mother and the children alone. No, he sits there and complains and swears to my brothers and sisters. Such languages isn't good for children to hear. He is getting worse and worse every day, and my mother cries and I can't bear to see my mother cry. You don't know how hard my mother works.

"There is Abe. He is eight, but he is a little stupid and very weak and can't eat regular food. And my big sister that goes to work in the fur shop downtown and gets home all tired out. You could hardly believe how hard she works.

"And my father makes all this trouble. He plays cards at night with his friends that came from the other side with him, the same country he came from. When the men come to play cards, we must stay up late, and that's not good for us. I can't stand it any longer."

Here Ruth stopped talking and looked at me expectantly.

Still I waited, merely lifting an inquiring eyebrow.

"I took advice," she resumed, "and went before the judge and told him everything. Now had I right? The judge asked me if we wanted to put him out. I said no, he was my father, but I wanted the judge to make him stop using bad languages. The judge did, and told me to come to him in case there was any more trouble."

"How has your father been since?" I asked her when I had sufficiently recovered.

"Very well. He does not talk much, but he looks as if he wanted to. I don't care; I know what's good for him."

"Is he to give you any more money?"

"Yes, the judge said he must give half his salary at least and he must work, and be good, and be proud of his children."

I found a boy in a classroom after school hours. His shirt was full of flowers that other children had brought to the teacher.

"What are going to do with them?"

"Take them home and hide them."

Why hide them? His mother would not let him take the flowers home. She did not want him to steal flowers.

I went to see his father. He knew his boy took flowers not only from the teacher but from the florist and from the park. He would punish the boy as he had done many times before. I could see for myself by examining the boy's body. He would whip him more now than ever.

"What can I do?" he went on. "I go out to work all day. I have three children that go to school. I make a dollar and a half a day when it does not rain; I have to pay fourteen dollars a month rent. I

want my boy to learn. I give him plenty to eat though beans are ten cents a pound. I try to make him study and he goes out stealing flowers and disgraces me."

"A dollar and fifty cents a day, when it does not rain." I saw the man's torn shoes, his shabby clothes and knotted fingers. I saw the boy's skinny body and his starving soul craving for the sweet earth flowers. Was it the children's fault?

"Please help me. Do something for me," pleaded a sixteen year old girl just out of school. "My little brother makes such a fuss at home! When he does not like his food, he pulls the table cloth on the floor and breaks the dishes. When a young man comes to see me, my brother makes such trouble that he never comes back. Now I am getting along in years. I'll be seventeen next birthday. I am losing my chances. He threw the sofa pillows out of the window. I must take from my savings to buy more pillows and dishes. How can I save up for a husband?"

"Please make my boy clean himself before he comes to school. He won't do it for me."

"Please talk to Herbert about hitting his little brother. You have such influence over him."

"Put my boy away. He is no good. He steals my money."

"Solomon is at home stamping his feet. He will not go for me. Please send the officer."

"Please tell Dorothy she must take her medicine. She will do it for you. It's a bother to you I know, but I'll make it all right with you."

Inadequate, isolated homes, forever closing their doors and forever begging us to come in!

#### IV

On one side of the school was the road, dusty, badly kept and constantly used. Across the street was the park, beautiful and fresh at first but as the population increased, abused and neglected more and more.

On the other side ran the elevated trains that disturbed us all. Assembly exercises in the morning had to stop to let the trains go by. Classroom recitations had to stop too for there was no competition. The children and the teachers got the habit of waiting in the middle of a sentence as the roar began, swelled,— ceased.

The school district reached across the park to the east where lived many families who owned their own houses. These were the first residents, the lovers of grass and open spaces, of home and family traditions. It extended westward four blocks to the tracks of the railroad and north and south almost a

quarter of a mile each way. A wide area this. Scattered about were empty lots, fences,—long stretches of fences, empty houses and flats. The neighbourhood was in a state of transition from a dignified provincial suburb to a mass of tenements. There was a group of people who came from the southern part of the city each spring that their children might enjoy the open spaces of the neighbourhood. They remained until fall when they returned to their steam heated flats. This made an unstable community in the school and in the neighbourhood. Each time they came fewer of them returned and the tenements grew in number.

This meant that most of our children came from little two, three and four room flats, strung along block upon block. In such homes there was little time or room for play, work or fun. As the crowds came the tenements increased and poured their tenants out upon the sidewalks and streets. The street corner, the curb, the candy shop, the pool room, the dance hall were becoming the social centres of the district.

There was a mixture of races. These were people who had come from various countries of Europe and they differed in their attitude towards ethics, society, religion, education, cleanliness. These differences isolated the various groups, the families, and the blocks.

These parents did not understand the newer conditions of life. They did not understand the city. They did not understand the school. They did not understand the older residents.

In their turn they too were misunderstood even by their own children. The child saw in the rush of the school life the idea of getting on. In school he saw life in a white collar, fine clothes, and an easy job. Home was not like this.

Michael was one of the brightest and most promising among the boys. He was a yard monitor. He came to school early and stayed late. He helped the teachers attend to supplies and hang pictures. Whatever the work in hand, Michael was first assistant.

A neighbour brought Michael's mother in to see me. She turned to her friend and spoke in a foreign tongue and the neighbour answered, and turned to me saying,—“She speaks no English. I have come to talk to you for her.”

“That's too bad. I thought Michael was born in this city?” I said.

“Oh, yes, they've been in this country fifteen years, but she never learned the language. She's religious and doesn't go around much.”

Michael's mother was anxiously watching our faces while we talked and now she spoke again to the neighbour.

"She says to tell you that she wants to see Michael."

Michael was sent for and came into the office with his usual cheerful willingness. When he saw his mother he stopped. She went toward him. Michael backed against the wall, his face sullen and embarrassed. His mother talked pleadingly. She put her hand on his shoulder and he pushed it off rudely. Then his mother sank into a chair and began to cry softly.

Michael stood against the wall scowling down at his shoes. I looked on wondering what it could be about. The neighbour began to talk.

"It's a pity. It's a shame. Mickee, you shouldn't treat your mother that way."

"She shouldn't come here," muttered Michael.

The neighbour looked from Michael to the weeping woman and anger shone in her face as she turned to me.

"You think Michael is a good boy, don't you? You like him. Well, I don't. You think you do a lot for him by keeping him in school all day long and letting him run all over for the teachers. You're just spoiling him. You're only making him selfish. He thinks he's too good to talk to his own mother. That's what you're doing if you want to know the truth."

Then turning to Michael she said, "If you be-

longed to me you wouldn't act like that. I'd fix you."

Michael lifted his head ready to answer but catching my eye resumed his sullen attitude again.

"You can go to your room now, Michael. Come in to see me after hours," I said to his great relief.

"I'd wish," the neighbour broke in, "you would take a stick to that kid's back. His mother can do nothing more with him. I'm sorry for her. She came from Russia years ago. She was quiet and stayed in the house. Michael is ashamed of her because she can't talk English. He makes fun of her clothes. When there is a school party he doesn't even tell her. Her husband learned English and all the American ways quickly. So did the children. Now her husband is ashamed of her and he lives by himself. Michael goes to see him and lots of times he stays two or three days. His mother hasn't seen him this week. That's why she came here, to beg him to come home to her."

Here were children and parents living their lives apart. These children were ashamed because their parents did not speak or look like Americans. How could I help the children in my school respond to the dreams of their fathers? How could I get the fathers to share in the work of building a school for their children?

The parents often misunderstood the motives of the school in dealing with their children. Especially was this true of the parents whose children were fitted for manual rather than for intellectual labour.

When their fourteen year old boys and girls who had almost reached their full physical growth and had difficulty in making the fifth grade were placed in a special class in which the emphasis was put on the fundamentals of learning because they would soon have to go out and work for a living, the parents came to protest.

I did not blame them for protesting although my reason was different from theirs. Already these children had had too much of the fundamentals. Their mentalities had foundered on the sacred three R's. In these average special classes instead of less of the three R's, the children got more of them. It was like taking a drowning man out of a lake and throwing him into the sea.

But the parents protested not because these children were being given more reading, writing and arithmetic, but because the special class meant that the child who was put there was an outcast from the normal school life. He would soon have to go to work because he had no brains for books.

In the country they came from this question would not have arisen. The children would have gone to

the farm or the factory as their fathers for generations had gone. But it was to avoid that future they had come to this new land and when we were obliged to say to some of them that their children would never be able to become doctors or lawyers or priests but they would and should become workingmen and women, they were bitter in their denunciation of the school.

So it was in matters of health. Parents who had been brought up in the country where there was no noise, no confusion, no confinement, where the food came directly from the soil, were somewhat at a loss to appreciate why it was that their children so often were ill.

They could not understand that the noise of the city life and the speed of city work, the effect of canned foodstuff and adulterated food products were factors in the lives of their children. They could not, therefore, understand why their children could not grow as they had.

Having been in the habit of trusting nature, they declared when the school required medical attention, "The child will grow out of it. I never had such diseases and why should my child?" Even when they seemed convinced that medical attention was necessary they still had little faith in what was told them, or in the doctor and his medicine.

The school alone could do nothing. It was not

organised with the idea of a maximum spiritual and intellectual growth.

The home alone could do nothing. It was isolated, antagonistic, indifferent. It shut its eyes fearing, distrusting, hoping for better things but doing nothing. The more it lived by itself the less able it became to hold the children close to itself.

I had learned that education was a matter of co-operation between parents and teachers. Conduct, self-expression, meant action in the street and home. Moral education meant group reaction.

The problems of my school, therefore, loomed up as the problems of our community. The transfers of our teachers and of our children, the equipment of the building, the curriculum, were not only school problems but community problems. Unless the people knew about and shared in the education of their children the schools would be inefficient. To save the school and the home from becoming cloistered, self centred, the culture of children would have to be a co-operative effort between the people and the teachers.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE PARENTS AT WORK

#### I

“How did you begin?”

I don't know exactly how I began. I began as so many others did without realising that I was beginning anything unusual. I began slowly, hesitatingly, making many mistakes as I went.

“How did you begin?”

Does not that very question try to force a tabulated, logically arranged answer that may be applied like a formula to any situation? Is it not more important to know why the school began, and how the work grew, and the value of what the school learned while it was growing?

I explained to the teachers that we needed the parents. How we were going to get them was another matter. I have a feeling that we started by noting the men and women who seemed to take some interest in the school life of their children. I distinctly remember that we studied the various neighbourhood groups to discover who the leaders were,

that we singled out those who objected most to what the children were doing in their street time. Slowly, almost unconsciously, the neighbourhood people came in touch with the school and with each other.

Our primary task was to hear the people talk. The more they talked the sooner we were able to see what they were like and what they had to give to the school. We were good listeners and when we saw that a neighbour's vital interests touched some phase of common social growth, we knew that neighbour had something to give that the school needed.

Early one morning, before opening exercises, a gentleman came in and said he must see me at once. He was greatly excited and paced up and down the office as he talked.

"Two of my boys come to this school so I think you ought to be interested in what concerns their welfare and whatever goes on in the neighbourhood concerns them mightily."

Here was a man with a point of view. I listened intently.

"Yesterday one of them might have been killed by one of your pupils. The milkman leaves his cases of empty bottles in the vacant lot opposite my house. Yesterday afternoon a gang of boys fought the children on the block with those bottles. They threw them at each other's heads, sir. I tell you it's outrageous. My boys were coming home peaceably

when some of those ruffians attacked them with empty bottles — glass bottles. It's murderous, I tell you. Fun's fun but this is no fun." And he brought his clenched fist down smartly on his outstretched palm. "What's the school doing? Can you offer us parents no better protection for our children than this?"

Drawing himself to his full height and speaking more earnestly if possible he rallied me to a sense of my duty. "The public school is or ought to be the greatest force for good in the community. If it's going to stand by and see these children of foreigners actually murder our children — the children of generations of Americans who gave their lives for their flag and their country — then this nation is lost, sir. As a parent and a citizen I call upon you to do your duty. Search out the miscreants and mete out fit punishment for them. Skinning's too good for them."

Advancing to the desk shelf that separated us he punctuated his rapid phrases with sharp taps of his fingers. "When I went to school they used to teach the children respect for law and order and above all a regard for truth. But the schools these days have no time to teach law and order. They have no time to teach the simple adherence to the truth."

"But," I suggested, before he could begin again, "perhaps some of this misbehaviour which as you

state occurs outside the school is due to the lack of care and influence of the home folk?"

"Maybe, maybe, a little of it. But work isn't done by shifting the responsibility, you know. I've pointed out the disease. The remedy is up to you."

"I'll investigate this," I said. "I'll report my findings to you if you wish."

"Indeed I wish. I'll come back again in a day or so. I believe in the personal touch, sir," and with a grim "Good day, sir," he marched out.

I called in one of the older teachers in the school and told her the story and asked her to search the thing carefully. I wanted to make a thorough report to the man.

"We ought to get his energy and interest in the school if we can manage it," I added.

True to his word he came back a few days later.

"Well, sir, what have you? Not forgotten all about it I hope?"

"No," I said, "I've not forgotten. I find that the boys concerned in the bottle fight were two groups of our boys who were dismissed after the main body of the school had gone home for the day and no teachers and monitors were on duty."

"Just what I said, nobody on the job, sir."

"And," I went on without heeding the interruption, "both groups of boys threw the bottles at each other without any thought of hurting any one."

They had no quarrel. It was just the reaction after the repression of the day, a very dangerous one, to be sure, but boys are heedless and thoughtless."

"Heedless and thoughtless — I should —"

"Another thing," I insisted, interrupting him, "I found that a few of these boys had taken milk from the neighbours' bottles to feed some stray cats they were keeping as pets in the vacant lot across the street from your home."

"Awful! Murderous weapons to beat the brains out of one another and then thievery! Just what I told you, sir. Now —"

I could restrain him no longer, and once more he pointed a solemn finger at me. "I demand of you, young man, that for the good of the children we parents have entrusted to your care, you search out these offenders and punish them, that you make every reasonable effort to see that the streets are safe places for the children of the neighbourhood. My advice is to look for the leaders and the rest will be easy."

"I have one or two of them," I said.

"Good," he answered with a note of surprise.

"One of them is Henry."

"Henry? Henry who?"

"Why — your Henry."

"My son? Never, sir — you're joking, I'm serious in this. My son?"

"Well, suppose you ask him. He told me himself, and he keeps a couple of the cats."

Varying emotions chased themselves swiftly across the fine old face. Then a grin stole over it —

"Well, well, sir. I'm astonished: and Henry told you?"

"Yes — you see, there's very little a boy can do after school but get into mischief. In your day it was different. There were many things to keep you busy. Perhaps now, you could help us get some after-school activities for the children. Working together we could do something."

"I'll help you in any way I can, sir. This neighbourhood must be a decent place for our children. Just show me how I can be of service and I'll be delighted to assist you." Then a vestige of the old grin appeared as he rose to go. "I believe in the personal touch, sir, the personal touch. I'll attend to Henry."

"This is one parent I can count on," I said as he walked out.

When the children needed a garden the teachers went to the real estate operator on the corner. He was interested at once and loaned us a nearby lot and allowed us a room in his office suite to store our tools.

He was one of the leaders whom we had made up

our minds we should have. He was the kind to help make the school's needs the people's opportunities.

Fancy the busiest real estate man in our district allowing a troupe of grubby young ones to prance in and out of his office daily for months, armed with rakes, hoes, spades, shovels, trowels, to say nothing of the sheet iron wheel-barrow that brought up the clattering rear.

This he did and smiled.

One day he was seated in conference with some dignified city officials whom he was trying to persuade to some civic betterment plan he had taken to his heart. The gardeners, hushed by the anxious teacher, pigeon-toed into the outer room. With unusual quiet, tools were stacked in the corner. Isaac and his beloved barrow came last. The children held their breath while he skilfully reversed his pet and leaned it against the wall. Alas — alack — the relieved teacher was taking the hushing finger from her lips and turning towards the door when that barrow slipped, slid, and the whole armoury, each bit, screeching its own note of protest, crashed to the floor.

"Bless my life," called the most dignified city official starting out of his chair.

Calm as a summer day our friend merely turned his head and said, "Those kids certainly have the

time of their little lives on that bit of land. I tell you, gentlemen, there's nothing like it. Back to the land! The land is the source of all wealth—"All right, children," as they essayed to restore order out of the heap of hardware. "It's all right. Harry'll fix all that. The tools need cleaning up anyway."

The streets and park in front of the school were bare of trees and we thought Arbour Day would be a fine time to plant some.

Accordingly a committee of teachers wrote the Park Commissioner asking for trees for Arbour Day. He wrote a very non-committal note, the gist of which was that he didn't understand what children were going to do with valuable trees.

We were all discussing the note and wondering what next to do when the teacher came in from her gardening class.

"I think we have the trees. I met Robert Hull on my way in. He's one of the Administration lawyers now, you know. I used to teach him. He wanted to know what I was doing with the 'kids and the spades' and I told him and mentioned our difficulty about the trees.

"That's because you teachers are a lot of amateurs,' he said. 'You don't know how; the Park Commissioner doesn't know you from a hole in the ground; you don't cut any political ice and he doesn't

know the kids' side of it. I'll go and explain to him and I have a hunch you'll get those trees.' ”

We got them too — twelve beauties.

Each year after this a dozen trees were given the school by the park department. After the first year the trees were given, not because of individual requests, but because of the new relation established between the public school and the Department of Parks.

As the months passed people became as interesting to us as children. All sorts of folks with all sorts of stories came to school. The more we looked the more we found those that were most useful to us.

A motherly looking woman was shown in one day and stood looking at me as if doubtful whether she should come in or go out.

“ Can I do anything for you? ”

“ Are you the principal? ”

“ Yes, can I help you? ”

“ I don't know, that's just why I came. I've been everywhere and don't know where else to go. I'm bothered my life out with a child. Not mine. If she was mine, I'd kill her.”

“ Does she come to this school? ”

“ Not a bit of it. She goes to no school and she's close on to twelve.”

"Why doesn't she go to school?"

"No school would have her, I'm thinking, and small blame to them. She's one bad habit. She's a 'runner.'"

"A runner?"

"Yes, she's always going somewhere and never content when she gets there till she gets somewhere else, d'ye understand?" And she dabbed her perspiring face with a wadded handkerchief. Explanations were hard work.

"Well, she keeps our whole block on edge. We never know what's to do next. But this last is the limit. Tuesday she walked into my area where my baby was sleeping in its carriage and lifted it and away with it down the block. She got tired of carrying it — he's a heavy child, and doesn't she go into another woman's basement and take her baby carriage out and away she pelts.

"To make a long story short, after we had called up the police and the hospitals, she came walking up to me.

"'Are you looking for the baby?' she asks, meek as a lamb.

"'I am. Where is he?'

"'I left him down the street in Conlon's basement,' says she.

"There he was right enough. We went to the

police lieutenant and says he, ' You got the baby all right? '

" ' Surely. '

" ' And you got the carriage? '

" ' To be sure. '

" ' Well, spank the kid and close the case, ' said he, and thought it a good joke. Can you do something? "

I asked her to bring the mother of the little girl to see me. They came very soon. The mother of the sinner was sweet faced and sad.

" I'm sorry Kate is so troublesome, " she said. " She is very hard to control. I cannot keep her in school. She runs out every chance she gets and she is so trying the teacher is glad to have her go. I have a crippled husband and I cannot leave him long at a time so Kate is getting little or no training and she needs it. "

The accusing mother listened intently.

" Hark you, " said she as if inspired by a new idea. " If I bring her here myself every day will you try to keep her? "

" I'll do my best, " I answered.

" Then I'll do it, " she said firmly.

Faithfully she kept her word. She escorted her charge to and from school regularly for almost a year. Then the child came without her.

But the self-appointed truant officer had got a personal interest in the school and the children that she never lost.

We were getting hold.

These were the old residents. If we could get them interested and active then they might not all go away. Some might stay with us and help interest the new comers, holding them to the neighbourhood and the school.

After some time there was a group of neighbours who through personal service had a genuine interest in the school life. They talked about the school to their friends, they talked about the school to their children. Their children talked about the school to them. Many times the children were the means of bringing parents and teachers together.

"Mother, please come and see my teacher," said one of our youngest children. The mother came leading the child to the teacher's classroom.

"Mother," the child whispered, "isn't she lovely? She is so pretty. She has lovely blue eyes and she smiles all the time."

Some of the parents invited the teachers to their homes and the teachers went. The teachers invited the parents to school and some of the parents came. Now and then the teacher was asked to the pupil's birthday party, to mother's anniversary, or to a feast day celebration.

In and out the web was woven. Here and there children, teachers and parents became more intimate, more friendly. The school world that had been sufficient within itself opened up its doors; a little at first, but as the days passed more and more.

## II

We saw that the way to reach people and keep their co-operation was to give them work. Having secured individual co-operation we began to work for group co-operation. We wanted the parents to come into the school as a collective force.

What was the best way to get at it? We held many teachers' meetings,— formal and informal, trying to devise a scheme that would bring the great mass of parents in touch with the school.

We had been struggling to do this for a long time and had succeeded only in getting the parent who was already interested in school and school matters to work with us. The parent who needed us most and whose interest we most desired to arouse was still a stranger to us.

We decided on a course of meetings. We would do what the other schools were doing at their parents' meetings. We would have concerts; the appeal of music was universal. We would have popular lectures by specialists. We set to work.

The concert was the first thing attempted. We secured the use of the building, and the services of fine musicians. The little group of parents already our helpers promised to come early and take charge of the programme.

The evening of the concert came. The doors were opened. Henry's father presided. The teachers scattered through the rooms ready to greet the parents and make them feel at home.

At eight o'clock fifteen parents who had been in the school many times before, were assembled in the big room that held five hundred. At eight fifteen, twenty-seven people were present. Another dozen strolled in by eight-thirty when the concert began.

That night we held a conference at the school door. What was wrong? We had done everything we could think of to make the evening a great success and this was the result. There were no explanations, no excuses. We had failed. We went home pondering on the perversity of human nature.

We tried again. This time we had a lecture on "Pure Food," a subject that was being widely discussed throughout the city. Again we made our elaborate preparations and advertised the lecture well in advance. Nobody came but our own little group.

"I'm almost afraid to suggest what I have in mind because it is contrary to what we have been teaching,

but 'desperate diseases,' you know," said one of our primary teachers. "I think the only way you can get the average father and mother to school is to invite them to see their own children perform. The parents are in the school only because their own children are here. Let's have the next meeting an entertainment given by the children. I think the folks will come then."

"But it will keep the children up late."

"I've thought of that. We'll keep the actors in classrooms. Immediately after they perform the teacher in charge can take them out of the building and send them home. We'll let the younger children get through first."

The teacher had the idea. The parents were interested in their own children first. That was the place to begin.

The school naturally divided into grade groups according to the age and the needs of the pupils. There were the kindergarten and the first year children. There was the primary group and there was the upper grade group.

The teachers in each of these groups held parents' meetings after school hours. The parents came to the classrooms and saw the children and the teacher at work for the last school hours of the day, and then when the children were dismissed the parents met the teachers in conference. Then the discussion

was specific. Whether the problem was getting a lesson or cleaning teeth or the need of fresh air, it was directly applied to the children.

We began also to colour our evening meetings with the performances of the children whose parents seemed further away from us. The parents began to come. When they came once they were apt to come again.

All this time, however, the teachers were doing the work. But we were gathering the forces, preparing the way for effective organisation.

Having done these things it was again decided to hold a large meeting. We were going to try once more to get the mass feeling in sympathy with the school.

This meeting opened with an entertainment — a play in two acts, given by the children. The school orchestra furnished the music. At the end of the first act I spoke to the people who filled the hall.

“My friends,” I said, “I have brought you here to enlist your collective help in the work of the school. Acting together as a moral force in the neighbourhood you are more vital to the education of the children than is the school.

“You remember the story of the cactus plant, how once upon a time, the cactus was a fine flourishing plant with luscious fruit. Then there came a change

over that part of the earth where the cactus grew. The mountains heaved and the wind shifted.

“The valley that was once rich became barren and the plants died. They all died but the cactus plant, which, in answer to the new needs that the changing earth brought, toughened its skin and grew needles all over its body.

“The winds came with their sandy blasts and the cactus plant withstood their attacks. It had become ugly, repellent, and the beasts of the field could not touch it.

“Thousands of years after, a man came by who took the cactus plant and put it in his garden.

“Here there were no hot sandy winds. There was moisture and soft breezes and wonderful soil to grow in. The cactus plant changed and became once more the thing it had been in the beginning, a fine plant with luscious fruit.

“So it is with your children. You are the soil and the wind and the light in which the child, your plant, grows. You are the environment, the compelling force which by its influence, can make the children fine children, or can make of them warped and twisted natures unfit to live with, unworthy to carry on the ideals of your souls.

“Even if we could take upon our shoulders all the responsibilities of the home and relieve you entirely it would not be good for you and for the children.

The children need you. You cannot afford to have the teachers take over your responsibility.

"You must share the common burden. You must work all together to make the conditions of life under which the children are living such that they will grow up healthy, intelligent, sympathetic, appreciative of the ideals of school, appreciative of the ideals of family life, and of fine American citizenship."

More meetings followed this one. Like the others these meetings were managed by the teachers mainly. As long as the meetings remained in the teachers' hands they belonged to the teachers; they were large classes for parents where the teachers played the main part, and the parents give largely a listening co-operation. What the parents needed was an incentive. Their coming together enabled them to talk to each other about school problems. Before we knew it group opinion began to centre about children's needs, equipment, children's work, school continuity, moral training.

At first a few had come protesting about the shifting of children. They had come as individuals. Then more of the old residents of the district disturbed by the conditions of things in the school and in the neighbourhood, came in twos and threes and made their objections. They felt that the fine old school from which they had been graduated had been

offered an affront — had lost its standing and prestige, and that they must have this adjusted.

This they told me as I met them in and about the school and I appreciated their point of view which harmonised with my own in that I felt the loss of the older children to be a serious handicap to the younger ones.

Among them was a young lawyer whose father as well as himself had been graduated from the school.

“I think it was a mistake,” said he; “I think the local board didn’t realise the meaning of their action. I know them all pretty well. The secretary is a personal friend of mine. In fact I asked for his appointment. I’ll go over with a few of the folks and talk it over with them.”

I saw him again a few days later. He was bursting with wrath and indignation.

“Think of it,” he stormed; “think of it! We went over and there they all sat about the big table. I started to talk and the gentleman at the head of the table held up his hand and said, ‘Have you an appointment here to-night?’

“‘No,’ I said, ‘I haven’t, I just came in to speak to you about our top grades.’

“‘Exactly. Won’t you have the secretary of your organisation write to our secretary’— Billie, mind you—‘and ask for an appointment and we will be pleased to hear you when we can reach you on the

calendar.' And there sat Billie and never opened his mouth."

"What did you do?"

"What could we do? They asked us whom we represented — they intimated we'd better go and get a reputation before we came before them again — And we're going to get it. We're going to organise an Association and go back. That's what."

The school had already furnished the impetus. The few leaders confident of their strength and sure of their position with relation to the school called a meeting. They tried to get the schoolhouse but they were too impatient to wait until permission was granted. The real estate man offered them his corner store as freely as he had offered it to the grubby gardeners. The people came not on tiptoes but talking, gesticulating, protesting. And this was the beginning of the parents' organisation.

### III

The parents wanted frequent meetings. They were impatient to get to work to see things done. But the school law provided that only four meetings a year could be granted.

There is that in each one of us that makes us antagonistic to a new idea — to a new point of view.

We have been happily pursuing our course and some one comes along and suggests that perhaps it has not been the best one in the world and maybe his is better.

Our first impulse is to brush him aside — bowl him over — get him out of the way, anything so we may be comfortable again.

But that won't do. Society won't permit it. We must listen more or less patiently while he dins his story into our ears. We argue the matter with him, we protest loudly, vigorously, with much waving of arms and stamping of feet.

We end by acknowledging he has much right on his side and if he had only said that long ago we should have understood him at once and saved much valuable time.

When the parents therefore asked for frequent use of the building the School Authorities objected.

"No, no," they said. "It isn't done. 'Twould be a bad precedent."

The association urged and persisted.

"Yes, we know, you're respectable, responsible citizens but you're going to open the building to the public. They'll mar the furniture and damage the building. You must remember the school was built for the children. We must protect their interests."

"But we are the parents of the children —" came the reminder.

"Yes, yes, we believe you to be perfectly fine people, but you'd better hire a hall. You might say things we would not like to stand for. We'll let you have the building four nights a year. That's very generous. We hope you won't abuse the privilege."

The Association was not satisfied with this concession. However, they accepted these four meetings and when they wanted more,— and they did,— they went to the Real Estate store or to the candy shop around the corner.

Then they decided that what the school needed was direct representation in the Local School Board. No member of the Local School Board had a child attending our school! Small wonder they did not understand the parents' requests.

Neighbourhood opinion supported the idea and soon the chairman of the Executive Committee was appointed on the Local School Board. That was a great step forward, a strong link between the school workers and the administration group.

The parents were granted the use of the building once a month during the school year simply because some one who knew was on hand to explain the need.

They looked forward to the monthly meetings when matters of vital interest to themselves and their children were discussed.

These points were always carefully selected by

the Executive Committee months ahead. The speakers were secured and the details of the programme well worked up so that the meeting proceeded with the precision and efficiency of fine organisation.

The usual "order of business" was followed: the various committees made their reports which were accepted or returned for further work as the cases demanded. New committees for new work were appointed and then the audience settled back to hear the special topic of the evening.

The Executive Committee, not the teachers, planned a health meeting. It was one of the neighbours who gave the talk.

This doctor began by telling us that the public school with its thousands of children coming from all sorts of homes was apt to be a breeding place for all sorts of contagious and infectious diseases.

In simple language the doctor told the parents how to protect their children from the contagious or infectious diseases, how to recognise the first symptoms of them. His points were illustrated with slides, the best of their kind.

"Only by utmost care and vigilance," were his last words "exercised by the school people, the Board of Health, doctors and nurses — and above all and beyond all — by the parents, can the health, the lives even, of the children be safeguarded."

The idea of the meetings was always a direct application of general principles to the immediate problems. If we talked about art it was the children's art with the children's drawings before us. If we talked about play it was our children's playground, our streets that were used. We made no attempt to bring in outsiders for general talks. Our work was specific and always had for its outcome something to do, a job, a concrete thing. So much begins and ends in talk. We wanted to get things done.

Naturally one expression of the group feeling was its relief work. The parents wanted to help the children, the neglected children, to attend and to profit by their school.

A standing committee was formed. Its work was to investigate cases of parental neglect, cases of need, cases of truancy. These were simple and direct. They could be attended to without much room for argument. There was usually sufficient information at hand to insure promptness in relief work.

Red haired Pat, small and ill-kept, did not attend school. The notices sent home by the teacher were unanswered. If a teacher called there was no one at home.

The case of Pat in the hands of the parents became a simple matter. The neighbours knew that the father drank and was seldom home. He had

no job. The mother went out to work but could not make enough for food and clothing. Pat needed clothes. He needed food. He needed medical care. Pat was clothed, fed, had his teeth fixed. He was kept at school and that was the end of the matter.

There were other children like Pat in the school, who, for want of proper food were unable to go on with their work; there were children who because they lacked proper clothing could not attend school; there were children who because proper medical care could not be given them were handicapped in their progress.

Physical needs were not new to the people. The ways of meeting these needs were not new to them. What was new was the group meeting these needs because it was their business to help their neighbours. What was new was the conscious strength that came through united effort, the feeling of responsibility that made them answer, "Yes, I am my brother's keeper, because he is my brother."

"Help me," was as natural a demand as its answer, "I will."

The judgment of the group was one that could generally be trusted. They loaned money to a family where the father was sick. The landlord was about to dispossess the family, the store keepers refused further credit. The relief committee loaned

them money, the family returning it in small instalments when times were better.

One of the members of the committee was a clever, grey haired, Yankee lawyer. He was very much averse to anything that looked like charity and he had been placed on the committee to act as a brake on their generosity.

"Have you inquired carefully into this case?" he would ask, balancing his eyeglasses on the end of his sharp forefinger. "Are you sure? So many cases in a week looks queer to me. Before acting on them I'd like to ask for further investigation."

"Further investigation! That's the Charity Bureau's cry and while they investigate the family starves to death. No, sir, I say no. Relieve first and investigate last," this from Henry's father, who was now leader of the group.

"Very well, but you'll get stung. Mark my words. You'll get stung!"

One family made repeated calls for help. Groceries, shoes, medicine, rent, until even the leader was a bit worried and made a more thorough investigation.

When the final report was presented to the committee it revealed that many parents had at some time or other, without the knowledge of the others, contributed money or food or clothes to these people: that two large charitable organisations in the

city were contributing to the support of the family in mutual ignorance of the situation, and the crushing fact that the impostors owned valuable property.

For an instant there was tense silence and then the old lawyer jumped up — and pointing his forefingers at the leader shouted triumphantly — “Stung, by George. Stung! Didn't I tell you! Didn't I tell you! Stung!”

Everybody rocked with laughter, but an investigator was added to the committee's staff, forthwith.

To make this sort of people better understand what the committee was trying to do it issued the following announcement: “Charity is not the primary object of the association. We are not here to make parents careless and dependent. Our object is to help children and this we try to do, though in helping them we bring pressure to bear upon the parents to help their own.”

Truancy and relief were intimately related. When a case of chronic absence was given to the attendance officer and he reported “poverty,” the committee's assistance in supplying clothing was often sufficient to cure truancy. Sometimes “jobs” had to be found for the working members of the family. This was done repeatedly.

Other cases of truancy were not so simple. It

was no easy task to get the corner boot black, big, ponderous, fat, to come puffing into the school building, with a struggling, kicking, yelling youngster, "a regular truant" he had found on the street, secure in his arms.

Neither was it easy to get the janitress a block away to send her children. Only the persistent daily visits of a member of the committee, the one who brought in the "runner," could succeed here. The attendance officer, stunned by the number and variety of excuses, could make no headway, but this woman, convinced that the children must attend school, paid daily visits to this family.

Some days she did not go but called at the school or sent a messenger. In case her particular charges were not in attendance she immediately started out, got the children and brought them to school. In the face of such persistence there was only one way out, the children had to come.

The object of the association was, as specifically stated, to co-operate with the school authorities, to come individually and collectively into contact with the school so that the highest influence of heredity and environment could be brought to bear upon the education of the children — in short, to direct the group consciousness upon the welfare of the children.

Soon there were requests for information as to the work of the association. The president of the association, our garden man, felt that here was a new idea.

"I sent out three hundred copies of this morning's paper. There was a fine account of our work. Have you seen it? My clerk was busy all day, cutting, folding, mailing.

"This is getting to be a big thing," he went on. "A parents' Association in every school! That's a big idea. I have been thinking of it for some time. What do you think of making a statement of policies?"

"Splendid," I answered, encouraging his enthusiasm.

"A square deal for the children," he announced vehemently, "means more parents' associations, a federation of parents' associations, co-operation between teachers and parents, the best teachers for the elementary school and for the youngest children, the masses, more schools, and smaller classes."

I smiled as I recognised some of my own pet theories.

The president appointed a committee to answer questions and to lend every assistance in their power to parents who desired to form a like association in their school.

We are all preachers by nature. We get an idea

and at once believe it is the most important idea in the world. Then like true reformers we launch into the campaign.

The danger of an adult association, however, lies not in this pushing enthusiasm of its members. The real danger comes when the association grows into a static, fixed, unyielding thing, itself a system. Parents' Associations in the city are not apt to be static. They are more apt to be fluid. They are with you one year and away the next. There is always a group coming in and a group going out. They are always making mistakes, the natural mistakes of beginners. Their work is a constant challenge to the intelligence and patience of the school. Dealing with parents in the interest of children has always seemed to me like handling a dynamic factor, one that puts power and soul into the hands of the teacher because it puts power and soul into the people. Socialising the school means humanising the teacher.

#### IV

No matter how many people moved into the neighbourhood, no matter how many tenements there were or how full, there was always the park. When the school was overwhelmed with children we looked out on the park and said, "There is plenty of air

and sunshine, there are plenty of trees, and shade and grass." When the streets overflowed there was the park to receive the overflow. When the summer nights were unbearable there was the park to sleep in. It was always there smiling in the sunshine — inviting the weary crowd to come out and rest.

But behold, one morning a startled parent came into school saying, "What do you think is afoot? They want to erect an armoury in the park and use it as a drill ground. This must not be allowed. We need the park for ourselves and we don't want amateur soldiers about. I shall ask that a meeting of the executive committee of the Parents' Association be called at once."

Two nights later the executive committee met at the president's house. The fact was brought out that a bill setting aside a portion of the park for an armoury had been introduced in the legislature and passed. Time was precious. The civic committee was appointed with full power to act. A meeting of the whole association followed. Then came a campaign, petitions, protests. The committee appeared before the Mayor when the bill was presented for his approval and joining forces with other park lovers secured its veto.

Aside from saving the park as a playground for the children, the group realised that their united

strength could achieve results even in the face of powerful political interests.

Two years later there was a second attempt at invasion. One morning a park attendant told a neighbour who was strolling by that he had seen a surveyor about and that a surveyor about meant a building. The neighbour was a member of the Executive Committee of the Parents' Association. At once there was a call, the school committee began to investigate. A startling discovery was made. Plans had been drawn for a firehouse to be erected in the park, the money appropriated and ground was about to be broken. There remained but one small formality — the location of the building on the part of the park commissioner. This time the association was ready. This time there was a united neighbourhood to appeal to and a People's Neighbourhood House through which to conduct a campaign.

There were public meetings in halls hired for the purpose. There were continued meetings at the school, the settlement house, the neighbourhood dispensary.

Then the parents' association called into play — and it was to them — a group of young men, none of whom was more than twenty. These young men belonged to the school group. They were getting ready to take part in the group activity of the adults.

Here was their opportunity. They helped at the open meetings. They circulated petitions. They organised groups of younger boys who paraded through the streets singing, "The parks must be free, the parks must be free for the people."

Sam, their leader, short, chunky, aggressive and deadly in earnest, wrote an impassioned letter to the Mayor protesting against the threatened invasion and calling the City Fathers to strict account for it. He read the letter to the club who enthusiastically approved it and ordered it mailed forthwith.

Eagerly Sam watched the mails for the reply and when the envelope bearing the City Hall Crest came he tore it open fully expecting a thrilling response from the famous letter writer. He got it.

Across the top of Sam's own letter in the Mayor's neat chirography was pencilled, "Who but a madman heeds what a madman says?" W. J. G.

The shout of laughter that went up was full of joyful appreciation of the old gentleman's cleverness and the joke on Sam.

After many months the city authorities, the park commissioner and the neighbourhood agreed upon a compromise. The firehouse was put elsewhere.

Once more, aside from saving the park, the group realised that united strength could achieve results even in the face of powerful opposition.

## V

"Tony did it," gasped an enraged voice. I looked up. Framed in the office door stood Mrs. Mason in a sorry state. Tony, in one of his tantrums had vented his resentment in a more forceful way than usual. Calling names, throwing stones would not do. Tony had utilised the ammunition furnished by the pickle barrel,—the pickled onion, the scaly, salty fish.

Mrs. Mason appeared reeking from the fray. Onion peels, fish scales, coated her usually immaculate gown and the odour of dill was strong upon her.

"Tony did it. I want you to punish Tony. He is a little terror. We are all in dread of him. Just now he charged into my shop, pointed a penny pistol in my face and shouted at me, 'Money or your life!'

"When I started after him he grabbed two handfuls of candy, knocked over the paper stand so I nearly fell over it and made out of the door.

"I chased him and he raced into Rachel's fish store and this is what he did to me.

"If I get him I'll spank the life out of him. His parents don't care. He gets most of his ideas from the movies. Something ought to be done. Teach

these boys manners. Now-a-days children have no respect for older people."

Mrs. Mason sank into a chair and suddenly a ripple of laughter crossed her face and she said, "We've got to get after those movies."

Mrs. Mason was a member of the Executive Committee and for hours watched the bright lights of the moving picture show opposite her home. She saw the children playing about under the lights. She saw them beg to be taken in. She saw them go in unescorted. She talked with the neighbours about the "movie show," about the mysterious, dark influences at work to undermine the children's characters.

When the matter finally came up for official investigation she had a deal of information. Then followed an investigation of many picture houses in the borough and of all picture houses in the school district.

The committee visited these places afternoons and evenings. Then they detailed the violations of law to the association. The association decided to call a meeting of the managers of the moving picture houses. They came resenting the call and yet too cautious to stay away.

The parents who had looked up the law on picture houses explained the law, described the violations

in each place that had been visited. They asked each manager to remedy the evils of presenting poor pictures, of badly lighted places, of allowing entrance to unescorted children, of crowding men and women and children without regard to fire laws.

Especially indignant was the father of two little boys, aged nine and seven, who had stayed away from school and had taken "nickles" from their mother's purse in order to go to the movie show.

The parents demanded protection against conditions that were demoralising to the children.

One of the managers present said, "You can't close up my place. I don't care if you do take me to court; the most that can happen to me will be a fine. I can afford to pay a fine and make plenty of money besides."

The indignant father who had secured evidence against this man, presented the case in court. He was fined fifty dollars.

A week later a second fine was imposed upon the same man. In two weeks his house had to close its doors. Not only had the owner been fined but bulletins had been issued announcing the fact. Public opinion emptied his house.

There was no more opposition to our demands. We were asked by the managers to visit and inspect

their premises and their pictures and to make suggestions for the betterment of both.

The Parents' Association had become a power for good in the neighbourhood. It had earned the confidence of the people.

## CHAPTER V

### THE NEIGHBOURHOOD IDEA KEEPS ON GROWING

#### I

WHAT the children needed was leadership and direction.

When my family came to New York, I lost the companionship of open fields, grass, trees, flowers, sheep, streams, dark castles on the mountain sides.

In their places were flats, dark stairs, and streets — paved streets with trucks and boys running wild, empty lots, waste heaps. My companionship with nature was lost.

What a change, from the sunshine, the open fields, the folk stories, the friends, to this crowded city life! And yet what a wonderful place is a city. Here life is seething, moving, searching it knows not what — fellowship? Common ideals?

The children left to themselves wandered mystified, guessed, tried first this thing and then that, and failed. Few, very few, through some fortunate accident, carried the dreams of their fathers into their lives.

I wandered about with the rest of the children doing what we saw the older boys doing. Too young to find work for ourselves we imitated those who were experienced enough to turn to their own uses what the empty lots and paved streets offered.

We played with pennies until the older ones took them from us. We used bad language because the older ones used bad language. We smoked for the same reason. We took what was on the vender's wagon because the older ones praised us for doing it. We fought with our fists because the older ones encouraged us.

The streets and the boys who owned the streets were our masters. They did the training. Our parents worried and wondered. They punished us when they caught us. We learned to deceive, to cheat, to lie, to fight.

Through all this there was never a word of school. School had nothing to do with living and we were busy living.

When we grew older we formed our own little club and held meetings in a corner of the cellar where no one could intrude. We built a theatre in one of the cellar store rooms. We took boards from the buildings and made benches. We searched for discarded mats and carpets. We ripped the "thriller ads" off the fences and pasted them on the walls of our theatre. We made a stage and a cur-

tain and gave our plays. What we needed to satisfy our dramatic instincts was leadership and a clean place.

The cellar walls of an abandoned building made our playground. We stayed home from school and sailed planks on the water that had gathered between the decaying walls. We hopped from wall to wall, across openings, at the risk of life and limb. We fell into dirty water and made a fire to dry our clothes. We went home only when we felt we had to because we feared punishment. When we were late, we relied on our mothers to shield us. This was all bad for us, terribly bad. It was a life of chance with the chances all against us. What we needed to satisfy our play instincts was leadership and open spaces.

Where these cellars stood twenty-five years ago, there are rows upon rows of flat houses, with stores and stables, and saloons and factories.

Many crimes have been committed in the spot where we played truant from school. It was bad for us twenty-five years ago. It is worse for the children of to-day who must contend not against an indifferent, passive environment, but against an aggressive, sinful, depressing, fearful environment.

Many times I have heard people say that the children who had it in them to become good men and women would become good men and women, and

children who had it in them to be bad would become bad. My experience has been different. I have seen perfectly fine boys go wrong through no fault of theirs. The school had driven them out and the home did not know what to do. I have seen beautiful natures with a passion for fine things, become discouraged, perverted, lost, and through no fault of theirs. The home was powerless to help. The school did not understand.

What we needed as children was some one to show the way. Some one who knew us and valued us. Some one who would live with us and for us.

What we needed as children, children still need.

The teachers and I conscious of the dangers that come to an active child from a random seeking to satisfy his desires, tried to make the people whose children were about us realise their responsibility while we ourselves did our share. We knew the children needed the older folk. We knew that we had only limited means of gathering and holding these young people together. All we had was the school and we were fast losing that except as a drill machine running eight hours a day during which time two schools in turn tried to master the prescribed book facts.

An eager little group of children waited at the door to speak to me as I left the school one after-

noon. I recognised the leader in one of the school plays.

"Do you know," he began after an exchange of greetings; "do you know that the Dramatic Club can't meet any more?"

"Yes," I said. "I'm very sorry about it."

"But what are we going to do?" and the anxious little faces pressed closer to me. "We've no place to go. We can't give it up," the little fellow pleaded.

"I don't know what we're going to do, son. The school is so crowded that we have to let two classes take turns in using a room so each room is used all day long. I'm trying to find some way out for you."

"We'll stay after school hours as we used to do."

"I don't think it would be right. You could not have a room until half-past four and it's too late then and the teachers are tired. When the other new school opens there will be more room and we can begin again."

The school, after all, narrowing down to routine, was such a far-away place, far away from the actual lives of people. How could we get close, so close to each other that we would be part of the people and they a part of us, and be "folksy" together?

A woman I knew of began by going into the crowded streets. She started in the spring, when

the houses were emptied of the children and the streets were filled with their shouts, their games, their squabbles.

She arrived at the same time each afternoon. She began by going from one group of little mothers to another and helping them with their sewing. To some she loaned books, to others she told stories that were found in books. The boys were helped with their games. By and by there were excursions.

The summer came and passed. School opened and when these children returned they were a little different from what they had been. They were better, less selfish, cleaner, in spite of the vacation.

The cold weather came and it was evident that the street meetings would soon have to stop.

Nobody had any money. There was a stranded old house on the block. No one lived in it. No one wanted to live in it. The "Street Lady" called upon the owner and got the use of the house for the asking. There was no furniture, no heat, no lighting. But they began.

Bits of matting and cast-off carpets, chairs without backs, chairs without seats, anything that could be made of service the children seized and carried to their house. Pictures, pictures out of magazines and newspapers, advertisements, moving picture idols were cut out and were pasted on the walls.

An old stove was fed by the boys who brought

wood to heat the place. The library was a packing case. The books were just books, torn, dirty, dog-eared, battle-scarred by long and rough usage. But the books, the house, and all about it belonged to the children.

Could we build such a place where the boys and the girls would work together, plan together, live together, grow together?

We felt that it would be good for our children to have a house of their own to go to when they felt inclined. We felt that it would be good for the parents of the children to have a house that was different from a school because its atmosphere was of hospitality; where the seats were ordinary chairs that invited one to sit and relax; the rooms, ordinary rooms cluttered with delightful evidences of human occupancy; the people ordinary people who could chat about every day things; the ways of living, the ordinary ways of living; and the doors opened because they couldn't find it in their hearts to stay shut.

Our personal interest in the adults was always secondary. We worked with them because we could get no results if we ignored them. Our primary interest was the child. What we sought was complete living for him.

The most popular meeting place for the parents had not been the school but the Hall. This was a

great bare room in back of the candy shop, where we were welcome any time,— a most convenient arrangement when a meeting had to be called at short notice.

In the Hall we held our annual dinners. The food was cooked by the mothers in their own kitchens and taken to the Hall. The neighbours loaned the chairs for the diners. On these occasions the cellar was dressed up for a reception room and a very acceptable one it made.

It was a wonderful spirit that could work and hold a group of people together under such conditions. The people were big and strong and united. There was always the promise of bigger things to come. What change might the next day bring? When people are sacrificing, striving, they forget to think of themselves. They think of the idea only, and the idea marches on.

Many conferences were held in the Hall. We discussed again and again the need of a settlement. We needed leaders who would make it their business to live with the problems of the people, with the problems of the children. The only way to get these leaders was through the establishment of a settlement.

Our friends' sympathies were enlisted and through their generosity a settlement house was founded. The house selected was a mansion set on a big plot

of grass with shade trees. The apartment houses towering on all sides of it had driven the owners away. They were glad to find a market for it.

Some repairs and alterations were necessary before the house could be used. Who was to take charge while the workmen were busy — and how could we use the lawn and shade trees at once for the little children?

We had overlooked my father. He had come into the school every now and then, looked about, stayed an hour or two, smiled and gone home.

Now that there was work to do, he put his cot in one of the rooms, and had his meals sent in. To him the settlement like the school meant a place for children. As soon as he appeared they gathered about him. Slowly, softly he smiled and told them stories, and then more stories. He spoke in broken English, and in gestures, but the children understood. Again Crusaders marched; again the goblins grinned in unsuspected places in this house of dark rooms, plaster, paints, papers, windows, boards, packed furniture. Once more he was a soldier on his charger, and once more little children listened and adored.

At night favoured ones were allowed to come and stay with him. They came bringing their blankets. His one steady companion was a child on crutches who followed Father all about the lawn and the

house. The two had long intimate talks and many, many laughs.

During the day the baby carriages rolled in over the lawn and under the shade of the trees, and the small boys actually hushed themselves that the baby brothers and sisters might sleep.

Early one day in that first summer the calm was broken by a voice shrieking: "It's fierce. Soup meat for twenty-two cents. How can poor people live?" It was Ruth's voice and a teacher hurried toward the rapidly growing knot of people about her. A flourish with a little stick toward the audience pointed the question.

"Sure, sure — that is right," they murmured. "And chicken! Full of sands their insides are and for that thirty-two cents. The thieves, the murderers, they'll starve us!" Fiercer plunges with the little stick and more assenting murmurs.

The crowd began to warm up. The teacher tried to edge closer to the speaker.

Now Ruth broke into Yiddish, still carrying the crowd with her, at the end of her sharp little stick and sharper little tongue.

Then in unmistakable English she called out, "Come, stand up, we'll break their windows, we'll —"

Now thoroughly alarmed, the teacher pushed close

to Ruth. Immediately her face broke into smiles, "Ah, here's our school. They'll help us," and Ruth poured out her story.

"Bring your friends over to the House, Ruth, and we'll talk it over there."

Led by "the school" and Ruth, the group marched over to the House and the first of numerous meetings were held on the meat strike.

As time passed the clubs began to voice the need that the school had voiced so many times before the need for play space.

Twice the school, its people and its teachers had secured a temporary summer playground in the park opposite the school. Twice when the playground had been removed, they were disappointed. Then the settlement and the school decided that the time had come to secure a permanent playground. A conference was called at the settlement, to which the city officials came. A playground in front of the school was demanded. We wanted an organised playground conducted by a teacher, one who knew how to lead children to play.

We were all familiar with free play, absolute free play, digging about in ash heaps, pouring dirty water from one mud hole to another, fights, pulling the pedlar's pack, baseball where the older took what they needed from the younger. We wanted a super-

vised playground, where the various group activities were controlled by an idea and where sportsmanship and not force held sway.

Twice the school had tried and failed, twice it had succeeded only partially; now hand in hand with the settlement and a public-spirited park commissioner, we succeeded in securing a permanent playground for the use of the neighbourhood children. We were all sure of a place at last where the boys who wanted to play could go and be free to shout, to compete, to win, to lose, to breathe deeply and to drink in the sunshine and the wind.

The settlement, seeing as the school had seen that language difficulty was one cause of separation between parents and children, began the work of teaching mothers English. Each morning a group of mothers gathered in one of the club rooms. The babies were left in the game room in charge of a house leader, and the mothers laboriously prepared to go through simple English exercises.

Some day the school itself will bridge over the gap that exists between English speaking children and non-English speaking parents, by helping the children to teach the parents in the school building itself and during school hours.

Each month ten thousand children, men, women of all ages, went in and out of the settlement house. Music, drawing, sewing, civic clubs, athletic clubs,

literary clubs, occupied all the space there was. Michael and his mother were there. So were the Flannigans and their group. We looked upon the settlement as a moving, living force whose idea was one of service and not of power. Free from tradition, we felt that it would be the neighbourhood social experimental station, finding out, working out, and then beginning again, never stopping long enough to standardise. We felt it would always be open hearted because it prided itself on the bigness of the new opportunities. Through it the people would be drawn together more closely and neighbourhood idealism result. It gave us the hope that some day the school itself would be a bigger thing than it had ever been before.

## II

Many new children were admitted to the school in the spring. They came, they stayed till the cold weather and then went away.

"This is a shifting population," said my friend the real estate man. "It's better than it was but it's still bad. They are beginning to settle however. They don't change as much as they used to. Why, of the fifty-two flat houses I have charge of, twenty-eight were empty, completely empty from October to May. When they come they want a month's

rent free. When they go they forget to pay the last month's rent. I wish they would stop moving."

"So do I. Our changes of class registers are tremendous. Some years our transfer figures are larger than our register."

"They'll stop soon," he added. "They come up from the crowded East Side. They move up here for the summer season to get the air. In fall they have been in the habit of returning to their winter quarters. You see, there are two parks here and plenty of open lots. These folks can't afford to go to the country so they come here. A great many of them are sick, too. Go through the park in the morning and see the men and women on the benches. Some of them are tubercular; all of them need fresh air."

This then was the reason that the school kept the local doctors busy, that we were not satisfied with the little that the Board of Health doctor and nurse could do and had begun to group our doctor friends into departments — nerve doctors, eye doctors, and the rest. This was the reason for the increase in our classes for atypical children, the anæmic children, for groups of children with special defects, bad feet, bad speech, bad spines, bad eyes.

But what had this to do with us? We had been trained as teachers, not as doctors. Why should we use time and energy that should be given to the

three R's, and allow children to rest, to sleep, to do special physical exercises in the school?

Whatever has to do with the growth of the child has to do with the teacher. No one can teach a sick child. It cannot be done. The building, the equipment, the books, the teacher, are all wasted on the sick child. A sound mind rarely dwells in a sick body.

The local doctors had been giving their services freely and gladly as the school needed them. They had been ahead of the parents in their service because their contribution was definite and could be made any time they were called upon. But as there was no hospital near the school where the people could take their children for treatment, a great many times children's ailments were allowed to go unattended because the distance to the nearest hospital was too great.

The examination and care of abnormal children, always a difficult problem, had been a severe drain upon the school, because the institutions that could help were far from home. The teachers gave their afternoons and Saturdays to this work but even that was not sufficient.

I saw the doctors grouped, and the people helping, and I realised that the school was already building its hospital. What was needed was its concrete embodiment as an institution. The people, and the

doctors secured a charter from the state authorities and began work at once by opening a dispensary.

Shortly after the dispensary opened a Russian Jew presented himself at the office in school. He was very much afraid of intruding but he had something to say that had to be said, he explained, holding out a strong, white hand and smiling across at me with the kindest brown eyes imaginable.

Wondering, I placed a chair and waited for his story. He laid aside his big soft hat and little black bag.

"You open a hospital, my friend?" he said. "I am a doctor. I would help."

I was about to explain that he must apply to the Board of Directors, but he checked me and went on.

"We are Russian doctors — me and my wife. We lived in a little town in Russia. Always we worked for the sick. No difference, Jew or Gentile. From morning till night, all night when they needed us, we worked for them. If they could pay it was good. If they could not, it was alike good.

"When we did not think of trouble it came. They rushed to kill us. Even the sick people we worked for — they came to kill us. I pushed my wife in the cellar, I fight, then I hide. See this scar on my hand — that I get from Russia.

"By and by we make our way to France, then to America. America gave us a home, it gave us work.

Now we want to pay back some little. We want to work for the sick children under the flag.

"In Russia I learned to cure the lame children. Show me some. I am a — how you say in English — a masseur doctor."

We set him to work and his energy and enthusiasm were wonderful.

One day he caught my arm as I passed his room in the dispensary. His face was transfigured, the tears shone in his eyes as he dragged me in.

"See, my friend, see, he walks. The little fellow, he walks again. I have made it so, I am like your Jesus Christ — I make him walk again, the little fellow. I am so happy."

### III

Within three years after I had come to "My School," another school had opened its doors. But still we were all overcrowded. We demanded additional room. The classes increased in size and number. We asked for more schools and waited. But there was no relief. It was always in the coming. There were conferences, there were petitions, there were public meetings, there were local newspaper demands, there were letters aplenty, all dealing with the need for additional school accommodations. Temporary quarters were rented. But

these were of little help. When the movement of population sets in a certain direction, there is no help; at least no ordinary help will do.

The president of the Parents' Association, who had been the most insistent person on school accommodations, headed a church committee and with the aid of our real estate man secured property on the northern edge of the school district and began a school building for which the people belonging to the church furnished the funds.

"I want you to go over the plans of the building with me," he told me one day as he came into the office with a roll of papers under his arm.

"There are to be sixteen classrooms, and an auditorium accommodating four hundred, with regular auditorium seats, not the desks we've had to use here — No more knee cramping, no more sitting doubled up when we hold our Parents' Association meetings. There will be a fine stage for dramatic work. In the cellar a large gymnasium is planned and the children can use the swimming pool. It is already in the building, marble, with filtered water. It is planned to have a roof playground in addition. The library is across the street. This will be a fine building. I have tried to put in it everything you have been telling us a school should have. There is room for shops, and a music room. It will be finished in two years."

"Those are fine plans," I said. "Your pastor is a first rate architect. The whole thing is wonderful. We are a lucky neighbourhood. Only yesterday the park commissioner gave us a plot for a garden in the park. It is located near the pond. And about four months ago a lady came and talked over the project of opening up a children's nursery. She has already secured a house not far from your proposed building."

## IV

When the over-large school recognised its social limitations and possibilities, it recognised also the need of a home visitor, a woman experienced in the ways of the world, who knew things that a young teacher could not possibly know, who could grasp the neighbourhood problems and handle them most effectively.

The Henry Street Nurses' Settlement had a branch in our district. Now and then the teachers had come across the nurses in their visits to the home. The teacher had gone to ask about a neglected child, the nurse, to see the child's sick mother. Many times the teacher and nurse worked together. When the school needed a home visitor because the teachers were too tired and the work become too heavy, the nurse suggested a woman "who had years of experience in meeting the people's problems."

“ Thus Aunt Margaret ” came to us. We begged money for her salary. Those who gave it were our neighbours, the people with whom and for whom she would have to work.

The machinery of Aunt Margaret's department was simple. The human quality of it kept it and made it so. A little pasteboard box that suggested shoes, and a little black bag that suggested efficiency were about all that was visible — and of course “ Aunt Margaret.” In the black bag were the records of the cases for the day, and a list of all the children's welfare agencies, addresses and telephone calls, a street directory, a note book and pencil, a handkerchief, a change purse and some chocolate for children. All very simple and very human and most efficient.

The first day Aunt Margaret appeared, a teacher came into the office looking very dejected. She had made a visit to the home of a child whose appearance indicated extreme neglect and the mother had ordered her out. The family lived in a basement. The teacher had knocked and entered. The mother met her silently. Her clothes were unsightly and the condition of the rooms was desperate. Scarcely anything was clean. The teacher at once had begun to explain to the parent that her child needed washing, needed clothes, and that a mother should not be so careless as to permit the child to go to school in

such a disgraceful condition. Whereupon the parent had upbraided the teacher for coming to her house to find fault.

"You have no right," she had said, "to come here and talk about mine kid. Mind your own business. Teach mine kid and leave her clothes alone. What do you know about mine troubles, with your fur coat and your feathers in your hat? Go away."

And the teacher had come back to school and poured forth a tirade against home visits and against superiors that required home visits and against the school that encouraged such visits.

Aunt Margaret took up the story and the job.

"How do you do this morning? The teacher told me you weren't feeling very well so I just ran over to see you. How's the little girl?" she asked. "Now don't disturb yourself. Sit right down on that chair. I'll get one for myself."

Before she knew what was happening to her the woman found herself in the most comfortable chair in the room and "Aunt Margaret" waiting upon her.

"My mother was ill a long time before I lost her and I learned how to make her more comfortable. She used to like to have me brush her hair. She said it rested her," Aunt Margaret chatted amiably. Her hands were already fumbling about among the

sick woman's hairpins and during the brushing process the two became very confidential.

"Are you from the school?"

"Yes. I belong to it. The teacher told me you were sick," said Aunt Margaret.

"Such a fresh teacher! She comes in and says mine kid is dirty and I should shame myself. Mine God — I have such a sore on mine leg and mine arm that I can't move. I pull mine hair like crazy."

"But the teacher didn't know that," interposed the visitor.

"Sure she don't. Then for why she makes a face at mine kid and says she is too dirty to be by the other kids. She's got no sores nor no kids neither. Like a grand lady she is with her high heels and feathers and powder on her nose. Never she come here again, I quick slam the door in her face. The fresh thing!"

"Have you had the doctor?" asked Aunt Margaret.

"Yes, once I go by the doctor and he say, 'My dear woman, you must go to the hospital. You can't pay me for this job. It cost you a hundred dollars maybe.' How can I go to hospital? They will not take mine kid and the society will get her. Maybe I lose mine husband. He not come by me in hospital."

"I know a good doctor who will come and see you right here. He belongs to the school like me, and he will take care of you for nothing," and the deft fingers put in the last hairpin.

"Maybe he say for nothing and then charge me big money," and suspicion looked out of her eyes for an instant.

"No, he won't. He isn't like that. Now I'll get the little girl ready for school and I'll come back very soon with the doctor."

When the doctor came he said the "sores" were very bad.

"She must have a nurse here to dress these every day. She should really be in a hospital," he explained to the school visitor.

The woman cried out sharply—"No, no. I lose mine kid if I go by hospital. Maybe I die. No, I stay home."

Aunt Margaret asked the Nurses Settlement for help and one of the blue gowned nurses called every day until the patient was cured.

In the meantime the little girl fell ill. Nothing we could do could save her. Neglect and poverty had weakened her so that when pneumonia attacked her she died. Aunt Margaret helped from first to last.

Some weeks later the mother came to school.

"I come to say good-bye," she said. "I go with

mine husband in the country. But first I say good-bye to the school, mine friend, never I forget. So good you were, so kind. When I come back I come to see you, how you look. I wish you health —”

A few words of explanation was all that Aunt Margaret needed, for she was keen where children were concerned and knew what to do.

Were the children dirty? Somehow they were made clean. Were they hungry? Then they were fed. Were they brought before the children's court, Aunt Margaret was sure to be there to plead their cause. Was father out of work? A job was dug up out of somewhere. One thought twice before getting into trouble, for while she helped you out, you got a stinging, blistering raking over when she had pulled you out.

Peter, one of the highlights in 4A, stole some pigeons. The indignant owner had him arrested and hauled to the Court.

Peter's father and Aunt Margaret appeared with him.

“I didn't steal 'em,” said Peter, looking the judge straight in the eye — “I took 'em.” Aunt Margaret gasped and the father made frantic gestures towards Peter.

“But they were not yours. What do you call stealing?”

"When I take it and I ain't got the right."

"Exactly. Now what right had you to those pigeons?"

"They eat my pigeons' feed. He never hardly feeds his and they come and eat my feed."

"Is that all you have to say, Peter?" and the judge's eyes searched Peter's face.

"And — a — I wanted the fantail."

"Exactly. Then you stole, Peter, and I ought to lock you up."

Peter hung his head.

Turning to Aunt Margaret the judge said, "What kind of a boy is he in school?"

"He's a first rate boy. We've never heard a word against him. His teacher says his lessons are very good. I think he made a mistake, your Honour. Perhaps you could give him another chance and we'll keep an eye on him. He's really a good boy."

Peter looked up gratefully.

"If I let you go home with your father and this lady this time," said the judge, "will you promise me not to take anything that isn't yours — even if you think you have a good excuse?"

"Sure — I mean — Yes, sir."

"Very well. Are you willing to take charge of him?" the judge said to Aunt Margaret. "You'll be responsible for him and if he does anything like

this again you'll have to bring him back here to me."

"Yes, I'll take him," said Aunt Margaret, "and I'll see he doesn't come back."

On the way home Aunt Margaret took a hand at Peter.

"Look here — young man — stealing is stealing and there'll be none of it in your family. Do you understand? I'll take a look at those pigeons of yours every so often and if I find one there that I don't know about — I'll empty that coop — every last one of them will fly over your head. Mind that."

"I have more trouble," said my assistant to Aunt Margaret, "with ninety-nine, ninety-nine than with any other house in the district. It seems to me that anybody who is dirty, or sick or a truant lives there. I wish it would disappear off the face of the earth," and the assistant slammed down a bundle of papers on her desk. "Every one of those slips stands for somebody in ninety-nine, ninety-nine — I wish I could find out what sort of a place that is."

"Aunt Margaret" reached for the slips and dropped them into her black bag, saying, "I'll look in to-day and tell you what I find."

Later in the day she stopped at the school to report.

"Well, I should say there was something wrong about that house. It's awful, I don't believe it's had a coat of paint since it was built. The fire escapes are jammed. The first floor stairway looks like a dump. It's a wonder everybody in the house isn't sick. I've asked all the departments in sight for help, and they've all promised to get busy. The landlord says all he does is paint and paper but I don't believe it. I am going to make him show me."

"But I don't think we'll get very far at that. I went in to Mary Ann's mother about her hair and what do you think she said? 'And what of that? Sure she has them. We all have them. It's a sign of good health.' Did you ever hear anything to equal that?"

"Lots," said the assistant. "Lots, I've heard a book since I began to get after ninety-nine, ninety-nine."

"Well, we'll see what the Board of Health and the Tenement Department will do for us," and Aunt Margaret gathered up her belongings and went home.

"How's ninety-nine, ninety-nine?" my assistant asked her a while later.

"Fine, we're a little cleaner. The children are looking better. I'm going around there this morning though to see Mary Ann. She isn't much better."

In a short time the school visitor returned. She was angry.

"If that place isn't the limit. I've just had it cleaned up and it's as bad as ever. I went in to see about Mary Ann and the minute I stepped into the hall I smelled something. I walked to the back and there under the stairs was a dirty old mattress and a heap of old rags and the smell of cats — I went hot-foot for the janitor.

"'What can I do?' he said. 'I told you you couldn't keep this place clean. It ain't my fault. I don't make the people. Now you see it for yourself. I got my troubles and they ain't yours. Yours ain't mine neither,' and he turned his back on me and started to walk off.

"'Who put that stuff there?' I demanded.

"'How should I know? I guess it was Rebecca's family.'

"I went right up and asked Rebecca's mother why she put that stuff out there and she said, 'I didn't put it there, the kids did.'

"'What did you let them do it for?'

"'I should let them do it? She asks me I should let the kids? They don't ask me. They put it there for a place for their cats.'

"'Their cats!' I exclaimed.

"'Sure, ain't they got any rights? The teacher of the Board of Health says they can't keep no cats

in the house cause it ain't healthy. She says it makes sores on the baby, those cats. Then the kids put them in a place under the stairs. I ain't got anything to do by it.' She waved her arms overhead and shouted at me till I was deaf and dizzy." Aunt Margaret was out of breath.

"What did you do?" asked the assistant.

"I got the rubbish man to take the stuff out. Now I'm going to get rid of those cats."

She picked up the telephone and began talking.

"Yes, a lot of cats, Ninety-nine, ninety-nine. Catch them? No, I didn't. How can I catch them? Will you go up with your wagon and try? I'll catch what I can."

"Now, what do you think of that?" said Aunt Margaret as she hung up the receiver. "He says did I catch the cats?"

There were the dance halls and the moving picture shows always likely to become a serious menace to moral growth. To cope with the conditions, the school visitor had to stay in the district nights, Saturdays and Sundays. She had to find out exactly what went on, who the leaders were, what temptations were put before the children to attract and keep them, and then to act in accord with this information, appealing to the law, to welfare societies, and to the parents, individually and collectively.

Usually reports of this kind made to the group of parents evoked more interest and enthusiasm than any other kind. The visitor's vigorous crusades always resulted in better conditions.

V

But somehow I already had the feeling that the very presence of Aunt Margaret, even though she belonged to the school and to the people, was ultimately tending towards keeping the people out of the school and the school out of the home. She was here, there, everywhere. The people met her in the streets, in the homes. The more efficient Aunt Margaret became the more the parents relied on her and stayed home, the more the teachers stayed in the schoolhouse and relied on her. I had the same idea about the doctors, the settlement leaders, the civic club. I wondered if the price the school had to pay for efficiency was a loss of the personal element, the very thing we had worked hard to obtain.

The school had stood alone, an imposing structure; about it a tall iron-spiked fence with gates that opened and shut at the appointed hour. Scarcely a soul that was not a pupil, a teacher, or a school official, had ventured through its gates. They had passed, repassed, looked up, wondered what might be going on inside and then passed on thinking,

"What handsome buildings our school houses are!"

I had come and asked the people to stop. They had stopped. By ones and twos they had come through the gates. Then we had gone on together, parents and teachers, sharing the children's problems. We had worked individually and collectively to push the school out into the neighbourhood. "My school" had become "Our School." The teachers' school had become the people's school.

Through its efforts to get the people as the background for the spiritual growth of the children the school had succeeded in starting the mass movement. And then what had happened? The energy of the mass had begun to divide itself almost at the very moment of its greatest unity. Each group had begun to interpret the idea of service in terms of its own experience. Each had begun to think, "Mine is the most important work."

Those that had helped to care for the sick developed the dispensary. They believed this was the great neighbourhood need.

Those that had been talking about overcrowded school conditions built a school. They believed this was the great neighbourhood need.

Those that wanted the inspiration of personal leadership formed a settlement. They believed this was the great neighbourhood need.

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Those that wanted the spread of knowledge on civic problems organised a forum. They believed this was the great neighbourhood need.

We had thought our worries were over, and they were only beginning in a new way. I realised that the problem the school was now facing was one common to many schools. There was scarcely a congested school district in the city that had not its settlement, its library, its hospital, its park, its charitable organisations, its civic bodies. Would the school be equal to the task of keeping the social forces working together, the children always as the centre of united effort?

There was no answer. And yet I knew that the school must accept the challenge or again stand alone while the crowd passed by its gates. The school that had started the mass movement and had watched it take its course would now have to regather the mass and start it off once more.

## CHAPTER VI

### OUR SCHOOL

#### I

WHILE the school was engaged in the process of getting the parent to feel the power that comes through united effort, what was the school doing within its own doors to reflect the larger freedom and the closer human touches of the world outside its doors? What was the reaction of all this upon the life of the school? Very slight, I confessed to myself. The classroom work went on very much in the same way. Why was this?

I went back to my own experiences as a teacher. Many times I had the feeling of bondage. I was just one in a great machine and as long as I stayed in my particular corner that was sufficient.

The days slipped by in a monotonous repetition, "number for ten examples — If a man had,—" of bells, marchings, piles of yellow paper that seemed to distribute themselves to the deadening, chant "Write your name, class, and date at the head of the paper. . . . Skip a line. Begin one inch in

from the left side! Monitors collect. . . . Mark time, march,"— and the day was over.

This kind of work I had to do day in and day out. Going home nights I was weary. There is no bondage so deadly as that which prohibits intellectual liberty. Intellectual slavery was what school teaching had meant to me at that time. It should not mean that for these teachers if I could prevent it.

I looked for individual strength in the teacher and put that strength on the work where it would tell. I felt that the teacher would grow only when allowed to use her best talent in behalf of the children.

Teachers' hobbies was what "my school" needed. The anæmic class was given to one type of teacher, the atypical class to another, the backward class to another, the posture cases to one group, the speech cases to another, the disciplinary cases to the Child's Interest Committee. What we did for the special children during school time we now tried to do for the normal children, but this had to be done after school hours and in the teacher's own time.

The lover of flowers organised the Nature Study walks, the lover of music organised the Choral Club, the literary groups became the editorial staff of the school paper and the Story Telling club. Teachers grouped themselves according to individual tastes and inclinations. There were committees on festivals, athletics, dancing, embroidery classes, art

classes, manual training classes. The children selected the class they wanted to join and soon the school hummed with the sounds of these different afternoon "shops." But one must finish his day's allotment of the classroom work before he could relax in the shops.

I was going the rounds of the building late one afternoon, as was my habit. This was a long time after I had become principal. I passed the assembly room. It was full of groups of children and teachers. Some were rehearsing, some were talking, some were just looking on and smiling. In another room I found a group of boys and girls making paper hats. In another half a dozen were drawing, putting in colour, motion, ideas, and each proud because the drawing belonged to him.

I went on. It was late. School as such had closed its doors long since. Yet here were half a dozen teachers and a hundred or more children working, laughing, growing together.

I went into another room. A teacher was sitting there with a group of children about her. They had papers all about them. Now and then they stopped to read one aloud and the teacher and the children would say, "Let's save that one. That's a real good story."

When they saw me standing near them they looked up.

"We are picking out the good ones that are to go into the school paper," and the teacher added, "See what Isaac has written."

### THE WIND

Oh! How I'd like to be the wind! I'd scamper all over the world.

I'd blow so softly, that the buds would say, "Spring is coming. Let's put on our bonnets of bright colours."

If I were at sea I would whisper into the captain's ear, "Spring is coming."

Oh! Oh! I'd have a jolly time frolicing all the day long.

I went out of the room smiling, feeling that the children were getting a sense of values, a sense of joyousness, a sense of laughter with their product.

The regular classroom, however, with its fixed curriculum seemed the hardest to reach. It seemed almost impossible to vitalise the curriculum by means of first hand experiences or to push the classroom out into the world. There was no time for the cultural values here. The classes were large, the per cent. standard high, and the time limited.

A geography teacher who dropped into the office one afternoon epitomised this situation.

He was short and chubby — the sort that never stands if he can sit and never sits up if he can lie down, and the more sofa pillows the better.

He slid down into a chair and when his hands had found their accustomed pockets and coins and keys he made his plaint.

“ ‘Head’ came in to-day. Gave me a ‘Suggestive outline’ for a geography lesson. Says it’ll ‘stimulate thought and imagination.’ Make you dizzy. Wait ‘n’ I’ll read it.”

Searching about in his pocket he drew out a note book and read: “Michael Zurich’s father is going to move his family to Wilkesbarre next week. This family came from the mining district of Austria. They are going to the mining district of Pennsylvania. Get Michael to tell his experiences in the old country, his voyage to New York. Get class to see why his father is going to Pennsylvania rather than stay in New York. Go over the route from New York to Wilkesbarre, the distance, the cost, the time. Compare the coal and iron industries of the two countries. Get Michael to promise to write to the class to answer the questions that he can’t answer now.”

“Sounds interesting,” I ventured. “Did you try it out?”

He snuggled further down into his wide collar and comfortable pockets.

"I certainly did not. That class has to learn the stuff that'll pass exams. When they come up for promotion, will anybody ask them to follow Zurich's old man around the globe? They emphatically will not. Where's Wilkesbarre? What's the principal industry? What railroad? Just like that. That's what they need. Well, I'm off. Had a long day. Good-bye."

Gently he eased himself out of his chair.

"Good-bye," I answered. "Thanks for showing me the outline. You know I rather like that notion?"

"Which?" and he stopped in the doorway. "Oh, the suggestive outline? Stimulate thought, et cetera. Sure, I'm going to give it. I'll take the time from the literature. 'Head's' a good fellow. Do it just to please her. Good-bye."

A line from my old history flashed into my thoughts: "Dense and impenetrable forests lay between him and the entrenched enemy."

The classrooms were too strongly entrenched. I must try to break through by a new route—the school assembly.

The strongest impression of an assembly exercise I had carried away from my attendance at public school was that of the principal, day after day, reading to the assembled group, a chapter at a time, the story of "Black Beauty." He could read wonder-

fully well. The children understood every word he said. He held us spellbound as he read through the story.

It was the cumulative effect of this reading that impressed me. The rest of the exercises never touched me. They were pieced up of odds and ends, — a recitation, a song, a quotation, with no relation of one to the other.

I never recall them without chuckling over the funny side of one disastrous November morning. We took turns in furnishing the "entertainment." This gave us each about two weeks to prepare. The morning I speak of fell to 4B. The luckless teacher had forgotten to give out the quotations until the night before and then in a perfect panic distributed the three stanzas of "The Rainy Day" to three pupils, conjuring them by all they held dear to be ready to recite them in the assembly the next morning.

That morning it rained as thoroughly and completely as a November sky could rain when it was in earnest about it. The wind came in great gusts sending the leaves and dead twigs up against the window panes where they tapped as if eager to get in from the storm outside.

Few children came to school and the big Assembly hall was scarcely one-third full. The children started bravely to sing America, but their voices echo-

ing strangely, frightened them and they trailed out miserably at the end.

The principal rose and with all his accustomed grace and art read from the Bible the story of the man who built a great gallows for his enemy and was himself hanged upon it.

“So they hanged Haman on the gallows he had prepared for Mordecai. Then was the king’s wrath pacified.” The sonorous voice rolled through the silent room. The children sat scared and motionless.

He sent a sweeping glance over the room and solemnly closed the great Book. This was 4B’s cue.

The first child rose in his place and in a thin, little piping voice announced —

“The day is cold and dark and dreary,”

Swish, swish came the rain on the windows tap, crack, and a twig rapped smartly against them:

“It rains,— it rains”—

the piping voice stumbled, stopped, and the child sat down.

The second child rose and began tremblingly,

“My life is cold and dark and dreary —”

His voice trailed away and the storm once again filled the silence. A merciful teacher signalled the

boy to sit, and the third one rose and announced in a startlingly loud and commanding tone —

“ Be still — ”

The principal swung about in his direction and looked at him fiercely. That was fatal.

“ Be still,” again declared the boy, and ceased.

“ You have said it, my son,” boomed the principal.

“ We will omit the closing song.”

Aside from this single exception of “ Black Beauty,” I do not remember the school ever staying with a beautiful idea long enough to have it become part of the children’s lives.

Now our assembly work was going to be worth while. A special teachers’ committee, therefore, planned the assembly exercises. Their attention was first centred on literature.

Most of the children came from homes where English was spoken either not at all, or very poorly. There were a few of English origin. If our children were to grow to love English literature they must come upon it in a more vital way than they could possibly meet it in classroom work. In the classroom there was always a tendency toward grammatical analysis. Even in the treatment of Mother Goose there is, in the classroom, the temptation to use the stories as a basis for word drills, and little

else. We wanted appreciation, not symbols, and we were going to use the assembly as a means of getting this. We wanted to teach literature, on this occasion at least, so that it would become a permanent part of the child's life, and be carried home to his family, to his younger brothers and sisters.

We were gathered about the table viewing these points pro and con in the usual conservative tone of a teachers' meeting.

"I'd like to begin with a children's poet," I said in one of the pauses.

"Which one?" somebody put in.

"Longfellow," suggested the chubby geography man. "He's the easiest. 'Under the Spreading Chestnut Tree.'"

We smiled at his joke and waited for some one to make another suggestion. None coming, I said, "I thought about Stevenson. How would he do to begin with?"

"Splendid!" and a wiry little teacher who up until now had not uttered a syllable except to vote "ay" jumped to her feet. "He's the one for the children."

For the first time since we'd known her the Scotch burr had stuck to her tongue. Snatching up the book that lay near her hand she hurried on, a bright rose colour appearing on either cheek bone and her dark eyes taking fire as she talked excitedly.

“ Ah — he’s a r-rare one I tell you. Here’s the place we begin :

SINGING!

“ Of speckled eggs the birdie sings  
And nests among the trees;  
The sailor sings of ropes and things  
In ships upon the seas.

“ The children sing in far Japan,  
The children sing in Spain;  
The organ with the organ man  
Is singing in the rain.

“ Do you get it? They’re all singing — Children all around the world in one great merry-go-round are joining hands and singing — that’s the thing for you!

“ Hark ye to this bit! ‘Bring the comb and play upon it.—’ Can’t you just see them stretching out their little legs and marching and singing — singing!

“ Everywhere he starts them at it — The wind and the rain and the sea make music for them and away they go, dancing.

“ And the pictures, they’re wonderful — The wee yellow bird on the window sill — The formless wind singing in the grass and the treetops — The tiny lad marching and singing in the land of pain —

The wistful poetry of childhood — It's all there  
and so wonderful, wonderful!

“Man, we'll clap a glengarry and kilts on this old school. We'll stick a twig of heather in her hand and she'll march to Stevenson's music.” She stopped breathless and glowing.

We chose Stevenson.

The Stevenson enthusiast never let up. She pointed out the best poem for the kindergarten, the best one for the 1A's. She recited one here to prove its music, another one in some other room to point out the nicety of its phrasing. She found musical settings for some and dramatic settings for others. She got some fine pictures that illustrated, in colour, some of the children's favourites. So we recited and sang and marched to Stevenson's music until his spirit permeated the school.

On Fridays we had special Stevenson exercises in the assembly. We sang selected Stevenson songs, recited the last learned poems; sometimes several children recited the same one, vieing with each other to bring out its special beauties. I asked questions about the songs and pictures and poems and about the man who wrote them all and the children answered freely, joyously. At the end of the term all the children knew a few of the poems, while some of them knew a great many. Some two hundred chil-

dren owned copies of the "Child's Garden of Verses."

When we finished with Stevenson we went to Field and Riley.

Then there were the Folk Tales that were handled in a similar fashion. Folk Tales, not scattered, but in terms of people, Russian, Irish, German, Norwegian and Indian.

These were dramatised and the songs and dances introduced. We gave the children a sympathetic appreciation of people and taught them to take home these folk stories, tell them to their parents and get the parents to tell their own folk tales. So would the children be kept close to their parents, giving and receiving values that were human.

The parents came to our Friday morning assemblies, sometimes a few, sometimes a great many, but those who came always smiled as they left and carried the spirit of the school beyond its doors.

When spring came I thought of the time of carnival in Italy, the huge masqued forms reaching to the upper windows of the low houses and the children pretending to be scared at their hugeness, running in and out from behind doors and corners. It was all a game that the men, women and children played. Then there were the religious festivals,

crowds, lights, processions, fireworks, colour, laughter; a people at play.

The school needed a play day. I wanted the babies, the mothers, the grandfathers, the friends to feel, to think, to take their part in this thing for one day and so selected Arbour Day as our festival.

The school neighbourhood soon got the habit of looking forward to Arbour Day. We knew it was coming when a month or more before the day the Dramatic Club began its work of selecting, of putting together, of changing, of re-arranging the best scenes of the term's work in dramatics.

We knew Arbour Day had almost come when the duly delegated member of the Parents' Association reported that the Park Department had granted us twelve trees for Arbour Day, one for each grade.

We knew Arbour Day was very near when on Thursday the trees arrived, and the men came to dig the holes, and the school paper came from the press and we all went home praying for fair weather.

We knew it was Arbour Day when on Friday morning we woke early and looked out to find a clear sky and a warm sun. We went to school an hour ahead of time just because we couldn't stay at home, or because we wanted to make sure that the final touch had been given to the building's decorations.

Before the doors were opened, there was an army

of three thousand children, all dressed in their best, bright, coloured and gay. With them were their mothers, their aunts, their cousins, and the babies in the baby carriages.

Those that could, went to the assembly to see the play. Those that had no tickets of admission stayed in the streets and in the park waiting for the tree planting and the out-door games.

A child announced the day's programme. He was dressed as a herald and spoke through a trumpet. "Know all ye people that this is our Arbour Day. It is a special day of festivities for our school. It is our custom each year to plant twelve trees. At nine o'clock there will be performed before you the play of Robin Hood. At ten o'clock the tree planting begins. Each class plants its own tree. At one o'clock the school marches to the athletic field to engage in its sports. This is according to our custom so that one day in each year parents, teachers and children may live together in the open. This is our Arbour Day."

Then away we marched to the park. The brown uniformed Park men helped us plant the trees and when the IA babies joined hands and sang and danced about their tree they beat time with their picks and shovels and laughed aloud in sympathy, and the big policemen in the background looked at one another and said almost wistfully, "We had

nothing like this when we went to school. It's great to be a kid these days."

Then the games and the dances in the afternoon! The hurdy-gurdy men got wind of us and came smiling and chattering and grinding away and immediately all the little girls and boys joined hands and such a tumbling of little legs and flashing of bright coloured ribbons you never saw.

Beaming mammas and laughing teachers poured pennies into the hats and the music and dancing went on. The boys played games, and ran races, and proudly displayed their medals.

Then joy of all joys, the hokey, pokey man arrived:

"Hokey-Pokey — com' along,  
Hokey-Pokey — no last-a-long!  
Penny lump —  
Penny lump."

When the long shadows began to darken the grass we started home, with tousled hair and floating neckties, dusty shoes and sticky faces, and the memory of a great glad day.

## II

What had become of the problem of school discipline, the friction that resulted when a teacher tried to teach and a child would not learn?

I had begun by punishing children that were reported, by all the means known to school masters; detention, reprimand, lowered standing, suspension from work, parents' assistance, but following the child into the street and home had changed the point of view. The problem of making the child behave had become the problem of providing the best conditions of growth for him. The school discipline had given way to life discipline — and appreciation of social values, because the children that needed discipline, needed the help of the community, the people, the teachers, the doctors.

Jacob was a very, very small boy when he first came to us. He stayed only a part of the morning the first day and did not come back for a year. Then he came for two hours more and disappeared again. Now Jacob was within the jurisdiction of the Compulsory Education Law. He had to attend school. Repeatedly therefore when the big man had gone out hunting boys, he had returned with this wee boy Jacob. In silence they would come through the front door, up the stairs, into the office of the primary department.

Then the big man would say, "Good morning — I have brought in Jacob. He's small but he won't do anything. He won't stay home and he won't go to school. He is on parole now. If he does not attend we will put him in the truant school."

My assistant would look once more at Jacob, look severely, sharply, then in silence take his hand. In silence they would go down the hall. Jacob would be put in his class with fifty little boys, all sitting very stiff and looking at the teacher.

"Here he is again. Jacob, sit next to Joseph, and Joseph, be sure and watch him. See that he does not get away," ordered the teacher.

The seat was farthest away from the door. But somehow when the class least expected it Jacob would disappear. Usually he slid to the floor when the class was busy and wiggled his way over the well oiled surface and out of the room. At nine years of age he had been in the truant school. And still when the big man went out hunting boys he came back with Jacob.

Then something happened. Jacob discovered a teacher he liked. She was teaching the first grade and a girls' class. Jacob was in the second grade, thanks to the truant school, but when he discovered Miss Katherine, instead of making his way out of the building he appeared dishevelled and dusty beside her.

"I want to be in your class."

"But," said the astonished Miss Katherine, "this is a girls' class and a first grade."

"Where will I sit?" asked Jacob.

Before the teacher could recover herself, Jacob

had found an empty seat and taken it as if to say, "Let the world roll on, I'm happy."

The big man had lost his job. No matter how often Jacob was placed in his right class he found his way to Miss Katherine's room.

There was only one thing to do and that was to let him stay with her. Miss Katherine understood Jacob. He loved growth and the smell of growing things. He wanted to handle flowers, dirt, animals, and Miss Katherine saw that he got the chance. She understood what happened to Jacob on fine spring mornings when the roll was called and Jacob did not answer. She sent him on trips to his beloved woods and he brought back treasures of the outdoors. These he tended.

When he at last recognised that he had outgrown Miss Katherine's class he took his proper grade but reported daily to his first friend.

We were thankful Miss Katherine belonged to our school. While she took care of Jacob, the rest of us had grasped a new idea.

We made a point of assigning the troublesome child to a teacher whom he liked. The teacher friend kept in touch with him as long as she could be useful. Sometimes the child outgrew one advisor and was assigned to another. Oftener the relationship lasted through his school life and beyond it.

It was this desire to help by getting strong influences

to continue to be a part of a child's life that made us send the "Flannigans" to the settlement house.

When a parent came saying, "Please see that my boy behaves. He whips his little brother and throws dishes on the floor," the teacher gave the boy a parole card and the parent marked the home behaviour and sent the card in to the teacher.

Josephine was troublesome. She was in the habit of coming in and out of school to suit herself. Her mother worked long hours and had no time to train Josephine. She did not want the child "put away."

"There's a woman near by," said our school visitor, "who is lonesome for children. All hers have grown up and gone away. Let's ask her and see if she will mother Josephine."

Accordingly Josephine was transplanted. The new "mother" taught the child how to live for herself and other people, and sent her back home.

"I could teach," the teacher had said, "if some one would make them behave." Now she said, "Something is wrong with Jacob." Instead of thinking of Jacob merely as an interference, as a challenge to her ability to hold her position, she thought of Jacob as a little child crying out for her help. "He is mine to make behave," was becoming. "He is mine to stand by and strengthen."

Sounds of voices in loud protest came from the

end of the corridor and I went down to see what was wrong. Miss North was trying to talk to Mrs. Tavish and Mrs. Tavish was insisting upon doing the talking herself.

"But can't you understand me? I'm telling you I don't want him to learn. I'd rather he'd be stupid than dead," she shouted.

"He must learn. Harry must obey the rules of the school the same as every other child," firmly enunciated the teacher. "He's got to come to school every day and come early. And he's got to learn." Miss North didn't say this all at once. She said it as she got opportunity between the loud declamations of the contrary minded Mrs. Tavish.

When I appeared there was an instant's lull and the panting teacher said, "I'm so glad you've come. Perhaps you can make Mrs. Tavish understand."

"Understand? It's me that understands. Haven't I been trying to make you understand the thing that's as plain as the nose on your face for the past two months," and Mrs. Tavish's pleasant voice rose again in good humoured protest. I took her to the office and asked her what it was all about.

"It's about my Harry. Now I'm not standing up for Harry — and I'm not blaming him either — nor the teacher — for there's them you can do with, and them you can't. It's the same with teachers as with children, you'll find."

"What did you want the teacher to do?" I queried.

"Just to leave the child alone. But she won't. She says she can't. I'm the mother of eleven, all alive and well, thank God, and Harry's the last, and if I must say it, he's a bit thick. As good a boy as ever stepped, but thick about his lessons.

"Well, sir, whatever got into that teacher two months ago she began fighting the child to learn his lessons. The more she kept at him the more she might, till she says, 'You'll have to stay in every night until you do every bit of your work.' True to her word, didn't she keep him every day till five and after?

"I didn't tell you that once Harry had the fits. He doesn't be troubled with them much unless his food goes wrong or something bothers him, but this steady driving brought them on. He'd come home from school and fall asleep at the table, then in the night he'd have a fit. The next morning he couldn't get up. He was all in. When he got ready I gave him his breakfast and started him to school. To be sure he was late but I thought 'Better late than not at all.'

"All this time I kept writing her notes and asking her to excuse Harry until one day she said, 'Bring me no more excuses. You must learn your lessons and you've got to come early every day.'

"She kept right on trying to make him learn and keeping him in every day until Harry came home and said, 'I won't go back to that teacher any more.' Neither would he. I had to pull him out of bed and push him to the school door. I told her about it but, 'No, he must come and he must learn,' says she.

"'On your head be it,' says I and I just let the child sleep in the morning.

"And what next does she do, d'ye think?" and here Mrs. Tavish leaned over very confidentially and marked each word with her forefinger on the arm of her chair.

"She comes every morning before eight o'clock and she pushes my bell and says she, 'Is Harry ready? I'll take him with me,' till I'm so wrought up I hear that bell every morning before she gets on the block. Nothing I say takes effect on her. She just dunnors and dunnors away at the boy until he'll lose the bit of sense he has. She's got to stop it. Now am I right or am I wrong?" and she leaned back in her chair with the patient air of one sorely tried.

"I think you're right. We'll have to let Harry alone."

"Good for you. I'm not blaming you for the teacher, I said and I say again, there's them you can do with and them you can't. And you must not blame me for Harry. Some we make priests, some

we make stone masons and some we leave as God made them. That's Harry"—and she shook my hand heartily and went home.

I went back to the teacher and told her about the boy.

"Oh, I'm sorry. It's all my own fault. If I'd only listened. But I was so sure he was just lazy and I was trying so hard to cure him. Do you think I've hurt him much? Can't we put him in the Special?"

"That's the place for him," I agreed.

The Special was a very large, bright room. The children were selected for different reasons. Some were too fast and some were too slow for the measured work of the classroom. Some were unfitted by temperament or nerves for the pressure of the big group; each of them was an individual that for some reason or other could not go forward with the mass.

The equipment of the room was selected with the idea of liberty of action for individuals and groups. There were a few benches screwed in orderly lines to the floors; but scattered about the room were tables and chairs where children might group themselves for work. At one end a long rack of tools, lumber, and twists of reed and raffia, stood ready for work. A sewing machine occupied one corner and a book case another. Pictures there were in plenty, with here and there a cast or a plant.

The teacher was a fine strong man who wanted to understand and help children. He could play ball, tell a story, tie up a sore finger, give an arithmetic lesson, with equal enthusiasm and appreciation; and he never lost his poise, not even when I sent him the "Five."

"The Five" were sturdy youngsters from the fourth and fifth years, a monitor-teasing, pedlar-baiting, neighbourhood-disturbing group — strong on ball games and street fights; the joy of the small boy and the bane of the teachers' lives. About the middle of the term their teachers discovered that they were going to be left back at the term-end unless some radical change took place. I sent the "Five" to the Special.

By-and-by I went in to see how they were doing. The teacher was busy teaching a group to add fractions; the remaining groups were disposed about the room. "The Five" were around a big table very busy. "Corduroids" was in command as of right and usage. "Put away the pads and take your readers," he ordered. "Now 'Specks,' begin. Go slow. The words I don't get will be counted a miss."

"But I —"

"Begin, or you'll lose one for the argument."

They read around the table until the lesson was completed. Once they stopped to have an "argument."

"That *sur-round* the island," read "Beef."

"That's wrong. It's *sur-round*—" corrected Corduroys.

"'Tis not. A minute ago you said *sur-face*, now you say *sur-round*. If it's *sur-face* then it's *sur-round*," Beef grinned in triumph.

For an instant Corduroys was held, then his face lighted.

"Get the Dictionary, Specks."

"No, you don't. I don't know the Dictionary. You ask teacher when it's our turn with him to-day. What he says I stand for."

"How are they getting on?" I asked the teacher.

"Great. I wouldn't ask any better. They take turns in teaching but they generally fall back to Corduroys. They'll more than make their grade. I wish you'd have Specks' eyes looked at though. I think his glasses are not right. He gets very irritable after he uses his eyes for a time."

In the Ungraded Room were the children of defective minds. At one time these were our disciplinary cases: now they were our wards, to be studied and given every opportunity for growth.

One big overgrown boy had in the first months given us a great deal of trouble. As usual we appealed to his parents but they could do nothing for us. Morris was worse at home than he was at

school. School time came as a blessed relief to his mother. Then he was examined and put in the Ungraded class. Soon I missed him from the complaint list and went to see what he was doing that kept him out of mischief.

When I entered his room he was busy with a pile of stiff white paper, a brush, a pot of paint and a stencil set. He leaned a card against the blackboard to dry. It read, "9 eggs 25 cents." "Teacher," he called out, "how do you spell bread?" Slowly the teacher spelled over the heads of three little girls she was helping thread big needles — b-r-e-a-d. With his tongue curling around the corners of his mouth, fingers tightly knotted about a very thick, bright, yellow pencil, Morris printed each letter on a slip of paper. Then assuming a very important, bustling air he began painting a card for "bread."

"What is it?" I whispered to the teacher.

"He's crazy to work in a grocery store," she answered. "He has a job for the afternoons. I've made the grocery shop the centre of his work and it's surprising how he's getting on. He works his arithmetic on the grocery slips. He tries to read anything that has to do with the grocery business so I'm making a reader for him out of cuttings in this blank book," and the teacher pulled a long strand of raffia through a big needle. "He's just what you see him now all the time. For a day or so he was sulky and

ugly but I saw him with the grocery slips and talked to him about them and he's been going ahead on that line ever since." Another strand was drawn through another big needle.

"Lucy's at her loom, you see. Usually she threads these needles for the little ones but I don't want to bother her to-day. She has one of her fussy spells. When she's like that she can't do a thing with her academic work but she works beautifully at her loom. It's strange but it seems to soothe and rest her. She'll work at it maybe all morning — then go to her table and do her lessons very nicely. We have an order for the rug she's making and that's a great help. When her mother found that the work had money value she wasn't so much worried about Lucy's spending time on it and stopped scolding her. She even sent us some rags for the rug. So that's settled.

"I am going to take Morris to the garden. He needs more physical work. I can tie it up to the grocery store and once he gets started he will like it well enough to go on."

As I turned to leave the room the teacher said, "It's story time. I wish you had time to tell us a story."

"Of course I have. I know a fine one."

Like magic the work disappeared into drawers and closets. Morris ran to the corner of the room where

a long roll leaned, swung it up the centre of the room and rolled it out, "the magic carpet." Every child sat down upon it and the story began.

I knew when I went away that the older ones would go on with their bench work and the littlest ones build a story of blocks on the Magic Rug. By and by the teacher would play softly on the piano and the little ones would sleep while the older ones went down to the gymnasium.

We had difficulty with the little foreigners who found their way to the school. It is so hard not to be able to make oneself understood, especially when one is little.

"Plis. I make finger, she no let foot." This from a tearful boy brought to me by a vexed teacher. The vexation vanished in a peal of laughter.

"Really," she gasped, "I can't do anything with him. He means he raised his hand and I wouldn't let him go out of the room. He doesn't know a word I say, and I don't understand him a bit. Just now I thought by his motions that he wanted to change his seat. I wouldn't let him and he ran out of the room. He didn't come back and I went to look for him and I found him standing in the hall weeping. I know now he was asking to leave the room but next time he'll try it a different way because I didn't understand this time, and I'll get it wrong

again. Seriously, I'm wasting time though. I have to stop for him so many times and the class must wait for me and lose part of each lesson."

We asked for the "C" or the Foreign Class for all such children. We had about thirty. The teacher assigned to the foreigners was an older teacher, one who had been a foreigner as I had been. Together we planned for these children. We compared notes and resolved that our difficulties should not be theirs. There should be plenty of toys, pictures, maps, stories, dramatics, games, action and colour and music. And there should be no difficulty or misunderstanding about leaving the room.

There was an ornamental balcony open to the sky and facing the park. The Board turned it into a room for us and here we put the anæmic children.

At first they didn't like it. They wanted to do just what the other children did. But the teacher was "lovely"—they couldn't help loving her. She had rosy cheeks and shiny eyes and little wisps of curls that danced about and when she said, "I'm so glad you came," they couldn't help being glad of it themselves.

Then there were crackers and milk. A mother came in to serve it and the teacher said, "I'm so glad you came," and instantly there was a proud son of his mother helping give out the mugs and another

one vowing inwardly that it should be his turn another day.

But the best was to come. Long chairs were drawn out and each child wrapped in a blanket lay very, very quiet, wondering what was to happen next. Teacher sat where everybody could see and hear and began to tell a story of creeping, creeping bunnies who were sleeping, sleeping, sleeping, and no one ever knew what happened to those bunnies for no matter how many times the story started it never got past the sleeping, sleeping part.

The children grew taller and heavier and rosier. The place of honour was accorded the pupil who had gained the greatest number of pounds during the week and the race was close.

At the end of the term we found their academic work was ahead of that of their former classmates. Some of these children who in their weakness had been a serious drag upon the classroom had done more than a term's work in the open air.

Time and again we found that the children with whom we failed, the bad children, were physically or mentally unprepared. They had adenoids or bad teeth or poor digestion or sluggish livers; their eyes were weak or their ears were dull; their nervous reactions were slowed up or over stimulated. They were in no condition to be taught what we wanted to teach them.

We had first examined and regrouped the most striking cases of failure. These proved to be the physically and mentally retarded children. Still we failed with a group in each class. We couldn't get the whole fifty to measure up. We called in the specialists and they examined and regrouped the stragglers. Those who showed eye defects had glasses fitted and these were tested monthly for a year.

The Speech Defects were searched out, classified and drilled daily by a speech expert.

So we struggled on. Every time a teacher reported a child as falling below the class standard, we examined and classified him anew with the idea that it was his duty to reach that standard and ours to help him to it. We did this in the spirit of service. We must help him to realise himself and our only medium was the Course of Study, the seat, the book, the teacher.

Out of the seeming confusion of the great school's activities,— the children playing, studying, shouting; teachers chatting, gravely conferring with fathers and mothers, visiting, teaching, presiding at parents' meetings; fathers and mothers coming and going, praising, criticising, helping,— emerged the great idea of our school — Service.

Service based upon the appreciation of the best that was in all of us — parents and children, principal

and teachers. The slow realisation that we were, all of us, "just folks," struggling under the limitations of humanity, was teaching us toleration and generosity and sympathy for each other. If our bones ached with the toil of the day we no longer nursed them in isolation. We talked over the day's happenings, laughed at the funny ones and stored the others away as experience.

I met the Assistant Principal. She was coming from a visit to the regular classrooms studying the records she had made in her note book. She looked up as I neared her with a worry line between her eyes.

"What is it?" I asked.

"I've examined and classified and followed up the individual child and yet I go to the classroom and find the group that can't 'make it.' There's something missing in the classrooms." She snapped the rubber band on her note book and the worry line grew deeper. "Do you know, I feel like the old woman in children's story. 'And still she sat — and still she spun and still she sighed for — company.' Does one have to be feebleminded or crippled or bad before he gets a chance to do things? All we have is pencils and paper and text books. No tools, no garden — fifty to a class, 'nothing doing' for us normal citizens. We just sit and spin.

" You've tried to remove every obstacle in the way of the children's progress, yet we seem to get no further ahead. We aren't alive. Do you realise that the little children may talk aloud about half a minute every two hours? That's about all we can allow them. When are they going to learn to talk English? They move about only at the teacher's command and they soon learn to wait for it and when they reach the upper grades they have no self direction whatever.

" We're not to blame. It's the size of our classes. Fifty to a teacher and two classes in a room. We're simply turning out more candidates for Specials instead of making the Specials useless. I'm disheartened," and she turned wearily toward the office.

" Yes," I said to myself, " that's as far as we've got. Picking up those that fall, and doing nothing to keep them from falling."

### III

Six years passed. The school that once held a little more than two thousand children had grown again to almost four thousand. As more children came the classes had to double up in the use of classrooms.

Soon there was little place and little time for the afternoon activities. The classroom time now re-

duced from five to four hours was all too short to accomplish the curriculum work. One group of children came from 8:30 to 10:30 and from 12:30 to 2:30 — another group came from 10:30 to 12:30 and from 2:30 to 4:30. Five times a day the gong rang — I heard its resonance from floor to floor, calling, calling to the children to move. Five times a day I heard the measured rhythm of many, many feet. I saw the surge of sound, and colour and motion, children going in, children going out, eyes front, hats off, tramp, tramp, tramp and then silence.

All the rooms in the building except those used by the special children had to be given up all day long to learning the three R's. There was no spot where the child in the regular grades could turn for freedom. The biggest part of the Assembly work had to be omitted, because the rooms, cut off by rolling doors, had to be used for teaching the rudiments of learning. The registers in each of these normal classes was full to the seating capacity — fifty to a teacher. Those in the Specials were kept down to thirty.

“There's a group in the fifth grade that must be scattered,” said my assistant. “I don't understand it but every once in a while that happens. A group of difficult cases get into one class and what one overlooks the other remembers. We might scatter them through the classes — put some in morning time and

some in the afternoon so that they'll be separated, and if that can't be done they should be assigned to a strong teacher next term. Even with all our sorting we get one of these classes now and then that will not learn. I am afraid thirty per cent. of this class will have to be left back. But even at that we'll promote ninety per cent. of the school. Pretty good, don't you think?"

"Very good indeed. How did it happen?"

She looked a bit astonished. "Why we've worked like dogs to get it. I hoped for more but we can't seem to make it. Do what you will there's always a group of holdovers. The teacher has too many children, too little time and always a fear that she won't finish the term's work; that we will find fault, that the superintendent won't be pleased, or that her class will not be up to the standard of the other classes."

As she started to leave the office I said, "I'm tremendously interested in the ninety per cent. we are going to promote. Do you feel that they've learned? Are they really taking in what we are teaching them?"

The assistant laughed. "You are always looking behind the scenes."

"Sometimes I've been afraid that the real thing wasn't there even when the children answered with seeming intelligence."

The next day I went into a first grade class. It happened that my assistant was there looking on. The class was just about to begin the reading lesson. At a signal from the teacher seven little fellows sprang up and distributed the readers to their rows.

"Open to lesson six. It has a big six at the top and the duck picture," said the teacher. "Ready? First row, begin!"

The first row sprang up in a flash. Each child read one sentence. Sometimes it meant five words, sometimes eleven, rarely more. Row after row in quick succession read. No child hesitated: no child made a mistake until the last row was reached.

"The holdovers," whispered the assistant.

These children read slowly, pointing at each word and sometimes miscalling one.

I knew what was in the assistant's mind when she went to the board and printed a jingle using only words that had occurred in the reading lesson.

The dog, the fox, the cat,  
 One day,  
 Woke up,  
 And said,  
 "O, a rainy day.  
 We are sad,  
 It's too bad,  
 We cannot play."  
 But the duck said, "Luck, Luck,  
 This is my own day."

"Who can read my story?" she said.

A troubled silence followed.

"I make a different g," whispered the teacher.

"Fix it up if you think that will help?" said the assistant.

Still nobody volunteered to read the story.

"Think, children," urged the teacher. "You know those words."

Still sorrowful silence.

Again the teacher went to the rescue.

"What is this word?" laying a pointer tip on "dog."

"Dog," came the answer.

"Certainly. Now what's this one?"

"Fox!"

"To be sure. Now this one."

"Cat."

"Now read the first story."

"The dog, the fox, the cat —"

"See, they know it. But they want to do it my way."

"Ask a child to read the line about the duck," said the assistant.

The teacher called a bright looking child to read.

"Study it, William."

She pointed to each word along the line and the little boy nodded vigorously toward her as he followed the pointer tip with his eyes and lips.

William pointed at each word with a little stabbing motion and jerked his body forward and back as he recognised each word and went on to the next. With a final stab at the period he straightened to attention and read —

“ But the duck said, ‘ Quack, quack! ’ ”

“ The last word, William, look again,” and the pointer tip guided his eyes to the right place.

William looked, first at the word and then at the teacher — then again at the word and read, not so confidently.

“ But the duck said, ‘ quack, quack! ’ ”

“ Hands, children. What is that word? ”

Several hands came up and one boy said, “ Luck, luck.”

“ Why, William, I’m surprised. You should have known that.”

“ I know it,” said William, “ but the duck always said ‘ quack, quack,’ before.”

As we went out I said, “ Do you really feel they are ninety per cent. efficient? ”

It was the children’s own vocabulary. They were familiar with the animals in the story. It was grouped into short phrases. It had the familiar phonic elements. It was a jingle. It told a story, yet the children couldn’t read it. The teacher had to show the way for each step. Without her they

were helpless. The duck must always say "quack, quack."

"I've tried that same thing a half dozen times this term, but I get nowhere," said the assistant wearily. "The teacher says, 'I am coming up for a seventh year increase of salary. The superintendent only asks what is in the book. With fifty children in this room it's all I can do to get the children to learn the grade words and the sentences in the book.'

"And after all aren't we teachers just that way? Haven't we been taught to be afraid from the very first day we came to the Kindergarten class and the teachers said, 'On your toes. Not a sound,' as we passed the principal's office? Haven't we been trained to give perfect results? Haven't we been trained to fear making a mistake, to fear the responsibility of working out our own ideas? This is a school world and we always say 'quack, quack,' because we have said it before, and it was right."

As promotion time drew nearer I thought more and more about these children who were to be promoted or left back. We had taken out of the regular grades the children that were weak, so that the others could progress and yet the average child was not doing work that made him independent of the teacher.

## IV

I lived only a short distance from the school. I had settled in the neighbourhood to get the feel of the school in a rather intimate way. Looking out of my window morning or evening I could see the school building towering over the trees. It was only a short walk through the park and all the many hours I would otherwise have spent in travel were saved for the school. It was so convenient being near the school. A neighbour could drop in any time. A teacher now and then might stop in on his way home. A child or a group of them was sure to appear on a holiday. It was not so difficult to go out of an evening and meet some of the people and talk over the needs of the children.

We never grew tired of talking about the needs of the children. We said the same things over and over again and the oftener we said them the more we believed we were right.

I do not know how many times we talked over better opportunities for the children, more vital things to do in school, or Parents' Associations. Somewhere in the course of the conversation some one was sure to explode. He would become wrought up at the slow progress of things, at the apparent indifference of school officials, and we would listen and laugh and plan the next move.

The walk across the park gave me a good start each day, and brought me back refreshed at night. I watched the seasons coming and going in their slow, calm, measured way. The trees would bud, flower, fruit, and sleep again. Progress here had its own measured steps and when I became impatient at school progress the trees would speak to me and I would smile and go on again. Many times as I walked among them I would catch the smile and the nod of a stranger who thought my smile was intended for him.

Sometimes I would run over in my mind the things we had done to make the child's lot better. There were the clubs and the music classes at the settlement house, the children's departments at the dispensary, the garden, the playground, the dramatics, the poets, the music, the tree planting, the special classes, the speech training, the school visitor, the parents helping in the school, the big, human friendliness of the whole mass, children, teachers, and parents.

Then my mind unfailingly went to the classroom and the class teacher and I tried to figure out what was happening there to make for freedom and courage. "It isn't what you teach the children that counts," the old principal who loved school children had told me. "They forget most of the knowledge given them. What they need is the habit of free

thinking and the spirit of work." How much thought was there in the classroom? How much independent work?

Nowhere did the children, save those of the handicapped classes, learn by personal experiences, nor did they act independently. The classrooms had not been built to permit that. The classes were crowded. The children had to move in class units and exactly on time. The clamour of the gong was insistent. How rude and how frequent were its interruptions. I felt the hurry to get the facts into the children's heads. I felt the tension in the child's body as he bent to the routine. I saw the teachers standing over all, talking, measuring, urging.

Here was "Our School" still in the grip of tradition, rules, records, and endless routine. "My School" was still a dream school.

But growth is a slow affair. At least, or at best, perhaps I should say, we teachers had touched the people. We had carried the school out of its four walls and the school had been touched by the breath of reality, humanity. Socialising the school had humanised it.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE DIRECTION OF THE NEW START

#### I

THE schools will change for the better when their life is made basically different from what it has been.

They are pointed in the direction of the fundamentals of knowledge but working with the tools of the classicists. They have developed and developed until we find life on one side, that is outside the school, and learning on the other side, that is inside the school. Now the schools must be pointed so that life and the school become one.

To begin with, better school conditions must be provided for the youngest children. The first steps in child teaching must be sound. The primary years of school must be worth while. Unless the basic structure is real, soul satisfying, higher education will be halting and futile. The child is entitled to a fine start in his life's journey if he is to have a fair chance of carrying his head high and his shoulders straight.

He comes to school a distinct personality. He is joyous, spontaneous, natural, free — But from

the first day, instead of watching, encouraging that personality, the school begins to suppress it and keeps up the process year in and year out. By and by we begin to search for the individuality that has been submerged. We make tempting offers to the student in the high school and in the college — we give him better teachers, better equipment, greater freedom, more leisure, smaller classes, direct experiences. We call upon him to stand out, to face the problems of life honestly, squarely; to be himself. How blind we are! First we kill and then we weep for that which we have slain.

We do not look upon the children as an important economic factor. Children are a problem to the parent and teacher but not to the race.

Do you raise pigs? The government is almost tearful in its solicitude for their health and welfare. The Agricultural Bureau sends you scientific data gathered at great pains and expense. But do you raise children? Ah. They are very expensive. And there are so many of them! One teacher to fifty is the best we can do for you. Teachers who are specialists in their profession? Oh, now really! You know we could never afford that. We must pay for high-priced teachers for the high schools and upper grades but for the little children — all you want is a pleasant personality that is able to teach the rudiments of learning. There's not much to do in

those grades — just the rudiments, you know. There's no disciplining to do there, the children are so easily suppressed. It's only in the upper grades we have the trouble!

Stupid and topsy-turvy!

We need the scientist, the child specialist, the artist in the first year of school. We need few children to a teacher and plenty of space to move about in.

It's there the teacher should eagerly, anxiously, reverently, watch for the little spark of genius, of soul, of individuality, and so breathe the breath of life upon it that it can never again be crushed or repressed.

We must spend more money on elementary education if the money we now spend on higher education is to bring forth results that are commensurate with our national needs. We spend fifty dollars a year on the education of a child and ten times that amount on the education of a young college man.

We must keep the three R's, but they must change with the changing social needs. They must keep pace with the world, and in fact a little ahead of the practical world so that they will be dynamic. Constantly they must be in touch with the strong life currents about the child, the factory, the mill, the shop, the market, the store, the garden, the home.

The school must be enriched so that the child can

experiment with actual things from the very first day he comes to school. Play rooms and games, animals and plants, wood and nails must take their place side by side with books and words.

Be it remembered, however, that a shop, a studio, a play-room, may become as formal, as dead, as antiquated, as rigid as any phase of the present book school, if these activities are developed by rule and applied to all children regardless of tastes or tendencies, in accordance with a fixed time schedule that has neither elbow room nor leisure.

Just as we have failed to throw out the useless in the book study so we may fail to throw out the useless in the new things to come, if we centre attention on them rather than on the child.

The school must constantly ask, "What is the effect of my programme on the soul growth of the children? Why is it that my programme does not reach all children? What can I do to keep in touch with ideas that are vigorous and young? What can I do to keep sane, human, far-seeing? How can I respect the child's prolonged infancy and keep him from facing the struggle of the labour market until he is mentally and physically fit? How can I translate efficiency, goodness, will training, citizenship, parental duty into child happiness?"

The child is the permanent factor. The expression of himself for the common good is his purpose in

life. Service that is in harmony with the best instincts of his soul is the child's mission in life. Service always carries with it some one else. Talking, co-operation, fun, openness, are part of its very being. It grows with the spirit of the crowd from which it derives hope, life, strength, emotion.

I call this expression of self for the common good the art instinct of the child and I say that art puts the soul into everything the child does, whether he sweeps a floor, washes a wall, draws a picture, writes a poem, sings a song. The things he makes, the poems he reads, the compositions he writes, the games he plays, the clay he moulds, all these need the force of an idea that is inspiring because it has the forward pull of this social art.

To take the child out of the narrowness of the printed page and put his energy back into the narrowness of the furrow of the plough will not make for complete living. The substitution of direct experiences for indirect ones leads nowhere. Both are needed, work and analysis of work, study and the application of study and through it all, sincere artistic expression in answer to the needs of each individual soul.

Change the school so its life is continuous. Change the school so that the child may grow by intimate contact with older children and the teachers, the ones who carry the responsibility. Change the

school so that each child is individualised and not merged, so that the child has leisure to grow and a desire to grow in the right direction.

Change the school so that it will permit the children to act for themselves and less by rule, so that it is not the teacher who shows the way but the child, and the teacher follows his lead.

Change the school so that the external, imposed dogmatism of school discipline gives place to real discipline, morally strong, self-made, independent.

We are now at the beginning of newer and richer educational possibilities. Have we the courage to think of the youngest child first, and this time begin our changes, not in the college, the high school, the upper grades, but in the first six years of school? Have we the courage to offer these children opportunities for joyous, expressive work? Have we the courage to change our class education into democratic education?

## II

The first thing to do then is to change the kind of school, making it rich, making it live. The second thing to do is to train the teacher differently.

If the conditions of school life are such that they warp the child's mental powers, then these same conditions warp the teacher's mental powers. If the

school means arrested development for the child it means arrested development for the teacher.

What briefly is the history of the teacher's training?

At six she goes into a first year grade to begin the serious task of preparing for life. She may be too weak physically, or too immature mentally to start the routine of regular classroom work but she is six and that's the age to begin.

For eight years the child who is to be a teacher sits and memorises and recites, receives good marks and is promoted. Her ability to recite the allotted lessons, though no test of spiritual growth, of human sympathy, are sufficient for school progress.

Now the child that is to be a teacher is sent to high school. The same grind continues, the same standards are practised. She sits, memorises, receives good marks and is promoted.

From the first day she began as a child in the baby class the teacher learned to be silent. She learned to be impressed. She learned to yield to force. She got into the habit of relying on the mind of another, of believing in books and words rather than in actions. She got into the habit of being afraid to think, to act, she merely followed.

"Come, quick — eleven times twelve — think now, why don't you think!" said one teacher.

But what was the child to think about as she stood

dejectedly at her seat, a harried look in her eye? As the teacher passed on to the next girl, the child said, "I must think, I must think — next time I'll know."

The class went to the gymnasium. In one corner were the wands to be used in the day's drill. At once she remembered, "I must think." She left the line and was about to take down the wands from the rack when the teacher saw her. Snap went the teacher's thumb and finger and her voice followed after:

"Come here. What are you doing there without permission?"

"Why, I thought —" the child began timidly.

"You thought! What right had you to think? I'll do the thinking for this class. Take your place. We'll have no more interruption from you."

And this was part of the teacher's training.

Next the child that is to be a teacher goes to training school. By this time she is almost a machine. She knows what to do. She continues to sit, to study books, to make recitations, to receive per cent. ratings, to be promoted. By and by this child that is to be a teacher is examined, placed upon an eligible list, and appointed to teach.

The child that is now a teacher enters the classroom, the history of her training fresh in her mind. She begins to teach the children in the way that she has learned. The supervisor enters her room and

because of the children's ability to reproduce the facts of the curriculum says, "Well done," and rates the teacher. The training is nearly complete.

Later on the teacher decides to go back to the University so as to obtain promotion, so that she herself may become a supervisor. When she enters the University what is done for her? At once she is put into a seat, and handed a book. The professor talks, talks, talks. She writes, writes, writes. Words, words, words! Examinations come and she returns these words to him. She is marked, rated and passed. Now and then there is an exception. The teacher gets a new point of view. She goes back to the classroom. But before long the continuous monotony of teaching the same thing in the same way, at the same time, with the same results has its effect and she succumbs, dies spiritually, intellectually! — Now the training is quite complete.

How can the training be changed so that a new type of teacher may be evolved?

Is there any change that can be made in the elementary school itself? Is it possible to vitalise the school so that the child who is to be a teacher may from the beginning learn from contact with more vital experience than mere school book-learning affords?

If the older children are trained to assist in teaching the younger ones, helping in the classrooms with

the lessons, or leading the games in the yards, then even at the age when they enter the high school they know in a dim way whether teaching is the right "calling" for them.

Can the higher training include the direction of young children in club life, the participation in the work of settlements, the study of the home and street life?

Should the training school period include work in the hospital for children, so that the teacher may actually learn what the physical needs of the children are, and where to go for help?

Should practice work be preparation for more intensive study in the training school and not the finishing touch? Should the student take back to the training school, studies of individual children, their economic conditions, their history, their physical condition, their tendencies, and the attempts she has made to solve the problems they presented?

Is it right to say that a knowledge of subject matter and ways of presenting it are only a minor part of the teacher's training? What controls methods of teaching? Subject matter or children?

The teacher must be trained in this larger way because the burden of making a better school rests on her. She has been massed, she must cease to be numbers and be ONE.

O Teacher, find your inspiration in your work!

Find work that will keep you mentally fresh. You, above all, have need of work that will make you grow, and what you do for the sake of the children is the only work that gives you life. With neighbours, fathers, mothers, with children, good and bad, you must cast your lot and as a leader plan the future of the race. Do not go to books. There is more philosophy — big, broad, human philosophy in the simple folk lore of some of the poorest and most distressed people than there is in most of the books that you read. It is only when you keep in constant touch with humanity that you see the child, more important than the curriculum, than the school, than the per cents., than promotions.

To know the child, to work so that he may grow, is a far bigger thing than anything else in the world. You sometimes refuse to have anything to do with the child that presents a problem. You cast him off, because you are school-trained, not life-trained. You put the problem up to somebody else. When you do that you are lost. This is your problem. Only touch with life conditions can help solve it.

Like the child, you have been so long in bondage, dominated, that you have lost your strength, you are fearful, you sometimes lack the courage of your convictions.

But there is nothing to fear.

Speak freely, experiment boldly. You are a

greater artist than he who paints a picture, than he who carves a statue, than he who writes a book. Your product is that wonderful thing, human conduct! You are a creator! America looks to you for her greatness, her united voice, her bigness of race!

### III

First we must change the life of the school, making school experience life experiences; second, we must change the teacher's training, making the teacher life-trained, instead of book-trained; third, we must break the deadening influence of a too strongly centralised system; we must individualise the schools rather than mass them.

But is it possible to create public schools each of which will possess its own individuality, each of which will be the ideal school of its community?

The educational reformer usually starts his reform by projecting an ideal school. He does this in answer to what he believes the best parent, usually the well-to-do parent, wants, for his children. The reformer starts by carefully selecting the factors that go to make up the life of the school. He builds the plant, selects the children and the teachers and lays out the work to be done. He tries to make his school distinctive, the only one of its kind.

Can the system learn a lesson from the private school and the educational reformer?

What the school system needs to understand is that its strength lies, not in the strength of the central organisation, but in the strength of the individual school, not in making one school like another, but in making each school a distinct unit. The need of the system is the preservation of its units, so that each school can keep itself alive, wide awake, responsive to its people, easily adaptable, the best of its kind. x

Before the school site is selected and before the plans are drawn for the building, the neighbourhood in which the school is to be located should be studied, so that the physical equipment of the building will be in conformity with the needs of the neighbourhood.

The neighbourhood being regarded as a unit problem, the school should be put in the civic centre of the neighbourhood, where the settlement, the hospital, the church, the library and the playground are. When these are lacking then the school should make provision for some of them at least.

If the school is the most important unit in the whole educational system, the principal and his staff are the most important officials in the system. Principals and teachers should be placed in each school because these principals and teachers are best able to meet the problem of the school. The business of the system should then be to help those in direct touch

with the school problems, offering plenty of opportunity for growth.

Each individual school needs unity of organisation.

There are school buildings that are used for day schools, night schools, summer schools, music centres, recreation centres, lectures, play centres. All these activities are in one building. All the people come from the same district. All the problems that the varied activities serve are the common group problems. Yet for each activity there is a separate head, each independent of the other and each responsible to its own department head.

The mere physical use of the plant does not mean complete use, definite heading towards a desired end. What is necessary is to make all these activities responsible to one leader so that he may co-ordinate them, permit their interplay. We have all the features of a settlement but without a leader or without a council of leaders. The result is isolation in the very work where there is need of the utmost co-ordination. Instead of using the people as the focal point for developing school activities, the system imposes a curriculum that the people must follow.

It is only a school with a continuous life and a continuous responsibility that can keep in touch with the neighbourhood and, if necessary, help to create neighbourhood machinery, that will get the parents to work together.

The great school is one that preserves its life, dignifies it, holds itself responsible for the neighbourhood and compels the neighbourhood to rise to its highest level.

Unless a school enters deeply into the lives of the people, that school will not enter deeply into the lives of the children or into the lives of the teachers. Unless the school is the great democratic socialising agency, it is nothing at all.

#### IV

First we must change the fundamental mistake, that schools were made only for the three R's; second, we must change the notion that teachers are trained by being cast in a mould; third, we must change the idea that one school is to be organised just like another; fourth, we must change the notion that the school is a cloistered institution, by breaking down its walls and having it come into direct contact with people.

In one school I found a common ground of appreciation in a co-operative garden idea.

We chose two gardens, dirty, garbage filled lots they were. On one a neighbour street-cleaner was our partner. He was responsible for the general care of the plot. With him worked children who lived in his neighbourhood.

To the children, the man working in the soil was a far more important man than the one who was sweeping the streets. Father farmer was more dignified than father street cleaner. The school had dignified labour and the parent keeping in contact with the child had become more hopeful. The school was no longer apart from the worker, but at one with him. Somehow the idea that the soil was our common interest made us forget that the home and the school were different.

If it is good to have a garden where everybody can see the children at work, is it not equally as good to put clay rooms, wood-working rooms facing along the streets, even as the tradesmen's shops are, so that the passerby may stop and watch the children at work?

People have faith in the school even though they do not know what goes on behind the school doors. Because they have faith they throw more and more of their own responsibility on the school and the school shoulders the burden. The process must be reversed.

The school must stop doing things for the people and get the people to do things for themselves by putting the work before them in such a way that they will be able to do it themselves. It is in this movement out of a cloistered environment into the common lives of people that the school must share, be-

cause it means enriched responsibility through a consciousness of social values.

The school must open its doors. It must reach out and spread itself, and come into direct contact with all its people. Each day the power of the school must be felt in some corner of the school district. It must work so that everybody sees its work and daily appraises that work. It must put the responsibility on the parent, not so much the individual parent as groups of parents, so that the individual acts or refrains from acting because the group consciousness is at his elbow and not in a distant school, or in an unknown law.

The school must follow the lead of the social agencies. What have these social agencies done? They have gone out of their buildings, out of their offices and worked where the work would tell.

What does the domestic science teacher of a settlement house do? She does not teach merely. She goes out to live with her neighbours,— those that need her, helps rebuild the home, then goes on to the next.

What do the settlement nurses do? They go to the homes and help the people take care of their sick ones, thus relieving the hospitals. Home care under wise guidance takes the place of the institution.

What do parents do who have come through united effort to appreciate school problems? They go back

to the home and compel the parent to give the child a fair chance, and they compel by helping. The neighbourhood holds up the individual home.

See, too, how the playground tends to shift. From the park to the back yards of the tenements. The children play and the mothers need have no worry. Play, children's healthy play, not harmful haphazard experiences, is going back into the home.

Dr. Montessori has taken the kindergarten school, the nursery into the homes, directly in touch with the parents. The school is going back to the home.

In the school-yard, I saw an old woman, her shawl about her head. She was talking to a group of children in her own native tongue. She was telling them stories, folk stories treasured for many years out of her peasant life abroad. Her voice was soft, dreamy. Her eyes were far off. The story-teller had come to the school. The home had come to the school.

One morning when the school was gathered in the assembly hall, a young man seated himself at the piano and played out of the fulness of his larger experiences, played the songs of the masters. Now and then he stopped, he explained and went on. The artist parent was giving to the children the best that he had. The home had come into the school.

The school has already done many of these things in a blind unconscious way. The school must now

directly and consciously organise its larger social life. It must go out of its doors as it were. It must use the factory, the stores, the neighbouring parks, the museums, not incidentally but fully and with deliberation.

The teacher must go to market with her children. She must take the drawing class to the woods, the lakes, the streets, the open yards. She must bring into the building the artist, the musician, the singer, the advertiser, the picture man, the story teller.

What the schools need is the push of the crowd. What the crowd needs is the pull of the child life. The school must become the people.

As yet, the school has not been taken over by humanity. When the people recognise the possibilities of the school as they did those of the printing press, the school will become a thousand times more powerful in fostering race growth.

## V

First we must change the kind of experiences that are given in the school; second, we must change the teacher's training; third, we must individualise the school; fourth, we must give the school over to the people; fifth, we must change our attitude towards the child.

Do we really believe in children? Can we say

with the Roman mother, "These are my jewels." How long ago is it that the state legislature passed a bill enabling the canneries to employ children and women twelve hours a day? Fifty children to a teacher, adulterated foods, military discipline, are not beliefs in children. Enslaving mothers is not a belief in children.

Our belief in children like our belief in many other good things is mainly a word belief. What we need is a practical belief. We are still at the stage where we separate work and thought, action and theory, practice and ethics. If we would be saved we must follow the child's way of life. His way is the direct way. He learns from contact with the forces about him. He feels them, he sees them, he knows what they do to him. He thinks and does and discovers all in one continuous flow of energy.

The child says, "I am of things as they are. I am the fighter for the things that ought to be. I was the beginning of human progress and I am the progress of the world. I drive the world on. I invent, I achieve, I reform. About me is always the glory of mounting. I have no fear of falling, of slipping down, down. I have no fear of being lost. I am truth. I am reality and always I question chaos."

When the child begins to question the wisdom of the group, its religion, its literature, its dress, its tastes, its method of government, its standard of

judgment, that moment the group should begin to take heed. It should take the child's questioning seriously. When the group fails to do this, it gives up its existence, it ceases to grow because it looks back, it worships tradition, it makes history in terms of the past rather than in terms of the future.

Belief in evolution is a belief in the child.

What the race needs is a principle of growth, spiritual growth that can never be denied. Such a principle it will find in the child, because the spirit of the child is the one factor of the group existence that in itself keeps changing, growing. The child is nature's newest experiment in her search for a better type and the race will be strong as it determines that the experiment shall be successful.

We develop national characteristics in accord with our adherence to a common ideal. We must therefore surrender ourselves for the common good and the common good to which we should surrender is epitomised in the child idea.

I feel that the attitude towards the school and the child is the ultimate attitude by which America is to be judged. Indeed the distinctive contribution America is to make to the world's progress is not political, economical, religious, but educational, the child our national strength, the school as the medium through which the adult is to be remade.

What an ideal for the American people!

When my father came to America he thought of America only as a temporary home. He learned little or no English. As the years went by he would say, "It is enough; my children know English." Then more years rolled by. One day he came to me and asked me to help him get his citizenship papers. He and I began reading history together. Month after month we worked, labouring, translating, questioning until the very day of his examination.

That day I hurried home from college to find a smiling, happy father. "Did you get them?" I asked.

"Yes, and the judge wanted to know how I knew the answers so well and I told him my son who goes to college taught me and the judge complimented me."

I have been a part of many movements to Americanise the foreigner, but I see that the child is the only one who can carry the message of democracy if the message is to be carried at all. If the child fails to make the connection between the ideals of the school and the fundamental beliefs of the people, there is none other to do it. The children are the chain that must bind people together.

I have told about parents growing because they sought growth for their children. I saw them grow through the initiative of the school. These were tenement dwellers. Would this thing hold where

the parents are well to do, and the streets are clean and music is of the best, and home ideals are of the highest and the social life of the neighbourhood is intimate? Is it still necessary for the school to gather the parents about itself? Is it still necessary for the school to go out into the community and get the parents to consciously work as a group for the children's interest, to consciously shape their philosophy of life in conformity with the dynamic philosophy that childhood represents?

More necessary! If not to save the children, it should be done to save the parents.

No matter who the people are, they need the school as a humanising force, so that they may feel the common interest, revive their visions, see the fulfilment of their dreams in terms of their children, so that they may be made young once more. Americanise the foreigner, nay, through the child let us fulfil our destiny and Americanise America.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE CHILDREN

**YESTERDAY** the rain fell and the snow. I bent my head to the wind and went on. Then I met a boy; a very small boy he was, not big enough to be at school. He ran to me and took my hand and smiled, and I laughed and raised my head and walked on stepping lightly to the music of the rain and the snow.

Each day and every day, to school and from school, I meet you, hundreds of you. You smile and the welcome in your eyes is wonderful to see. You meet me and as you go you take me with you, free and joyous as yourself. Surely my life is blessed, blessed with the smiles of countless lips, blessed with the caress of countless greetings.

Do you feel that you have need of me? Know then, oh, my children, that I have far more need of you. The burdens of men are heavy and you make them light. The feet of men know not where to go and you show them the way. The souls of men are bound and you make them free. You, my beautiful people, are the dreams, the hopes, the meaning

of the world. It is because of you that the world grows and grows in brotherly love.

I look a thousand years ahead and I see not men, ships, inventions, buildings, poems, but children, shouting happy children, and I keep my hand in yours and smiling dream of endless days.

**THE END**

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"This is a book which should be read by teachers and superintendents the country over. Whoever is interested in the general problems of education as these apply to courses of study and the actual work of the school room will find in this book much of interest and value; not that many will agree with all the book contains, but because few can read it without being compelled to formulate their own ideas with respect to the subjects discussed. The author's style, his manner of treatment, and the keenness of his observations all serve to give the book a tone that appeals to one whether he agrees with its conclusions or not. There is a virility about the whole work, a wide-awakeness that is refreshing.

The book is largely the elaboration of three theses: individuals are born, not made; each individual is different than all others; and education must regard the individual rather than society of which he is a part. These are the ideas which the author states and restates with numerous illustrations and common sense figure throughout the whole work."—*American School Master*.

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*"John Dewey is to be classed among those who have made philosophic thought relevant to the needs of their own day. In the performance of this function he is to be classed with the ancient stoics, with Augustine, with Aquinas, with Francis Bacon, with Descartes, with Locke, with Auguste Comte."*

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--"Morris R. Cohen

## **Preface**

ALL SOCIAL movements involve conflicts, which are reflected intellectually in controversies. It would not be a sign of health if such an important social interest as education were not also an arena of struggles, practical and theoretical. But for theory, at least for the theory that forms a philosophy of education, the practical conflicts and the controversies that are conducted upon the level of these conflicts, only set a problem. It is the business of an intelligent theory of education to ascertain the causes for the conflicts that exist and then, instead of taking one side or the other, to indicate a plan of operations proceeding from a level deeper and more inclusive than is represented by the practices and ideas of the contending parties.

This formulation of the business of the philosophy of education does not mean that the latter should attempt to bring about a compromise between opposed schools of thought to find a *via media*, nor yet make an eclectic combination of points picked out hither and yon from all schools. It means the necessity of the introduction of a new order of conceptions leading to new modes of practice. It is for this reason that it is so difficult to develop a philosophy of education, the moment tradition and custom are departed from. It is for this reason that the conduct of schools, based upon a new order of conceptions, is so much more difficult than is the management of schools which walk in beaten paths. Hence, every movement in the direction of a new order of ideas and of activities directed by them calls out, sooner or later, a return to and practices of the past--as is exemplified at present in education in the attempt to revive the principles of ancient Greece and of the middle ages.

It is in this context that I have suggested at the close of this little volume that those who are looking ahead to a new movement in education, adapted to the existing need for a new social order, should think in terms of Education itself rather than in terms of some 'ism about education, even such an 'ism as "progressivism" For in spite of itself any movement that thinks and acts in terms of an 'ism becomes so involved in reaction against other 'isms that it is unwittingly controlled by them. For it then forms its principles by reaction against them instead of by a comprehensive, constructive survey of actual needs, problems, and possibilities. Whatever value is possessed by the essay presented in this little volume resides in its attempt to call attention to the larger and deeper issues of Education so as to suggest their proper frame of reference.

**John Dewey**

JOHN DEWEY, probably the most influential of all American philosophers, was born in Vermont in 1859. After graduation from the University of Vermont, he received a Ph.D. from The Johns Hopkins University and taught at a number of major universities, including the University of Chicago and Columbia. Before his death in 1952 he had gained an international reputation for his pragmatic approach to philosophy, psychology, and liberal politics.

Among his important books in these areas are: *How We Think* (1910), *Reconstruction in Philosophy* (1920), *Experience and Nature* (1925), and *Logic The Theory of inquiry* (1938). The commission, which he headed, that investigated the Moscow trials of 1936-37 is not example of the practical approach to political action which characterized him throughout his life and made him a controversial figure among liberals (though universally condemned by Communists).

In all likelihood, Dewey's most enduring influence is in the field of education. Believing in the unity of theory and practice, Dewey not only wrote on the subject, but for a time participated in the "laboratory school" for children connected with the University of Chicago. His chief early work in this field, *Democracy and Education* (1916), was the most comprehensive statement of his position. The present work, written more than two decades later, shows how Dewey reformulated his ideas as a result of the intervening experience of the progressive schools and in the light of the criticisms his theories had received. Consequently, it represents the best concise statement on education by the most important educational theorist of the twentieth century. Moreover, it is probably the simplest and most readable extended statement on this subject that Dewey ever made.

### **Editorial Foreword**

*Experience and Education* completes the first ten year cycle of Kappa Delta Pi Lecture series. The present volume therefore is, in part, an anniversary publication honoring Dr. Dewey as the Society's first and tenth lecturer. Although brief, as compared to the author's other works, *Experience & Education* is a major contribution to educational philosophy. Appearing in the midst of widespread confusion, which regrettably has scattered the forces of American education and exalted labels of conflict loyalties, this thin volume offers clear and certain guidance toward a united educational front. In as much as teachers of the "new" education have avowedly applied the teachings of Dr. Dewey and emphasized experience, experiment, purposeful learning, freedom, and other well-known concepts of "progressive education" it is well to learn how Dr. Dewey himself reacts to current and educational practices. In the interest of clear understanding and a union of effort the Executive Council of *Kappa Delta Pi* requested Dr. Dewey to discuss some of the moot questions that now divide American education into two camps and thereby weaken it at a time when its full strength is needed in guiding a bewildered nation through the hazards of social change.

*Experience & Education* is a lucid analysis of both “traditional” and “progressive” education. The fundamental defects of each are here described. Where the traditional school relied upon subjects or the cultural heritage for its content, the “new” school has exalted the learner’s impulse and the current problems of a changing society. Neither of these set of values is sufficient in itself. Both are essential. Sound educational experience involves, above all, continuity and interaction between the learner and what is learned. The traditional curriculum undoubtedly entailed rigid regimentation and a discipline that ignored the capacities and interests of child nature. Today, however, the reaction to this type of schooling often fosters the other extreme--inchoate curriculum, excessive individualism, and spontaneity, which is a deceptive index of freedom. Dr. Dewey insists that neither the old nor the new education is adequate. Each is mis-educative because neither of them applies the principles of a carefully developed philosophy of experience. Many pages of the present volume illustrate the meaning of experience and its relation to education.

Frowning upon labels that express and prolong schism, Dr. Dewey interprets education as the scientific method by means of which man studies the world, acquires cumulatively knowledge of meanings and values, these outcomes, however, being data for critical study and intelligent living. The tendency of scientific inquiry is toward a body of knowledge which needs to be understood as the means whereby further inquiry may be directed. Hence the scientist, instead of confining his investigation to problems as they are discovered, proceeds to study the nature of problems, their age, conditions, significance. To this end he may need to review related stores of knowledge. Consequently, education must employ progressive organization of subject- matter in order that the understanding of this subject-matter may illumine the meaning and suffice of the problems. Scientific study leads to and enlarges experience, but this experience is educative only to the degree that it rests upon a continuity of significant knowledge and to-the degree that this knowledge modifies or "modulates" the learner's outlook, attitude, and skill. The true learning situation, then, has longitudinal and lateral dimensions. It is both historical and social. It is orderly and dynamic. Arresting pages here await the many educators and teachers who are earnestly seeking reliable guidance at this time. *Experience and Education* provides a fine foundation upon which they may unitedly promote an American educational system which respects all sources of experience and rests upon a positive-not a negative- philosophy of experience and education. Directed by such a positive philosophy, American educators will erase their contentious labels and in solid ranks labor in behalf of a better tomorrow.

ALFRED L. HALL-QUEST,

Editor of Kappa Delta Pi Publications

## Chapter 1

## Traditional vs, progressive Education

MANKIND likes to think in terms of extreme opposites. It is given to formulating its beliefs in terms of Either-Or, between which it recognizes no intermediate possibilities. When forced to recognize that the extremes cannot be acted upon, it is still inclined to hold that they are all right in theory but that when it comes to practical matters circumstances compel us to compromise. Educational philosophy is no exception. The history of educational theory is marked by opposition between the idea that education is development from within and that it is formation from without; that it is based upon natural endowments and that education is a process of overcoming natural inclination and substituting in its place habits acquired under external pressure.

At present, the opposition, so far as practical affairs of the school are concerned, tends to take the form of contrast between traditional and progressive education. If the underlying ideas of the former are formulated broadly, without the qualification required for accurate statement, they are found to be about as follows: The subject-matter of education consists of bodies of information and of skills that have been worked out in the past; therefore, the chief business of the school is to transmit them to the new generation. In the past, there have also been developed standards and rules of conduct; moral training consists in forming habits of action in conformity with these rules and standards. Finally, the general pattern of school organization (by which I mean the relations of pupils to one another and to the teachers) constitutes the school kind of institution sharply marked off from other social institutions. Call up in imagination the ordinary school-room, its time schedules, schemes of classification, of examination and promotion, of rules of order, and I think you will grasp what is meant by "pattern of organization." If then you contrast this scene with what goes on in the family, for example, you will appreciate what is meant by the school being a kind of institution sharply marked off from any other form of social organization.

The three characteristics just mentioned fix the aims and methods of instruction and discipline. The main purpose or objective is to prepare the young for future responsibilities and for success in life, by means of acquisition of the organized bodies of information and prepared forms of skill, which comprehend the material of instruction. Since the subject matter as well as standards of proper conduct pre handed down from the past, the attitude of pupils must, upon the whole, be one of docility, receptivity and obedience. Books, especially textbooks, are the chief representatives of the lore and wisdom of the past, while teachers are the organs through which pupils are brought into effective connection with the material. Teachers are the agents through which knowledge and skills are communicated and rules of conduct: enforced

I have not made this brief summary for the purpose of criticizing the underlying philosophy. The rise of what is called new education and progressive schools is of itself a product of discontent with traditional education. In effect it is (I criticism of the latter. When the implied criticism is made explicit it reads somewhat as follows: The traditional scheme is, in essence, one of imposition from above and from outside. It imposes adult standards, subject-matter, and methods upon those who are only growing slowly toward

maturity. The gap is so great that the required subject matter, the methods of learning and of behaving are foreign to the existing capacities of the young. They are beyond the reach of the experience the young learners already possess. Consequently, they must be imposed; even though good teachers will use devices of art to cover up the imposition so as to relieve it of obviously brutal features.

But the gulf between the mature or adult products and the experience and abilities of the young is so wide that the very situation forbids much active participation by pupils in the development of what is taught. Theirs is to do--and learn, as it was the part of the six hundred to do and die. Learning here means acquisition of what already is incorporated in books and in the heads of the elders. Moreover, that which is taught is thought of as essentially static. It is taught as a finished product, with little regard either to the ways in which it was originally built up or to changes that will surely occur in the future. It is to a large extent the cultural product of societies that assumed the future would be much like the past, and yet it is used as educational food in a society where change is the rule, not the exception. If one attempts to formulate the philosophy of education implicit in the practices of the new education, we may, I think, discover certain common principles amid the variety of progressive schools now existing. To imposition from above is opposed expression and cultivation of individuality; to external discipline is opposed free activity; to learning from texts and teachers, learning through experience; to acquisition of isolated skills and techniques by drill, is opposed acquisition of them as means of attaining ends which make direct vital appeal; to preparation for a more or less remote future is opposed making the most of the opportunities of present life; to static aims and materials is opposed acquaintance with a changing world.

Now, all principles by themselves are abstract. They become concrete only in the consequences, which result from their application. Just because the principles set forth are so fundamental and far-reaching, everything depends upon the interpretation given them as they are put into practice in the school and the home. It is at this point that the reference made earlier to Either-Or philosophies becomes peculiarly pertinent. The general philosophy of the new education may be sound, and yet the difference in abstract principles will not decide the way in which the moral and intellectual preference involved shall be worked out in practice. There is always the danger in a new movement that in rejecting the aims and methods of that which it would supplant, it may develop its principles negatively rather than positively and constructively. Then it takes its clew in practice from that which is rejected instead of from the constructive development of its own philosophy.

I take it that the fundamental unity of the newer philosophy is found in the idea that there is an intimate and necessary relation between the processes of actual experience and education. If this be true, then a positive and constructive development of its own basic idea depends upon having a correct idea of experience. Take, for example, the question of organized subject-matter-which will be discussed in some detail later. The problem for progressive education is: What is the place and meaning of subject-matter and of organization within experience? How does subject-matter function? Is there anything inherent in experience, which tends towards progressive organization of its contents?

What results follow when the materials of experience are not progressively organized? A philosophy which proceeds on the basis of rejection, of sheer opposition, will neglect these questions. It will tend to suppose that because the old education was based on ready-made organization, therefore it succeeds to reject the principle of organization in toto, instead of striving to discover what it means and how it is to be attained on the basis of experience. We might go through all the points of difference between the new and the old education and reach similar conclusions. When external control is rejected, the problem becomes that of finding the factors of control that are inherent within experience. When external authority is rejected, it does not follow that all authority should be rejected, but rather that there is need to search for a more effective source of authority. Because the older education imposed the knowledge, methods, and the rules of conduct of the mature person upon the young, it does not follow, except upon the basis of the extreme Either-Or philosophy, that the knowledge and skill of the mature person has no directive value for the experience of the immature. On the contrary, basing education upon personal experience may mean more multiplied and more intimate contacts between the mature and the immature than ever existed in the traditional school, and consequently more, rather than less, guidance by others. The problem, then, is: how these contacts can be established without violating the principle of learning through personal experience. The solution of this problem requires a well thought-out philosophy of the social factors that operate in the constitution of individual experience.

What is indicated in the foregoing remarks is that the general principles of the new education do not of themselves solve any of the problems of the actual or practical conduct and management of progressive schools. Rather, they set new problems which have to be worked out on the basis of a new philosophy of experience. The problems are not even recognized, to say nothing of being solved, when it is assumed that it suffices to reject the ideas and practices of the old education and then go to the opposite extreme. Yet I am sure that you will appreciate what is meant when I say that many of the newer schools tend to make little or nothing of organized subject-matter of study; to proceed as if any form of direction and guidance by adults were an invasion of individual freedom, and as if the idea that education should be concerned with the present and future meant that acquaintance with the past has little or no role to play in education. Without pressing these defects to the point of exaggeration, they at least illustrate what is meant by a theory and practice of education which proceeds negatively or by reaction against what has been current in education rather than by a positive and constructive development of purposes, methods, and subject-matter on the foundation of a theory of experience and its educational potentialities.

It is not too much to say that an educational philosophy which professes to be based on the idea of freedom may become as dogmatic as ever was the traditional education which is reacted against. For any theory and set of practices is dogmatic which is not based upon critical examination of its own underlying principles. Let us say that the new education emphasizes the freedom of the learner. Very well. A problem is now set. What does freedom mean and what are the conditions under which it is capable of realization? Let us say that the kind of eternal imposition which was so common in the traditional school limited rather than promoted the intellectual and moral development of the young.

Again, very well. Recognition of this serious defect sets a problem. Just what is the role of the teacher and of books in promoting the educational development of the immature? Admit that traditional education employed as the subject-matter for study facts and ideas so bound up with the past as to give little help in dealing with the issues of the present and future. Very well. Now we have the problem of discovering the connection which actually exists within experience between the achievements of the past and the issues of the present. We have the problem of ascertaining how acquaintance with the past may be translated into a potent instrumentality for dealing effectively with the future. We may reject knowledge of the past as the end of education and thereby only emphasize its importance as a means. When we do that we have a problem that is new in the story of education: How shall the young become acquainted with the past in such a way that the acquaintance is a potent agent in appreciation of the living present?

## **Chapter 2**

### **The Need of a Theory of Experience**

IN SHORT, the point I am making is that rejection of the philosophy and practice of traditional education sets a new type of difficult educational problem for those who believe in the new type of education. We shall operate blindly and in confusion until we recognize this fact; until we thoroughly appreciate that departure from the old solves no problems. What is said in the following pages is, accordingly, intended to indicate some of the main problems with which the newer education is confronted and to suggest the main lines along which their solution is to be sought. I assume that amid all uncertainties there is one permanent frame of reference: namely, the organic connection between education and personal experience; or, that the new philosophy of education is committed to some kind of empirical and experimental philosophy. But experience and experiment are not self-explanatory ideas. Rather, their meaning is part of the problem to be explored. To know the meaning of empiricism we need to understand what experience is.

The belief that a genuine education comes about through experience does not mean that all experiences are genuinely or equally educative. Experience and education cannot be directly equated to each other. For some experiences are miseducative. Any experience is miseducative that has the effect of arresting or distorting the growth of further experience. An experience may be such as to engender callousness; it may produce lack of sensitivity and of responsiveness. Then the possibilities of having richer experience in the future are restricted. Again, a given experience may increase a person's automatic skill in a particular direction and yet tend to land him in a groove or rut; the effect again is to narrow the field of further experience. An experience may be immediately enjoyable and yet promote the formation of a slack and careless attitude; this attitude then operates to modify the quality of subsequent experiences so as to prevent a person from getting out of them what they have to give. Again, experiences may be so disconnected from one another that, while each is agreeable or even exciting in itself, they are not linked cumulatively to one another. Energy is then dissipated and a person becomes scatter-brained. Each experience may be lively, vivid, and "interesting," and yet

their disconnectedness may artificially generate dispersive, disintegrated, centrifugal habits. The consequence of formation of such habits is inability to control future experiences. They are then taken, either by way of enjoyment or of discontent and revolt, just as they come. Under such circumstances, it is idle to talk of self-control.

Traditional education offers a plethora of examples of experiences of the kinds just mentioned. It is a great mistake to suppose, even tacitly, that the traditional schoolroom was not a place in which pupils had experiences. Yet this is tacitly assumed when progressive education as a plan of learning by experience is placed in sharp opposition to the old. The proper line of attack is that the experiences, which were had, by pupils and teachers alike, were largely of a wrong kind. How many students, for example, were rendered callous to ideas, and how many lost the impetus to learn because of the Way in which learning was experienced by them? How many acquired special skills by means of automatic drill so that their power of judgment and capacity to act intelligently in new situations was limited? How many came to associate the learning process with ennui and boredom? How many found what they did learn so foreign to the situations of life outside the school as to give them no power of control over the latter? How many came to associate books with dull drudgery, so that they were "conditioned" to all but flashy reading matter?

If I ask these questions, it is not for the sake of whole sale condemnation of the old education. It is for quite another purpose. It is to emphasize the fact, first, that young people in traditional schools do have experiences; and, secondly, that the trouble is not the absence of experiences, but their defective and wrong character-- wrong and defective from the standpoint of connection with further experience. The positive side of this point is even more important in connection with progressive education. It is not enough to insist upon the necessity of experience, nor even of activity in experience. Every- thing depends upon the quality of the experience, which is had. The quality of any experience has two aspects. There is an immediate aspect of agreeableness or disagreeableness, and there is its influence upon later experiences. The first is obvious and easy to judge. The effect of an experience is not borne on its face. It sets a problem to the educator. It is his business to arrange for the kind of experiences which, while they do not repel the student, but rather engage his activities are, nevertheless, more than immediately enjoyable since they promote having desirable future experiences. Just as no man lives or dies to himself, so no experience lives and dies to itself. Wholly independent of desire or intent every experience lives on in further experiences. Hence the central problem of an education based upon experience is to select the kind of present experiences that live fruitfully and creatively in subsequent experiences.

Later, I shall discuss in more detail the principle of the continuity of experience or what may be called the experiential continuum. Here I wish simply to emphasize the importance of this principle for the philosophy of educative experience. A philosophy of education, like any theory, has to be stated in words, in symbols. But so far as it is more than verbal it is a plan for conducting education. Like any plan, it must be framed with reference to what is to be done and how it is to be done. The more definitely and sincerely it is held that education is a development within, by, and for experience, the

more important it is that there shall be clear conceptions of what experience is. Unless experience is so conceived that the result is a plan for deciding upon subject-matter, upon methods of instruction and discipline, and upon material equipment and social organization of the school, it is wholly in the air. It is reduced to a form of words which may be emotionally stirring but for which any other set of words might equally well be substituted unless they indicate operations to be initiated and executed. Just because traditional education was a matter of routine in which the plans and programs were handed down from the past, it does not follow that progressive education is a matter of planless improvisation.

The traditional school could get along without any consistently developed philosophy of education. About all it required in that line was a set of abstract words like culture, discipline, our great cultural heritage, etc., actual guidance being derived not from them but from custom and established routines. Just because progressive schools cannot rely upon established traditions and institutional habits, they must either proceed more or less haphazardly or be directed by ideas which, when they are made articulate and coherent, form a philosophy of education. Revolt against the kind of organization characteristic of the traditional school constitutes a demand for a kind of organization based upon ideas. I think that only slight acquaintance with the history of education is needed to prove that educational reformers and innovators alone have felt the need for a philosophy of education. Those who adhered to the established system needed merely a few fine-sounding words to justify existing practices. The real work was done by habits, which were so fixed as to be institutional. The lesson for progressive education is that it requires in an urgent degree, a degree more pressing than was incumbent upon former innovators, a philosophy of education based upon a philosophy of experience.

I remarked incidentally that the philosophy in question is, to paraphrase the saying of Lincoln about democracy, one of education of, by, and for experience. No one of these words, of, by, or for, names anything which is self-evident. Each of them is a challenge to discover and put into operation a principle of order and organization, which follows from understanding what educative experience, signifies.

It is, accordingly, a much more difficult task to work out the kinds of materials, of methods, and of social relationships that are appropriate to the new education than is the case with traditional education. I think many of the difficulties experienced in the conduct of progressive schools and many of the criticisms leveled against them arise from this source. The difficulties are aggravated and the criticisms are increased when it is supposed that the new education is somehow easier than the old. This belief is, I imagine, more or less current. Perhaps it illustrates again the Either-Or philosophy, springing from the idea that about all which is required is not to do what is done in traditional schools.

I admit gladly that the new education is simpler in principle than the old. It is in harmony with principles of growth, while there is very much which is artificial in the old selection and arrangement of subjects and methods, and artificiality always leads to unnecessary complexity. But the easy and the simple are not identical. To discover what

is really simple and to act upon the discovery is an exceedingly difficult task. After the artificial and complex is once institutionally established and ingrained in custom and routine, it is easier to walk in the paths that have been beaten than it is, after taking a new point of view, to work out what is practically involved in the new point of view. The old Ptolemaic astronomical system was more complicated with its cycles and epicycles than the Copernican system. But until organization of actual astronomical phenomena on the ground of the latter principle had been effected the easiest course was to follow the line of least resistance provided by the old intellectual habit. So we come back to the idea that a coherent theory of experience, affording positive direction to selection and organization of appropriate educational methods and materials, is required by the attempt to give new direction to the work of the schools. The process is a slow and arduous one. It is a matter of growth and there are many obstacles, which tend to obstruct growth and to deflect it into wrong lines.

I shall have something to say later about organization. All that is needed, perhaps, at this point is to say that we must escape from the tendency to think of organization in terms of the kind of organization, whether of content (or subject-matter), or of methods and social relations, that mark traditional education. I think that a good deal of the current opposition to the idea of organization is due to the fact that it is so hard to get away from the picture of the studies of the old school. The moment "organization" is mentioned imagination goes almost automatically to the kind of organization that is familiar, and in revolting against that we are led to shrink from the very idea of any organization. On the other hand, educational reactionaries, who are now gathering force, use the absence of adequate intellectual and moral organization in the newer type of school as proof not only of the need of organization, but to identify any and every kind of organization with that instituted before the rise of experimental science. Failure to develop a conception of organization upon the empirical and experimental basis gives reactionaries a too easy victory. But the fact that the empirical sciences now offer the best type of intellectual organization which can be found in any field shows that there is no reason why we, who call ourselves empiricists, should be "pushovers" in the matter of order and organization.

## Chapter 3

### Criteria of Experience

IF THERE IS any truth in what has been said about the need of forming a theory of experience in order that education may be intelligently conducted upon the basis of experience, it is clear that the next thing in order in this discussion is to present the principles that are most significant in framing this theory. I shall not; therefore, apologize for engaging in a certain amount of philosophical analysis, which otherwise might be out of place. I may, however, reassure you to some degree by saying that this analysis is not an end in itself but is engaged in for the sake of obtaining criteria to be applied later in discussion of a number of concrete and, to most persons, more interesting issues.

I have already mentioned what I called the category of continuity, or the experiential continuum. This principle is involved, as I pointed out, in every attempt to discriminate between experiences that are worth while educationally and those that are not. It may seem superfluous to argue that this discrimination is necessary not only in criticizing the traditional type of education but also in initiating and conducting a different type. Nevertheless, it is advisable to pursue for a little while the idea that it is necessary. One may safely assume, I suppose, that one thing which has recommended the progressive movement is that it seems more in accord with the democratic ideal to which our people is committed than do the procedures of the traditional school, since the latter have so much of the autocratic about them. Another thing which has contributed to its favorable reception is that its methods are humane in comparison with the harshness so often attending the policies of the traditional school.

The question I would raise concerns why we prefer democratic and humane arrangements to those, which are autocratic and harsh. And by "why," I mean the reason for preferring them, not just the causes which lead us to the preference. One cause may be that we have been taught not only in the schools but by the press, the pulpit, the platform, and our laws and law-making bodies that democracy is the best of all social institutions. We may have so assimilated this idea from our surroundings that it has become an habitual part of our mental and moral make-up. But similar causes have led other persons in different surroundings to widely varying conclusions--to prefer fascism, for example. The cause for our preference is not the same thing as the reason why we should prefer it.

It is not my purpose here to go in detail into the reason. But I would ask a single question: Can we find any reason that does not ultimately come down to the belief that democratic social arrangements promote a better quality of human experience, one which is more widely accessible and enjoyed, than do non-democratic and anti-democratic forms of social life? Does not the principle of regard for individual freedom and for decency and kindness of human relations come back in the end to the conviction that these things are tributary to a higher quality of experience on the part of a greater number than are methods of repression and coercion or force? Is it not the reason for our preference that we believe that mutual consultation and convictions reached through persuasion, make possible a better quality of experience than can otherwise be provided on any wide scale?

If the answer to these questions is in the affirmative (and personally I do not see how we can justify our preference for democracy and humanity on any other ground), the ultimate reason for hospitality to progressive education, because of its reliance upon and use of humane methods and its kinship to democracy, goes back to the fact that discrimination is made between the inherent values of different experiences. So I come back to the principle of continuity of experience as a criterion of discrimination.

At bottom, this principle rests upon the fact of habit, when habit is interpreted biologically. The basic characteristic of habit is that every experience enacted and undergone modifies the one who acts and undergoes, while this modification affects, whether we wish it or not, the quality of subsequent experiences. For it is a somewhat

different person who enters into them. The principle of habit so understood obviously goes deeper than the ordinary conception of a habit as a more or less fixed way of doing things, although it includes the latter as one of its special cases. It covers the formation of attitudes, attitudes that are emotional and intellectual; it covers our basic sensitivities and ways of meeting and responding to all the conditions which we meet in living. From this point of view, the principle of continuity of experience means that every experience both takes up something from those which have gone before and modifies in some way the quality of those which come after. As the poet states it,

... all experience is an arch wherethro'

Gleams that untraveled world, whose margin fades

Forever and forever when I move.

So far, however, we have no ground for discrimination among experiences. For the principle is of universal application. There is some kind of continuity in every case. It is when we note the different forms in which continuity of experience operates that we get the basis of discriminating among experiences. I may illustrate what is meant by an objection, which has been brought against an idea which I once put forth--namely, that the educative process can be identified with growth when that is understood in terms of the active participle, growing.

Growth, or growing as developing, not only physically but intellectually and morally, is one exemplification of the principle of continuity. The objection made is that growth might take many different directions: a man, for example, who starts out on a career of burglary may grow in that direction, and by practice may grow into a highly expert burglar. Hence it is argued that "growth" is not enough; we must also specify the direction in which growth takes place, the end towards which it tends. Before, however, we decide that the objection is conclusive we must analyze the case a little further.

That a man may grow in efficiency as a burglar, as a gangster, or as a corrupt politician, cannot be doubted. But from the standpoint of growth as education and education as growth the question is whether growth in this direction promotes or retards growth in general. Does this form, of growth create conditions for further growth, or does it set up conditions that shut off the person who has grown in this particular direction from the occasions, stimuli, and opportunities for continuing growth in new directions? What is the effect of growth in a special direction upon the attitudes and habits which alone open up avenues for development in other lines? I shall leave you to answer these questions, saying simply that when and only when development in a particular line conduces to continuing growth does it answer to the criterion of education as growing. For the conception is one that must find universal and not specialized limited application.

I return now to the question of continuity as a criterion by which to discriminate between experiences which are educative and those which are mis-educative. As we have seen, there is some kind of continuity in any case since every experience affects for better

or worse the attitudes which help decide the quality of further experiences, by setting up certain preference and aversion, and making it easier or harder to act for this or that end. Moreover, every experience influences in some degree the objective conditions under which further experiences are had. For example, a child who learns to speak has a new facility and new desire. But he has also widened the external conditions of subsequent learning. When he learns to read, he similarly opens up a new environment. If a person decides to become a teacher, lawyer, physician, or stock-broker, when he executes his intention he thereby necessarily determines to some extent the environment in which he will act in the future. He has rendered himself more sensitive and responsive to certain conditions, and relatively immune to those things about him that would have been stimuli if he had made another choice.

But, while the principle of continuity applies in some way in every case, the quality of the present experience influences the way in which the principle applies. We speak of spoiling a child and of the spoilt child. The effect of over-indulging a child is a continuing one. It sets up an attitude, which operates as an automatic demand that persons and objects cater to his desires and caprices in the future. It makes him seek the kind of situation that will enable him to do what he feels like doing at the time. It renders him averse to and comparatively incompetent in situations, which require effort and perseverance in overcoming obstacles. There is no paradox in the fact that the principle of the continuity of experience may operate so as to leave a person arrested on a low plane of development, in a way, which limits later capacity for growth.

On the other hand, if an experience arouses curiosity, strengthens initiative, and sets up desires and purposes that are sufficiently intense to carry a person over dead places in the future, continuity works in a very different way. Every experience is a moving force. Its value can be judged only on the ground of what it moves toward and into. The greater maturity of experience which should belong to the adult as educator puts him in a position to evaluate each experience of the young in a way in which the one having the less mature experience cannot do. It is then the business of the educator to see in what direction an experience is heading. There is no point in his being more mature if, instead of using his greater insight to help organize the conditions of the experience of the immature, he throws away his insight. Failure to take the moving force of an experience into account so as to judge and direct it on the ground of what it is moving into means disloyalty to the principle of experience itself. The disloyalty operates in two directions. The educator is false to the understanding that he should have obtained from his own past experience. He is also unfaithful to the fact that all human experience is ultimately social: that it involves contact and communication. The mature person, to put it in moral terms, has no right to withhold from the young on given occasions whatever capacity for sympathetic understanding his own experience has given him.

No sooner, however, are such things said than there is a tendency to read to the other extreme and take what has been said as a plea for some sort of disguised imposition from outside. It is worth while, accordingly, to say something about the way in which the adult can exercise the wisdom his own wider experience gives him without imposing a merely external control. On one side, it is his business to be on the alert to see what attitudes and

habitual tendencies are being created. In this direction he must, if he is an educator, be able to judge what attitudes are actually conducive to continued growth and what are detrimental. He must, in addition, have that sympathetic understanding ~ individuals as individuals which gives him an idea of what is actually going on in the minds of those who are learning. It is, among other things, the need for these abilities on the part of the parent and teacher which makes a system of education based upon living experience, difficult affair to conduct successfully than it is to follow the patterns of traditional education.

But there is another aspect of the matter. Experience does not go on simply inside a person. It does go on there, for it influences the formation of attitudes of desire and purpose. But this is not the whole of the story. Every genuine experience has an active side which changes in some degree the objective conditions under which experiences are had. The difference between civilization and savagery, to take an example on a large scale, is found in the degree in which previous experiences have changed the objective conditions under which subsequent experiences take place. The existence of roads, of means of rapid movement and transportation, tools, implements, furniture, electric light and power, are illustrations. Destroy the external conditions of present civilized experience, and for a time our experience would relapse into that of barbaric peoples.

In a word, we live from birth to death in a world of persons and things which in large measure is what it is because of what has been done and transmitted from previous human activities. When this fact is ignored, experience is treated as if it were something which goes on exclusively inside an individual's body and mind. It ought not to be necessary to say that experience does not occur in a vacuum. There are sources outside an individual which give rise to experience. It is constantly fed from these springs. No one would question that a child in a slum tenement has a different experience from that of a child in a cultured home; that the country lad has a different kind of experience from the city boy, or a boy on the seashore one different from the lad who is brought up on inland prairies. Ordinarily we take such facts for granted as too commonplace to record. But when their educational import is recognized, they indicate the second way in which the educator can direct the experience of the young without engaging in imposition. A primary responsibility of educators is that they not only be aware of the general principle of the shaping of actual experience by environing conditions, but that they also recognize in the concrete what surroundings are conducive to having experiences that lead to growth. Above all, they should know how to utilize the surroundings, physical and social, that exist so as to extract from them all that they have to contribute to building up experiences that are worth while.

Traditional education did not have to face this problem; it could systematically dodge this responsibility. The school environment of desks, blackboards, a small schoolyard, was supposed to suffice. There was no demand that the teacher should become intimately acquainted with the conditions of the local community, physical, historical, economic, occupational etc., in order to utilize them as educational resources. A system of education based upon the necessary connection of education with experience must, on the contrary, if faithful to its principle, take these things constantly into account. This tax upon the

educator is another reason why progressive education is more difficult to carry on than was ever the traditional system.

It is possible to frame schemes of education that pretty systematically subordinate objective conditions to those which reside in the individuals being educated. This happens whenever the place and function of the teacher, of books, of apparatus and equipment, of everything which represents the products of the more mature experience of elders, is systematically subordinated to the immediate inclinations and feelings of the young. Every theory which assumes that importance can be attached to these objective factors only at the expense of imposing external control and of limiting the freedom of individuals rests finally upon the notion that experience is truly experience only when objective conditions are subordinated to what goes on within the individuals having the experience.

I do not mean that it is supposed that objective conditions can be shut out. It is recognized that they must enter in: so much concession is made to the inescapable fact that we live in a world of things and persons. But I think that observation of what goes on in some families and some schools would disclose that some parents and some teachers are acting upon the idea of subordinating objective conditions to internal ones. In that case, it is assumed not only that the latter are primary, which in one sense they are, but that just as they temporarily exist they fix the whole educational process.

Let me illustrate from the case of an infant. The needs of a baby for food, rest, and activity are certainly primary and decisive in one respect. Nourishment must be provided; provision must be made for comfortable sleep, and so on. But these facts do not mean that a parent shall feed the baby at any time when the baby is cross or irritable, that there shall not be a program of regular hours of feeding and sleeping, etc. The wise mother takes account of the needs of the infant but not in a way, which dispenses with her own responsibility for regulating the objective conditions under which the needs are satisfied. And if she is a wise mother in this respect, she draws upon past experiences of experts as well as her own for the light that these shed upon what experiences are in general most conducive to the normal development of infants. Instead of these conditions being subordinated to the immediate internal condition of the baby, they are definitely ordered so that a particular kind of interaction with these immediate internal states may be brought about.

The word "interaction," which has just been used, expresses the second chief principle for interpreting an experience in its educational function and force. It assigns equal rights to both factors in experience-objective and internal conditions. Any normal experience is an interplay of these two sets of conditions. Taken together, or in their interaction, they form what we call a situation. The trouble with traditional education was not that it emphasized the external conditions that enter into the control of the experiences but that it paid so little attention to the internal factors which also decide what kind of experience is had. It violated the principle of interaction from one side. But this violation is no reason why the new education should violate the principle from the other side-except

upon the basis of the extreme Either-Or educational philosophy which has been mentioned.

The illustration drawn from the need for regulation of the objective conditions of a baby's development indicates, first, that the parent has responsibility for arranging the conditions under which an infant's experience of food, sleep, etc., occurs, and, secondly, that the responsibility is fulfilled by utilizing the funded experience of the past, as this is represented, say, by the advice of competent physicians and others who have made a special study of normal physical growth. Does it limit the freedom of the mother when she uses the body of knowledge thus provided to regulate the objective conditions of nourishment and sleep? Or does the enlargement of her intelligence in fulfilling her parental function widen her freedom? Doubtless if a fetish were made of the advice and directions so that they came to be inflexible dictates to be followed under every possible condition, then restriction of freedom of both parent and child would occur. But this restriction would also be a limitation of the intelligence that is exercised in personal judgment.

In what respect does regulation of objective conditions limit the freedom of the baby? Some limitation is certainly placed upon its immediate movements and inclinations when it is put in its crib, at a time when it wants to continue playing, or does not get food at the moment it would like it, or when it isn't picked up and dandled when it cries for attention. Restriction also occurs when mother or nurse snatches a child away from an open fire into which it is about to fall. I shall have more to say later about freedom. Here it is enough to ask whether freedom is to be thought of and adjudged on the basis of relatively momentary incidents or whether its meaning is found in the continuity of developing experience.

The statement that individuals live in a world means, in the concrete, that they live in a series of situations. And when it is said that they live in these situations, the meaning of the word "in" is different from its meaning when it is said that pennies are "in" a pocket or paint is "in" a can. It means, once more, that interaction is going on between an individual and objects and other persons. The conceptions of situation and of interaction are inseparable from each other. An experience is always what it is because of a transaction taking place between an individual and what, at the time, constitutes his environment, whether the latter consists of persons with whom he is talking about some topic or event, the subject talked about being also a part of the situation; or the toys with which he is playing; the book he is reading (in which his environing conditions at the time may be England or ancient Greece or an imaginary region); or the materials of an experiment he is performing. The environment, in other words, is whatever conditions interact with personal needs, desires, purposes, and capacities to create the experience which is had. Even when a person builds a castle in the air he is interacting with the objects which he constructs in fancy.

The two principles of continuity and interaction are not separate from each other. They intercept and unite. They are, so to speak, the longitudinal and lateral aspects of experience. Different situations succeed one another. But because of the principle of

continuity something is carried over from the earlier to the later ones. As an individual passes from one situation to another, his world, his environment, expands or contracts. He does not find himself living in another world but in a different part or aspect of one and the same world. What he has learned in the way of knowledge and skill in one situation becomes an instrument of understanding and dealing effectively with the situations which follow. The process goes on as long as life and learning continue. Otherwise the course of experience is disorderly, since the individual factor that enters into making an experience is split. A divided world, a world whose parts and aspects do not hang together, is at once a sign and a cause of a divided personality. When the splitting-up reaches a certain point we call the person insane. A fully integrated personality, on the other hand, exists only when successive experiences are integrated with one another. It can be built up only as a world of related objects is constructed.

Continuity and interaction in their active union with each other provide the measure of the educative significance and value of an experience. The immediate and direct concern of an educator is then with the situations in which interaction takes place. The individual, who enters as a factor into it, is what he is at a given time. It is the other factor, that of objective conditions, which lies to some extent within the possibility of regulation by the educator. As has already been noted, the phrase "objective conditions" covers a wide range. It includes what is done by the educator and the way in which it is done, not only words spoken but the tone of voice in which they are spoken. It includes equipment, books, apparatus, toys, games played. It includes the materials with which an individual interacts, and, most important of all, the total social set-up of the situations in which a person is engaged.

When it is said that the objective conditions are those which are within the power of the educator to regulate, it is meant, of course, that his ability to influence directly the experience of others and thereby the education they obtain places upon him the duty of determining that environment which will interact with the existing capacities and needs of those taught to create a worth-while experience. The trouble with traditional education was not that educators took upon themselves the responsibility for providing an environment. The trouble was that they did not consider the other factor in creating an experience; namely, the powers and purposes of those taught. It was assumed that a certain set of conditions was intrinsically desirable, apart from its ability to evoke a certain quality of response in individuals. This lack of mutual adaptation made the process of teaching and learning accidental. Those to whom the provided conditions were suitable managed to learn. Others got on as best they could. Responsibility for selecting objective conditions carries with it, then, the responsibility for understanding the needs and capacities of the individuals who are learning at a given time. It is not enough that certain materials and methods have proved effective with other individuals at other times. There must be a reason for thinking that they will function in generating an experience that has educative quality with particular individuals at a particular time.

It is no reflection upon the nutritive quality of beefsteak that it is not fed to infants. It is not an invidious reflection upon trigonometry that we do not teach it in the first or fifth grade of school. It is not the subject per se that is educative or that is conducive to

growth. There is no subject that is in and of itself, or without regard to the stage of growth attained by the learner, such that inherent educational value can be attributed to it. Failure to take into account adaptation to the needs and capacities of individuals was the source of the idea that certain subjects and certain methods are intrinsically cultural or intrinsically good for mental discipline. There is no such thing as educational value in the abstract. The notion that some subjects and methods and that acquaintance with certain facts and truths possess educational value in and of themselves is the reason why traditional education reduced the material of education so largely to a diet of predigested materials. According to this notion, it was enough to regulate the quantity and difficulty of the material provided, in a scheme of quantitative grading, from month to month and from year to year. Otherwise a pupil was expected to take it in doses that were prescribed from without. If the pupil left it instead of taking it, if he engaged in physical truancy, or in the mental truancy of mind-wandering and finally built up an emotional revulsion against the subject, he was held to be at fault. No question was raised as to whether the trouble might not lie in the subject-matter or in the way in which it was offered. The principle of interaction makes it clear that failure of adaptation of material to needs and capacities of individuals may cause an experience to be non-educative quite as much as failure of an individual to adapt himself to the material.

The principle of continuity in its educational application means, nevertheless, that the future has to be taken into account at every stage of the educational process. This idea is easily misunderstood and is badly distorted in traditional education. Its assumption is, that by acquiring certain skills and by learning certain subjects which would be needed later (perhaps in college or perhaps in adult life) pupils are as a matter of course made ready for the needs and circumstances of the future. Now "preparation" is a treacherous idea. In a certain sense every experience should do something to prepare a person for later experiences of a deeper and more expansive quality. That is the very meaning of growth, continuity, reconstruction of experience. But it is a mistake to suppose that the mere acquisition of a certain amount of arithmetic, geography, history, etc., which is taught and studied because it may be useful at some time in the future, has this effect, and it is a mistake to suppose that acquisition of skills in reading and figuring will automatically constitute preparation for their right and effective use under conditions very unlike those in which they were acquired.

Almost everyone has had occasion to look back upon his school days and wonder what has become of the knowledge he was supposed to have amassed during his years of schooling, and why it is that the technical skills he acquired have to be learned over again in changed form in order to stand him in good stead. Indeed, he is lucky who does not find that in order to make progress, in order to go ahead intellectually, he does not have to unlearn much of what he learned in school. These questions cannot be disposed of by saying that the subjects were not actually learned for they were learned at least sufficiently to enable a pupil to pass examinations in them. One trouble is that the subject-matter in question was learned in isolation; it was put, as it were, in a water-tight compartment. When the question is asked, then, what has become of it, where has it gone to, the right answer is that it is still there in the special compartment in which it was originally stowed away. If exactly the same conditions recurred as those under which it

was acquired, it would also recur and be available. But it was segregated when it was acquired and hence is so disconnected from the rest of experience that it is not available under the actual conditions of life. It is contrary to the laws of experience that learning of this kind, no matter how thoroughly engrained at the time, should give genuine preparation.

Nor does failure in preparation end at this point. Perhaps the greatest of all pedagogical fallacies is the notion that a person learns only the particular thing he is studying at the time. Collateral learning in the way of formation of enduring attitudes, of likes and dislikes, may be and often is much more important than the spelling lesson or lesson in geography or history that is learned. For these attitudes are fundamentally what count in the future. The most important attitude that can be formed is that of desire to go on learning. If impetus in this direction is weakened instead of being intensified, something much more than mere lack of preparation takes place. The pupil is actually robbed of native capacities which otherwise would enable him to cope with the circumstances that he meets in the course of his life. We often see persons who have had little schooling and in whose case the absence of set schooling proves to be a positive asset. They have at least retained their native common sense and power of judgment, and its exercise in the actual conditions of living has given them the precious gift of ability to learn from the experiences they have. What avail is it to win prescribed amounts of information about geography and history, to win ability to read and write, if in the process the individual loses his own soul: loses his appreciation of things worth while, of the values to which these things are relative; if he loses desire to apply what he has learned and, above all, loses the ability to extract meaning from his future experiences as they occur?

What, then, is the true meaning of preparation in the educational scheme? In the first place, it means that a person, young or old, gets out of his present experience all that there is in it for him at the time in which he has it. When preparation is made the controlling end, then the potentialities of the present are sacrificed to a suppositious future. When this happens, the actual preparation for the future is missed or distorted. The ideal of using the present simply to get ready for the future contradicts itself. It omits, and even shuts out, the very conditions by which a person can be prepared for his future. We always live at the time we live and not at some other time, and only by extracting at each present time the full meaning of each present experience are we prepared for doing the same thing in the future. This is the only preparation which in the long run amounts to anything.

All this means that attentive care must be devoted to the conditions which give each present experience a worthwhile meaning. Instead of inferring that it doesn't make much difference what the present experience is as long as it is enjoyed, the conclusion is the exact opposite. Here is another matter where it is easy to react from one extreme to the other. Because traditional schools tended to sacrifice the present to a remote and more or less unknown future, therefore it comes to be believed that the educator has little responsibility for the kind of present experiences the young undergo. But the relation of the present and the future is not an Either-Or affair. The present affects the future

anyway. The persons who should have some idea of the connection between the two are those who have achieved maturity. Accordingly, upon them devolves the responsibility for instituting the conditions for the kind of present experience which has a favorable effect upon the future. Education as growth or maturity should be an ever-present process.

## Chapter 4

### Social Control

I HAVE Said that educational plans and projects, seeing education in terms of life experience, are thereby committed to framing and adopting an intelligent theory or, if you please, philosophy of experience. Otherwise they are at the mercy of every intellectual breeze that happens to blow. I have tried to illustrate the need for such a theory by calling attention to two principles, which are fundamental in the constitution of experience: the principles of interaction and of continuity. If, then, I am asked why I have spent so much time on expounding a rather abstract philosophy, it is because practical attempts to develop schools based upon the idea that education is found in life-experience are bound to exhibit inconsistencies and confusions unless they are guided by some conception of what experience is, and what marks off educative experience from non-educative and mis-educative experience. I now come to a group of actual educational questions the discussion of which will, I hope, provide topics and material that are more concrete than the discussion up to this point.

The two principles of continuity and interaction as criteria of the value of experience are so intimately connected that it is not easy to tell just what special educational problem to take up first. Even the convenient division into problems of subject-matter or studies and of methods of teaching and learning is likely to fail us in selection and organization of topics to discuss. Consequently, the beginning and sequence of topics is somewhat arbitrary. I shall commence, however, with the old question of individual freedom and social control and pass on to the questions that grow naturally out of it.

It is often well in considering educational problems to get a start by temporarily ignoring the school and thinking of other human situations. I take it that no one would deny that the ordinary good citizen is as a matter of fact subject to a great deal of social control and that a considerable part of this control is not felt to involve restriction of personal freedom. Even the theoretical anarchist, whose philosophy commits him to the idea that state or government control is an unmitigated evil, believes that with abolition of the political state other forms of social control would operate: indeed, his opposition to governmental regulation springs from his belief that other and to him more normal modes of control would operate with abolition of the state.

Without taking up this extreme position, let us note some examples of social control that operate in everyday life, and then look for the principle underlying them. Let us begin with the young people themselves. Children at recess or after school play games,

from tag and one-old- cat to baseball and football. The games involve rules, and these rules order their conduct. The games do not go on haphazardly or by a succession of improvisations. Without rules there is no game. If disputes arise there is an umpire to appeal to, or discussion and a kind of arbitration are means to a decision; otherwise the game is broken up and comes to an end.

There are certain fairly obvious controlling features of such situations to which I want to call attention. The first is that the rules are a part of the game. They are not outside of it. No rules, then no game; different rules, then a different game. As long as the game goes on with a reasonable smoothness, the players do not feel that they are submitting to external imposition but that they are playing the game. In the second place at times feel that a decision isn't fair and he may even get angry. But he is not objecting to a rule but to what he claims is a violation of it, to some one-sided and unfair action. In the third place, the rules, and hence the conduct of the game, are fairly standardized. There are recognized ways of counting out, of selection of sides, as well as for positions to be taken, movements to be made, etc. These rules have the sanction of tradition and precedent. Those playing the game have seen, perhaps, professional matches and they want to emulate their elders. An element that is conventional is pretty strong. Usually, a group of youngsters change the rules by which they play only when the adult group to which they look for models have themselves made a change in the rules, while the change made by the elders is at least supposed to conduce to making the game more skillful or more interesting to spectators.

Now, the general conclusion I would draw is that control of individual actions is effected by the whole situation in which individuals are involved, in which they share and of which they are co-operative or interacting parts. For even in a competitive game there is a certain kind of participation, of sharing in a common experience. Stated the other way round, those who take part do not feel that they are bossed by an individual person or are being subjected to the will of some outside superior person. When violent disputes do arise, it is usually on the alleged ground that the umpire or a person on the other side is being unfair; in other words, that in such cases some individual is trying to impose his individual will on someone else.

It may seem to be putting too heavy a load upon a single case to argue that this instance illustrates the general principle of social control of individuals without the violation of freedom. But if the matter were followed out through a number of cases, I think the conclusion that this particular instance does illustrate a general principle would be justified. Games are generally competitive. If we took instances of co-operative activities in which all members of a group take part, as for example in well-ordered family life in which there is mutual confidence, the point would be even clearer. In all such cases it is not the will or desire of any one person which establishes order but the moving spirit of the whole group. The control is social, but individuals are parts of a community, not outside of it.

I do not mean by this that there are no occasions upon which the authority of, say, the parent does not have to intervene and exercise fairly direct control. But I do say that, in

the first place, the number of these occasions is slight in comparison with the number of those in which the control is exercised by situations in which all take part. And what is even more important, the authority in question when exercised in a well-regulated household or other community group is not a manifestation of merely personal will; the parent or teacher exercises it as the representative and agent of the interests of the group as a whole. With respect to the first point, in a well ordered school the main reliance for control of this and that individual is upon the activities carried on and upon the situations in which these activities are maintained. The teacher reduces to a minimum the occasions in which he or she has to exercise authority in a personal way. When it is necessary, in the second place, to speak and act firmly, it is done in behalf of the interest of the group, not as an exhibition of personal power. This makes the difference between action, which is arbitrary, and that which is just and fair.

Moreover, it is not necessary that the difference should be formulated in words, by either teacher or the young, in order to be felt in experience. The number of children who do not feel the difference (even if they cannot articulate it and reduce it to an intellectual principle) between action that is motivated by personal power and desire to dictate and action that is fair, because in the interest of all, is small. I should even be willing to say that upon the whole children are more sensitive to the signs and symptoms of this difference than are adults. Children learn the difference when playing with one another. They are willing, often too willing if anything, to take suggestions from one child and let him be a leader if his conduct adds to the experienced value of what they are doing, while they resent the attempt at dictation. Then they often withdraw and when asked why, say that it is because so-and-so "is too bossy."

I do not wish to refer to the traditional school in ways which set up a caricature in lieu of a picture. But I think it is fair to say that one reason the personal commands of the teacher so often played an undue role and a reason why the order which existed was so much a matter of sheer obedience to the will of an adult was because the situation almost forced it upon the teacher. The school was not a group or community held together by participation in common activities. Consequently, the normal, proper conditions of control were lacking. Their absence was made up for, and to a considerable extent had to be made up for, by the direct intervention of the teacher, who, as the saying went, "kept order." He kept it because order was in the teacher's keeping, instead of residing in the shared work being done.

The conclusion is that in what are called the new schools, the primary source of social control resides in the very nature of the work done as a social enterprise in which all individuals have an opportunity to contribute and to which all feel a responsibility. Most children are naturally "sociable." Isolation is even more irksome to them than to adults. A genuine community life has its ground in this natural sociability. But community life does not organize itself in an enduring way purely spontaneously. It requires thought and planning ahead. The educator is responsible for a knowledge of individuals and for a knowledge of subject-matter that will enable activity ties to be selected which lend themselves to social organization, an organization in which all individuals have an

opportunity to contribute something, and in which the activities in which all participate are the chief carrier of control.

I am not romantic enough about the young to suppose that every pupil will respond or that any child of normally strong impulses will respond on every occasion. There are likely to be some who, when they come to school, are already victims of injurious conditions outside of the school and who have become so passive and unduly docile that they fail to contribute. There will be others who, because of previous experience, are bumptious and unruly and perhaps downright rebellious. But it is certain that the general principle of social control cannot be predicated upon such cases. It is also true that no general rule can be laid down for dealing with such cases. The teacher has to deal with them individually. They fall into general classes, but no two are exactly alike. The educator has to discover as best he or she can the causes for the recalcitrant attitudes. He or she cannot, if the educational process is to go on, make it a question of pitting one will against another in order to see which is strongest, nor yet allow the unruly and non-participating pupils to stand permanently in the way of the educative activities of others. Exclusion perhaps is the only available measure at a given juncture, but it is no solution. For it may strengthen the very causes which have brought about the undesirable anti-social attitude, such as desire for attention or to show off.

Exceptions rarely prove a rule or give a clew to what the rule should be. I would not, therefore, attach too much importance to these exceptional cases, although it is true at present that progressive schools are likely often to have more than their fair share of these cases, since parents may send children to such schools as a last resort. I do not think weakness in control when it is found in progressive schools arises in any event from these exceptional cases. It is much more likely to arise from failure to arrange in advance for the kind of work (by which I mean all kinds of activities engaged in) which will create situations that of themselves tend to exercise control over what this, that, and the other pupil does and how he does it. This failure most often goes back to lack of sufficiently thoughtful planning in advance. The causes for such lack are varied. The one, which is peculiarly important to mention in this connection, is the idea that such advance planning is unnecessary and even that it is inherently hostile to the legitimate freedom of those being instructed.

Now, of course, it is quite possible to have preparatory planning by the teacher done in such a rigid and intellectually inflexible fashion that it does result in adult imposition, which is none the less external because executed with tact and the semblance of respect for individual freedom. But this kind of planning does not follow inherently from the principle involved. I do not know what the greater maturity of the teacher and the teacher's greater knowledge of the world, of subject-matters and of individuals, is for unless the teacher can arrange conditions that are conducive to community activity and to organization which exercises control over individual impulses by the mere fact that all are engaged in communal projects. Because the kind of advance planning heretofore engaged in has been so routine as to leave little room for the free play of individual thinking or for contributions due to distinctive individual experience, it does not follow that all planning must be rejected. On the contrary, there is incumbent upon the educator

the duty of instituting: a much more intelligent, and consequently, more difficult, kind of planning. He must survey the capacities and needs of the particular set of individuals with whom he is dealing and must at the same time arrange the conditions which provide the subject-matter or content for experiences that satisfy these needs and develop these capacities. The planning must be flexible enough to permit free play for individuality of experience and yet firm enough to give direction towards continuous development of power.

The present occasion is a suitable one to say something about the province and office of the teacher. The principle that development of experience comes about through interaction means that education is essentially a social process. This quality is realized in the degree in which individuals form a community group. It is absurd to exclude the teacher from membership in the group. As the most mature member of the group he has a peculiar responsibility for the conduct of the interactions and inter-communications which are the very life of the group as a community. That children are individuals whose freedom should be respected while the more mature person should have no freedom as an individual is an idea too absurd to require refutation. The tendency to exclude the teacher from a positive and leading share in the direction of the activities of the community of which he is a member is another instance of reaction from one extreme to another. When pupils were a class rather than a social group, the teacher necessarily acted largely from the outside, not as a director of processes of exchange in which all had a share. When education is based upon experience and educative experience is seen to be a social process, the situation changes radically. The teacher loses the position of external boss or dictator but takes on that of leader of group activities.

In discussing the conduct of games as an example of normal social control, reference was made to the presence of a standardized conventional factor. The counterpart of this factor in school life is found in the question of manners, especially of good manners in the manifestations of politeness and courtesy. The more we know about customs in different parts of the world at different times in the history of mankind, the more we learn how much manners differ from place to place and time to time. This fact proves that there is a large conventional factor involved. But there is no group at any time or place which does not have some code of manners as, for example, with respect to proper ways of greeting other persons. The particular form a convention takes has nothing fixed and absolute about it. But the existence of some form of convention is not itself a convention. It is a uniform attendant of all social relationships. At the very least, it is the oil which prevents or reduces friction.

It is possible, of course, for these social forms to become, as we say, "mere formalities." They may become merely outward show with no meaning behind them. But the avoidance of empty ritualistic forms of social intercourse does not mean the rejection of every formal element. It rather indicates the need for development of forms of intercourse that are inherently appropriate to social situations. Visitors to some progressive schools are shocked by the lack of manners they come across. One who knows the situation better is aware that to some extent their absence is due to the eager interest of children to go on with what they are doing. In their eagerness they may, for

example, bump into each other and into visitors with no word of apology. One might say that this condition is better than a display of merely external punctilio accompanying intellectual and emotional lack of interest in schoolwork. But it also represents a failure in education, a failure to learn one of the most important lessons of life, that of mutual accommodation and adaptation. Education is going on in a one-sided way, for attitudes and habits are in process of formation that stand in the way of the future learning that springs from easy and ready contact and communication with others.

## **Chapter 5**

### **The Nature of Freedom**

AT THE RISK Of repeating what has been often said by me I want to say something about the other side of the problem of social control, namely, the nature of freedom. The only freedom that is of enduring importance is freedom of intelligence, that is to say, freedom of observation and of judgment exercised in behalf of purposes that are intrinsically worth while. The commonest mistake made about freedom is, I think, to identify it with freedom of movement, or with the external or physical side of activity. Now, this external and physical side of activity cannot be separated from the internal side of activity; from freedom of thought, desire, and purpose. The Limitation that was put upon outward action by the fixed arrangements of the typical traditional schoolroom, with its fixed rows of desks and its military regimen of pupils who were permitted to move only at certain fixed signals, put a great restriction upon intellectual and moral freedom. Straitjacket and chain-game procedures had to be done away with if there was to be a chance for growth of individuals in the intellectual springs of freedom without which there is no assurance of genuine and continued normal growth.

But the fact still remains that an increased measure of freedom of outer movement is a means, not an end. The educational problem is not solved when this aspect of freedom is obtained. Everything then depends, so far as education is concerned, upon what is done with this added liberty. What end does it serve? What consequences flow from it? Let me speak first of the advantages which reside potentially in increase of outward freedom. In the first place, without its existence it is practically impossible for a teacher to gain knowledge of the individuals with whom he is concerned. Enforced quiet and acquiescence prevent pupils from disclosing their real natures. They enforce artificial uniformity. They put seeming before being. They place a premium upon preserving the outward appearance of attention, decorum, and obedience. And everyone who is acquainted with schools in which this system prevailed well knows that thoughts, imaginations, desires, and sly activities ran their own unchecked course behind this facade. They were disclosed to the teacher only when some untoward act led to their detection. One has only to contrast this highly artificial situation with normal human relations outside the schoolroom, say in a well conducted home, to appreciate how fatal it is to the teacher's acquaintance with and understanding of the individuals who are, supposedly, being educated. Yet without this insight there is only an accidental chance that the material of study and the methods used in instruction will so come home to an

individual that his development of mind and character is actually directed. There is a vicious circle. Mechanical uniformity of studies and methods creates a kind of uniform immobility and this reacts to perpetuate uniformity of studies and of recitations, while behind this enforced uniformity individual tendencies operate in irregular and more or less forbidden ways.

The other important advantage of increased outward freedom is found in the very nature of the learning process. That the older methods set a premium upon passivity and receptivity has been pointed out. Physical quiescence puts a tremendous premium upon these traits. The only escape from them in the standardized school is an activity, which is irregular and perhaps disobedient. There cannot be complete quietude in a laboratory or workshop. The non-social character of the traditional school is seen in the fact that it erected silence into one of its prime virtues. There is, of course, such a thing as intense intellectual activity without overt bodily activity. But capacity for such intellectual activity marks a comparatively late achievement when it is continued for a long period. There should be brief intervals of time for quiet reflection provided for even the young. But they are periods of genuine reflection only when they follow after times of more overt action and are used to organize what has been gained in periods of activity in which the hands and other parts of the body beside the brain are used. Freedom of movement is also important as a means of maintaining normal physical and mental health. We have still to learn from the example of the Greeks who saw clearly the relation between a sound body and a sound mind. But in all the respects mentioned freedom of outward action is a means to freedom of judgment and of power to carry deliberately chosen ends into execution. The amount of external freedom, which is needed, varies from individual to individual. It naturally tends to decrease with increasing maturity, though its complete absence prevents even a mature individual from having the contacts, which will provide him with new materials upon which his intelligence may exercise itself. The amount and the quality of this kind of free activity as a means of growth is a problem that must engage the thought of the educator at every stage of development.

There can be no greater mistake, however, than to treat such freedom as an end in itself. It then tends to be destructive of the shared cooperative activities which are the normal source of order. But, on the other hand, it turns freedom which should be positive into something negative. For freedom from restriction, the negative side, is to be prized only as a means to a freedom which is power: power to frame purposes, to judge wisely, to evaluate desires by the consequences which will result from acting upon them; power to select and order means to carry chosen ends into operation.

Natural impulses and desires constitute in any case the starting point. But there is no intellectual growth without some reconstruction, some remaking, of impulses and desires in the form in which they first show themselves. This remaking involves inhibition of impulse in its first estate. The alternative to externally imposed inhibition is inhibition through an individual's own reflection and judgment. The old phrase "Stop and think" is sound psychology. For thinking is stoppage of the immediate manifestation of impulse until that impulse has been brought into connection with other possible tendencies to action so that a more comprehensive and coherent plan of activity is formed. Some of the

other tendencies to action lead to use of eye, ear, and hand to observe objective conditions; others result in recall of what has happened in the past. Thinking is thus a postponement of immediate action, while it effects internal control of impulse through a union of observation and memory, this union being the heart of reflection. What has been said explains the meaning of the well-worn phrase "self-control." The ideal aim of education is creation of power of self-control. But the mere removal of external control is no guarantee for the production of self-control. It is easy to jump out of the frying-pan into the fire. It is easy, in other words, to escape one form of external control only to find oneself in another and more dangerous form of external control. Impulses and desires that are not ordered by intelligence are under the control of accidental circumstances. It may be a loss rather than a gain to escape from the control of another person only to find one's conduct dictated by immediate whim and caprice; that is, at the mercy of impulses into whose formation intelligent judgment has not entered. A person whose conduct is controlled in this way has at most only the illusion of freedom. Actually forces over which he has no command direct him.

## Chapter 6

### The Meaning of Purpose

IT IS, then, a sound instinct which identifies freedom with power to frame purposes and to execute or carry into effect purposes so framed. Such freedom is in turn identical with self-control; for the formation of purposes and the organization of means to execute them are the work of intelligence. Plato once defined a slave as the person who executes the purposes of another, and, as has just been said, a person is also a slave who is enslaved to his own blind desires. There is, I think, no point in the philosophy of progressive education which is sounder than its emphasis upon the importance of the participation of the learner in the formation of the purposes which direct his activities in the learning process, just as there is no defect in traditional education greater than its failure to secure the active cooperation of the pupil in construction of the purposes involved in his studying. But the meaning of purposes and ends is not self-evident and self-explanatory. The more their educational importance is emphasized, the more important it is to understand what a purpose is; how it arises and how it functions in experience.

A genuine purpose always starts with an impulse. Obstruction of the immediate execution of an impulse converts it into a desire. Nevertheless neither impulse nor desire is itself a purpose. A purpose is an end-view. That is, it involves foresight of the consequences which will result from acting upon impulse. Foresight of consequences involves the operation of intelligence. It demands, in the first place, observation of objective conditions and circumstances. For impulse and desire produce consequences not by themselves alone but through their interaction or co-operation with surrounding conditions. The impulse for such a simple action as walking is executed only in active conjunction with the ground on which one stands. Under ordinary circumstances, we do not have to pay much attention to the ground. In a ticklish situation we have to observe

very carefully just what the conditions are, as in climbing a steep and rough mountain where no trail has been laid out. Exercise of observation is, then, one condition of transformation of impulse into a purpose. As in the sign by a railway crossing, we have to stop, look, and listen.

But observation alone is not enough. We have to understand the significance of what we see, hear, and touch. This significance consists of the consequences that will result when what is seen is acted upon. A baby may see the brightness of a flame and be attracted thereby to reach for it. The significance of the flame is then not its brightness but its power to burn, as the consequence that will result from touching it. We can be aware of consequences only because of previous experiences. In cases that are familiar because of many prior experiences we do not have to stop to remember just what those experiences were. A flame comes to signify light and heat without our having expressly to think of previous experiences of heat and burning. But in unfamiliar cases, we cannot tell just what the consequences of observed conditions will be unless we go over past experiences in our mind, unless we reflect upon them and by seeing what is similar in them to those now present, go on to form a judgment of what may be expected in the present situation. The formation of purposes is, then, a rather complex intellectual operation. It involves (1) observation of surrounding conditions; (2) knowledge of what has happened in similar situations in the past, a knowledge obtained partly by recollection and partly from the information, advice, and warning of those who have had a wider experience; and (3) judgment which puts together what is observed and what is recalled to see what they signify. A purpose differs from an original impulse and desire through its translation into a plan and method of action based upon foresight of the consequences of acting under given observed conditions in a certain way. "If wishes were horses, beggars would ride." Desire for some thing may be intense. It may be so strong as to override estimation of the consequences that will follow acting upon it. Such occurrences do not provide the model for education. The crucial educational problem is that of preventing the postponement of immediate action upon desire until observation and judgment have intervened. Unless I am mistaken, this point is definitely relevant to the conduct of progressive schools. Overemphasis upon activity as an end, instead of upon intelligent activity, leads to identification of freedom with immediate execution of impulses and desires. This identification is justified by a confusion of impulse with purpose; although, as has just been said, there is no purpose unless overt action is postponed until there is foresight of the consequences of carrying the impulse into execution—a foresight that is impossible without observation, information, and judgment. Mere foresight, even if it takes the form of accurate prediction, is not, of course, enough. The intellectual anticipation, the idea of consequences, must blend with desire and impulse to acquire moving force. It then gives direction to what otherwise is blind, while desire gives ideas impetus and momentum. An idea then becomes a plan in and for an activity to be carried out. Suppose a man has a desire to secure a new home, say by building a house. No matter how strong his desire, it cannot be directly executed. The man must form an idea of what kind of house he wants, including the number and arrangement of rooms, etc. He has to draw a plan, and have blue prints and specifications made. Ah this might be an idle amusement for spare time unless he also took stock of his resources. He must consider the relation of his funds and available credit to the execution of the plan. He has to

investigate available sites, their price, their nearness to his place of business, to a congenial neighborhood, to school facilities, and so on and so on. All of the things reckoned with: his ability to pay, size and needs of family, possible locations, etc., etc., are objective facts. They are no part of the original desire. But they have to be viewed and judged in order that a desire may be converted into a purpose and a purpose into a plan of action.

All of us have desires, all at least who have not become so pathological that they are completely apathetic. These desires are the ultimate moving springs of action. A professional businessman wishes to succeed in his career; a general wishes to win the battle; a parent to have a comfortable home for his family, and to educate his children, and so on indefinitely. The intensity of the desire measures the strength of the efforts that will be put forth. But the wishes are empty castles in the air unless they are translated into the means by which they may be realized. The question of how soon of means takes the place of a projected imaginative end, and, since means are objective, they have to be studied and understood if a genuine purpose is to be formed.

Traditional education tended to ignore the importance personal impulse and desire as moving springs. But this is no reason why progressive education should identify impulse and desire with purpose and thereby pass lightly over the need for careful observation, for wide range of information, and for judgment if students are to share in the formation of the purposes which activate them. In an educational scheme, the occurrence of a desire and impulse is not the final end. It is an occasion and a demand for the formation of a plan and method of activity. Such a plan, to repeat, can be formed only by study of conditions and by sewing all relevant information.

The teacher's business is to see that the occasion is taken advantage of. Since freedom resides in the operations of intelligent observation and judgment by which a purpose is developed, guidance given by the teacher to the exercise of the pupils' intelligence is an aid to freedom, not a restriction upon it. Sometimes teachers seem to be afraid even to make suggestions to the members of a group as to what they should do. I have heard of cases in which children are surrounded with objects and materials and then left entirely to themselves, the teacher being loath to suggest even what might be done with the materials lest freedom be infringed upon. Why, then, even supply materials, since they are a source of some suggestion or other? But what is more important is that the suggestion upon which pupils act must in any case come from some- where. It is impossible to understand why a suggestion from one who has a larger experience and a wider horizon should not be at least as valid as a suggestion arising from some more or less accidental source.

It is possible of course to abuse the office, and to force the activity of the young into channels which express the teacher's purpose rather than that of the pupils. But the way to avoid this danger is not for the adult to withdraw entirely. The way is, first, for the teacher to be intelligently aware of the capacities, needs, and past experiences of those under instruction, and, secondly, to allow the suggestion made to develop into a plan and project by means of the further suggestions contributed and organized into a whole by the

members of the group. The plan, in other words, is a co-operative enterprise, not a dictation. The teacher's suggestion is not a mold for a cast-iron result but is a starting point to be developed into a plan through contributions from the experience of all engaged in the learning process. The development occurs through reciprocal give-and-take, the teacher taking but not being afraid also to give. The essential point is that the purpose grows and takes shape through the process of social intelligence.

## **Chapter 7**

### **Progressive Organization of Subject Matter**

ALLUSION HAS been made in passing a number of times to objective conditions involved in experience and to their function in promoting or failing to promote the enriched growth of further experience. By implication, these objective conditions, whether those of observation, of memory, of information procured from others, or of imagination, have been identified with the subject-matter of study and learning; or, speaking more generally, with the stuff of the course of study. Nothing, however, has been said explicitly so far about subject-matter as such. That topic will now be discussed. One consideration stands out clearly when education is conceived in terms of experience. Anything which can be called a study, whether arithmetic, history, geography, or one of the natural sciences, must be derived from materials which at the outset fall within the scope of ordinary life-experience. In this respect the newer education contrasts sharply with procedures which start with facts and truths that are outside the range of the experience of those thought, and which, therefore, have the problem of discovering ways and means of bringing them within experience. Undoubtedly one chief cause for the great success of newer methods in early elementary education has been its observance of the contrary principle.

But finding the material for learning within experience is only the first step. The next step is the progressive development of what is already experienced into a fuller and richer and also more organized form, a form that gradually approximates that in which subject-matter is presented to the skilled, mature person. That this change is possible without departing from the organic connection of education with experience is shown by the fact that this change takes place outside of the school and apart from formal education. The infant, for example, begins with an environment of objects that is very restricted in space and time. That environment steadily expands by the momentum inherent in experience itself without aid from scholastic instruction. As the infant learns to reach, creep, walk, and talk, the intrinsic subject-matter of its experience widens and deepens. It comes into connection with new objects and events, which call out new powers, while the exercise of these powers refines and enlarges the content of its experience. Life-space and life-duration's are expanded. The environment, the world of experience, constantly grows larger and, so to speak, thicker. The educator who receives the child at the end of this period has to find ways for doing consciously and deliberately what "nature" accomplishes in the earlier years.

It is hardly necessary to insist upon the first of the two conditions which have been specified. It is a cardinal precept of the newer school of education that the beginning of instruction shall be made with the experience learners already have; that this experience and the capacities that have been developed during its course provide the starting point for a further learning. I am not so sure that the other condition, that of orderly development toward expansion and organization of subject-matter through growth of experience, receives as much attention. Yet the principle of continuity of educative experience requires that equal thought and attention be given to solution of this aspect of the educational problem. Undoubtedly this phase of the problem is more difficult than the other. Those who deal with the pre-school child, with the kindergarten child, and with the boy and girl of the early primary years do not have much difficulty in determining the range of past experience or in finding activities that connect in vital ways with it. With older children both factors of the problem offer increased difficulties to the educator. It is harder to find out the background of the experience of individuals and harder to find out just how the subject-matters already contained in that experience shall be directed so as to lead out to larger and better organized fields.

It is a mistake to suppose that the principle of the leading on of experience to something different is adequately satisfied simply by giving pupils some new experiences any more than it is by seeing to it that they have greater skill and ease in dealing with things with which they are already familiar. It is also essential that the new objects and events be related intellectually to those of earlier experiences, and this means that there be some advance made in conscious articulation of facts and ideas. It thus becomes the office of the educator to select those things within the range of existing experience that have the promise and potentiality of presenting new problems which by stimulating new ways of observation and judgment will expand the area of further experience. He must constantly regard what is already won not as a fixed possession but as an agency and instrumentality for opening new fields which make new demands upon existing powers of observation and of intelligent use of memory. Connectedness in growth must be his constant watchword. The educator more than the member of any other profession is concerned to have a long look ahead. The physician may feel his job done when he has restored a patient to health. He has undoubtedly the obligation of advising him how to live so as to avoid similar troubles in the future. But, after all, the conduct of his life is his own affair, not the physician's; and what is more important for the present point is that as far as the physician does occupy himself with instruction and advice as to the future of his patient he takes upon himself the function of an educator. The lawyer is occupied with winning a suit for his client or getting the latter out of some complication into which he has got himself. If it goes beyond the case presented to him he too becomes an educator. The educator by the very nature of his work is obliged to see his present work in terms of what it accomplishes, or fails to accomplish, for a future whose objects are linked with those of the present.

Here, again, the problem for the progressive educator is more difficult than for the teacher in the traditional school. The latter had indeed to look ahead. But unless his personality and enthusiasm took him beyond the limits that hedged in the traditional

school, he could content himself with thinking of the next examination period or the promotion to the next class. He could envisage the future in terms of factors that lay within the requirements of the school system as that conventionally existed. There is incumbent upon the teacher who links education and actual experience together a more serious and a harder business. He must be aware of the potentialities for leading students into new fields which belong to experiences already had, and must use this knowledge as his criterion for selection and arrangement of the conditions that influence their present experience.

Because the studies of the traditional school consisted of subject-matter that was selected and arranged on the basis of the judgment of adults as to what would be useful for the young sometime in the future, the material to be learned was settled upon outside the present life-experience of the learner. In consequence, it had to do with the past; it was such as had proved useful to men in past ages. By reaction to an opposite extreme, as unfortunate as it was probably natural under the circumstances, the sound idea that education should derive its materials from present experience and should enable the learner to cope with the problems of the present and future has often been converted into the idea that progressive schools can to a very large extent ignore the past. If the present could be cut off from the past, this conclusion would be sound. But the achievements of the past provide the only means at command for understanding the present. Just as the individual has to draw in memory upon his own past to understand the conditions in which he individually finds himself, so the issues and problems of present social life are in such intimate and direct connection with the past that students cannot be prepared to understand either these problems or the best way of dealing with them without delving into their roots in the past. In other words, the sound principle that the objectives of learning are in the future and its immediate materials are in present experience can be carried into effect only in the degree that present experience is stretched, as it were, backward. It can expand into the future only as it is also enlarged to take in the past.

If time permitted, discussion of the political and economic issues which the present generation will be compelled to face in the future would render this general statement definite and concrete. The nature of the issues cannot be understood save as we know how they came about. The institutions and customs that exist in the present and that give rise to present social ills and dislocations did not arise overnight. They have a long history behind them. Attempt to deal with them simply on the basis of what is obvious in the present is bound to result in adoption of superficial measures which in the end will only render existing problems more acute and more difficult to solve. Policies framed simply upon the ground of knowledge of the present cut off from the past is the counterpart of heedless carelessness in individual conduct. The way out of scholastic systems that made the past an end in itself is to make acquaintance with the past a means of understanding the present. Until this problem is worked out, the present clash of educational ideas and practices will continue. On the one hand, there will be reactionaries that claim that the main, if not the sole, business of education is transmission of the cultural heritage. On the other hand, there will be those who hold that we should ignore the past and deal only with the present and future.

That up to the present time the weakest point in progressive schools is in the matter of selection and organization of intellectual subject-matter is, I think, inevitable under the circumstances. It is as inevitable as it is right and proper that they should break loose from the cut and dried material which formed the staple of the old education. In addition, the field of experience is very wide and it varies in its contents from place to place and from time to time. A single course of studies for all progressive schools is out of the question; it would mean abandoning the fundamental principle of connection with life-experiences. Moreover, progressive schools are new. They have had hardly more than one generation in which to develop. A certain amount of uncertainty and of laxity in choice and organization of subject-matter is, therefore, what was to be expected. It is no ground for fundamental criticism or complaint.

It is a ground for legitimate criticism, however, when the ongoing movement of progressive education fails to recognize that the problem of selection and organization of subject-matter for study and learning is fundamental. Improvisation that takes advantage of special occasions prevents teaching and learning from being stereotyped and dead. But the basic material of study cannot be picked up in a cursory manner. Occasions which are not and cannot be foreseen are bound to arise wherever there is intellectual freedom. They should be utilized. But there is a decided difference between using them in the development of a continuing line of activity and trusting to them to provide the chief material of learning.

Unless a given experience leads out into a field previously unfamiliar no problems arise, while problems are the stimulus to thinking. That the conditions found in present experience should be used as sources of problems is a characteristic which differentiates education based upon experience from traditional education. For in the latter, problems were set from outside. Nonetheless, growth depends upon the presence of difficulty to be overcome by the exercise of intelligence. Once more, it is part of the educator's responsibility to see equally to two things: First, that the problem grows out of the conditions of the experience being had in the present and that it is within the range of the capacity of students; and, secondly, that it is such that it arouses in the learner an active quest for information and for production of new ideas. The new facts and new ideas thus obtained become the ground for further experiences in which new problems are presented. The process is a continuous spiral. The inescapable linkage of the present with the past is a principle whose application is not restricted to a study of history. Take natural science, for example. Contemporary social life is what it is in very large measure because of the results of application of physical science. The experience of every child and youth, in the country and the city, is what it is in its present actuality because of appliances which utilize electricity, heat, and chemical processes. A child does not eat a meal that does not involve in its preparation and assimilation chemical and physiological principles. He does not read by artificial light or take a ride in a motor car or on a train without coming into contact with operations and processes which science has engendered.

It is a sound educational principle that students should be introduced to scientific subject-matter and be initiated into its facts and laws through acquaintance with everyday

social applications. Adherence to this method is not only the most direct avenue to understanding of science itself but as the pupils grow more mature it is also the surest road to the understanding of the economic and industrial problems of present society. For they are the products to a very large extent of the application of science in production and distribution of commodities and services, while the latter processes are the most important factor in determining the present relations of human beings and social groups to one another. It is absurd, then, to argue that processes similar to those studied in laboratories and institutes of research are not a part of the daily life- experience of the young and hence do not come within the scope of education based upon experience. That the immature cannot study scientific facts and principles in the way in which mature experts study them goes without saying. But this fact, instead of exempting the educator from responsibility for using present experiences so that learners may gradually be led, through extraction of facts and laws, to experience of a scientific order, sets one of his main problems.

For if it is true that existing experience in detail and also on a wide scale is what it is because of the application of science, first, to processes of production and distribution of goods and services, and then to the relations which human beings sustain socially to one another, it is impossible to obtain an understanding of present social forces (without which they cannot be mastered and directed) apart from an education which leads learners into knowledge of the very same facts and principles which in their final organization constitute the sciences. Nor does the importance of the principle that learners should be led to acquaintance with scientific subject-matter cease with the insight thereby given into present social issues. The methods of science also point the way to the measures and policies by means of which a better social order can be brought into existence. The applications of science which have produced in large measure the social conditions which now exist do not exhaust the possible field of their application. For so far science has been applied more or less casually and under the influence of ends, such as private advantage and power, which are a heritage from the institutions of a pre-scientific age.

We are told almost daily and from many sources that it is impossible for human beings to direct their common life intelligently. We are told, on one hand, that the complexity of human relations, domestic and international, and on the other hand, the fact that human beings are so largely creatures of emotion and habit, make impossible large-scale social planning and direction by intelligence. This view would be more credible if any systematic effort, beginning with early education and carried on through the continuous study and learning of the young, had ever been undertaken with a view to making the method of intelligence, exemplified in science, supreme in education. There is nothing in the inherent nature of habit that prevents intelligent method from becoming itself habitual; and there is nothing in the nature of emotion to prevent the development of intense emotional allegiance to the method.

The case of science is here employed as an illustration of progressive selection of subject-matter resident in present experience towards organization: an organization which is free, not externally imposed, because it is in accord with the growth of experience

itself. The utilization of subject-matter found in the present life-experience of the learner towards science is perhaps the best illustration that can be found of the basic principle of using existing experience as the means of carrying learners on to a wider, more refined, and better organized environing world, physical and human, than is found in the experiences from which educative growth sets out. Hogben's recent work *Mathematics for the Million*, shows how mathematics, if it is treated as a mirror of civilization and as a main agency in its progress, can contribute to- the desired goal its surely as can the physical sciences. The underlying ideal in any case is that of progressive organization of knowledge. It is with reference to organization of knowledge that we are likely to find Either-Or philosophies most acutely active. In practice, if not in so many words, it is often held that since traditional education rested upon a conception of organization of knowledge that was almost completely contemptuous of living present experience, therefore education based upon living experience should be contemptuous of the organization of facts and ideas.

When a moment ago I called this organization an ideal, I meant, on the negative side, that the educator cannot start with knowledge already organized and proceed to lade it out in doses. But as an ideal the active process of organization facts and ideas is an ever-present educational process. No experience is educative that does not tend both to knowledge of more facts and entertaining of more ideas and to a better, a more orderly, arrangement of them. It is not true that organization is a principle foreign to experience. Otherwise experience would be so dispersive as to be chaotic. The experience of young children centers about persons and the home. Disturbance of the normal order of relationships in the family is now known by : ' psychiatrists to be a fertile source of later mental, and : emotional troubles--a fact which testifies to the reality of this kind of organization. One of the great advances in early school education, in the kindergarten and early grades, is that it preserves the social and human center of the organization of experience, instead of the older violent shift of the center of gravity. But one of the outstanding problems of education, as of music, is modulation. In the case of education, modulation means movement from a social and human center toward a more objective intellectual scheme of organization, always hearing in mind, however, that intellectual organization is not an end in itself but is the means by which social relations, distinctively human ties and bonds, may be understood and more intelligently ordered.

When education is based in theory and practice upon experience, it goes without saying that the organized subject-matter of the adult and the specialist cannot provide the starting point. Nevertheless, it represents the goal toward which education should continuously move. It is hardly necessary to say that one of the most fundamental principles of the scientific organization of knowledge is principle of cause-and-effect. The Hay in which this principle is grasped and formulated by the scientific specialist is certainly very different from the way in which can be approached in the experience of the young. But neither the relation nor grasp of its meaning is foreign to the experience of even the young child. When a child two or three years of age learns not to approach a flame too closely and yet to draw near enough a stove to get its warmth he is grasping and using the causal relation. There is no intelligent activity that does not conform to the

requirements of the relation, and it is intelligent in the degree in which it is not only conformed to but consciously borne in mind.

In the earlier forms of experience the causal relation does not offer itself in the abstract but in the form of the relation of means employed to ends attained; of the relation of means and consequences. Growth in judgment and understanding is essentially growth in ability to form purposes and to select and arrange means for their realization. The most elementary experiences of the young are filled with cases of the means-consequence relation. There is not a meal cooked nor a source of illumination employed that does not exemplify this relation. The trouble with education is not the absence of situations in which the causal relation is exemplified in the relation of means and consequences. Failure to utilize the situations so as to lead the learner on to grasp the relation in the given cases of experience is, however, only too common. The logician gives the names "analysis and synthesis" to the operations by which means are selected and organized in relation to a purpose.

This principle determines the ultimate foundation for the utilization of activities in school. Nothing can be more absurd educationally than to make a plea for a variety of active occupations in the school while decrying the need for progressive organization of information and ideas. Intelligent activity is distinguished from aimless activity by the fact that it involves selection of means-analysis-out of the variety of conditions that are present, and their arrangement-synthesis-to reach an intended aim or purpose. That the more immature the learner is, the simpler must be the ends held in view and the more rudimentary the means employed, is obvious. But the principle of organization of activity in terms of some perception of the relation of consequences to means applies even with the very young. Otherwise an activity ceases to be educative because it is blind. With increased maturity, the problem of interrelation of means becomes more urgent. In the degree in which intelligent observation is transferred from the relation of means to ends to the more complex question of the relation of means to one another, the idea of cause and effect becomes prominent and explicit. The final justification of shops, kitchens, and so on in the school is not just that they afford opportunity for activity, but that they provide opportunity for the kind of activity or for the acquisition of mechanical skills which leads students to attend to the relation of means and ends, and then to consideration of the way things interact with one another to produce definite effects. It is the same in principle as the ground for laboratories in scientific research.

Unless the problem of intellectual organization can be worked out on the ground of experience, reaction is sure to occur toward externally imposed methods of organization. There are signs of this reaction already in evidence. We are told that our schools, old and new, are failing in the main task. They do not develop, it is said, the capacity for critical discrimination and the ability to reason. The ability to think is smothered, we are told, by accumulation of miscellaneous ill-digested information, and by the attempt to acquire forms of skill which will be immediately useful in the business and commercial world. We are told that these evils spring from the influence of science and from the magnification of present requirements at the expense of the tested cultural heritage from the past. It is argued that science and its method must be subordinated; that we must

return to the logic of ultimate first principles expressed in the logic of Aristotle and St. Thomas, in order that the young may have sure anchorage in their intellectual and moral life, and not be at the mercy of every passing breeze that blows.

If the method of science had ever been consistently and continuously applied throughout the day-by-day work of the school in all subjects, I should be more impressed by this emotional appeal than I am. I see at bottom but two alternatives between which education must choose if it is not to drift aimlessly. One of them is expressed by the attempt to induce educators to return to the intellectual methods and ideals that arose centuries before scientific method was developed. The appeal may be temporarily successful in a period when general insecurity, emotional and intellectual as well as economic, is rife. For under these conditions the desire to lean on fixed authority is active. Nevertheless, it is so out of touch with all the conditions of modern life that I believe it is folly to seek salvation in this direction. The other alternative is systematic utilization of scientific method as the pattern and ideal of intelligent exploration and exploitation of the potentialities inherent in experience.

The problem involved comes home with peculiar force to progressive schools. Failure to give constant attention to development of the intellectual content of experiences and to obtain ever-increasing organization of facts and ideas may in the end merely strengthen the tendency towards a reactionary return to intellectual and moral authoritarianism. The present is not the time nor place for acquisition upon scientific method. But certain features of it are so closely connected with any educational scheme based upon experience that they should be noted. In the first place, the experimental method of science attaches more importance, not less, to ideas as ideas than do other methods. There is no such thing as experiment in the scientific sense unless action is directed by some lead-idea. The fact that the ideas employed are hypotheses, not final truths, is the reason. Why ideas are more jealously guarded and tested in science than anywhere else. The moment they are taken to be first truths in themselves there ceases to be any reason for scrupulous examination of them. As fixed truths they must be accepted and that is the end of the matter. But as hypotheses, they must be continuously tested and revised, a requirement that demands they be accurately formulated.

In the second place, ideas or hypotheses are tested by the consequences, which they produce when they are acted upon. This fact means that the consequences of action must be carefully and discriminatingly observed. Activity that is not checked by observation of what follows from it may be temporarily enjoyed. But intellectually it leads nowhere. It does not provide knowledge about the situations in which action occurs nor does it lead to clarification and expansion of ideas.

In the third place, the method of intelligence manifested in the experimental method demands keeping track of ideas, activities, and observed consequences. Keeping track is a matter of reflective review and summarizing, in which there is both discrimination and record of the significant features of a developing experience. To reflect is to look back over what has been done so as to extract the net meanings, which are the capital stock for

intelligent dealing with further experiences. It is the heart of intellectual organization and of the disciplined mind.

I have been forced to speak in general and often abstract language. But what has been said is organically connected with the requirement that experiences in order to be educative must lead out into an expanding world of subject-matter, 1 subject-matter of facts or information and of ideas. This condition is satisfied only as the educator views teaching and learning as a continuous process of reconstruction of experience. This condition in turn can be satisfied only as the educator has a long look ahead, and views every present experience as a moving force in influencing what future experiences will be. I am aware that the emphasis I have placed upon scientific method may be misleading, for it may result only in calling up the special technique of laboratory research as that is conducted by specialists. But the meaning of the emphasis placed upon scientific method has little to do with specialized techniques. It means that scientific method is the only authentic means at our command for getting at the significance of our everyday experiences of the world in which we live. It means that scientific method provides a working pattern of the way in which and the conditions under which experiences are used to lead ever onward and outward. Adaptation of the method to individuals of various degrees of maturity is a problem for the educator, and the constant factors in the problem are the formation of ideas, acting upon ideas, observation of the conditions, which result, and organization of facts and ideas for future use. Neither the ideas, nor the activities, nor the observations, the organization are the same for a person six years old as they are for one twelve or eighteen years old, to say nothing of the adult scientist. But at every level there is an expanding development of experience if experience is educative in effect. Consequently, whatever the level of experience, we have no choice but either to operate in accord with the pattern it provides or else to neglect the place of intelligence in the development and control of a living and moving experience.

## **Chapter 8**

### **Experience--The Means and Goal of Education**

IN WHAT I HAVE SAID I have taken for granted the sound-ness of the principle that education in order to accomplish its ends both for the individual learner and for society must be based upon experience--which is always the actual life-experience of some individual. I have not argued for the acceptance of this principle nor attempted to justify it. Conservatives as well as radicals in education are profoundly discontented with the present educational situation taken as a whole. There is at least this much agreement among intelligent persons of both schools of educational thought. The educational system must move one way or another, either backward to the intellectual and moral standards of a pre-scientific age or forward to ever greater utilization of scientific method in the development of the possibilities of growing, expanding experience. I have but endeavored to point out some of the conditions, which must be satisfactorily fulfilled if education takes the latter course.

For I am so confident of the potentialities of education when it is treated as intelligently directed development of the possibilities inherent in ordinary experience that I do not feel it necessary to criticize here the other route nor to advance arguments in favor of taking the route of experience. The only ground for anticipating failure in taking this path resides to my mind in the danger that experience and the experimental method will not be adequately conceived. There is no discipline in the world so severe as the discipline of experience subjected to the tests of intelligent development and direction. Hence the only ground I can see for even a temporary reaction against the standards, aims, and methods of the newer education is the failure of educators who professedly adopt them to be faithful to them in practice. As I have emphasized more than once, the road of the new education is not an easier one to follow than the old road but a more strenuous and difficult one. It will remain so until it has attained its majority and that attainment will require many years of serious co-operative work on the part of its adherents. The greatest danger that attends its future is, I believe, the idea that it is an easy way to follow, so easy that its course may be improvised, if not in an impromptu fashion, at least almost from day to day or from week to week. It is for this reason that instead of extolling its principles, I have confined myself to showing certain conditions which must be fulfilled if it is to have the successful career which by right belongs to it.

I have used frequently in what precedes the words "progressive" and "new" education. I do not wish to close, however, without recording my firm belief that the fundamental issue is not of new versus old education nor of progressive against traditional education but a question of what anything whatever must be to be worthy of the name education. I am not, I hope and believe, in favor of any ends or any methods simply because the name progressive may be applied to them. The basic question concerns the nature of education with no qualifying adjectives prefixed. What we want and need is education pure and simple, and we shall make surer and faster progress when we devote ourselves to finding out just what education is and what conditions have to be satisfied in order that education may be a reality and not a name or a slogan. It is for this reason alone that I have emphasized the need for a sound philosophy of experience.

**END**

# LETTER TO A TEACHER

(by The School of Barbiana)

*Eight young Italian boys from the mountains outside Florence wrote this passionate and eloquent book. It took them a year. Simple and clearly, with some devastating statistical analysis of the Italian education system, they set out to show the ways in which attitudes towards class, behavior, language and subject-matter militates against the poor. They describe too, the reforms they propose, and the methods they use in their own school - the School of Barbiana, started under the guidance of a parish priest and now run entirely by the children.*

*This remarkable book was written for the parents of the Italian poor. But it is about poor everywhere: their anger is the anger of every worker and peasant who sees middle-class children absorbed effortlessly into schools as teacher's favorites.*

*Letter to a Teacher was a best seller in Italy and has been published subsequently in many languages. The School of Barbiana was awarded the prize of the Italian Physical Society, usually reserved for promising physicists, for the statistical achievement involved in the book.*

*"this marvel of a book...,a masterpiece of protest...,an original work of literature....I have read no book on education which has left me so uncomfortably aware of our fellow human beings" Edward Blishen*

*"We in England cannot read this book complacently. It raises fundamental questions which educators everywhere must consider. It hits hard and it hits home." New Society*

**LETTER TO A TEACHER**  
by The School of Barbiana

Afterword by Lord Boyle of Handsworth

This book is not written for teachers, but for parents. It is a call for them to organize.

At first sight it seems written by one boy alone. Actually we, the authors, are eight boys from the school of Barbiana. Other schoolmates, who are now at work, helped us on Sundays.

We want to give thanks first of all to Father Milani, who trained us, taught us the rules of writing and supervised our work.

In the second place, a great many friends who co-operated in different ways:

Parents, who helped us to simplify the text, Secretaries, teachers, supervisors, school principals, officers of the Ministry of Education and of ISTAT\* priests, all of whom helped us to collect statistical data.

Union officials, newspapermen, civic administrators, historians, statisticians, jurists, who provided us with various kinds' of information.

\*ISTAT: Istituto Centrale di Statistiche (Central Institute of Statistics)

## *Translators' Introduction*

Barbiana is not the name of a school nor the name of a town. It is a community of about twenty farmhouses in the hills of the Mugello region, in Tuscany. The church of Barbiana, a small lovely building of the fourteenth century, stands on a hill overlooking the valley. It is reached by a winding dirt road from Vicchio. Vicchio, known as the birthplace of Giotto, is located about thirty miles from Florence on a road branching off from the old highway that connects Florence and Bologna through the Apennines.

The landscape has a harsh beauty: woods, stony slopes and a few scattered fields and orchards.

Don Lorenzo Milani, founder of the school of Barbiana, was ordered to the Barbiana church in 1954. He went there from Calenzano, a town near Florence, where as a young priest he had started a night school for the working people. The school soon attracted those who found in its classes, tailored to their needs, the encouragement or inspiration to pursue their interests or go on with their studies.

Soon after being ordered to Barbiana, Lorenzo Milani felt the needs of the children of the farms scattered near by to be very critical. Most of the children had either failed their exams and left school or were bitterly discouraged with the way they were taught. He gathered about ten boys, eleven to thirteen year olds, and gave them a full timetable of eight hours' work, six or seven days a week. Later, the group grew to twenty. The older children would devote a great deal of time to teaching or drilling the younger. Many hours were given by all to the study and understanding of problems directly significant to their own lives, and, along these lines, eight students of the school wrote this *Letter* as a full-year project.

Don Lorenzo Milani died in the summer of 1967, and the school at Barbiana died with him. And yet it is still alive. With the magnetizing strength of their priest gone, a number of the farmers followed the inevitable trend of migration to the valley or to Florence. But their children have not lost contact with one another or with the little church. They all work: some in the trade unions, some in factories or as technicians; others are studying to become teachers. Often on Sundays they get together in the old classroom to discuss things.

When one of the translators visited Barbiana in the summer of 1968, a group from an orphanage in Florence was camped there, and some of the "old" Barbiana students - now aged sixteen or seventeen - were teaching the younger children.

Gathered around rickety tables, under the trellises, in the kitchen - children of all ages were hard at work everywhere. In the autumn, the school of Barbiana officially moved to Calenzano, where some of the former Barbiana students, together with old friends and other pupils of Don Milani, have opened a regular *doposcuola* for both young boys and adult students. It consists simply of one large room with a blackboard and some chalk, a few books and many voluntary teachers. Yet in that air, too, there breathes the enthusiasm of Barbiana and a sense of the future.

A few words on the Italian school system might help the reader to understand the point of view and the criticism, of the young writers. Until 1962, when a law was passed making the three intermediate years' schooling compulsory, all children, starting at age six, were required to attend school for five elementary years only. They would complete the five years or repeat one or more. Yet, the earliest age for beginning work was not eleven but fourteen. Following the elementary stage was a school called *media* intended for children who wanted to (or whose parents wanted them to) go on to the upper school (*liceo*) and possibly to a university.

The law of 1962 raised the working age to fifteen, established a new *media inferiore*, or “intermediate school” (for twelve to fourteen year olds) and made it compulsory for all.

Today the Italian school system is organized basically as follows: five elementary and three intermediate years are compulsory. After fourteen, children who plan to continue their studies choose from a number of courses:

1. Five years of *liceo classico*, where Greek and Latin are taught as well as mathematics, sciences and so forth.
2. Five years of *liceo scientifico* (no Greek, some Latin and more emphasis on mathematics and science).
3. Five years of *istituto tecnico* (a technical school ).
4. Four years of *liceo artistico*, where graphic arts are emphasized.  
(All of the above upper schools will qualify students for admission to a university.)
5. Four years of *magistrale*, a school that prepares elementary school teachers and qualifies students for admission to a *magistero* or teacher's college, which qualifies upper-school teachers.
6. Four years of a vocational school called *tecniche*.

It is very important to note that the school day runs only until 12.30 or 1.30 in the afternoon. Hence the great stress in this book on the potential use of the after-school hours (*doposcuola*) for those who need or want extra work. The well to do can afford to pay private tutors to complement the schoolwork for their children. In poorer families those hours often go to waste, so that many children most in need of help are left stranded.

The marking system, a very rigid and rather dreaded feature of the Italian classroom, is the same throughout the elementary and upper school. It uses the numerals from 0 to 10, with 10 as the highest score, and 6 as the pass mark. General exams are given at the end of the fifth elementary year, after the third intermediate year, and at the end of the upper-school course. Make-up exams are also offered in September to the children who did not pass during the year and have prepared again for the tests during the summer.

*Letter to a Teacher*, written by poor country schoolchildren, has touched the lives of a vast number of readers. It has had great success in Italy, and in other countries. Undoubtedly, its popularity is in response to the book's substance, its attack on a very hot area of social and educational concern. The need for changes in the 'middle-class-orientated' schools of Italy is widespread and deeply felt, as witnessed by the turmoil among students in the past years. But the charm of the book in the original Italian comes also from its unique style. Italian readers, who were used to an overdose of adjectives, long sentences and ornate vocabulary, find this book direct, plain, refreshing. Its style follows what the boys call 'the humble and sound rules of the art of writing in all ages', which they set forth with typical brevity.

Have something important to say, something useful to everyone or at least to many. Know for whom you are writing. Gather all useful materials. Find a logical pattern with which to develop the theme. Eliminate every useless word. Eliminate every word not used in the spoken language. Never set time Limits.

That is the way my schoolmates and I am writing this letter. That is the way my pupils will write, I hope, when I am a teacher.

The "I" of that passage is really a composite of the eight authors, all in their teens; the "you" they address throughout the book stands for the kind of teacher they had all known in the school system. Their method of working as a team that can pool and trim its thoughts into such plain speaking is also set forth in a passage toward the end of the book. Both the method and the result might well serve as models

wherever a roomful of young writers would like to cut through accumulations of nonsense and tell some truths about their own world. The boys' clear and biting language may recall certain of our own writers who have sharpened their English against injustices, in the Orwellian mode; but the words from Barbiana seem especially strong to us, **arising from within the world of the poor rather than king about it.**

The writers are from Tuscan peasant families, but the experience they speak of is not limited to their own hillsides. While certain specific passages - their consideration of celibacy, for example, or their discussion of the use of the Gospels – may have a strange ring for some British readers, the main force of the book will have great relevance for people in many parts of the world. And even the 'strange' elements spring out of feelings universally recognizable among the poor in their quest for schooling.

This book is written to be 'useful to everyone', as the boys say. If the names Cicero or Homer come up, the boys supply footnotes explaining who they are. The message is for all to understand, and nobody is to be left out because he hasn't heard of certain books.

To back up their protest in depth the young authors did a great deal of research into the Italian school system. Their analyses of the data they compiled, which refer specifically to Italian situations and problems, may be hard going for a British reader. We considered editing some of these passages, and omitting the more difficult charts but then decided against it. These children wanted to make more than an emotional protest. Under the leadership of Don Milani, they insisted that their conclusions also be accurate, and were willing to go through a painstaking discipline. Although some readers may only glance at the statistical work, its presence makes their moving appeal for change still more forceful.

In translating, we had many arguments about usage, about the finding of English equivalents for the fresh and often abrupt expressions the boys use, and also about the points they make. About schools, learning, about Italy and this country, about the future. It seems to us that kind of book: it stirs those who read it, not always or necessarily to agree, but to care. Its challenge is so direct, humane and radical that indifference to it seems almost impossible.

March 1969

Nora Rossi  
Tom Cole

## **PART 1: The Compulsory Schools ought not to fail their Students**

### **Dear Miss**

You won't remember me or my name. You have failed so many of us.

On the other hand I have often had thoughts about you, and the other teachers, and about that institution which you call 'school' and about the boys that you fail.

You fail us right out into the fields and factories and then you forget us.

### ***Timidity***

Two years ago, when I was in first *magistrale*, you used to make me feel shy.  
(\* *magistrale*: a four four-year upper school leading to a diploma for elementary school teachers.)

As a matter of fact, shyness has been with me all my life. As a little boy I used to keep my eyes on the ground. I would creep along the walls in order not to be seen.

At first I thought it was some kind of sickness of mine or maybe of my family. My mother is the kind that gets timid in front of a telegram form. My father listens and notices, but is not a talker.

Later on I thought shyness was a disease of mountain people. The farmers on the flat lands seemed surer of themselves. To say nothing of the workers in town.

Now I have observed that the workers let 'daddy's boys' grab all the jobs with responsibility in the political machines, and all the seats in Parliament.

So they too are like us. And the shyness of the poor is an older mystery. I myself, in the midst of it, can't explain it. Perhaps it is neither a form of cowardice nor of heroism. It may just be lack of arrogance.

## **The Mountain People**

### ***The school for all***

During the five elementary years the State offered me a second-rate education. Five classes in one room. A fifth of the schooling that was due me.

It is the same system used in America to create the differences between black and whites. Right from the start a poorer school for the poor.

### ***Compulsory School***

After the five elementary years I had the right to three more years of schooling. In fact, the Constitution says that I had the obligation to go. But there was not yet an intermediate school in Vicchio. To go to Borgo was an undertaking. The few who had tried it had spent a pile of money and then were thrown out as failures like dogs.

In any case, the teacher had told my family that it was better not to waste money on me: "Send him into fields. He is not made for books."

My father did not reply. He was thinking, 'If we lived in Barbiana, he *would* be made for books.'

### ***Barbiana***

In Barbiana all the boys were going to school. The priest's school. From early morning until dark, summer and winter. Nobody there was 'not made for school'.

But we were from a different parish and lived far away. My father was ready to give up. Then he heard of a boy from San Martino who was going to Barbiana. He took courage and went to find out.

### ***The woods***

When he came back I saw that he had bought me a torch for the dark evenings a canteen for soup and boots for the snow.

The first day he took me there himself. It took us two hours because we were breaking our path with a sickle and a billhook. Later I learned to make it in little more than an hour.

I would pass by only two houses along the way. Windows broken, recently abandoned. At times I would start running because of a viper or because a crazy man, who lived alone at the Rock, would scream at me from the distance.

I was eleven years old. You would have been scared to death.

The intermediate school (*media inferiore*) covers the ages twelve to fourteen.

You see, we each have our different kind of timidity. So, in that sense we are even.

But we're even only if both of us stay at home. Or if you have to come and give us the exams at our place. But you don't have to do that.

### ***The tables***

Barbiana, when I arrived did not seem like a school. No teacher, no desk, no blackboard, no benches. Just big tables, around which we studied and also ate.

There was just one copy of each book. The boys would pile up around it. It was hard to notice that one of them was a bit older and was teaching.

The oldest of these teachers was sixteen. The youngest was twelve, and filled me with admiration. I made up my mind from the start that I, too, was going to teach.

### ***The favorite***

Life was hard up there too. Discipline and squabbles until you didn't feel like coming back.

But there a boy who had no background, who was slow or lazy, was made to feel like the favorite. He would be treated the way you teachers treat the best student in the class. It seemed as if the school was meant just for him. Until he could be made to understand, the others would not continue.

### ***Break***

There was no break. Not even Sunday was a holiday.

None of us was bothered by it because labor would have been worse. But any middle-class gentleman who happened to be around would start a fuss on this question.

Once a big professor held forth: ‘you have never studied pedagogy, Father Milani. Doctor Polianski writes that sports for boys is a physiopsycho....’  
(physiopsycho.... the first half of a big word used by that professor, we cannot remember the ending.)

He was talking without looking at us. A university professor of education doesn't have to look at schoolboys. He knows them by heart, the way we know our multiplication tables.

Finally he left, and Lucio, who has thirty-six cows in the barn at home, said, ‘School will always be better than cow shit.’

### ***The peasants of the world***

That sentence can be engraved over the front doors of your schools. Millions of farm boys are ready to subscribe to it. You say that boys hate school and love play. You never asked us peasants. But there are one hundred thousand, nine hundred million of us. Six boys out of every ten in the world feel the same as Lucio. About the other four we can't say.

All your culture is built this way. As if you were all the world.

### ***Children as teachers***

The next year I was a teacher; that is, three half-days a week. I taught geography, mathematics and French to the first intermediate year.

You don't need a degree to look through an atlas or explain fractions.

If I made some mistakes, that wasn't so bad. It was a relief for the boys. We would work them out together. The hours would go by quietly, without worry and without fear. You don't know how to run a class the way I do.

### ***Politics or stinginess***

Then, too, I was learning so many things while I taught. For instance, that others' problems are like mine. To come out of them together is good politics. To come out alone is stinginess.

I was not vaccinated against stinginess myself. During exams I felt like sending the little ones to hell and studying on my own. I was a boy like your boys, but up at Barbiana I couldn't admit it to myself or to others. I had to be generous even when I didn't feel it.

To you this may seem a small thing. But for your students you do even less. You don't ask anything of them. You just encourage them to push ahead on their own.

### **The Boys from Town**

#### ***Warped***

When the intermediate school was started in Vicchio, some boys from the town came to Barbiana. Just those who had failed, of course.

The problem of shyness did not seem to exist for them. But they were warped in other ways.

For example, they felt that games and holidays were a right and school a sacrifice. They had never heard that one goes to school to learn, and that to go is a privilege.

The teacher, for them, was on the other side of a barricade and was there to be cheated. They even tried to copy. It took them one hell of a time to believe that there was no mark book.

#### ***The rooster***

The same subterfuges when it came to sex. They believed they had to speak in whispers. When they saw a rooster on a hen they would nudge each other as if they had seen adultery in action.

In any case, sex was the only subject that would wake them up at first. We had an anatomy book at school. They would lock themselves up to study it in a corner. Two pages became totally worn out.

Later they discovered other interesting pages. Later still, they noticed that even history is fun.

Some have never stopped discovering. Now they are interested in everything. They teach the younger children and have become like us.

Some others, however, you have succeeded in freezing all over again.

#### ***The girls***

None of the girls from town ever came to Barbiana. Perhaps because the road was so dangerous. Perhaps because of their parents' mentality. They believed that a

woman can live her life with the brains of a hen. Males don't ask a woman to be intelligent.

This, too, is racialism. But on this matter we cannot blame you, the teachers. You put a higher value on your girl students than their parents do.

### ***Sandro and Gianni***

Sandro was fifteen; five feet eight in height: a humiliated adult. His teachers had declared him an imbecile. They expected him to repeat the first intermediate year for the third time.

Gianni was fourteen. Inattentive, allergic to reading. His teachers had declared him a delinquent. They were not totally wrong, but that was no excuse for sweeping him out of their way.

Neither of them had any intention of trying yet again. They had reached the point of dropping out and getting jobs. They came over to us because we ignore your failing marks and put each person in the right year for his age.

Sandro was put in the third intermediate class and Gianni in the second. This was the first satisfaction they ever had in their unhappy school careers. Sandro will remember this forever. Gianni remembers once in a while.

### ***'The Little Match Girl'***

Their second satisfaction was a change, at last, in their school syllabus.

You kept them at the search for perfection. A useless perfection, because a boy hears the same things repeated to the point of boredom, but meanwhile he is growing up. Things stay the same, but he is changing. So the subjects turn into childish matter in his hands.

For instance, in the first intermediate year you read to the students two or three times 'The Little Match Girl' and '*La neve fiocca, fiocca, fiocca*' But in the second and third intermediate years you read things written for grown ups.

Gianni could not be made to put the *h* on the verb 'to have'. But he knew many things about the grown up world. About jobs and family relations and the life of his town's people. Sometimes in the evening he would join his dad at the Communist Party meeting or at the town meeting.

You, with your Greeks and your Romans, had made him hate history. But we, going through the Second World War, could hold him for hours without a break.

You wanted him to repeat the geography of Italy for another year. He could have left school without ever having heard of the rest of the world. You would have done him great harm. Even if he only wants to read the newspaper.

***'You can't even speak properly'***

Sandro became enthusiastic about everything in a short time. In the morning he devoted hours to the same course he would have studied in the third intermediate year. He would take notes on the things he didn't know and at nights he would poke around in the books of the first and second intermediate years. This 'imbecile' took your exams at the June session and you had to let him pass.

With Gianni it was harder. He had come to us from your school illiterate and with a hatred of books.

We tried the impossible with him. We succeeded in having him love not every subject; but at least a few. All that we needed from you teachers was to pass him into the third intermediate year and to give him lots of praise. We could have taken upon ourselves to make him love the rest.

Instead, a teacher said to him during the oral exam, 'Why do you go to private school, boy? You know that you can't even speak properly?'

We certainly do know that Gianni can't speak properly.

Let's all beat our breasts about that. But most of all, you teachers, who had thrown him out of school the year before.

Fine remedies you have.

***Without distinction as to language***

Besides, we should settle what correct language is. Languages are created by the poor, who then go on renewing them forever. The rich crystallize them in order to put on the spot anybody who speaks in a different way. Or in order to make him fail exams.

You say that little Pierino, daddy's boy, can write well. But of course; he speaks as you do. He is part of the firm.

On the other hand, the language spoken and written by Gianni is the one used by his father. When Gianni was a baby he used to call the radio '*rara*'. And his father would correct him: 'It's not called *rara*, it's called "aradio".'

Now, it would be a good thing for Gianni also to learn to say 'radio', if at all possible. Your own language could become a convenience in time. But meanwhile, don't throw him out of school.

'All citizens are equal without distinction as to language,' says the Constitution, having Gianni in mind.'

### ***Obedient puppet***

But you honor grammar more than constitutions. And Gianni never came back, not even to us.

Yet we can't get him off our mind. We follow him from a distance. We heard that he doesn't go to church any more, or to any political meetings. He sweeps up in a factory. During his free time he follows like a puppet whatever is 'in'. Saturday, dancing; Sunday, the sports field.

But you, his teacher, don't even remember his existence.

### ***The hospital***

This was our first contact with you. Through the boys you don't want.

We, too, soon found out how much harder it is to run a school with them around. At times the temptation to get rid of them is strong. But if we lose them, school is no longer school. It is a hospital, which tends to the healthy and rejects the sick. It becomes just a device to strengthen the existing differences to a point of no return.

And are you ready to take such a position? If not, get them back to school, insist, start from scratch all over again, even if you are called crazy.

Better to be called crazy than to be an instrument of racialism.

## Exams

### *The rules of good writing*

After three years of schooling at Barbiana. I took, in June, my exams for the intermediate diploma as a private-school candidate. The composition topic was: 'The Railway Waggon Speak'.

At Barbiana I had learned that the rules of good writing are:

Have something important to say, something useful to everyone or at least to many. Know for whom you are writing. Gather all useful materials. Find a logical pattern with which to develop the theme. Eliminate every useless word. Eliminate every word not used in the spoken language. Never set time limits.

That is the way my schoolmates and I are writing this letter.

That is the way my pupils will write, I hope, when I am a teacher.

### *The knife in your hands*

But, facing that composition topic, what use could I make of the humble and sound rules of the art of writing in all ages? If I wanted to be honest I should have left the page blank. Or else criticized the theme and whoever had thought it up.

But I was fourteen years old and I came from the mountains. To go to teachers' school I needed the diploma. This piece of paper lay in the hands of five or six person's alien to my life and to everything I loved and knew. Careless people who held the handle of the knife completely in their own grasp.

I tried to write the way you want us to. I can easily believe I was not a success. No doubt there was a better flow to the papers of your own young men, already masters in the production of hot air and warmed-up platitudes.

### *The trap-complex*

The French exam was a concentrate of irregularities.

Examinations should be abolished. But if you do give them, at least be fair. Difficulties should be chosen in proportion to their appearance in life. If you

choose them too frequently, it means you have a trap-complex. As if you were at war with the boys.

What makes you do it? Is it for the good of the students?

### ***Owls, pebbles and fans***

No, not for their good you gave an A-- in French to a boy who, in France, would not know how to ask the whereabouts of the toilet.

He could only have asked for owls, pebbles and fans, either in the singular or the plural. All in all, he knew perhaps two hundred words picked carefully for being exceptions, not for being commonly used.

The result was that he hated French the way some people hate maths.

### ***The end***

Instead, I learned my languages from records. Without effort I learned first the most useful and common words. Just the way one's own language is learned.

In the summer I had been in Grenoble washing dishes in a restaurant - I had felt at home right away. At the youth hostels I was able to be in contact with boys from Europe and from Africa.

Back home I decided to pick up languages one after another. Many languages, even if not so well, rather than one to perfection. So I could communicate with all kinds of people, meet new men and new problems, and laugh at the sacred borders of all fatherlands.

### ***The means***

During the three years of intermediate school we had taken two languages instead of just one: French and English. We had acquired a vocabulary sufficient to carry on any argument.

We did not linger over every mistake in grammar. Grammar is there mainly for writing. One can get along without it for reading and speaking. Little by little one gets it by ear. Later on, it can be studied in depth.

This is the way it goes with our own language. The first grammar lesson comes when we are eight years old. After we have been reading and writing for three years.

Gramophone records are recommended in your own new courses. But records are good in a full-time school, where languages are learned for relaxation during the time when the boys are tired of other work. Every day of the week for a couple of hours. Not three hours a week, as you do it.

Under your conditions it is just as well not to use records.

### ***The castles of the Loire***

At the oral examination we had a surprise. Your students seemed to be bottomless wells of French culture. For example, they spoke with great knowledge of the castles of the Loire (*a river in France*).

We found out later on that this was the only thing they had studied all year. They had also prepared some selections from a syllabus and could read and translate them.

If an inspector happened to pass by, they could put up a better show than we could. The inspector does not venture outside the syllabus. Although you know perfectly well, and so does he, that that kind of French is useless. And for whom are you doing it? You do it for the inspector. He does it for the school superintendent. And he does it for the Minister of Education.

That is the most upsetting aspect of your school: it lives as an end in itself.

### ***Social climbers at twelve***

But your students' own goal is also a mystery. Maybe it is nonexistent; maybe it is just shoddy. Day in and day out they study for marks, for reports and diplomas. Meanwhile they lose interest in all the fine things they are studying. Languages, sciences, history - everything becomes purely pass marks.

Behind those sheets of paper there is only a desire for personal gain. The diploma means money. Nobody mentions this, but give the bag a good squeeze and that's what comes out.

To be a happy student in your schools you have to be a social climber at the age of twelve.

But few are climbers at twelve. It follows that most of your young people hate school. Your cheap invitation to them deserves no other reaction.

### ***English***

In the classroom next door there was an English exam. More baffling than ever.

I believe that English is the most useful of all languages. But only if you know it. Not if you have just started to scratch the surface. Owls and pebbles? The students could not even say 'good night'. And they were discouraged about languages forever.

The first foreign language is an event in the life of a young person. It has to be a success; or else there will be trouble.

We have seen from experience that for an Italian this success is possible only with French. Every time a French-speaking guest visited us, some of the boys would discover the joy of understanding him. The same night we could see them go and pick up the records of a third language.

The most important tools were in their hands: motivation, belief in a capacity to break through, a mind already under way on linguistic problems.

### ***Mathematics and sadism***

The geometry problem in the exam brought to mind a sculpture in one of the modern-art exhibitions: 'A solid is formed by a hemisphere superimposed on a cylinder whose surface is three-sevenths of that. ...'

There is no instrument that can measure surfaces. Thus, it never happens in life that we know the surface without knowing the dimensions. Such a problem can only be conceived by a sick mind.

### ***New labels***

In the reformed intermediate (after the law in 1962, introduced new courses with a more practical intent) school things like that will be seen no more. Problems will have to be based on 'concrete considerations'.

And so Carla was tested on a modern problem on her exam this year, based on boilers: 'A boiler has the shape of a hemisphere superimposed....' Back to surfaces again.

Better an old-fashioned teacher than one who thinks he is modern because he has changed the labels.

### ***A class made up of imbeciles***

Our teacher was old-fashioned. The funny thing was that none of his own pupils managed to solve that problem. But two out of four pupils did work it out. The result: twenty-six out of twenty-eight were failed.

He went around saying he was stuck with a class made up of imbeciles.

### ***The parents' union***

Who should have kept him in check?

The principal might have been able to do it, or the teachers' council. They did not.

The parents might have been able to do it. But as long as you have the handle of the knife completely in your grasp they will keep quiet. And so, either we have to wrest from your hands all the knives (marks, reports, exams) or we have to get the parents organized.

A wonderful union of fathers and mothers able to remind you that we are the people who pay you; and we pay you to serve us, not throw us out of school.

It may turn into a good thing for you. People who get no criticism do not age well. They lose touch with life and the progression of events. They turn into poor creatures like yourselves.

### ***The newspaper***

The history of this half-century was the one I knew best. Russian Revolution, Fascism, war, resistance, liberation of Africa and Asia. It is the history lived by my father and my grandfather.

I also knew well the history of my own time. That means the daily newspaper, which we always read at Barbiana, aloud, from top to bottom.

While cramming for the exams we would steal a couple of hours every day to read the paper, overcoming our stinginess. Because nothing is found in the newspaper that could help us pass your exams. This proves again how little there is in your school useful for life.

That is why we must read the news. It is like shouting in your face that your filthy certificates have not turned us into beasts. We want the diploma for our parents.

But politics and the news of each day - they are the sufferings of others and are worth more than your interests or our own.

### *The Constitution*

One woman teacher ended her lessons before the First World War. She stopped exactly at the spot where school could tie us to life. In the whole year she never once read a newspaper to her class.

The Fascist posters must still be dangling before her eyes:  
'Do not talk politics in here.'

Gianpietro's mother was talking to her one day: 'But you know, I feel that my child has improved so much since he started going to the *doposcuola* (*after – hours school*) I see him reading at home in the evening.'

'Reading? Do you know what he reads? The CONSTITUTION! Last year he worried about girls, this year it's the Constitution.'

That poor woman was made to feel that it must be a dirty book. That night she wanted Gianpietro's father to give him a good beating.

*Vincenzo Monti* (poet of the nineteenth century. He translated *The Illiad* into *Italian*) That same teacher wanted to teach her class, at all costs, the strange fables of Homer. Fine, if at least she was teaching Homer. But no, it was Monti's translation.

We did not read it at Barbiana. Just once, for a joke, we took the Greek text and counted all the words in one of the stanzas. One hundred and forty words as against one hundred in Homer! Of every three words, two are really Homer's, and one is conceived inside Monti's pretty little head.

Who is this Monti? Someone who has something to tell us? Someone who speaks the language we want to learn? No, even worse: someone who wrote in a language not even used in his own time.

One day I was teaching geography to a boy who had just failed in one of your intermediate schools. He did not know a thing, but Gibraltar he called the 'Pillars of Hercules'."

Can you imagine him in Spain asking for a ticket at the station window?

### ***Order of priorities***

If schooling has to be so brief, then it should be planned according to the most urgent needs.

Little Pierino, the doctor's son, has plenty of time to read fables. Not Gianni. He dropped out of your hands at fifteen. He is in a factory. He does not need to know whether it was Jupiter who gave birth to Minerva or vice versa.

His Italian literature course would have done better to include the contract of the metalworkers' union. Did you ever read it, Miss? Aren't you ashamed? It means the life of half a million families.

You keep telling yourselves how well educated you are. But you have all read the same books. Nobody ever asks you anything different.

### ***Unhappy children***

At the gymnastics exam the teacher threw us a ball and said, 'Play basketball.' We didn't know how. The teacher looked us over with contempt: 'My poor children.'

He, too, is one of you. The ability to handle a conventional ritual seemed so vital to him. He told the principal that we had not been given any 'physical education' and we should take the exams again in the autumn.

Any one of us could climb an oak tree. Once up there we could let go with our hands and chop off a two hundred-pound branch with a hatchet. Then we could drag it through the snow to our mother's doorstep.

I heard of a gentleman in Florence who rides upstairs in his house in a lift. But then he has bought himself an expensive gadget and pretends to row in it. You would give him an "A" in physical education.

***Latin in Mugello*** In Barbiana we learned very little Latin. Parliament had buried it (with the new law). In fact, that same year Latin was no longer required for entrance to Cambridge and Oxford.

But the farmers of Mugello still had to study it seriously. Solemn teachers moved among the desks looking like high priests. True custodians of the extinguished lamp.

I stared wide-eyed at this strange breed of men. I had never seen anything like them in my life.

## **The New Intermediate School**

### ***In your hands***

We have been reading the new law and the courses planned for the new intermediate school.

Most of what we read we liked. Especially the fact that the new intermediate school does exist, is universal, compulsory and is disliked by the right-wing factions. These are positive facts.

But it is a pity to know that it is back in your hands. Are you going to make it class-orientated again, as it was before?

### ***School timetable***

The old intermediate school sharpened class distinctions chiefly-through its timetable and its terms (short hours of schooling and long holidays). This has not changed in the new system. It remains a school cut to measure for the rich. For people who can get their culture at home and are going to school just in order to collect diplomas.

There is a sign of hope in Article 3 of the new law. It calls for the establishment of a *doposcuola* allowing at least ten hours a week. Just below that, the same article offers you a loophole for getting out of it: the *doposcuola* will be put into effect only 'upon ascertainment of the local conditions'. And so the decision goes back into your hands.

### ***Results***

During the first year of life of the new intermediate school the *doposcuola* was established in fifteen towns out of the fifty-one in the Province of Florence.

During the second year it worked in six towns, reaching 7.1 percent of the students. Last year only in five towns, for 2.9 per cent of the boys.

Today no *doposcuola* exists in the State-school system at all.

You can't blame the parents. They realized you aren't eager to get it started. Otherwise, willing as they are, they would have sent the children not only to *doposcuola* but even to bed with you.

### ***Opposed***

The mayor of Vicchio, before opening a *doposcuola*, asked the opinion of the State-school teachers. Fifteen letters arrived. Thirteen against and two in favor. The recurring argument was that if a *doposcuola* is not run very well, it is better not to have one.

The town boys were hanging around in the bars and in the streets. The country boys were back out in the fields. This being the case, the *doposcuola* could never go very wrong. Anything would be better. Even an abortive school like yours is better.

If you are opposed to the *doposcuola* let me advise you not to let it be known. People are malicious. They might think that you would rather tutor young gentlemen and earn a little extra on your afternoons.

### ***South Africa***

Some people hate equality.

A school principal in Florence told a mother: 'Don't you worry, madam, send your son to us. Our school is one of the least egalitarian in all of Italy.'

It is quite easy to cheat the 'sovereign people'. One can do it just by starting a special class for the 'nice' boys. It is not necessary to know them personally. It's enough to look at their report cards, their age, their address (farm or city), place of birth (North or South), father's profession, and influential references or strings.

In this way, two, three and even four intermediates will co-exist in the same school. Class A is the 'intermediate old-style'. The class that runs smoothly. The best teachers will fight to have it.

A certain kind of parent will go to a lot of trouble to have a child placed in it. Class B will not be quite as good, and so on down the line.

### ***The duty to push***

But these are all honorable people. The principal and the teachers are not doing it for their own good; they are doing it for the good of Culture.

Not even the parents act for their own good. They are acting for the child's future. To push one's own way through is not proper, but to do it for the child's good is a Sacred Duty. They would feel ashamed not to.

### ***Disarmed***

The poorest among the parents don't do a thing.

They don't even suspect what is going on. Instead, they feel quite moved. In their time, up in the country, they left school at nine.

If things are not going so well, it must be that their child is not cut out for studying. 'Even the teacher said so. A real gentleman. He asked me to sit down. He showed me the record book. And a test all covered with red marks. I suppose we just weren't blessed with an intelligent boy. He will go to work in the fields, like us.'

## **Statistics**

### ***At the national level***

Here you might object that we happened to take our examinations in particularly bad schools. Also, that whatever reports we receive from elsewhere all happen to be sad. You can say that you know a lot of other examples, as true as ours, but leading to the opposite conclusions.

So, let us drop all of us, a position that has become too emotional and let us stand on scientific ground.

Let us start all over, this time with numbers.

### ***Unfit for studying***

Giancarlo took on himself a job of compiling statistics. He is fifteen years old. He is another of those country boys pronounced by you to be unfit for studying.

With us he runs smoothly. He has been engulfed in these figures for four months now. Even maths has stopped being dry for him.

The educational miracle we have performed on him comes out of a very clear prescription.

We offered him the chance to study for a noble aim: to feel himself a brother to 1,031,000 who were failed, as he was, and to taste the joy; of revenge for himself and for all of them.

### ***The cocksure teacher***

Scores of statistical compendia, scores of visits to schools or inquiries by letter, and trips to the Ministry of Education and to ISTAT (*Central Institute of Statistics*) to gather further data, and whole days spent at the calculating machine.

Others may have done similar research before us. They must be the kind of people who can't translate their findings into plain language.

We haven't read their findings. Neither have you teachers.

And so none of you has a clear idea of what really goes on inside the schools.

We mentioned this to a teacher visiting our place. He was mortally offended: 'I have been teaching for thirteen years. I have met thousands of children and parents. You see things from the outside. You don't have a deep knowledge of the problems in a school.'

Then it is *he* who has a deep knowledge - he, who has only known pre-selected boys. The more of them he knows, the more he goes off the track.

### ***Gianni means millions***

Schools have a single problem. The children they lose. The Giannis.

Your 'compulsory school' loses 462,000 children per year. This being the case, the only incompetents in the matter of school are you who lose so many and don't go back to find them. Not we: we find them in the fields and factories and we know them at close range.

Gianni's mother, who doesn't know how to read, can see what the problems of the school are. And so will anybody who knows the pain endured by a child when he fails, and who has enough patience to look through statistics.

Then these figures will begin to scream in your face. They say that the Giannis run into millions and that you are either stupid or evil.

### ***The pyramid***

Since the statistical tables may be hard to digest, we have put them into appendixes. Here in the text we cut them down to a human measure. To fit into a classroom that can be embraced with one loving glance.

We have decided to keep the pyramid diagram here. It is a symbol that leaves an impression on the eye.

It looks as if it is chopped out by hatchet blows. Every blow, from the elementary years up, is a creature going off to work before being equal.

### ***Tracing the class of 1951***

But the pyramid does have the defect of putting students from age six to age thirty on the same sheet of paper - failures old and new.

Let's try to follow one class of children throughout their eight years of compulsory schooling.

*[Here, follows a statistical analysis of the failure and dropout patterns in the Italian schools, demonstrating a powerful discrimination against the children of the working or farming class. These are especially Italian problems. However the British reader may still be interested in these analyses and calculations as a sample of the way the students of Barbiana were taught always to make their point and base their findings on solid statistical foundations. Because of the serious effort on the part of these children, the Italian Physical Society gave a prize (generally given to promising physicists) to the school of Barbiana after the publication of the book]*

### ***First year***

Let us drop in on a first-year class on the first day of school, in October. Thirty-two students are there: At a glance they all seem alike. In reality there are five amongst them who will sit their exams again and again.

Seven years old, aprons and ribbons, yet already stamped 'retarded', which will cost them dearly later on in the intermediate school.

### ***Lost earnings***

Three children are missing even before the school term begins. The teacher doesn't know them, but they have been in school earlier. They tasted their first failure and they have not come back.

If they had come back they would be in her class. In a way, then, she has lost them. In the same way that we speak of lost earnings.

The same story goes on throughout the following years. To be really mean we could double the count of children lost every year: the ones you have chased away and the ones missing from your class because they are repeating a year.

To be really good, you should be the ones to do the counting.

### *The truants*

We do not include in our count those children who never started school. For them there are no available data on a national scale. There seems to be a small number, as far as we can tell. Giancarlo could not find a single one in the Mugello region.

We could not blame you for them, in any case. Others are to be blamed. Above all, the priests, who know the people of their parish and could have talked to the parents or even given their names to the school authorities.

### *The failures*

In June the teacher fails six children. She is disobeying the law of 24 December 1957, which asks teachers to bring them through the two years of the first cycle.

But our young Miss does not accept orders from the sovereign people. She fails them and then leaves for the beach.

### *Shooting into a bush*

To fail someone is like shooting into a bush. Perhaps you get a boy, perhaps a hare. We'll find out in time.

You don't know what you have done until the following October. Has he gone off to work or will he repeat the year? If he repeats, will he get anything out of it? Will he gain some solid ground for going on with his studies, or will he just grow older badly in courses not made for him?

### *Second year*

In the following October the teacher of the seven to eight year olds again finds thirty-two children in her classroom." She sees twenty-six familiar faces and feels at home again among her own, whom she has come to love.

A bit later she spots the six new students. Five are repeating the year. One of these has already repeated it twice; he is almost nine years old.

The sixth new face is Pierino," the doctor's son.

Pierino. The doctor's chromosomes are powerful. Pierino could write when he was only five. He has no need for a first year. He enters the second at age six. And he can speak like a printed book.

He, too, is already branded, but with the mark of the chosen race.

### ***Bitter bread***

Of the six failed children, four repeat the first year. They are not lost to the school but they are lost to their schoolmates.

Perhaps the teacher is not over concerned about them because she knows they are safely tucked away next door in another teacher's class. Perhaps she has already forgotten them.

For her, one boy - out of thirty-two - is just a fraction. But for the boy a teacher is much more. He had only *one* teacher, and she threw him out.

Two of the missing never came back to school. They are at work in the fields. In everything we eat now there is a bit of their illiterate sweat.

### ***The mothers***

Six mothers have already learned what kind of a place your school is. Four have seen their children uprooted from their classes and from their friends. Exiled to grow up among younger and ever younger schoolmates.

Two of them have seen their children cut off for ever.

Mothers are no saints. They do not see beyond their own threshold. That is a great defect. But their children live on the same side of the threshold. They are people mothers can never forget.

### ***Priests and whores***

Teachers, on the other hand, can always find excuses for forgetting. They are only part-time mothers. The missing child has the defect of not being there. At his old desk there ought to be a cross or a coffin, as a reminder.

Instead, a new student sits there. Another watched little character like him. And the teacher is already growing fond of the new one.

Teachers are like priests and whores. They have to fall in love in a hurry with anybody who comes their way. Afterwards there is no time to cry. The world is an immense family. There are so many others to serve.

It is a fine thing to be able to see beyond one's own threshold. But we have to be sure that we ourselves haven't chased a child away from it.

### *Only a fraction of equality*

At the end of the five elementary years, eleven children have already disappeared from the school, and it is their teachers' fault.

'Schools are open to all. All citizens have a right to eight years' of school. All citizens are equal.' But what about those eleven?

Two of them are equal to nothing at all. To sign their name they make a cross. One of them has one-eighth equality. He can sign his name. The others have two-, three-, four- or five-eighths of equality. They read after a fashion but cannot understand a newspaper.

### *Family allowances*

Not one of them is the son of well to do parents. The thing is so clear-cut that we can only smile.

Only recently have farm families begun to receive subsidies. "Fifty-four lire per day for each child. Workers receive 187 lire per day."

It isn't the teacher who writes the laws. But she knows they are there. Every time she fails the poor she leads them into temptation to leave. Not so for the rich.

### *Peasants*

This temptation to leave and go to work weighs on the children of both poor farmers and poor laborers. It can hit them at different ages. Those eleven boys who went to work during the five elementary years ranged in age from seven to fourteen.

They were mostly peasants or, in any case, children living in isolated communities where even the smallest can be given something to do.

### ***Men before their time***

The government has erased its memory of these children. They are no longer registered as students but are not yet registered as workers.

Still, they are working, and by putting the following two laws side by side, we can really see what's happening even if it isn't acknowledged.

The law of 20 January 1961, 'On the Protection of Child Labor' forbids working before the age of fifteen. It does not apply to farm labor. Of course. This lower class has no children.

We are men before our time.

Yet article 205 of the unified text INAIL (*State Agency for Worker's Insurance*) provides farm laborers with accident compensation from the age of twelve. This proves that it's known that we work at that age.

### ***Mystery***

A glance at the pyramid (Figure I) gives some credit to the elementary teacher, despite all the children that she loses. The pyramid begins to take shape only in the intermediate years.

The teacher of the first elementary year began with thirty-two students. In the fifth, she still has twenty-eight. She apparently lost only four.

Actually, she lost twenty. How she can lose twenty boys out of thirty-two and still have twenty-eight in class is something of mystery and deserves explanation.

### ***The lake***

Try looking at a lake on any map. It seems to have such a lot of water, but in reality it has exactly the same amount as the stream that fed it. The flow of water has simply slowed down. It loses time while taking up much more space. Then at the outlet it begins to run again and we can see that it is the same stream it was before.

The elementary years are the lake. A boy who is regularly promoted takes up five desks. When he repeats years he occupies six, seven, and eight ... Pierino, that darling child, takes up only four desks.

When you stop failing pupils, you will in the same stroke solve the problem of crowded classrooms.

### ***Nomads***

To the teacher, the Giannis, the habitual repeaters, are simply rubbish she has dumped into the laps of her colleagues. But what you do to others gets done to you. From the teacher next door you get just about the same amount of rubbish.

In all, for the five-year period the teacher has had forty-eight children in her care and handed on twenty-three of them. The twenty-nine Giannis passed through her class without leaving a trace. Of the thirty-one boys she was originally entrusted with only nineteen are left.

### ***It is forbidden to grow old***

The damage done to the eighteen students stranded in the wrong classes becomes serious at the intermediate level. They have grown old. And that is forbidden.

As long as there were five years of compulsory schooling the situation was different. Six and five makes eleven. Before reaching the legal working age there was time for two or three years of repeating courses.

But today six plus eight equals fourteen. And a working permit can be obtained at fifteen.

### ***No time for failing***

At first glance it would appear that there is still time for one failure. But we need a second glance at the month of birth of these first-year children. The oldest boy in the group was born in January. He is six years and nine months old.

When you have checked them all you realize that three-quarters of the children are really older than six when they enter the first year. So they do not have time to fail even once.

### ***The Will to Fail***

When a teacher becomes a victim of the Will to Fail she could let off steam on the children of the rich.

I would like to make a deal with the parents: 'Pierino is so young; he'll have to face so many choices before he is really mature. What do you say, Doctor, shall we keep him back for a year?'

### ***The immature***

But the teacher has a different opinion. Pierino is always promoted. Its' strange. Pierino, who is so young! The psychologists will tell you that he ought to be in trouble. It must be the power of those chromosomes.

Pierino, at nine, finds himself in the class for ten to eleven year olds. He has spent all his time among more mature schoolmates. He has not grown more mature but has been trained in the skill of facing adults. He knows how to be at his ease with you.

Gianni, instead, has always been in school with younger children. He plays the bully sometimes, but when he faces an adult he is tongue-tied.

### ***First intermediate year***

In the first intermediate year there are twenty-two children. For the teacher they are all new faces. She knows nothing of the eleven who were lost. She is truly convinced that no one is missing.

At times she allows herself to grumble: 'Now that everybody comes to school it's impossible to teach. We get quite illiterate students.'

She has studied so much Latin, but she has never seen a statistical table.

### ***The placard***

It wouldn't make a difference anyway. She would also have to study the ages of the students on her class list. Her students' childish faces and delicate bodies can be deceiving.

At the Registry of Births they don't bother to look at the faces. Whoever is old enough can have a work permit. He can run from your class at any moment.

Every one of these children ought to carry a big placard: 'I am 13. Do not fail me.'

### ***Slaughter of the oldest***

But no one carries a placard. And the instructors look at the marks in their register books, not at the birth dates.

Some of them may act in good faith. Some may even want to save the older students. Then, facing a pupil's paper full of mistakes, they forget all their good intentions.

The facts show that the oldest are always the ones who fail. Those who have a job within easy reach.

But those children who are in step will go on being promoted. They had no reason to fail in previous years. They have none this year.

Not all of their houses are like Pierino's, obviously, but neither are they so very different.

The class gets mown down in this fashion:

### ***Slaughter of the poor***

By failing the oldest of the children the teachers manage at the same time to hit the poorest.

We have made a survey of the professions of the fathers of those children who grow old in the elementary schools. The results can be seen in Figure 5.

### ***To bring home a pay packet***

Gianni has already reached age fourteen and will have to repeat the first intermediate year. At this point, to continue becomes an absurdity. Even if he is passed each time from now on he will finish the intermediate school at seventeen.

Boredom in school is at its peak. Work is easy to find. In a few months it will even be legal.

Gianni is well aware that going to work is not all that great, but he does feel like bringing home a pay packet. He is fed up with being scolded for every penny he spends.

And his parents themselves make their protests with less and less force. To do otherwise, both they and the boy would have to have a very rare ability to

persevere - a self-created passion for learning, strong enough to overcome every failure.

A helping hand from you could make the difference. You did stretch out a hand - but to topple him once and for all.

### ***The vegetable man***

Perhaps that wasn't your intention. The teacher who stuck you with a student too old for your class is certainly guilty as well. The world may also be guilty and, for that matter, so may Gianni himself be guilty.

But when you see a little boy behind the counter of a vegetable stand, I would hate to be in your shoes knowing that I was the one who had failed him.

If only you were able to say, 'Why don't you come back to school? I've passed you, just so that you can come back. Without you, school somehow has lost its flavor.'

### ***Second intermediate school***

By the second year of the intermediate school, the average age of the students is lower, since the oldest are missing. The distance between Pierino and the others grows less.

It can be said that the classes grow older all through the elementary years because of the boys who are repeating years. Then in the intermediate school they become younger again because the oldest have dropped out to go to work.

### ***The role of the homes***

The social structure of the school will change, too.

We have here a study made by friends of ours in a nearby township. They have subdivided the failures of the first and second intermediate years into social *classes*. The results are shown in Figure 6.

### ***When a test gets a 4***

When the instructors saw this graph they called it an insult to their fairness as impartial judges.

The fiercest of them all protested that she had never sought out or received any information about the students' families: 'When a test is worth a 4, I will mark it

with a 4.' She could not understand, poor soul, that this is exactly the charge against her.

**Nothing is more unjust than to share equally among unequals.**

***Who is the she talking about?***

Whether it's a matter of the age or the social status of the students, the teacher starts breathing freely when they reach the second intermediate year. She can cover the rest of the course quite easily now.

She looks forward to June. Then she will get rid of her last four thorns and will finally have a group worthy of her.

'When they came into the first intermediate class they were truly illiterate. But now, ah, their papers are all correct.'

Who is she talking about? Where are the boys she received in the first form? The only ones left are those who could write correctly to begin with; they could probably write just as well in the third elementary year. The ones who learned to write at home.

The illiterate she had in the first year are just as illiterate now. She has simply dumped them out of sight.

***Compulsory***

And she knows it well. So well that in the third intermediate year she fails only a few. Seven failures in first, four in second and only one in the third. Just the opposite of what she ought to do.

In the compulsory school system the compulsoriness ought to carry all the students through to the third intermediate year. Then at a final examination the teacher could release her selective instincts.

We wouldn't say a word about that. If a boy has not learned to write by then she would do well to fail him.

***Summary***

Figure 7 gives a summary of the class we have been following throughout the eight compulsory years of schooling.

This class has lost forty children. Sixteen went to work before they had completed their compulsory years of school. Twenty-four are repeaters. Altogether, fifty-six children have passed through this class. By the third year of the intermediate school we find only eleven out of the thirty-two original students entrusted to the teacher of the first elementary class.

### ***Father's profession***

At this point we need a survey of the occupations of the fathers of the children who receive their intermediate diploma. The ISTAT has not made one. How could ISTAT think that a compulsory school system would make social distinctions?

But ISTAT has made a study of the occupations of the fathers of students with upper-school diplomas. The result can be seen in Figure 8.

These are the students who have had twelve or thirteen years of your kind of school. Eight of those years are compulsory.

### ***It's not only money***

Some of the children may have left school for lack of money, which is not your fault. But there are some workers who will support their children through ten or eleven years of schooling just to get them through the third intermediate year.

They have spent every bit as much money as Pierino's daddy, but Pierino by the age of their children has already received his upper-school diploma.

## ***Born Different?***

### ***The stupid and the lazy***

You tell us that you fail only the stupid and the lazy.

Then you claim that God causes the stupid and the lazy to be born in the houses of the poor. But God would never spite the poor in this way. More likely, the spiteful one is you.

### ***Defense of the race***

It was a Fascist who defended the theory of 'differences by birth' at the Constituent Assembly: 'The Honorable Mastroianni, referring to the word "compulsory", points out that certain children have an organic inadequacy at attend schools.'

And a principal of an intermediate school has written: 'The Constitution cannot, unfortunately, guarantee to all children the same mental development or the same scholastic aptitude.' But he will never admit it about his own child. Will he fail to make him finish the intermediate school? Will he send him out to dig in the fields? I have been told that in the China of Mao such things are happening. But is it true?

Even the rich have difficult offspring. But they push them ahead.

### ***Other's children***

Children born to others do appear stupid at times. Never our own. When we live close to them we realize that they are not stupid. Nor are they lazy. Or, at least, we feel that it might be a question of time that they may snap out of it, that we must find a remedy.

Then, it is more honest to say that all children are born equal; if, later they are not equal, it is our fault and we have to find the remedy.

### ***Removing of obstacles***

This is exactly what the Constitution says, in reference to Gianni:

*All citizens are equal before the law, without distinction as to race, language or personal and social conditions.*

*It is the duty of the Republic to remove the obstacles created by economic and social conditions which, limiting the freedom and equality of citizens, prevent the full development of the human personality and the full participation of all workers in the political, economic and social organization of the country (Article 3).*

## **It Was Up to You**

### ***Unloader of barrels***

One of your colleagues (a sweet young bride who managed to fail ten out of twenty-eight children in the intermediate class - both she and her husband Communists, and quite militant) used this argument with us: 'I did not chase them away, I just failed them. If their parents don't see to it that they return, that's their worry.'

### ***Gianni's father***

But Gianni's father went to work as a blacksmith at age twelve and did not even finish the fourth year level of schooling.

When he was nineteen he joined the Partisans. He did not quite grasp what he was doing. But he understood far better than any of you. He was looking forward to a world with more justice, where Gianni at least could be equal to all Gianni, who was not even born.

This is the way Article 3 sounded in his ears: 'It is the duty of Mrs Spadolini [a teacher] to remove all obstacles. ...'

And he pays you, too - quite well. He gets 300 lire per hour, and out of it he pays you 4,300.

He'd be willing to give you even more if you would work a respectable number of hours. He works 2,150 hours a year, while you work 522 - (I don't count the examination hours; they are not teaching hours)."

### ***Substitution***

But Gianni's father cannot by himself remove the obstacles that weigh him down. He has no idea how to discipline a boy going through the intermediate years: how long the boy should sit at his desk, or whether it is good for him to have some distractions. Is it true that studying causes headaches and that his eyes 'begin to trill', as Gianni says?

If Gianni's father knew how to manage everything by himself, he would not have to send Gianni to you for schooling. It is up to you to supply Gianni with both education and training. They are two faces of the same problem.

If you lead him forward, Gianni will be able to work with you in a different way and still be a more competent father tomorrow. But for today, Gianni's father is what he is. What he was allowed by the rich to be.

### ***Coaching***

That poor man - if he knew what was going on would pick up his weapon and be a Partisan again. There are teachers who coach for money in their free time. So, instead of removing the obstacles they work to deepen the differences among students.

In the morning - during regular school hours - we pay them to give the same schooling to all. Later on in the day they get money from richer people to school their young gentlemen differently. Then, in June, at our expense, they preside at the trial and judge the differences.

### ***The little civil servant***

If some little civil servant did his paper work quickly and well at home, for a good price, but at his desk did the same job slowly and badly, you would have him locked up.

Consider further that should he whisper to clients, 'In this office your documents will be given to you late and all messed up. Let me suggest that you find someone who can do them better at home for a little extra'- he would be locked up.

But no one locks up that teacher whom I heard say to a mother: 'The boy's not going to make it on his own. Get him a tutor.' That's what he said, word for word. I have witnesses. I could bring him to court.

To court? To see a judge whose wife herself makes a bit extra by coaching? Anyway, the Italian Penal Code, for some reason, does not list such a crime.

### ***Onions***

You are all in perfect agreement. You want us crushed. Go ahead, do it, but at least don't pretend to be honest. Big deal, to be honest when the Code is written by you and cut to your measurements.

An old friend of mine stole forty onions from a vegetable garden. He got thirteen months in jail, no clemency. The judge of course does not steal onions. Too much trouble. He asks the maid to buy them for him. The cash to pay for both the onions and the maid is made by his wife, with her coaching.

### ***Priests are more honest***

Some parochial schools make a fairer showing. Although they play their part in the class struggle, at least they don't try to hide it. At the school of the Barnabiti Order in Florence, the tuition for a weekly boarder is 40,000 lire a month. At the school of the Scalopi Order it is 36,000.

Morning and night they serve the same master. They don't try to serve two masters, as you do.

### ***Freedom***

The other obstacle that you make no effort to remove is the sway of fashion.

One day Gianni told us, while talking about TV, 'They keep feeding us this junk. If they led us a school instead, that's where we would go.'

He used the impersonal 'they', meaning the society around him, the world that someone, not clearly defined in his mind, who guides the choices of the poor.

We called him all sorts of names. 'But you've had two schools already and you left both.' Just between us, though, did he really have a free choice?

In town, all kinds of fads press down on him, never anything worth while. When a boy doesn't follow the fads, he's 'out'. Or he needs the kind of courage that Gianni doesn't have - so young, so untaught and with nobody to help him. No help from his father, who falls into the same pattern. None from the parish priest who sells games at the counter of the ACLI (Asaociazione Cattolica dei Lavmatori Italiani). None from the Communists, who offer games at the 'Casa del Popolo' [People's Meeting House]. They all compete to drag him down deeper and deeper and deeper.

As if our natural desires in themselves didn't give us enough trouble.

### ***Fashions***

A fashionable theory holds that the years from twelve to twenty-one are for playing at sports and playing at sex, and for hating studies.

The years from twelve to fifteen are the best ones for mastering the language. And ages fifteen to twenty-one are the best for putting the language to use at union or political meetings. But these facts have been concealed from Gianni.

It has been hidden from him, too, that there is no time to lose. At fifteen it's good-bye to school. At twenty-one personal problems close in: engagement, marriage children, making a living. He will have no time then for meetings, will be afraid to expose himself and won't be able to give fully of himself outside his home.

### ***The defenses of the poor***

Only you teachers could have built a defense for the poor against the rule of fashion. The government pays you 800 thousand million lire a year to do so.

But you are such paltry educators, offering 185 days of holiday against 180 of school. And four hours at school against twelve hours out. An idiot of a principal who walks into a class to announce 'The education officer has granted a new holiday on the third of November,' hears a shout of joy and allows himself a smug smile.

*You have presented the school as a nuisance; how are the children supposed to love it?*

*Let's all embrace each other*

In the town of Borgo, the principal has granted the use of a classroom as a dance hall for the boys and girls of the third intermediate year. The Salesiani Order at their parochial school, not to be outdone, organize a masked parade.

A teacher I know parades about with the *Sports Gazette* sticking out of his pocket.

These are men full of understanding for the 'needs' of the young. In any case, it's so easy to take the world as it comes. A teacher with the *Sports Gazette* sticking out of his pocket gets along very well with a laborer-father who also has the *Sports Gazette* in his pocket, while they talk about a son who carries a ball under his arm or a daughter who spends hours at the hair-dresser.

Then the teacher puts a little mark in the mark book and the laborer's children have to go to work before they have learned to read. But the teacher's children - they will go on with their studies to the last, even if they 'don't feel like it' or 'don't understand a thing'.

## **Selection Is Useful to Some**

*Fate or plan?*

Here someone will start blaming it all on fate. To read history as keyed to fate is so restful.

To read it as keyed to politics is more disturbing: fashions then turn him into a well-calculated scheme to assure that the Giannis are left out. The apolitical teacher becomes one of the 411,000 useful idiots armed by their boss with a mark book and report cards. Reserve troops charged with stopping 1,031,000 Giannis a year, just in case the sway of fashion is not sufficient to divert them.

One million, thirty-one thousand children *res pinti* [rejected each year]. *Respinti* is a technical word used in your so-called school. But it is also a word used in military science. *Respinti* before reaching the age for conscription. It is not by chance that exams are a Prussian invention.

### ***Taxation***

The curious thing is that the salaries that go towards throwing us out are paid by us, the rejected.

That man is poor who consumes all of his earnings. Rich is the man who consumes only a fraction. In Italy, for no clear reason, consumer goods are taxed to the last penny. But the income tax is a real joke.

I have been told that the economics textbooks call this system of taxation 'painless'. Painless means that the rich manage to have the poor pay the taxes without the poor noticing it.

At the universities such problems are often aired. But there are only gentlemen there. In the lower schools these discussions are forbidden. To speak of politics in school is not nice. The boss doesn't like it.

### ***Who profits?***

Let's *try* to see who profits from schools kept to a minimum number of hours.

Seven hundred and twenty hours per year means about two hours of school per day averaged out over the year. But a boy stays awake another fourteen hours. In well-to-do families these are fourteen hours of cultural improvement.

But to the peasants they are fourteen hours of loneliness and silence, good only for deepening their shyness. To the sons of workers they are fourteen hours at the school of the hidden persuaders.

Summer holidays, in particular, seem virtually designed for the benefit of the rich. Their children go abroad and learn even more than they do in winter. But by the first day of school the poor have forgotten even the little they knew in June. If they have to take any make-up exams they can't afford a tutor to prepare for them. Usually they give up and just don't take the exam. Peasant boys help on the farm during the heavy summer months in order to pay for their keep.

### ***Straight talk***

At the time of Giolitti everything was spelled out: 'A convention of important men of property at Caltogirone suggested an amendment to abolish all primary education, so that peasants and miners will not absorb new ideas while learning to read.'

Ferdinando Marrini was just as frank. Lamenting that the intermediate *schools* had been made available to the lower classes, he said, 'It is for this reason that the members of the elite classes had to intensify their efforts or face losing all political and economic advantage.'

### ***The Fascists***

And during the Fascist regime the laws were quite explicit: 'Schools of urban or large rural centers will normally have a lower and an upper-elementary school (five years). But those located in smaller rural areas will have, as a rule, only a lower school (three years).'

Later, at the Constituent Assembly, it was again the Fascists who recommended lowering the school-leaving age to thirteen."

### ***Poor Pierino***

But they were all alone. The other politicians have learned that one has to speak more subtly these days.

When the assembly was debating the new intermediate school, it was forbidden to speak against the poor. Nothing was left but to weep over 'poor Pierino' and the extinction of Latin.

A member of the Christian-Democratic party made the most moving speech: 'Why, indeed, should we punish the most gifted children, confining them in a school where they have to clip their wings, adjusting their flight to that of the slower children.'

## **The Master**

### ***Does he exist?***

We may seem to be implying the existence of some master who manipulates you. Someone who has cut the schools to measure.

Does he really exist? Is there a handful of men gathered around a table, holding all the strings in their hands: banks, business, political machines, the press, fashions?

We don't know. If we claim this, we feel our book takes on a certain mystery-story tone. If we don't, we seem to play the simpleton. It is like arguing that so many little gears have fallen into place by chance. Out sprang an armored car able to make war all by itself, with no driver.

### ***Pierino's home***

Perhaps the life story of 'Pierino' can give us a key. So, let us try to take a loving look at his family.

The doctor and his wife are up there on top of things. They read, they travel, they see friends, they play with their child, they take him to keep close track of him and they even do it well. Their house is full of books and culture. At five I had mastered the shovel; Pierino, the pencil.

One evening, as if the decision has been brought about by the facts themselves, they say half-jokingly. 'Why place him in the first grade? Let's put him straight into the second.' They send him to take the test without giving it another thought. If he fails, who cares?

But he does not fail. He gets all 9s. Serene joy fills the family, just as it would have mine.

### ***Rain on wet soil***

The one odd note in all this is that the young couple find a law cooked up just for them. The law forbids a five-year-old child to enter the first year class, but allows a six-year-old child to enter the second.

Is it a stupid law, or in fact altogether too shrewd?

Our young couple did not write the law. They hadn't even been aware of it before. But then, who did write it?

### ***A special case***

As it began, so it continues, year after year. Pierino is always promoted and he hardly does any studying.

I fight my way through with clenched teeth, and I fail. He also manages to have time for sports, meetings of the Azizone Cattolica, or the Giovane Italia or the F.

G. Comunista as well as time for his puberty crisis, his year of the blues and his year of rebellion.

He is less mature at eighteen than I was at twelve. But he keeps going ahead. He will graduate with full honors. He will become a graduate student at no pay.

Working gratis. Yes, gratis. Who would believe it; graduate students work without salary.

Here we come up against another strange law. It has glorious legal precedents. The Statute of Carlo Alberto declared, 'The functions of an MP or deputy do not call for any compensation or emolument.'

This is not a romantic disregard for material interests; it is a refined system for keeping out the inferior classes without saying it to their face.

Class struggle when carried on by gentlemen is gentlemanly. It offends neither the priests nor the intellectuals reading their *Espresso* (*a well-known weekly newspaper considered left of center, and widely read by the intellectuals*).

### ***Peirino's mamma***

Pierino, then, will become a professor. He will find a wife much like himself. They will produce another Pierino. More of a Pierino than ever.

Thirty thousand such stories every year.

If we consider Pierino's mother in herself, she is no wild beast. She is just a bit selfish. She has simply shut her-eyes to the existence of other children, though she has not kept Pierino from meeting other Pierinos. She and her husband are surrounded by other intellectuals. Clearly, they don't want to change.

As to the thirty-one mothers of Pierino's schoolmates, either they don't have time or they don't know any better. They hold jobs, which pay so little that to make ends meet they have to work from childhood to old age and from dawn to night.

But *she* was able to go to school until she was twenty-four. Besides, she was helped at home by one of those thirty-one other mothers - the mother of some Gianni who neglected her own son while doing the housework for Pierino's mother.

All the free time she gets to pursue her interests - is it a gift from the poor or is it a theft by the rich? Why doesn't she share it?

### ***The lion's share***

To conclude the subject of Pierino's mamma, she is neither a beast nor is she an innocent. If we add up thousands of small selfish attitudes like hers, we get the total selfishness of a whole class, claiming for itself the lion's share.

It is a class that has not hesitated to unleash Fascism, racialism, war, unemployment. If it became necessary to 'change everything so that nothing would change' it would not hesitate to embrace Communism.

No one can know the precise mechanism - but when every law seems cut to measure in order to serve Pierino and screw us, we have difficulty believing in chance.

## **Selection Has Reached Its Goal**

### ***At the university***

'Daddy's boys' constitute 86.5 per cent of the university student body; laborers' sons, 13.5 per cent. Of those who get a degree, 91.9 per cent are young gentlemen and 8.1 per cent are from working-class families.

If the poor would band together at the university, they could make a significant mark. But, no. Instead, they are received like brothers by the rich and soon are rewarded with all their defects.

The final outcome: 100 per cent daddy's boys.

### ***In the political parties***

The men who staff the various political parties, at every level, are solidly university graduates.

The proletarian parties are no different on this issue. Workers' parties don't turn up their noses at daddy's boys. And the daddy's boys, conversely, don't turn up their noses at proletarian parties. As long as they themselves get the prominent positions.

Indeed, it is quite *in* with the rich to work 'with the poor'. That is, not so much 'with the poor', as leading the poor.

### ***The candidates***

Politicians prepare the shortlists of candidates They include the names of a few workers, as window dressing, in order to save face. But later on they see to it that university graduates get preference: "Leave it to people who know their way around. A worker would feel lost wandering in the legislature. Anyway, Dr X is *one of us.*"

### ***The Legislature***

To conclude, the men elected to make the new laws are the same ones who were quite pissed with the old laws. They are the only ones who have never personally lived through the things that ought to be changed, the only ones who should not be working in politics.

University graduates make up 77 per cent of Parliament They are supposed to represent the voters. But voters with university degrees make up 1.8 per cent of the population. Workers and union members in parliament - 8.4 per cent. Among the voters - 51.1 per cent. Peasants in parliament – 0.1 per cent. Among the voters – 28.1 per cent.

### ***Black Power***

Stokely Carmichael has been in jail twenty-seven times." He declared at his last trial, 'There isn't a white man I can trust.'

When a young white who had given his entire life to the cause of the blacks cried, 'Not a single one, Stokely?' Carmichael turned to the public, stared at his friend and repeated, 'No, not a single one.'

If the young white man took offence at what Carmichael said, then Carmichael is right. If he is truly with the blacks the young white must swallow it, draw aside and keep on loving. Perhaps Carmichael was waiting for just this moment.

Newspapers of the left and the center have always applauded any publication on the school of Barbiana. After this book, they may join with the right and start hating us. Then it will be clear that that is a party bigger than all other parties: the party of Italian College Graduates, '*Partito Italiano Laureati.*'

## **For Whose Sake Are You Teaching?**

### ***Good faith***

The good faith of teachers is a different matter entirely.

You teachers are paid by the government. You have the children right there in front of you. You have studied your history. You teach it. You should be able to see more clearly.

Of course, you see only selected children. And you got your culture from books. And the books were written by men in the Establishment. They are the only ones who can write. But you should have been able to read between the lines. How can you possibly say you are acting in good faith?

### ***The Nazis***

I try to understand you. You look so civilized. Not a hint of the criminal in you. Perhaps, though, something of the Nazi criminal. That super honest, loyal citizen who checked the number of soap boxes. He would take great care not to make mistakes in figures (four, less than four), but he does not question whether the soap is made from human fat.

### ***Even more timid than I***

For whose sake are you doing it? What do you gain by making school hateful and by throwing the Giannis out into the streets?

I can show you that you are more timid than I ever was. Are afraid of Pierino's parents? Or afraid of your colleague, in the upper schools? Or the education officer?

If you are so worried about your career there is a solution: cheat a little bit on your pupils' tests by correcting a few mistakes while you are walking up and down between the desks.

### ***For the good name of the school***

Or perhaps you don't fear something so obvious and so simple. Perhaps you fear your own conscience instead. Then your conscience is built wrong.

'I would consider promotion of this child injurious to the good name of the school,' wrote a principal in his report. But who is the school? We are the school. To serve it is to serve us.

### ***For the good of the child***

'After all, it's for the child's own good. We must not forget that these pupils stand at the threshold of the high school!' pompously cried the headmaster of a little country school.

It was immediately clear that only three of the thirty children in the class would go on to the upper years: Maria, the daughter of the dry-goods merchant; Anna, the teacher's daughter; and Pierino, of course. But even if more of the children went on, what difference would it make?

That headmaster has forgotten to change the record on his record player. He hasn't yet noticed the growth of the school population. A living reality of 680,000 children in the first year. Most of them poor. The rich, a minority.

It's not a question of a classless school, as he calls it. His is a one-class school, at the service of those who have the money to push ahead.

### ***For Justice***

'To pass a bad student is unfair to the good ones,' said a sweet little teaching soul.

Why not call Pierino aside to say to him, as Our Lord said in the parable about the vine trimmers: 'I am passing you, because you have learned. You are twice blessed: you pass, and also you have learned. I am going to pass Gianni to encourage him but he has the misfortune not to have learned.'

### ***For Society***

Another teacher is convinced that she has a responsibility towards Society 'Today I pass him into the fourteen year olds class, and tomorrow he turns up as an MD. !'

### ***Equality***

Career, culture, family, the good name of the school: you are using tiny sets of scales for grading your pupils. They really are petty. Too small to fill the life of a teacher.

Some among you have understood, but cannot find a way out. Always in fear of the sacred word. And yet, there is no choice. Nothing but politics can fill the life of a man of today.

In Africa, in Asia, in Latin America, in southern Italy, in the hills, in the fields, even in the cities, millions of children are waiting to be made equal. Shy, like me; stupid, like Sandro; lazy, Like Gianni. The best of humanity.

## **The Reforms that we propose**

1. Do not fail students.
2. Give a full-time school to children who seem stupid.
3. Give a purpose to the lazy.

### **1. Do Not Fail**

#### ***The turner***

A turner at his lathe is not allowed to deliver only those pieces that happen to come out well. Otherwise he wouldn't make the effort to have them all turn out well.

But you, you can get rid of the pieces that you don't like whenever you wish to. So you are happy taking care of those who are bound to be successful for reasons that lie outside the school.

#### ***Lowest Common Denominator***

This system is unlawful today.

The Constitution, in Article 34, has promised eight years of schooling to everybody. Eight years means eight different classes. Not four classes, each repeated twice. Otherwise Article 34 would be a poor word-play and unworthy of the Constituent Assembly.

Today, to reach the last year of the intermediate school is not a luxury. It is a cultural minimum, everyone's right.

The man who doesn't get it is not an Equal.

#### ***Aptitudes***

You can't hide any more behind the racialist theory of aptitude tests.

Every child has enough 'aptitude' to reach the third year of the intermediate school and to get by in all subjects.

It is so convenient to tell a boy, 'You are not cut out for this subject.' The boy will accept this; he is just as lazy as his teacher. But he knows that his teacher does not consider him an Equal.

It is not good policy to tell another child, 'You are clearly cut out for this subject.' When he has too much fondness for just one subject he should be forbidden to study it. Call his case specialized, or 'unbalanced'. There is so much time, later on, to lock oneself up in a specialized field.

### ***By piecework***

If all of you knew that, by any means possible, you had to move every child ahead in every subject, you would sharpen up your wits to find a way for all of them to function well.

I'd have you paid by piecework. So much for each child who learns one subject. Or, even better, a fine for each child who does not learn a subject.

Then your eyes would always be on Gianni. You would search out in his inattentive stare the intelligence that God has put in him, as in all children. You would fight for the child who needs you most, neglecting the gifted one, as they do in any family.

You would wake up at night thinking about him and would try to invent new ways to teach him - ways that would fit his needs. You would go to fetch him from home if he did not show up for class.

You would never give yourself any peace, for the school that lets the Giannis drop out is not fit to be called a school.

### ***You are the ones from Middle Ages***

On extreme provocation at our school we even use the rod.

Now don't play squeamish. Forget all those pedagogical theories. If you need a whip I can give you one, but throw away that pen lying on top of your record book. That pen leaves its mark all through the year. The mark of a whip disappears by the next day.

Because of the nice 'modern pen' of yours, Gianni will never in his life be able to read a book. He can't write a decent letter. That is cruel punishment, way out of proportion.

### ***Mathematics***

The maths teacher is the only one who might have some reason to complain if he can't ever fail a pupil. The second – or third year – lessons are useless to someone who has not learned the material in first year.

But mathematics is just one subject among many. The three hours a week of maths that a boy can't master should not cause him to lose all the twenty-three other hours in which he could do well.

### ***Less is enough***

We could start a discussion here on the question of mathematics, similar to the one the Assembly had on Latin.

How much maths does anyone have to know for his immediate needs at home and at work? Or in order to read the newspaper? In other words, just how much mathematics will a non-specialized man of culture remember?

The ordinary maths taught in the eight-year course, except for numerical expressions and algebra.

There is still the problem of making the word 'algebra' a meaningful part of the language. But that could be done in one lesson during the year.

## **2 Full -Time Teaching**

### ***Repetitions***

You are quite aware that two hours a week on each subject is not enough for every student to cover the whole course.

Up to now we have had a typical upper-class solution: the poor work through the year again. To the *petit bourgeois* you offer coaching (for money, after school hours) so that the lessons can be reviewed. For the upper-class boys it is all taken care of, since they are repeating what they already know. Pierino has had everything explained to him at home.

The *doposcuola* is a much better solution. A boy will repeat the work in the afternoon but will not lose the year, will not spend money, and will have you with him both in guilt and in struggle.

### ***Classless school***

Let's take off the mask. As long as your school remains class-orientated and chases away the poor, the only serious way to break the system is by creating a *doposcuola* that chases away the rich.

People who get upset at our solution but were never shocked at all the failing and private coaching are simply not being honest.

Pierino was not born racially different. He became different because of his environment at home, *after school hours*. The *doposcuola* must create a comparable environment for the rest of the children while keeping alive their own culture.

### ***Environment***

The words 'full time' frighten you. You feel it is difficult enough managing the children the few hours you do now. But the truth is that you have never tried.

So far you have run your class obsessed by the school bell, and with nightmares about the curriculum to be covered by June. You haven't been able to broaden the horizons, to answer the curiosity of your young people or to carry any argument to the very end.

The upshot is that you have done everything badly; you are always frustrated and so are the children. It is the frustration and not the hours of work that have tired you out.

### ***One has to believe***

Offer a *dopolcuola* right through the elementary years and on Sunday, Christmas, Easter and throughout the summer holidays. How can anyone say that the children and their parents do not want something when it has never been offered to them?

A principal who merely sends faded copies of a circular to parents cannot say he has really tried to start a *dopolcuola*. The *doposcuola* has to be launched like any good product on the market. Before it can be made to work, one has to believe in it.

## **Full-time Work and the Family**

### ***Celibacy***

A full-time school assumes teacher's family obligations will not be a hindrance. A good example of a full-time school would be one run by a couple, husband and wife, in their home, open to everybody and with no fixed schedule.

Gandhi did it. He mingled his own children among the others, at the price of seeing them grow up different from himself. Could you do it?

The other solution is celibacy.

### ***Wife-machine occupation***

Celibacy is not a word in fashion now.

The Church understood it, for the clergy, about a thousand years after the death of our Lord.

Gandhi understood it, for the sake of the school, when he was thirty-five years old (after twenty-two years of married life).

Once, Mao pointed out for the admiration of his comrades a worker who had castrated himself (the Italian 'Chinese' are embarrassed to mention it).

### ***88,000***

You will need another thousand years before adopting celibacy. But, meanwhile, you can do something: start praising celibacy and use well the unmarried teachers that you do have.

Of the 411,000 teachers in the school system, 88,000 are not married. Fifty-three thousand out of the 88,000 will never marry. Why not tell others and ourselves that this is not a misfortune but a blessing – they will be available for full-time teaching!

It is common to say now, I don't know with how much foundation, that unmarried teachers are less human. The day celibacy becomes a selfless choice, teachers might grow passionately fond of the school, might love the children and be loved by them.

Above all, they would have the joy of running a school that succeeds.

## **Full Time and Union Right**

### ***Great fights***

We happened to read a teachers'-union newspaper: 'No!' it said. 'No, to an increase in teaching hours! There were great battles to restrict the compulsory teaching timetable, and it would be an absurdity to go back.'

We felt taken aback. Strictly speaking, we can't say a word. Every worker fights to reduce his working hours and so he should.

### ***Unusual privileges***

But your work is really indecent.

A laborer works 2,150 hours a year. Your colleagues in the civil service work 1,630 hours. You, from a maximum of 738 hours (elementary teachers) to a minimum of 468 (maths and foreign-language teachers).

Your explanation that you have to study and to correct papers at home is not valid. Even judges have to write out their verdicts and sentences. Then, too, you could always skip giving tests. Or if you do give them, you could correct them, together with the children, while they are being taken.

As for your preparations and studies, we all have to study. Laborers need to study more than you do. When they take an evening course they don't ask to be paid.

To conclude, we repeat that your working hours are a peculiar privilege that the management has given to you for reasons of its own. It is no union victory.

### ***Nervous breakdown***

In the same newspaper we read further that your teaching hours are 'enough to drain the psychophysical capacities of any normal human being'.

A worker stays by his stamping machine eight hours a day: in constant fear of losing his arm. You would not dare say this sort of thing in his presence.

There are thousands of teachers, in any case, we read further never too tired to coach paying students. Until you get rid of them, you are on the wrong side of the fence. It is hard to see you as workers entitled to union rights.

### ***Strikes***

For instance, the right to strike. It is a sacred right of every worker. But for a person with your kind of timetable to go on strike is disgusting.

Study some more about Gandhi and you will discover other techniques equal in substance to the strike, but quite different in form.

A good solution for you would be to join the judges' union; you could go on strike just during those hours when your work is judges' work: exams, mark discussions, tests, reports.

If, instead, you stop working those few hours you are supposed to teach, then people will feel that you don't give a damn about us.

### **Who Will Teach Full Time?**

School, with today's timetable, is a war against the poor. If the government can't impose longer hours of teaching, it should have nothing to do with schools.

This is a very serious conclusion. Up to now the State schools have been considered an improvement over the private. We might have to reconsider everything and put the school back in the hands of someone else. Someone with an idealistic urge to teach, and to teach to us.

### ***Watch your words***

Let us keep our feet on the ground.

In the morning and during the winter, let the government run the schools. And continue to make them 'classless' (watch your word: the classism of the rich is called 'classlessness').

In the afternoon and during the summer someone else has to run them, and run them without class distinctions (watch your words again: a lack of class distinctions will be called 'classism' by the rich).

### ***The town administrations***

A first solution is to confront the town administrations. Let them show whether their school politics is favorable to us. As for asphalt, new lights or playgrounds, even the Monarchists can provide them.

If the Provincial Administrative Board cuts down on the funds because 'it is not within the jurisdiction of the town government', the people of the town can argue that this law was made by the Fascists in 1931, and object to it on those grounds.

It is easy enough to put the blame on the prefect and do nothing.

### ***The Communists***

It is possible that the town administrations won't budge. Even the Communists are timid when faced with class problems. Will they dare to antagonize the white-collar workers and the shopkeepers?

A big shot in the Party insisted that the schools must be the concern of the State 'when it is we who are in power. ...' Twenty years have gone by since the liberation. The Communists have not reached that power. We're waiting for the grass to grow, but meanwhile the cows are dying.

### ***The priests***

Perhaps the priests could run the *doposcuola*. But many among them cannot love with the same uncompromising love of our Lord. They believe that the best way to instruct the rich is to suffer them.

### ***The union members***

The unions are the only working-class organizations. Therefore, it is up to them to get the *doposcuola* started.

The union members refuse to listen for the moment. They say that in a modern democracy each public institution has its own function and should not trespass on the others' grounds.

They too, suffer, from a certain timidity.

Still, they complain about the indifference of today's youth to everything. They say it becomes harder every day to organize people to strike, to sign up new members, to find activists and full-time officers. In the meantime they let the young grow up in schools run by the management.

### ***At least give it a try***

After they have beaten their heads against enough walls, the union rank and file may change their minds. But meanwhile they could at least start some local experiments.

The CGIL and the CISL (Federation of Italian Workers) could try it, jointly or in competition.

A school really costs very little: some chalk, a blackboard, a few secondhand books, four older boys to do the coaching, and every so often a free lecturer to talk of newer things.

### **Full Time and Subject Matter**

***Don Borghi*** (a priest, and a friend and collaborator of Don Milani)

While we were writing this letter, Don Borghi paid us a visit. He made this criticism of us: ‘You seem so convinced that every boy must go to school and must have a full day of it. But then the boys will, turn out to be apolitical individualists, like all the other students around. Good soil for Fascism.’

‘As long as the teachers and the subjects they teach stay the same, the less school boys have, the better off they are. A workshop makes a better school.’

‘In order to change teachers and subject matter, we must do more than write this letter of yours. These problems must be solved at the political level.’

### ***Better than nothing***

That's true. A Parliament that reflected the needs of all the people, and not the middle class alone, could settle both you and the school syllabus with a couple of penal laws.

But first, we have to get into Parliament. Whites will never make the laws needed by the blacks.

To get into Parliament, we have to master the language. For the time being, then, and for lack of something better, children will have a go to your kind of school.

### ***Professional deformity***

In any case, not all teachers are as bad as Don Borghi thinks.

It may be that your deformity began while teaching at those schools. You did not favor the little gentlemen out of malice; it's just that there they were, right in front of you, for so long. Too many of them, and far too long.

You became attached to them, finally, and to their families, their world; the newspaper they read at home.

Whoever is fond of the comfortable and fortunate stays out of politics. He does not want anything to change.

### ***Tire pressure of the poor***

But now things are changing. The school population keeps growing, in spite of you failing pupils.

With the masses of the poor exerting pressure, needing basic things, you cannot keep pushing a syllabus specially made for Pierino.

All the more so if you teach full time. The children of the poor will remake you and remake the syllabus.

To get to know the children of the poor and to love politics are one and the same things. You cannot love human beings who were marked by unjust laws and not work for better laws.

## **3 A Goal**

### ***Religious schools***

At one time there were religious schools that really were religious. They had a goal and it was worth pursuing. But they did nothing for atheists.

Everyone looked forward to your great new secular solution. But you gave birth to a mouse: the school for personal profit.

The school with a religious goal is now extinct. The priests have asked to be integrated into the system, to give marks and diplomas like you. They, too, hold up their children the God Money.

### ***Communist schools***

The Communists could propose a somewhat better school. And yet I myself would not care to be a teacher and have to trim my words. To see the doubts growing in the children's eyes: is he saying what is true or simply what is expedient?

***Do we really have to pay this price for Equality?***

***An honest goal to be found***

We are searching for a goal.

It must be an honest one. A great one. It must demand of a boy that he be nothing less than a human being - *that* would be acceptable both to believers and atheists.

I know this goal. My teacher-priest has been impressing it on me since I was eleven years old, and I thank God for it. I have saved so much time. Minute by minute. I know why I was studying.

***A final goal***

The right goal is to give oneself to others.

In this century, how can you show your love if not through politics, the unions, and the schools? We are the sovereign people. The time for begging is gone; we must make choices – against class distinctions, against hunger, illiteracy, racialism and colonial wars.

***An immediate goal***

This is the ultimate goal, which should be remembered from time to time. The immediate one, which must be remembered every minute, is to understand others and to make oneself understood.

The Italian language is not enough; it is not used very much around the world. Men need to love one another across national borders. For this we need to study many languages - living languages.

Language is made up of words from every subject matter. So we must touch all subjects, at least lightly, in order to enrich our vocabulary. We must become amateurs in everything and specialists only in the ability to speak.

***Classic or scientific***

When the new intermediate school was being debated in Parliament, we, the mutes, kept silent because we were not there. The peasants of Italy were left out when a school for them was being planned.

Eternal discussions went on between two factions, seemingly opposed to each other, but in fact the same.

They were all graduates of the *liceo*, unable to see an inch beyond the school that had brought them to life. How could a young gentleman argue with his own shadow, spit on himself and on his own distorted culture while using the very words of that culture?

Parliament split into two factions. The right wing pushed Latin in the school system. The left pushed science. None of them remembered us, not one had seen the problem from inside, not one knew the struggle that your school put us through.

The men of the right were museum pieces. The Communists were laboratory mice. Both so distant from us, who cannot yet speak and who desperately need the language of today and not of yesterday - the language, not 'specialization'.

### ***Sovereigns***

It is the language alone that makes men equal. That man is an equal who can express himself and can understand the words of others. Rich or poor, it makes no difference. But he must speak.

The Honorable Deputy believed that we were all burning with desire to sew up somebody's intestines or to put 'Doctor' on our letterheads. 'The competent and deserving students, even the ones without personal names, have the right to follow their studies at the highest levels.'

Let us try to educate our children to a higher ambition. To become sovereigns. Forget about 'Doctor' or 'Engineer'

### ***The social climbers***

When we all have the power to speak, the social climbers can go on with their own studies. Let them go to the university, grab all the diplomas, make piles of money and fill all the specialists' jobs.

As long as they don't ask for a larger share of power, as they have up to now.

### ***Wither away***

Poor Pierino, I almost feel sorry for you. You have paid dearly for your privileges. You are marked forever by your specialization, by your book and by contact with people all just like you. Why don't you quit?

Leave the university, your obligations, your political parties. Start teaching right away. Start teaching the language and nothing else.

Break a path for the poor, forgetting about yourself. Stop reading. Wither away. It is the final mission of your class.

### *Saving the soul*

Don't try to save your old friends. If you go back to speak to them even once, you'll remain forever just what you have always been.

Don't worry about the sciences. There will always be enough self-seekers in that field. They will even make discoveries useful to us. They will irrigate deserts, fetch veal chops out of the sea, conquer diseases.

What do you care? Do not condemn your soul or your love for the sake of things, which will keep moving forward anyhow on their own momentum.

## **Part 2**

### **In the Magistrale You also Fail, but ...**

#### **England**

##### *The real test*

When I passed my exams and left the intermediate school I went to England. I was fifteen. At first I worked with a farmer in Canterbury; later on, with a wine merchant in London.

In our school the experience of going abroad takes the place of your exams. But it is an exam and a school wrapped up in one. We test our culture by sifting it through life.

Our final exam is far more difficult than the one you give, but at least while taking it we don't lose time on dead things.

### *Suez*

My exam went well. I came home alive and even brought back some cash. Best of all, I came back bursting with new experiences which I had understood and which I was able to retell.

The only member of the family who had ever gone abroad before was my Uncle Renato. He went to war, in Ethiopia. When I started to learn geography as a child, I asked him to tell me something about the Suez Canal. But he didn't know that he had passed through it.

### *Pacifist*

You will never get me to go abroad like him, to start killing farmers. I went and lived in a farmer's house. There was a boy my age. A younger daughter, too. They have a barn, they grow potatoes, they toil away like us. Why should I kill them!

You are more alien to me than they are. But don't worry – I have been brought up as a pacifist.

### *Cockney*

In London they are worse off than on the farms. We worked below ground in the City, unloading trucks. My co-workers were English, but they could not write a letter in English. They often asked Dick to write for them. Dick sometimes would ask advice from me; I who had learned my English from records. He, too, speaks only cockney (the dialect of the poor in London) like the rest of them.

Fifteen feet above our heads were the people who spoke the 'Queen's English'.

Cockney is not very different but to speak it, is to be marked. The English don't fail students in their schools. They divert them towards schools of lower quality. In school, then, the poor perfect the art of speaking badly, while the rich keep polishing their language. They can tell from the way a man speaks whether he is rich and what kind of work his father does. Come the revolution, they can disembowel each other with ease.

### *Against a wall*

When I returned to Italy I had forgotten that I was timid.

To explain oneself at the borders of countries, to argue with the boss and with monarchists, to defend oneself from racialists and sums to save money, make

decisions, eat strange food, wait for letters and swallow nostalgia: I felt I had tried and conquered everything.

But one thing I had not lived through was the *magistrale*. Now I've tried it. It has been like banging my head against a wall.

### ***Either you or us***

And yet, my schoolmates have broken through all over. Some of them are full-time union officials, and doing very well. Others are in various factories in Florence and nobody can intimidate them. They work in the unions, in politics and in the local administrations.

Even the two who went to the technical school have done well. They get promoted, like the Pierinos.

Our own culture bears up well wherever there is real life. In the *magistrale* (*four-year upper school, generally attended by prospective teachers*) it is useless.

Let's examine for awhile what happened. It is either you or us. One of us is off the track.

### ***Daily timetable***

I had to get up at five to go to Florence. By motor bike to Vicchio, from there by train. It is hard to study in a train: sleepiness, the crowds the noise.

I reached the front door of the school at eight and had to wait for the kids who had got up at seven. A four-hour handicap, every day.

### ***Early timetable***

I was there on the first of October. But you weren't. We were told to come back on the sixth. The students of the 'Leonardo' School were told to report back on the thirteenth.

The responsibility for these delays is a mixture of saints and sloth. Even Saint Francis is used as a pretext for stealing still another day of school from the poor. After they have already done without school for the four summer months.

Just where the responsibility for this laziness lies I haven't yet worked out: within the schools themselves, or the school governors or the Ministry of Education. They

are all made up of people who get paid on a thirteen-month basis (most government employees receive an extra month's salary as a bonus)

When a worker clocks in five minutes late he loses half an hour's pay. If he does it often he can lose his job.

The railways are State-run, as you are, but they keep, on going. When we pass over a railway crossing we can be relaxed. The signalmen are at their posts. Summer and winter, day and night. If one of them fails even once, it will be spread over all the newspapers. He can't bring in excuses about work classifications, or baby's tummy-ache. He goes to jail.

Why are you alone so special?

Perhaps the management finds it more urgent that trains should function than that the schools should. They know that their own children get taught right at home, but trains are a different question.

The boss's only concern is that you be ready to give out the diplomas in June.

### **Suicidal Selection**

#### ***Forgetful***

In the first part of this letter we tried to show what great damage is done to the discarded children. In Florence I saw that Don Borghi was quite right. The worst damage of all is done to the select.

The child who gets promoted stays with the same class. He is more of a fixture than his teachers. He should be able to make friends with his schoolmates and to take an interest in how they turn out.

But there are too many of them. Within eight years forty schoolmates have been sliced away from him or have burned up like dry branches. At the end of the intermediate school another five have dropped out - even though they were promoted - and so that makes forty-five. Pierino never hears a thing about them or their problems.

#### ***Snooty***

In the second year Pierino was one boy among many. By the fifth, he belongs to a more restricted group. Forty children out of the hundred he meets along the way have already become his 'inferiors'.

After leaving the intermediate school his 'inferiors' have multiplied to ninety-out of a hundred. After the upper-school diploma they are ninety-six. After his college degree, ninety-nine.

Every year he has seen higher marks put on his report card than on those of his disappearing schoolmates. The teachers who give those marks have engraved on his soul the impression that the other ninety-nine belong to an inferior culture.

At this stage, it would be a miracle if his soul did not become crippled.

### ***The poor have a reward***

His soul indeed is sick, because his teachers have lied to him. The culture of those other ninety-nine is not inferior; it is different.

True culture, which no man has yet possessed, would be made up of two elements: belonging to the masses and mastery of the language.

A school that is as selective as the kind we have described destroys culture. It deprives the poor of the means of expressing themselves. It deprives the rich of the knowledge of things as they are.

Unlucky Gianni, who can't express himself. Lucky Gianni, because he belongs to the whole world: brother to the whole of Africa, Asia and Latin America. Expert in the needs of most of humanity.

Lucky Pierino, because he can speak. Unlucky, because he speaks too much. He, who has nothing important to say. He, who repeats only things read in books written by others just like him. He, who is locked up in a refined little circle - cut off from history and geography.

The selective school is a sin against God and against men. But God has defended his poor. You want them to be mute, and so God has made you blind.

### ***Blind***

Whoever does not believe us should go into town on the day of the *matricole* (first year university students) 'celebration'.

The gentlemen feel no shame about their privileged position, and so they put on a hat to make themselves conspicuous. Then for a whole day they perform their antics in the streets, like puppies. They play obscene jokes, they break laws, they disturb traffic and everyone's work. They take off a policeman's hat and decorate his head with an enema tube.

The policeman takes it all silently. He understands his master's wish. But when the workers strike - serious, and orderly, moved by a desperate need - that is called disorder.

The young gentlemen busy with their tricks don't see that the policeman's servility is an accusation against them.

Nor do they notice the glance of a worker passing by without a smile. They are even capable of stopping him to ask for alms.

### ***Kept men***

Every worker gives alms every day, in taxes, even when he puts salt in his soup. The students are studying at his expense. But either they don't know it or they don't want to know it.

A student in the intermediate school costs the poor 298,000 lire a year. His father contributes 9,800 of that amount in school taxes. A university student costs the poor 368,000 lire per year. His father contributes 44,000 of that.

An M.D. has cost the poor, considering everything, 4,586,000 lire. The father has invested 244,000. Later, with that M.D. degree which was a gift from the poor, the doctor will charge than 1,500 lire for a fifteen-minute visit, will go on strike against the *Mutua* (the government's medical insurance) and will oppose socialized medicine of the English type.

### ***Potential Fascists***

Most of my schoolmates from Florence never read a newspaper. Those who do, read the paper of the Establishment. I asked one of them once if he knew who financed it. 'Nobody. It's independent.'

They don't care to know anything about politics. One of them did not even know the meaning of the word 'union'.

What they have heard about strikes is that they are a device for ruining production. They don't question the truth of this.

Three of them are out-and-out Fascists.

Twenty-eight apolitical plus three Fascists equals thirty-one Fascists.

### ***Even blinder***

There are students and intellectuals of a some what different type. They read everything and are militant left-wingers. Nevertheless, they can seem even blinder.

The most left-wing teacher I have heard was giving a talk to a meeting of teachers and parents. When it came to the *doposcuola*, he burst out with: 'You don't seem to realize that I teach a good eighteen hours a week!'

The room was crowded with workers who get up at four in the morning to catch the 5.39 train and with farmers who work eighteen hours every day, all summer.

Nobody spoke or smiled. Fifty blank pairs of eyes were fixed on him in silence.

## **The Goal**

### ***Bitter fruit***

The fruit of a selective system is a bitter fruit that will never ripen. I soon realized that most of my schoolmates was going to the *magistrale* either by chance or because their parents had made the choice.

When I appeared at the front door of your school I was carrying a new brief case. It was a present from my young pupils. At the age of fifteen I had already earned my first compensation as a teacher.

I never told this either to you or to my schoolmates. That may have been a mistake on my part, but your school is not a place for speaking out. When somebody knows what he wants, and wants to do something worthwhile he is taken for an idiot.

### ***Stingy***

None of my schoolmates spoke of teaching. One of them said: 'I want to work in a bank. At the *'tecniche'* they give too much maths, at the *liceo*, too much Latin, so I came here.'

The last census with data on the situation of these students is the one of 1961 : 675,975 citizens have a diploma from the *magistrale* 60,000 are retired teachers; 201,000 were actively teaching that year; and 120,000 had applied to teach. There remain, then, about 300,000 citizens who could teach, but in fact do not (43 percent).

### ***Dissatisfied***

Several of my schoolmates told me they would like to go on to the university, but without knowing in what field they wanted to specialize.

There were 22,266 graduates of the *magistrale* in 1963. The next year we found 13,370 of them applying to the university.

Thus, of every hundred who have the qualifications to teach, sixty are not planning to teach.

### ***Who can call himself a teacher?***

One lone girl in my class seemed a cut above the others. She studied out of love of learning. She read good books and closed herself up in her room to listen to Bach.

This is the finest fruit that your kind of schooling can produce.

But I have been taught to find this fruit the most dangerous and tempting of all. Knowledge is only meant to be passed on. 'A man can call himself a teacher when he has no cultural interest just for his own sake.'

### ***A closed school***

I know it must be discouraging for you to try to explain what a teacher is to the kind of boys you have in your classes. Still - is it the boys who have ruined you, or is it you who have ruined them?

Because of the increasing possibility to apply to the university after the *magistrale* instead of going into teaching, the training in the *magistrale* is becoming ever more generalized and vague.

To produce good teachers we need a self-contained school, one that is not a stepping-stone to other fields. The boy who wants to work in a bank should feel like an outsider in such a school. The boy from the farms who has chosen to become a teacher should feel at home.

### ***A necessary selection***

Now we come up against a problem wholly different from that of the compulsory eight-year school. There, everyone has the sacred right to be made equal. In the *magistrale* it is strictly a question of qualifications.

These schools educate citizens specialized in serving others. They have to be reliable.

The teaching diploma should be hard to get. We don't want to be cut down later on. We should be treated the same as chemists, doctors and engineers.

### ***An eye on the goal***

You do not fail a taxi driver if he doesn't know maths, or a doctor who doesn't know his poets.

Once you said to me in these precise words, 'You see, you don't know enough Latin. Why don't you go to a technical school?'

Are you sure that Latin is indispensable to the making of a good teacher? Have you given it any thought? All you do is keep your eye on the system as it is; but you never really evaluate it.

### ***The individual***

If you had taken a real interest in me, enough to ask yourself where I came from, who I was, where I was heading, then your Latin would have gone out of focus.

But you might have found something else to object to in me. It frightens you to see a fifteen-year-old boy who knows what he wants. You sense the influence of his teacher.

Woe unto him who toys with the Individual! The Free Development of the Personality is your highest creed. The needs of society are no concern of yours at all.

I am a boy under the influence of my teacher and I am proud of it. He, too, is proud of it. What, if not this, is the essence of a school?

School is the one difference between men and animals. The teacher gives to a boy everything the teacher himself believes, loves and hopes for. The boy, growing up, will add something of his own, and this is the way humanity moves forward.

Animals don't go to school. In the Free Development of their Personality, swallows have built their nests in exactly the same way for millenniums.

The seminary I have been told that even in the seminary there are boys torturing themselves to find their vocation. If they had been told in elementary school that we all have the same vocation - to do good wherever we are - then they would not have to lose the best years of their lives worrying about themselves.

### ***School of Social Service***

We could allow a bit more time for final choices by having two different types of schools.

One, for fourteen to eighteen year olds, could be called the 'School of Social Service'. It would be for anybody who has already decided to give his life to others. The same schooling could serve for priests, elementary school teachers, union workers and men in politics. One year might be added for specialization.

We could call all the other schools 'Schools of Ego Service', and they could continue to be the schools that we have now, without changing them.

### ***High aims***

The School of Social Service could try to aim high and find pleasure in it. No marks, no mark book, no games, no holidays, no weakness about marriage or a career. All the students would be guided toward total dedication.

Along the way some might settle a bit lower. They might find girls and adjust themselves to loving a more limited family.

They will be much better off for having spent their best years preparing to serve an immense family - the family of man. They will make better fathers and mothers, full of ideals, ready to raise a child who in turn will go back to that same school.

Your School of Ego Service wants to prepare everyone for marriage. It is not much of a success even for those who marry. And when someone stays single, he becomes a bitter spinster-man.

### ***Unemployed teachers***

We often hear complaints that there are too many teachers. That is not true. Teaching is the kind of profession that attracts many who really don't like it at all. Increase the hours of work and all of them will drop out.

A married female teacher makes as much money as her husband. Actually she spends no more time out of her home than a housewife. A perfect wife and mother. She stays home every time the child catches cold. Who wouldn't want a woman like that for a wife?

Then there are thousands of unfilled positions in the intermediate school. You fill them with anyone who has any higher degree at all or is studying for a degree (chemists, veterinary surgeons, pseudo-students).

You have refused to give those positions to elementary teachers with years of experience in the classroom.

### *Caste system*

The legislators now in power will never open the doors of the intermediate school to graduates of the *magistrale*.

On the contrary, some are proposing a university degree as a requirement for teaching even in the elementary schools. They say that pedagogy and psychology, as sciences, have to be studied at the university level.

When university graduates criticize the school and call it sick, they forget that they are products of it. They fed on this poison up to the age of twenty-five. They are unable to imagine that people with different backgrounds can also be worth something.

When they speak with the elementary teachers of their little children, they talk to them as to members of the family. They don't hide a thing; they work together.

But when they speak to a teacher in the intermediate school, they measure their words as if they were facing an enemy.

They don't want to admit it, but they do know the truth. The elementary teachers are good because they did not spend so much time in school. The teachers in the upper schools are what they are because they all have those degrees.

## The Culture Needed by All

### *Exodus*

In the mountains we can't survive. In the fields there are too many of us. All the economists agree on that point.

And what if they didn't agree? Try and put yourself in my parents' shoes. You would not allow your son to be shunted aside. Therefore, you ought to welcome us in your midst – and not as a second-class citizen good only for unskilled work.

Every people has its own culture, and no people has less than the others. Our culture is a gift that we bring to you. A vital breath of air to relieve the dryness of your books written by men who have done nothing but read books.

### *Agrarian culture*

Glancing through the pages of a school textbook we see plants, animals, the seasons. It seems that only a peasant could have written it.

But no, the authors are products of your school. It's enough just to glance at the pictures: left-handed farmers, round shovels, hooked hoes, blacksmiths with tools used in Roman times, cherry trees with the leaves of plum trees.

My first-year teacher told me one day, 'Climb that tree and pick some cherries for me.' When my mother heard this, she said, 'Whoever gave her a teaching license?'

You gave her a teaching license but you deny me one, when I know all my trees, each by each.

I also know my *sormenti* (twigs, vines, shoots) I have pruned them, gathered them, used them to bake bread. In one of my papers you underlined '*sormenti*' as a mistake. You insisted that the word is '*sarmenti*' because it comes from Latin. Then you sneaked away to look up its meaning in the dictionary.

### *All alone, like dogs*

You know even less about men than we do. The lift serves as a good machine for ignoring the people in your building; the car, for ignoring people who travel in buses; the telephone, for avoiding seeing people's faces or entering their homes.

I don't know about you, but your students who know Cicero - how many families of living men do they know intimately? How many of their kitchens have they

visited? How many of their sick have they sat with through the night? How many of their dead have they borne on their shoulders? How many can they trust when they are in distress?

If it hadn't been for the flood in Florence they wouldn't know how many people there are in the family that lives on the ground floor.

I was in a class for a year with these young people, but I have no idea what their families are like. And yet they never stop jabbering. Often they raise their voices to a pitch so high no one can possibly understand them. In any case, each one only wants to listen to himself.

### ***Human Culture***

A thousand motors roar under your windows every day. You have no idea to whom they belong or where they are going.

But I can read the sounds of my valley for miles around. The sound of the motor in the distance is Nevio going to the station, a little late. If you like, I can tell you everything about hundreds of people, dozens of families and their relatives and personal ties.

Whenever you speak to a worker you manage to get it all wrong: your choice of words, your tone, your jokes. I can tell what a mountaineer is thinking even when he keeps silent, and I know what's on his mind even when he talks about something else.

This is the sort of culture your poets should have given you. It is the culture of nine-tenths of the earth, but no one has yet managed to put it down in words or pictures or films.

Be a bit humble, at least. Your culture has gaps as wide as ours. Perhaps even wider. Certainly more damaging to a teacher in the elementary schools.

## **The Culture that You Demand of Us**

### ***Latin***

Your most important subject is one we shall never have to teach.

You even have us translate from Italian into Latin. But who can draw the exact line where Latin ends and Italian begins?

Somebody or other even wrote a Latin grammar for you. It is a major swindle. Because for every rule, one should know when and where it really originates.

Conformists accept the imposition of grammar and learn all the rules by heart. The one thing they care about is promotion. In turn, they will play the same rulebook game when they themselves are teachers.

You underlined the word 'portavit' (two verbs in Latin mean to carry. One is easy *porto*, the other difficult *jero*) in one paper of mine. According to you it is a crime to try to simplify anything when it can be made complicated. The curious fact is that Cicero often used '*porto*.'. 'He was a Roman and didn't even know it'

### ***Mathematics***

The second subject badly taught in the *magistrale* is maths. To teach at the Elementary level it is enough to know elementary maths. The mathematics of the three intermediate years is merely an extra. In fact, in the *magistrale* course all maths could be eliminated. Instead, one should learn the best way to teach maths - which in itself is not maths, but has to do with the learning process or with pedagogy.

Some higher mathematics, as an aspect of our general culture, could be taught in two or three lectures given by a specialist who can explain in a few words what it is all about.

The problem will not essentially change even if teachers graduating from the *magistrale* also have to teach the intermediate years in the future.

In truth, a mathematics degree is not necessary for teaching maths at the intermediate level. That need was invented by the special caste of people who have children with university degrees. This way they pocket 20,478 quite desirable jobs: minimum work load (sixteen hours per week), and no need to keep on your toes. In such a job you can repeat year after year the same idiocies that any student in the third intermediate class already knows. It is a job that requires only fifteen minutes for correcting all your students' papers, because the answers are either right or wrong.

### ***Philosophy***

Any philosopher studied out of a handbook becomes a bore. There are too many philosophers and they say too many things.

My philosophy teacher never took a stand for or against any of them. I could not work out whether he liked them all or simply didn't care

If I have to choose between two teachers, one a nut on the subject and the other totally indifferent, I'll take the nut - the one who has a theory of his own, or prefers a particular philosopher. He is certain to talk only about that philosopher and to attack all the others, but he would make us read the original writings of that philosopher during all of our three years of school. We would come out knowing that philosophy can fill an entire life.

### ***Pedagogy***

The way pedagogy is taught today, I would skip it altogether - although I'm not quite sure. Perhaps if we go deeper into it, we could decide whether or not it has something to say.

We might discover that it says one thing and one thing only. That each boy is different, each historical moment is different, and so is every moment different for each boy, each country, each environment, and each family.

Half a page from the textbook is all that is needed to explain this; the rest we can tear up and throw away. At the school of Barbiana not a day went by without its pedagogical problem. But we never called it by that name. For us, it always, had the name of a particular boy. Case after case, time after time.

I don't think there is a treatise written by any professor that can tell us anything about Gianni that we don't already know.

### ***The Gospels***

Three years spent on bad translations of ancient poems (the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey* the *Aeneid*). Three years reading Dante. And not a minute spent on the Gospels.

Don't make the claim that the Gospels are strictly the concern of the clergy. Leaving aside the religious issue, the book remains a book to be read in every school and in every year.

In courses on literature the longest period should be given to studying the book that has left the deepest trace, the one, which has crossed all frontiers. The longest

chapter in geography class should be Palestine in history, on the events that preceded, accompanied and followed the life of our Lord.

A special area of subject matter should be added to the syllabus: the reading of the Old Testament, a study of the synoptic Gospels, textual criticism, and related questions of linguistics and archaeology.

Why didn't you think of it? Can it be that the men who planned your school hold Jesus in distrust: too good a friend of the poor, too poor a friend of possessions?

### ***Religion***

When the Gospels receive the place they deserve, then the teaching of religion will become a serious matter.

It will simply be a question of guiding the children through the interpretation of the texts. A priest could do it, preferably with an agnostic but serious teacher, one who knows the Gospels as well as the priest does.

While you search for these teachers the limitations of your own culture will float up to the surface. In Florence there are dozens of priests able to give instructions in the Bible at a high level. Men who can read the Greek text with ease and can understand enough of the Hebrew if the need arises.

Can you name a layman thoroughly prepared to face them in discussion? A product of your schools, that is, and not a man from the seminary.

I heard in a lecture given by one of those young intellectuals who have read every book on the face of the earth (except one): 'Gide says if a grain of wheat does not fall to the earth and does not die, it will not bear fruit.'

Now I don't know who this Mr. Gide might be, but the Gospels have been my study for years and I shall go on studying them all my life.

### ***The count***

Almost anything can be expected from people who have forgotten the Gospels. One can start questioning every thing you people teach. One begins to wonder who has made the choices after all.

The truth is that your school began having troubles from birth. Its date of birth was 1859. A king wanted to enlarge his family possessions. So he began preparations

for a war. The first thing he did was to put a general at the head of the government. Next, he sent Parliament out for a holiday; finally he summoned a Count and had him write a law on State education.

That law, which was imposed by force of arms throughout Italy, is still the backbone of today's school.

### ***History***

History was the subject most damaged by this law. There are several different history surveys. I would like to get the figures on those most in use.

In general they are not history at all. They are narrow-minded, one-sided little tales passed down to the peasants by the conqueror. Italy right in the center of the world. The losers always bad, the winners all-good. There is talk only of kings, generals and stupid wars among nations. The sufferings and struggles of the workers are either ignored or stuck into a corner.

Woe unto the man disliked by generals and armament makers! In the best, most 'modern' book, Gandhi is disposed of in nine lines. Without a word on his thoughts, and even less on his methods.

### ***Civics***

Civics is another subject that I know something about, but it does not come up in your schools.

Some teachers say, as an excuse, that it is taught by implication through other subjects. If this were true, it would be too good to believe. If that really is such a great way to teach something, then why don't they use it for all subjects, building a sound structure in which all the elements are blended together and yet can be extracted separately at any time?

Admit that in truth you have hardly any knowledge of civics. You have only a vague notion of what a mayor really is. You have never had dinner in the home of a worker. You don't know the terms of the pending issue on public transport. You only know that the traffic jams are upsetting your private life.

You have never studied these problems, because they scare you. As it also scares you to plunge into the deeper meanings of geography. Your textbook covers all the world but never mentions hunger, monopolies, political systems or racialism

### ***Comments***

One subject is totally missing from your syllabuses: the art of writing.

It is enough simply to see some of the comments you write at the top of your students' compositions. I have a choice collection of them, right here. They are all nothing more than assertions - never a means for improving the work.

'Childish. Infantile. Shows immaturity. Poor. Trivial.' What use can a boy make of this sort of thing! Perhaps he should send his grandfather to school; he's more mature.

Other comments: 'Meager contents. Poor conception. Pale ideas. No real participation in what you wrote.' The theme must have been wrong, then. It ought not to have been set.

Or: 'Try to improve your form. Incorrect form. Cramped. Unclear. Not well constructed. Poor usage. Try to write more simply. Sentence structure all wrong. Your way of expressing yourself is not always felicitous. You must have better control of your means of expression.' You are the one who should have taught all that. But you don't even believe that writing can be taught; you don't believe there are any objective rules for the art of writing; you are still embalmed in your nineteenth-century individualism.

Then we also meet the creature touched by the hands of gods: 'Spontaneous. Rich flow of ideas. Fitting up of your ideas, in harmony with a striking personality.' Having gone that far, why not just add: 'Blessed be the mother who gave you birth?'

### ***The genius***

You returned one of my compositions with a very low grade and this comment: 'Writers are born, not made.' Meanwhile you receive a salary as a teacher of Italian.

The theory of the genius is a bourgeois invention. It was born from a compound of racialism and laziness.

It is also useful in politics. Rather than having to steer through the complex of existing parties, you find it easier to get hold of a de Gaulle, call him a genius and say that *he* is France.

This is the way you operate in your Italian class. Pierino has the gift. I do not. So let's all relax about it.

It doesn't matter whether or not Pierino reflects on his writing. He will write more of those books that already surround him. Five hundred pages that could be reduced to fifty without losing a single idea.

I can learn resignation and go back to the woods.

As for you, you can go on lounging behind your desk and making little marks in your mark book.

### *School of art*

The craft of writing is to be taught like any other craft. But at Barbiana we had to argue this question among ourselves. One faction wanted to describe the way we go about writing. Others said, 'Art is a serious matter, even if it uses simple techniques. The readers will laugh at us.'

The poor will not laugh at us. The rich can go on laughing all they want and we shall laugh at them, not able to write either a book or a newspaper with the skill of the poor.

Finally we agreed to write down everything for readers who will love us.

### *A humble technique*

This is the way we do it:

To start with, each of us keeps a notebook in his pocket. Every time an idea comes up, we make a note of it. Each idea on a separate sheet, on one side of the page.

Then one day we gather together all the sheets of paper and spread them on a big table. We look through them one by one, to get rid of duplications. Next, we make separate piles of the sheets that are related, and these will make up the chapters. Every chapter is sub-divided into small piles, and they will become paragraphs.

At this point we try to give a title to each paragraph. If we can't it means either that the paragraph has no content or that many things are squeezed into it. Some paragraphs disappear. Some are broken up.

While we name the paragraphs we discuss their logical order, until an outline is born. With the outline set, we reorganize all the piles to follow its pattern.

We take the first pile, spread the sheets on the table, and we find the sequence for them. And so we begin to put down a first draft of the text.

We duplicate that part so that we each can have a copy in front of us. Then scissors, paste and colored pencils. We shuffle it all again. New sheets are added. We duplicate again.

A race begins now for all of us to find any word that can be crossed out, any excess adjectives, repetitions, lies, difficult words, over-long sentences and any two concepts that are forced into one sentence.

We call in one outsider after another. We prefer it if they have not had too much schooling. We ask them to read aloud. And we watch to see if they have understood what we meant to say. We accept their suggestions if they clarify the text. We reject any suggestions made in the name of caution.

Having done all this hard work and having followed these rules that anyone can use, we often come across an intellectual idiot who announces, 'This letter has a remarkably *personal style*.'

### ***Laziness***

Why don't you admit that you don't know what the art of writing is? It is an art that is the very opposite of laziness.

And don't say that you lack the time for it. It would be enough to have one long paper written throughout the year, but written by all the students together.

Speaking of laziness, I can suggest an exercise to amuse your students. Why not spend a year translating *Saitta's (author of a history book)* book into real Italian?

### ***Criminal Trial***

You work 210 days a year, of which thirty are lost in giving exams and over thirty more on tests. That leaves only 150 days of school in a year. Half of these school days are lost in oral examinations, which means that there are seventy-five days of teaching against 135 of passing judgment.

Without changing your working contract in the least, you could triple the hours of schooling you give.

### ***Tests in the classroom***

While giving a test you used to walk up and down between the rows of desks and see me in trouble and making mistakes, but you never said a word.

I have the same situation at home. No one to run to for help for miles around. No books. No telephone.

Now here I am in 'school'. I came from far away to be taught. Here I don't have to deal with my mother, who promised to be quiet and then interrupted me a hundred times. My sister's little boy is not here to ask me for help with his homework. Here I have silence and good light and a desk all to myself.

And over there, a few steps away, you stand. You know all of these things. You are paid to help me. Instead, you waste your time keeping me under guard as if I were a thief.

### ***Laziness and terror***

You yourself told me that oral examinations are not really school. 'When my class is given the first hour you can take a later train, since I spend the first half-hour at oral exams.'

During those exams the whole class sinks either into laziness or terror. Even the boy being questioned wastes his time. He keeps taking cover, avoids what he understands least, keeps stressing the things he knows well.

To make you happy we need know only how to sell our goods. And how never to keep quiet. And how to fill empty spaces with empty words. To repeat critical remarks read in Sapegno, passing them off as our own and giving the impression that we have read the originals.

### ***Personal opinions***

It's even better to air some 'personal opinions'. You hold these personal opinions in high regard: 'In my opinion, Petrarch...' Perhaps this boy has read two of his poems, perhaps none. I have heard that in certain American schools whenever the teacher says anything, half the students raise their hands and say, 'I agree!' The other half says, 'I don't.' Then they change sides, continuing to chew gum all the while with great energy.

A student who gives personal opinions on things beyond his reach is an imbecile. He should not be praised for it. One goes to school to listen to the teachers.

It can happen on rare occasions that something of our own might be useful to the class or to the teacher. Nor just an opinion or something quoted out of a book. Some definite thing seen with our own eyes, at home, in the streets or in the woods.

### ***A clever question***

You never asked me questions about such things. On my own, I would never speak out about them. But your young gentlemen could go on asking, with angelic faces, about all sorts of things they already knew. And you would keep encouraging them: 'What a clever question!'

A comedy useless to everyone concerned. Harmful to those bootlickers. Cruel to me, who was unable to be good at that game.

### ***The other dead language***

'Change into contemporary prose.' My eyes kept wandering on those strange words, not knowing where to come to rest. You smiled to me and whispered, 'Go on, dear; it's so easy. I went through it all yesterday for you. You haven't studied.'

It was true. I hadn't studied. I shall never teach my own students that '*inaugurare*' (to inaugurate) means '*augurare male*' (to forebode) It is already explained in a footnote. But it is a lie. Foscolo made it up because he disliked the Poor. He did not want to make an effort on our behalf.

You asked me to keep a notebook with all those notations, in order to have me learn by heart that curious language of his. I was supposed to learn that language, but where could I ever use it?

For the sake of stretching out a hand to Dick, across all the barriers of language, I was ready to do acrobatics. During work breaks he would sit next to me and make an effort to pronounce '*doulce vita*' (*English mispronunciation of a major Italian film La Dolce Vita*). I'd respond with a dirty joke in my worst cockney. And I'd try to make my pronunciation as bad as his. That cockney never used inside an office. That cockney which keeps you among the poor.

### ***Blackmail***

Meanwhile the minutes were passing and my mouth would not open. I was sunk in rage and despair.

Those pathetic children couldn't make me out. You have trained them since infancy to accept the language of your Monti. They are already resigned to boredom. They expect nothing else from school.

They would cheer me on with loving sympathy. Like the young people of the St. Vincent Charitable Society, they never see the hatred.

No one disliked me. Not even you: 'I'm not going to eat you Up! You sounded so encouraging. You wanted to do your duty by me.

And meanwhile you were destroying every single ideal I had, with the blackmail power of that diploma you have in your hands.

### *Art*

If I had had some time to calm down during those oral examinations (as I now have with my friends while we write these things) I could have convinced you. I'm sure of it. You are not a beast, after all.

At the moment, though, only filthy words and insults kept coming to my mind. Those words that we try hard to hold back while we transform them into arguments.

So, we have understood what art is. It means to dislike somebody or something. To think about it at great length. To have friends help us in patient teamwork.

Slowly the truth will emerge from beneath the hatred. The work of art is born: a hand held out to your enemy so that he may change.

### *Infection*

After a month at your school I, too, was infected.

During the oral exams my heart would stop beating. I found that I was wishing on others what I did not want done to myself.

I stopped listening to the lessons. I would think only about the oral exams coming up in the next hour. The best and most exciting subjects - wrapped up and lifeless.

As if they had no relationship to the larger world outside. As if they could be confined only to those inches between the blackboard and the teacher's desk.

### ***A worm***

At home, I didn't even notice when my mother fell ill. Nor did I have any interest in my neighbors. I now read a newspaper. I couldn't sleep at night.

My mother cried. My father grumbled through his teeth: 'You'd be better off out in the woods.'

I was reduced to studying like a worm.

Until then, I had always had time to approach something as I would if I were teaching it to my pupils. If something seemed important, I would drop the textbook and go deeper into other books to understand it.

After your treatment, I found even the textbook too much. I saw myself underlining the crucial points. Later, my schoolmates suggested even skinnier books for cramming, invented strictly for satisfying your little heads.

### ***Doubts***

I reached the point of thinking you were right, and that your culture was the true one. Perhaps we, in our solitude up there, were still dreaming with simplicity you had left behind centuries ago.

Perhaps our dream of a language that everyone could read, made of plain words, was nothing but a fantasy ahead of in time.

By a hair I missed becoming one of you. Like those children of the poor who change their race when they go up to the university.

### ***The outrider***

I did not quite have the time, though, to become as corrupt as you would have liked. In June you gave me a 5 in Italian and a 4 in Latin.

I took the old path through the woods once more and returned to Barbiana. Day after day, from dawn till dark, like a child again.

But I did not pick up the full timetable of the school. Because of the two exams I had to resit, my mentor relieved me from having to teach the younger pupils and

from reading the newspaper. I was allowed to study in a room all by myself in order to have silence and the books I did not have at home.

I used to return from the dead only for the reading of letters.

## Letters

### *Alms*

Francuccio, from Algeria: ...

.... in some places around them the earth is all red and there isn't a blade of grass. Suddenly the train stops. I lean out of the window to see what is going on. Three girls with colorful skirts reaching down to their feet. They walk along the train and they don't beg but people toss them something. They gather it up quickly and hide it in their bosoms. When they have worked their way down to the last carriage, the engineer picks up speed again to thirty kilometers per hour. They tell me that Ben Bells wanted to stop this habit of begging and that Baumedienne, on the other hand, lets it go on I can't work it out yet. Who is right? What is your opinion Father?

### *The language of the poor*

Another note from Francuccio:

... found a wooden hoop on the street and began tossing it into the air to catch it. I am surrounded by about twenty children, who start to laugh and hold up their hands for me to throw it to them I do, and we go on for five minutes without a word. All of a sudden the oldest gives a signal to stop. He has noticed my Arabic newspaper. He asks in Arabic what I am doing here and where I came from. We began to talk on the steps of the little mosque. The *muezzin* came up to us and started to talk to me at a great rate. Since I couldn't understand his questions I had to admit that I was not an Arab, but that I could read Arabic. Then he took me into the mosque to read the Koran. He was all excited.

### *Religion*

Sandro, from France:

... he stops the car on a side street and asks me to pay him for the ride. I say, 'Mochin, je suis cotholique,' (*Listen you, I'm a catholic*) and he gives up, but he leaves me stranded right there and I had to walk four kilometers to reach the highway.

### *Boiled sunflowers*

Franco, from Wales:

... the priest has a special booklet for confessing foreigners. You say to him, 'I did two sins number twenty-five and I fought off three number twelve.' He gave me a sermon on number twenty-five!

I grow vegetables for a little old lady. Today I had to strip sunflowers all day. She is a vegetarian but would have bought meat just for me. I say no, it's one more experience. So, she picked two sunflower stalks and boiled them for me.

### ***The apolitical girl***

Carlo, from Marseilles:

.... there's a gang of Italian students here with a priest. They build barracks for the Algerians at no pay. They don't try to learn French. They don't want to hear about politics. They do a lot of talking about the Vatican Council but make very few strokes with the pickaxe. One of them is a rather stupid girl. Tonight when I went into my room to wire to you, she followed me in and threw herself on my bed, saying she was crazy about Florentines.

### ***Praising lies***

Edoardo, from London:

...it's all the fault of the parents who spoil their children too much. They don't teach them how to spend money, they let them give orders and they make them like grown men. Parents gain their trust, but is a lie such a bad thing when it can keep a boy away from so many sins? I don't know whether I have made myself clear. True, English children are very sincere. But what does it cost them when their mother will never scold them anyway? The parents - what do they gain? If I tell a lie it is a sign that I know what is wrong and I think twice before doing it again.

### ***To our credit***

An old union worker from England writes about Paolo:

...he is a blessing from God to our factory and a real credit to your school. He is so intense and happy with life. I feel as if God had arranged this thing: you and I so far away from each other and still we think and speak alike. Here many of the workers vote Conservative and read the boss's newspapers, and I tell them, 'I had to wait for this boy to come all the way from Italy to find one who thinks like me. You allow a boy and a Roman Catholic to come and teach you.'

### ***Annibal Caro***

When all the letters are read, I shut myself up again with my *Aeneid*.

I read an episode that you like.

Two toughs are disemboweling people while they sleep. List of people disemboweled, the stolen goods, the names of the men who have given a belt as a gift and the weight of that belt. The whole thing in a stillborn language." The *Aeneid* was not part of the curriculum. You chose it. I will never forgive you that.

My friends, however, do forgive me. They know that my goal is to be a teacher. But I am just as cut off from things as you are.

### **Disinfection**

#### ***Superficial***

In September you gave me 4s on both tests. You can't even carry out your chemist's trade very well. Your little scales are not working. How could I know less than I did in June?

You pulled a switch. You switched off a boy. But actually, without knowing it, you turned on my light. You opened my eyes to you and your culture.

First of all I have found the most accurate insult for defining you: you are simply superficial. You are a society of mutual flatterers that survives because there are so few of you.

#### ***Revenge***

My father and my brother go off to the woods for me. I cannot take that course again and I do not intend to carry wood on my hack, letting the world go on the way it is. That would give you too much satisfaction.

So I was back in Barbiana, and in June I went to take the exam once more.

You failed me again, as if you were spitting on the ground. But I am not going to give up. I will be a teacher and I'll make a better teacher than you.

#### ***Second revenge***

My other revenge is this letter. We all worked on it together.

Even Gianni did some work. His father is in the hospital. If only Gianni had been as manly last year as he is now. But now it is too late for schooling. They need his apprentice's pay at home. When he heard about this letter, though, he promised to come and help us on Sundays.

He finally came. He read it. He pointed out some words or phrases that were too difficult. He reminded us of some tasty bits of viciousness. He authorized us to make fun of him. He is practically the chief author.

But don't let yourself take comfort from this. You still have to carry him around in your soul. He can't yet express himself.

***Waiting for an answer***

Now we are here awaiting an answer. There must be someone in some *magistrato* who will write to us:

Dear boys,

Not all teachers are like that lady of yours. Don't become racialists yourselves.

Although I can't agree with everything you say, I know that our school isn't good enough. Only a perfect school can afford to refuse new people and new cultures. And there is no perfect school. Neither yours nor ours.

However, if any of you who want to be teachers will come and take your examinations here, I have a group of colleagues ready to shut their eyes for your sake.

In pedagogy, we shall ask you only about Gianni. In literature, we shall ask how you wrote this beautiful letter. In Latin, some old words your grandfather still uses. In geography, the customs of English farmers. In history, the reasons why mountain people come down to the plains. In science, you can tell us about *sormenti* and give us the correct name of the tree that bears cherries.

We are waiting for this letter. We know it will come.

Our address is:

Scuola di Barbiana,  
Vicchio Mugello, Firenze, Italy.

New address:

Ragazzi di Barbiana, Via del Colle 51, Calenzano-Firenze. Italy.

## Dear School of Barbiana

Let me first introduce myself. I am a former member of the British House of Commons, and a former Minister of Education. For nearly ten years, altogether, I used to speak on education in the British Parliament as an official spokesman of my political party. Now I have left politics, and I am about to become vice-chancellor of Leeds University, a large university in the north of England.

I have been greatly impressed by your *Letter*, and want to send you a reply of my own. I notice first, that your *Letter* expresses passionately, even angrily, a belief which cannot be too often or too strongly reaffirmed: *far too many boys and girls in your country and in mine, are still being allowed to write themselves off well below their true potential*. This is one of the most important truths about the world today, and I have always tried to do what I could to bring it to people's attention. It is the lesson taught by all the major reports on education, which have appeared in my country during the last twelve years - Crowter, Robbins, Newsom and Plowden. But I think your *Letter to a Teacher* drives it home best of all.

My second reason for sending you this reply is that I was particularly interested in what you had to say about Pierino - the professional -class child who goes straight into a higher form - as well as about Gianni, the child of poor parents who needs more 'full-time' education most. I think you are right to point out the educational deprivation, which Pierino suffers through being so cut off from the culture of Gianni. The education of a favored minority must be less effective, simply as education, if it affords them no opportunity for close contact with children who may not have heard of Cicero but who - as you vividly express it - 'can read the sounds of their valley for miles around'. Highly selective schooling, in your own words, 'deprives the poor of the means of expressing themselves. It (also) deprives the rich of a knowledge of things as they are' I personally found it salutary to have the case against a rigidly selective system made so forcefully in this way.

My third reason for writing is simply the desire to congratulate you on the sheer quality and effectiveness of your *Letter* as a piece of writing. You are of course concerned with better schooling, and not with literary elegance. But the vividness and precision of your language matches the clarity of your thought. And for all the sting of your polemic, you take up no positions that you are not prepared to defend with reasoned argument and rigorous analysis.

There are many points I wish I could discuss with you. I am glad you devote a number of pages to the content of secondary education - what we really mean when we speak of 'secondary education for all'. Your statistical analysis of failure in the Italian schools, and the diagrams which accompany and illustrate it, are achievements which not only merited the prize exceptionally awarded by the Italian Physical Society, but also help to justify what I and many others have said about offering all children the opportunity to learn something about modern numerate techniques. No one who really wants to try and understand the workings of our society can afford to ignore what a Professor of Economics in my country has called 'the immense gains to be derived from access to the principal technique of analytical thinking developed by man'.

I hope you might be pleasantly surprised by the number of schools in Britain where you would find considerable sympathy with your ideas. For instance, I think most of our teachers, and certainly those teaching in country schools, would be interested to hear about *sormenti*, or the correct name of the tree that bears cherries. Many of them have described to me how valuable visits abroad are in encouraging boys and girls to make progress in the use of a second language. Many, again, would strongly endorse your view that if you want good English - or Italian - prose composition, you must get people to write about experiences that are real to them. As for history, schools in my country do not have nearly enough money to spend on books, but I should judge that few history books for schools would nowadays make the mistake of dismissing Gandhi in a few lines - and, if they did, even few teachers would wish to buy them.

I found myself particularly intrigued by one sentence in the *Letter*: 'A man can call himself a teacher when he has no cultural interests just for his own sake.' My own inclination is to feel that there are 'goods of solitude' as well as 'goods of society' - and I do not see why a teacher, provided that (as you rightly insist) he works hard at his job, should not enjoy his own cultural interests in his spare time, just like anyone else. Some of us do like to spend a small part of the day alone if we can, and I thought you were too hard on the girl in your class who likes to shut herself in her room to listen to Bach. However, I think there is an important truth contained in your statement that 'knowledge is only meant to be passed on', since it reminds one that teacher-training is ultimately concerned with *what one can pass on to children*, rather than with academic study as such.

Your letter is full of flashes of insight, which I found exciting and sometimes highly disturbing. 'Whenever you speak to a worker you manage to get it all wrong: your choice of words, your tone, your jokes.' As someone who started life

as a Pierino, I accept the justice of this comment, except that I usually have the sense nor to attempt the jokes. Of course this difficulty of communication does not only apply vertically in our present-day society, to communication between the salaried classes and the wage-earners; it can apply equally, to take an example from my own country, to communication between a leader-writer on a sophisticated London weekly and a supporter of Mr. Enoch Powell in the West Midlands.

Most striking of all is your comment on Stokely Carmichael at his last trial, declaring that 'There isn't a white man I can trust.' If the young white man [who had given his entire life to the cause of the blacks] took offence at what Carmichael said, that Carmichael is right. If he is truly with the blacks, the young man must swallow it, draw aside and keep on loving. Here I am with you completely - in fact it was this comment, more than anything else, that made me want to write to you. Where race relations are concerned, it seems to me quite crucial that one's commitment should not be dictated by a woolly belief in 'tolerance', by charity or by a desire to be commended as a white liberal'. If it matters to us that our society should become a *juster* society for all (nor just a more tolerant society), then we will do what we can irrespective of what other people - be they black or white-may choose to say of us.

You have written an angry *Letter*, but it is a *Letter*, which stands for maturity as against triviality, and recognizes the gains we could all share from an educational system which more effectively lowers the barriers to civilized human intercourse. And for all the biting tone of your *Letter*, you end on a note of expectancy and hope - the hope that someone in authority will recognize in reply that 'There is no perfect school. Neither yours nor ours.' Of course this 'someone', if he is a real person, will almost certainly have started life not as Gianni but as Pierino, a Pierino who has himself come to recognize the defects in his own education. It is a fitting ending to your fine *Letter* that you are prepared to listen to him when he admonishes you: 'Don't become racialists yourselves.'

Yours sincerely  
Edward Boyle

**The Hundred Languages of Children**  
**By Loris Malaguzzi**

No way.

The hundred is there.

The child is made of one hundred. The child has a hundred languages

a hundred hands

a hundred thoughts

a hundred ways of thinking

of playing, of speaking.

a hundred, always a hundred

ways of listening

of marveling, of loving

a hundred joys

for singing and understanding

a hundred worlds to discover

a hundred worlds to invent

a hundred worlds to dream.

The child has a hundred languages (and a hundred hundred hundred more) but they steal ninety-nine.

The school and the culture separate the head from the body. They tell the child to think without hands to do without head

to listen and not to speak

to understand without joy

to love and to marvel

only at Easter and Christmas.

They tell the child

to discover the world already there and of the hundred

they steal ninety-nine.

They tell the child

that work and play

reality and fantasy

science and imagination

sky and earth

reason and dream

are things

that do not belong together.

And thus they tell the child

that the hundred is not there.

The child says

“No way – The hundred is there.”

Loris Malaguzzi (translated by Lella Gandini)

## Perestroika and Epistemological Politics

By Seymour, Papert, Ph.D.  
Sydney, Australia - July 1990

During the week of the conference you have been immersed in exciting and focused discussions about actual uses of computers in real educational settings. So it should be. But it is equally appropriate at the beginning and at the end of the week to look at larger issues that are further removed from the reality of everyday work. I am delighted to be joined with Alan Kay for this aspect of the conference. His opening and my closing remarks will come together to define one side of the front in a battle for the future of education, a battle that goes far beyond the use of computers and indeed far beyond what is usually called "education."

My choice of political and militaristic metaphors was not made casually. I like to think of myself as a peaceful person, and come close to being a pacifist in international politics. I believe in consensus. But I have been driven to look at educational decisions with a confrontational eye. This does not mean giving up the ideal of consensual thinking, rather it means changing the community within which to seek the consensus. There is no chance that all educators will come together on the same side of the intellectual front I am trying to demarcate here. Many people in the education establishment are sincerely committed to positions with a firmness that is all the greater, because what is at stake is not simply a theory of education, but deeply rooted ways of thinking that touch on the relationship between individuals and society, cultures and subcultures, relativity and objectivity. What gives me confidence in the likelihood of significant educational change is the possibility of broad and unlikely seeming alliances between movements as diverse as progressive education, feminist, "Africanis" and other radical challenges to traditional epistemologies, and trends towards putting more emphasis on distributed, decentralized forms of computation. I believe that on a global scale, political winds of change are synergic with such alliances: Among these the political events from which I took my title.

I see the major theoretical challenge for thinking about the future of education as identifying the common element in these movements and the major issue for the World Community of Computer-literate Educators as deepening our understanding of the central role computers will play in translating them into educational reality. My goal today is to lead you to believe that there is such a common element and such a role for computers. I shall not do so by trying to give a precise definition of the Big Issue at stake. I don't know how to do that and doubt whether it is susceptible to precision. It is more in accordance with the epistemology I want to suggest here to stimulate the emergence of an idea in your minds by circling around my own version of it, touching it a little redundantly from different angles, pointing to a number of its multiple manifestations,[\[1\]](#) arguing that a real stand-off is developing, speculating about the role of computers and computer-educators.

It would be cozier to think that the large issues of educational policy could be settled consensually throughout the education world by the persuasive power of normal science--by the accumulation of incremental scientific knowledge about the "best" conditions for

learning. But I am now convinced that, at the very least, something more akin to a Kuhnian revolution is needed. New paradigms are emerging and one cannot expect the established order of the old paradigms to give up their positions. Moreover, such a revolution would have to be of much broader scope than what is usually counted as "education." In particular, the emerging new paradigms require rethinking epistemological issues: while small changes in how to transmit knowledge do not call into question the nature of knowledge itself, the deep structure of our educational system is linked to our models of knowledge and cannot change unless they do. But perhaps even the concept of a Kuhnian revolution unduly limits the scope of what is necessary to bring about real change in education. For it is not only the established paradigms of knowledge that maintain the status quo in this field. In any science, the establishment holds its position in part through its control of institutions such as university departments, journals, and professional organizations. But in education there is a much vaster network of institutions--schools, universities, research labs, government departments, publishers--and the numerous people who work in them are more akin to a state bureaucracy than to the society of physicists. Exceptionally many people and institutions would be profoundly affected by any significant change and would defend their own interests by defending the status quo.

My title, "Perestroika and Epistemological Politics," is chosen to focus on these larger Issues, on the seriousness of the topic at hand, and on the high stakes of the revolutionary confrontation that awaits us. The analogy expressed by its use here has become significant for me in a number of ways.

The simplest is mostly inspirational. We have seen change happen with unexpected rapidity. No experts predicted the fall of the Berlin Wall or the newly found freedom of speech and religion in Soviet Union. Institutions that seemed firmly anchored have fallen, giving heart to those of us who have hoped for significant change in education. The backdrop of recent political events (in South Africa, Chile, and other places as much as in Eastern Europe) discourages one from even thinking "it can't change . . . it will never change!" And blocking this negative thought would remove one of the obstacles to change in school. But I also look at the events in these places as a source of insight into the nature of our own fight for change in education.

What is our fight really about? My reference to the Soviet Union comes from recognizing events there, not only as the most significant process of radical change in the world today, but also as one whose central issues are closely related to those that will dominate any deep change in education. What has happened in the Soviet Union is the collapse of a political and economic structure that invites descriptions like *hierarchical, centralized, depersonalized*. The confrontation I see in epistemology invites similar description as hierarchical - centralized-distanced vs. heterarchical decentralized-personal conceptions of knowledge. The confrontation in education reflects both the political/social and the epistemological confrontations in the battle between curriculum-centered, teacher-driven forms of instruction, and student-centered developmental approaches to intellectual growth.

My reference to Alan Kay is a first shot at concretely drawing the lines of this confrontation in an educational context by pinpointing two positions situated on one side of the line. Placing us on the same side of this line is not meant to imply that we agree about everything. Far from it. For example, a difference of aesthetic taste showed itself in the movies Alan showed us about how children could create the behaviors of fish that live on a computer screen. This constructionist approach to biology is at the center of what we share. The study of biology is usually confined to observing natural creatures. We want to extend it by creating "make-an-animal" construction kits so you can learn by designing your own creatures and making them work. Given the depth of this agreement, it feels churlish even to mention such a trivial-sounding point of difference as my feeling that the look of the fish in his movie was a little too flashy and reminiscent of Hollywood. I'd like to see children construct fish that look like the children I used to know might have constructed them. But I think that if you could listen in to discussion between Alan and me on this point you would see that the difference really emphasizes the deeper commonality by the very fact of bringing issues of aesthetic taste into intimate relationship with the scientific study of biology. For children engaged in constructing "artificial fish," aesthetics and science merge more deeply than in the "gee, isn't nature pretty" invited by the usual superficial classroom form of nature study. And this merging energizes and enriches the children's work.

Besides our commitment to constructionism, another dimension on which I feel Alan to be closer than almost anyone else in the field of education is his deep understanding of real change--change that is more than incremental. One sees his openness to radical change in the content of what children would learn from the make-an-animal kit. This is not just a better way of transmitting the knowledge that is contained in a normal biology curriculum. Constructionism is not simply a better form of instructionism. Constructing the animals exercises a very different kind of knowledge and even leads to a very different placement of biology in the ensemble of intellectual disciplines. The model for biology projected by the traditional curriculum, and to some extent by the traditional practice of the science, is dominated by hierarchical notions of classification and description of structure. When you make your own animal your thinking is led naturally to focus on the emergence of functions and behaviors. Your role model is not Linnaeus the classifier but Tinbergen (1951) the ethologist or Wiener the cybernetician. One sees a biology affiliated as closely with what Herbert Simon (1989) has called "The Sciences of the Artificial" or "artificial science" as with "natural science." One sees that understanding biology requires a different logic: the logic of heterarchical (or self-organizing or decentralized) systems and the logic of design. The mindset of a designer or an engineer is better suited to understanding why animals are as they are than the mindset of a physicist .

I see this shift as representing a very significant change in education. But since people will have different ideas about what changes are big changes, I'd like to share with you a metaphor, a parable that I find useful for calibrating change and distinguishing "real" change--let's call it *megachange*--from incremental evolution.

I like to imagine a party of time-travelers from, it doesn't matter when, 1800 let's say, who had the opportunity to travel in the time machine to 1990 to see how people nowadays do things. Among them is a surgeon, who finds himself suddenly projected into an operating room 1990 style. Imagine his bewilderment with what's going on there. The flashing screens, beeping electronics. Even anesthesia is something totally new to him. So is the idea of antiseptics. Indeed, I think it's reasonable to say that nothing that's going on there makes any sense to him. Certainly, if the 1990 surgeon were to have to leave the room for a moment, the 1880 surgeon would not be in a position to take over.

Now imagine another member of the time-traveling party. A school teacher, who is projected into a classroom of 1990. Some things are puzzling, such as the funny little box with a window looking into another place, or maybe it's a magic mirror. But most of what's going on in that classroom is easily understood. And if the host teacher had to leave the room, the visitor wouldn't have the slightest trouble taking over and teaching the multiplication tables or spelling--unusual ideas about a few words would not make a big difference.

In some departments of human activity, such as surgery, telecommunications, and transportation, megachange has come in the wake of scientific and technological progress. The change has been so radical that the fields have become unrecognizable. Satellite television is not an incremental improvement over smoke signals, carrier pigeons, and couriers on horseback. It's a different ball game. But in other departments, such as education, there may have been change, but it does not qualify as megachange in this sense.

Some people would argue that this is not surprising--it's simply not appropriate for megachange to happen in education. Not all activities are susceptible to megachange. Let's take eating, for example. The basic act of eating might be changed a little, it might be supported by technologies, but its essence is the same--you open your mouth, you put in the food, you chew it. Hopefully, you enjoy the food (and the company) and you swallow it down. Whether the food was cooked in a microwave oven, on an open fire, or not at all does not seem to be such a deep and radical change in the nature of the act. Eating is a natural act, it's not a technical act. It's a natural act that can be supported and modified by the technology around, but doesn't depend on it and doesn't change radically through its influence. We don't expect, and wouldn't welcome, megachange in the act of eating. Asking whether education is (in this respect) in the same category as eating or as medicine will help us clarify the educational lines of cleavage to a much greater extent than simply dividing people who, like Alan Kay and myself, hope for megachange from those who would look only for smaller "normal" change. The question also focuses on key epistemological issues underlying possible megachange. In particular it leads us to pay special attention to the *distinction between natural and technical acts*.

Isn't learning like eating? Isn't it also a natural act? And if so, should we expect megachange in learning? Well, I agree. Learning is a natural act, and it shouldn't be subject to megachange. Or rather, I agree that, if the kind of learning we're talking about is how a baby learns to talk, to walk, to love, to play--then learning is natural. And I don't

look for any radical change in how it might happen. But school is not a natural act. School has become a technical entity permeated with "technical" ways of thinking even in situations where no "technology" is used.

What kinds of megachange might one anticipate in school? How should one think about the possibility of such change and the circumstances under which it might happen? Well, first I want to elaborate on the sense in which I think school is a technical act by focusing on how the teacher is cast in the role of a technician carrying out procedures set by a syllabus or curriculum designed hierarchically (from on top), and dictated to the teacher. Of course this is a simplification of what actually happens. In each classroom there is tension and compromise, a dialectical struggle between the role of technician in which the system tries to cast as the teacher, and the fact that the teacher is really a natural human being who loves and relates to people and who knows what it is to learn and to encourage development in a nontechnical spirit. Very few teachers fall completely, purely into the technician mold. The technician-teacher is an abstraction. But this is the mold into which the system tries to force the teacher. The abstraction helps us define the nature of the system. As we've heard recently in Britain, somewhat in America, and I believe here in Australia, whenever politicians get excited about the fact that something is wrong with the education, they start shouting "accountability," "tighten it up," "more hierarchical control," "let's have national tests." Why do they do it? You can say that this is what conservatives always do. But I think that it is helpful to have more theoretical, even if therefore more speculative, characterizations of an underlying process. I am suggesting that it is useful to think of what is happening as the system striving to define teaching as a technical act. This serves conservative purposes in many dimensions. It fits the conservatives' preferred mode of social organization. It fits the conservatives' preferred epistemological orientation. And, of course, in the most local sense, it suits the school bureaucracy to define the teachers' job as carrying out a technically specified syllabus following a technically specified teaching method.

So, the aspect of change that is moving to center stage in this discussion is *releasing education from its technical form and releasing the teacher from the role of technician*. But why am I talking about this here? This is a conference on computers in education. It is not a conference on "humanistic education"-- computers *are* technology. Well, it might seem paradoxical--indeed is paradoxical--that technology should be the instrument for the achievement of a less technical form of education. But this is my goal, and I believe that such a trend has begun. I believe (and again I mention Kay as one who understands this in real depth) that the only plausible route to a "humanistic" education in the near future involves extensive use of computers. Technology can undermine technocentrism.<sup>[2]</sup> Specifically, having a strong technical infrastructure (e.g., in the form of computers as media of expression and exploration) allows the system to be less technical in its methodology (e.g., in laying down a centralized curriculum).

Let's go back to the time-traveling teacher to give ourselves a more concrete glimpse of what this might mean. There are a few classrooms where the teacher from 1800 would in fact fail to recognize most of the activities. Observing children designing fish in Alan Kay's "playground is a case in point. And last weekend some of you might have seen

children in this place working on building robots and other machines out of LEGO, connecting them to computers, and writing programs in Logo to control them. A teacher from 1800 who wandered into those workshops would be slightly closer to the situation of the surgeon from 1800 wandering into a modern operating room--though still only slightly.

In the LEGO/Logo workshop we see glimmers of what a different kind of learning environment would be like. Here the children are engaged in constructing things rather than (as Freire would say) "banking knowledge." They are engaged in activity they experience as meaningful. And for this they don't need to be directed by a technician-policeman-teacher but rather to be advised by an empathic, helpful consultant-colleague-teacher. They are learning a great deal with a great deal of passion even though there is no technician to keep track of exactly what they are learning. Yes, it is true that this does not solve the technical problem of deciding the optimal sequence of their learning, but then Shakespeare and Picasso and Einstein did okay without anyone having to decide in advance the optimal sequence for them to do whatever brought them to their enviable state of creativity. I want to see children more like Shakespeare, Picasso, and Einstein, who did what was personally meaningful rather than what was laid down in someone else's program.

Does this threaten the jobs of teachers? In the sense of the bureaucracy's job description it does. But it opens new jobs: to guide students, to act as consultants, to help when a child may be in trouble, to spot a child who is in a cul-de-sac or on a plateau and could be encouraged to take a leap forward, or to spot a child who is on the track of something really wonderful and give encouragement. There's plenty of place for a teacher in this. In fact surely this image of the teacher, not as technician, not as policeman, not as an enforcer of curriculum, but as somebody who is part of a learning community, is an image of the teacher really being a teacher. The teacher would officially be given responsibility to exercise full individual judgment at each moment and to make individual decisions about where to go, what to do, and what action to take.

It is this freedom of the teacher to decide and, indeed, the freedom of the children to decide, that is most horrifying to the bureaucrats who stand at the head of current education systems. They are worried about how to verify that the teachers are really doing their job properly, how to enforce accountability and maintain quality control. They prefer the kind of curriculum that will lay down, from day to day, from hour to hour, what the teacher should be doing, so that they can keep tabs on it. Of course, every teacher knows this is an illusion. It's not an effective method of insuring quality. It is only a way to cover ass. Everybody can say, "I did my bit, I did my lesson plan today, I wrote it down in the book." Nobody can be accused of not doing the job. But this really doesn't work. What the bureaucrat can verify and measure for quality has nothing to do with getting educational results--those teachers who do good work, who get good results, do it by exercising judgment and doing things in a personal way, often undercover, sometimes even without acknowledging to themselves that they are violating the rules of the system. Of course one must grant that some people employed as teachers do not do a good job.

But forcing everyone to teach by the rules does not improve the "bad teachers"--it only hobbles the good ones.

The change in education projected by the LEGO/Logo workshop can be seen from at least three different points of view. We're talking about a very different content material. The children are building robots, something that overlaps with doing math, doing physics, doing shop, doing writing, and doing spelling but is essentially different from any of them. We're talking about a different view of learning. And we're talking about a different form of control and organization of the school system.

But are these really three different dimensions of the system? I want to suggest that they are not. They are really manifestations of a common deeper structure. I would suggest that one reason education reform has not worked is that it almost always treats these dimensions as separate and tries to reform one or another--the choice depending on who is doing the reforming. Curriculum reformers try to put new curriculum in an otherwise unchanged system but ignore the fact that the old curriculum really suits the system and reverts to type as soon as the reformers turn their backs. Similarly, when reformers introduce new forms of management of the old approach to knowledge and learning, the system quickly snaps back to its state of equilibrium. And, perhaps most dramatically from the point of view of people in this room, the same kind of process undermines any attempt to change education by putting a lot of computers into otherwise unchanged schools. But before talking about computers and schools, I shall take a closer look at how the study of Perestroika casts light on this kind of issue.

I have used the recent history of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in several ways as a powerful metaphor for thinking about change and resistance to change in education. First, there's the most elemental way: the events in Eastern Europe remind us that change is possible in systems that just 5 or 6 years ago seemed impregnable and unchangeable. Hardly any expert, maybe none, predicted that, in such a short time, the Berlin Wall would have crumbled, just as most people, all of us from time to time, feel that our education system is simply impregnable, and cannot change significantly, not in our lifetimes. But seeing how rapidly the Iron Curtain crumbled is sobering as well as heady in relation to our sense of the possibility of change in education.

But this incitement to believe that what seemed unchangeable isn't, is only one way to learn from the events in the Soviet world. These events can tell us a lot about the process, the pain, and the difficulty of changing a large, stable social structure.

When Gorbachev first began talking about Perestroika, he did not have any idea that there was going to be so much change so quickly. He didn't seem to predict it any better than the rest of us. It's more likely that he imagined a simple incremental restructuring. His intention seems to have been, not to induce megachange, but rather to jiggle the bureaucratic organization in the hope of producing incremental improvements. But the system would not be jiggered.

Little by little in the Soviet Union and almost explosively elsewhere in Eastern Europe, it became clear that the problems of "Soviet" society could not be fixed by tinkering with details. By now it is painfully obvious that solving the urgent crisis of that society requires calling in question the fundamental ideas on which it is structured. Jiggering is not enough.

I believe that the same is true in our education system. Many reformers have tried to jiggle the school system, to improve it by making small changes in the hope that it would eventually be transformed into a new modern, well functioning system. But I think these reforms are victims of the same illusion that beset Gorbachev in the early days of Perestroika. Reforming School requires more than jiggering. Here too we have to call into question the underlying, structuring ideas. But what are the structuring ideas of school?

A relatively easy step towards an answer is to note that what is wrong with our schools is not very different from what is wrong with the soviet economy--both suffer from rampant centralism. In fact, if we ask what aspect of American life is most like the Soviet economic system, it might well turn out that education is the closest parallel.

But it is easy to criticize bureaucracy superficially. It's harder to realize that, in both cases our schools and the Soviet economy--the bureaucratic organization reflects underlying "structuring" ideas. I believe that a critique of bureaucracy can only be effective if it proceeds on this basis. Otherwise it cannot intelligently guide reform that will be more than jiggering. Gorbachev's Perestroika started as jiggering but was forced to move quickly toward calling in question the *fundamental* ideas of Soviet society, among them its deep commitment to a centrally planned economy.

Does the parallel between the central plan and our school's concept of curriculum need more explanation? In one case, a central authority decides what products will be manufactured in 5-year plans; in the other, it decides what children will learn in a 12-year plan: two-digit addition this year, three-digit addition next year, and so on. It is in the nature of this centralized planning that teachers be cast in the role of technicians whose job is to implement the plan. The very nature of a curriculum requires subordinating individual initiative to the Great Plan. Schools can see no way to make it work other than by exactly the methods and principles that have now been discredited in the Soviet system. All over the world, more and more people are recognizing that these principles do not work in economics. I think that more and more people are also beginning to see that they will not work in education either. These principles fail in the two cases ultimately for exactly the same reason: They hamper individual initiative, and deprive the system of the flexibility to adapt to local situations.

Thus when I talk about Perestroika in education, I refer to the conceptual organization of education as much as to restructuring its administrative organization. Indeed, ultimately conceptual organization and administration are so intertwined that one might as well say that they are the same thing.

In the Soviet Union, creating conditions for initiative and enterprise is emerging as the prerequisite for Perestroika. In education, initiative and enterprise (of students and of teachers) are blocked by the administrative bureaucracy and by the curriculum. The thrust of constructionism is to create a learning environment in which rich learning will come about in activities driven by enterprise and initiative. New technologies provide the opportunity for such learning by opening new possibilities for people of all ages to imagine and realize complex projects in which they implement a large range of important knowledge. "Learning by doing" is an old enough idea, but until recently the narrowness of range of the possible doings severely restricted the implementation of the idea. The educational vocation of the new technology is to remove these restrictions.

But even this does not go far enough toward a fullness of educational Perestroika. Real restructuring of the administration and of the curriculum can only come with an epistemological restructuring, an epistemological perestroika . . . *reshaping the structure of knowledge itself.*

One step in this direction is to break away from the traditional educator's role as someone who worries about transmitting knowledge but leaves the making of the knowledge to others. I illustrate this by recalling at least one of the lines of thinking that led to the development of the Logo Turtle. Instead of trying to "make children learn math" we tried to "make math that children will learn." Turtle Geometry offered a way to do math in the course of writing programs that would achieve purposes other than getting the right answer and getting a grade. Children write programs to make graphics on the screen, to make a game, to simulate something. They also write programs just to test out their own abilities, or just to have fun.

To do this, you need a somewhat different math. But it's mathematics nonetheless; it uses mathematical concepts, and above all it involves mathematical ways of thinking. It also leads children into thinking like mathematicians. Or rather, this is my opinion of it. But in order for this opinion to prevail, several layers of obstacles have to be overcome. These recapitulate the layers of Perestroika. First there is an administrative layer. The bureaucracy dislikes the change simply because it is change. A lot of money, effort and personal reputation has been invested in curriculum materials, definitions of job qualifications, textbooks, and so on. There is reluctance to change. On a second, more substantive level, a shift in content raises questions of authority. Who has the right to decide that this stuff really is math? Once posed in this way, the question effectively blocks anything remotely like a megachange. The only acceptable answer for the hierarchy would require an impossible consensus. But I really want to focus on a third level, where opposition to this kind of mathematics is firmly rooted in prevailing epistemological ideology. A shift here challenges more than particular knowledge: it challenges the very idea of knowledge. Inevitably the resistance will be fierce.

Scholars from different disciplines and with different purposes have criticized the role assigned by current epistemology to the hegemony of certain ways of thinking frequently described by terms like *formal*, *objective*, *abstract*.<sup>[3]</sup> Feminist scholars have argued that these categories express a male-centered approach. African scholars have associated

these same ways of thinking with colonial domination. Such politically directed commentators on epistemology argue that the ways of thinking in question do not have an intrinsic superiority. Cases are cited of great intellectual works that proceed by other ways of thinking. And in this they are supported by recent work by ethnographers who go into laboratories to see what scientists actually do and how they actually think. A body of evidence is building up that puts in question, not only whether traditional scientific method is the *only* way to do good science, but even whether it is even practiced to any large extent. One can argue that it is nothing more than a shibboleth. But even if one takes a less extreme position, one has adequate grounds for several serious epistemological conflicts in the education system. An epistemological look at the turtle shows how these debates are close kin to issues in education.[\[4\]](#)

The most visible of Turtle Geometry's epistemological transgressions is bringing the body into mathematics. The turtle was chosen as a metaphor because it is so easy for a person to identify with it: You anthropomorphize the turtle: you solve a problem by putting yourself in its place and seeing what you would do. Of course, you can do Turtle Geometry in a formal way without any of this subjectivity. If this were not possible, I am not sure that I would accept it as "mathematics" (though this reluctance may be just residual conservatism that comes from being a white male of my generation who grew up in a series of elitist academic institutions Cambridge University, Sorbonne, MIT, and so on). But if one were to refrain from doing "body math," most of the point of Turtle Geometry would be lost. Its intuitive attraction reflects epistemological preferences that would make Euclid wince--at least if we accept the image of him in the standard geometry curriculum.

The feminist and African critics of the traditional, canonical epistemology should understand the Turtle as a direct challenge to the ideology they wish to criticize. They have shown how the reduction of knowledge to precise formal rules in the name of "objectivity" is often male genderized and colored with colonialism. In the present context I can add another way in which it appears clearly as the ideological expression of an oppressive system. Control over teachers and students is simply easier when knowledge is reduced to rules stated so formally that the bureaucrat is always able to "know" unambiguously what is right and what is wrong. Technician-teachers and bureaucrats both like the true/ false binary epistemology that insists on a right answer to every question, a right way to solve every problem. Constructionist mathematics has a different epistemology, whose criterion of success lies in the results rather than the method.

Different methods can be used in a spirit of try, explore, test, debug, rethink. It becomes possible for the student to say, "Maybe the book says that, but this works. Just look and see."

Students working with LEGO/Logo show the beginnings of another area of new knowledge for children which is currently being actively developed by my colleagues and students at the MIT: an area we call *cybernetics for children*-- using Norbert Wiener's name in a sense somewhat broader than its current American usage.[\[5\]](#) We are struggling

to develop elementary forms of knowledge from control theory, theory of systems, and parts of AI that emphasize "emergence" and "society models." Doing so brings out in particularly sharp relief several aspects of my present theme. First, as I already noted, it is an area where the teacher from 1800 would be lost; thus it qualifies as an example for thinking about megachange. Second, it is highly constructionist. Children can exercise sophisticated ideas in pursuit of personal projects and fantasies (of which creating imaginary creatures is just the most obvious example,) Third, it shows us developing new knowledge rather than simply figuring out how to deliver existing knowledge. Each of these aspects has epistemological overtones, as I have already hinted. But cybernetics also brings out an epistemological issue I have not yet mentioned here.

Critics (such as the feminist and Africanist scholars already mentioned) of dominant epistemologies set up a line of demarcation that places formal, abstract kinds of thinking on one side, and intuitive, contextualized, concrete thinking on the other. In general, mathematics and computer science tend to be placed on the "dominant" rather than on the "alternative" side of this demarcation. I have already noted that Turtle geometry brings some of the personal into mathematics for children. Cybernetics, with an emphasis on self-organizing, decentralized, and distributed processes, provides more strong support for the alternative epistemologies. Through it children and teachers experience working in a precise way with heterarchical-decentralized forms of knowledge. This means they can "do science" without doing violence to their natural ways of thinking. Moreover, this kind of cybernetics represents a current of growing influence in the contemporary scientific world, including the culture of computer science. These two sides of cybernetics make it a powerful ally for an anti-hierarchical epistemological perestroika.

This is as far as I can go here in the direction of developing the idea of an epistemological perestroika. I move towards closure by recapitulating. I have used Perestroika in the Russian political sense as a metaphor to talk about change and resistance to change in education. I use it to situate educators in a continuum: are you open to megachange, or is your approach one of seeking Band-Aids to fix the minor ills of the education system? The dominant paradigm is the Band-Aid--most reform tries to jigger the curriculum, the management of schools, the psychological context of learning. Looking at the Soviet experience gives us a metaphor to talk about why this doesn't work. For stable change a deeper restructuring is needed--or else the large parts of the system you didn't change will just bring the little parts you did change back into line. We have to seek out the deeper structures on which the system is based. On this level, too, the Soviet case provides an analogy: for the same categorization--hierarchical-centralized depersonalized vs. heterarchical-decentralized-personal--applies to the organization of education, to the structure of the curriculum, and to a deeper underlying epistemology. It offers a handle to grasp the conditions for change. Moreover, it suggests a close tie between educational change and the winds of change that seem to be blowing in many other domains in many parts of the globe. In short here is my conjecture and my call to arms: There is a powerful force in the world which could in principle--perhaps will inevitably--carry education in a certain direction. Moreover this is a direction which I and Alan Kay and all the people I love and admire most consider to be a good one. Let's go with it! It's our responsibility .

But why us? First, because we are, I hope, good and right-thinking people, who want to see education change for the better. And second, more specifically, because we have an instrument for such a change. But in recognizing this I must state a qualification. I do not see the computer as a "cause" of change-- certainly not of this change: much thinking about the computer goes in the opposite direction, strengthening the idea of teaching as technical act, supporting centralization in organization of institutions and of ideas. I've seen models of a school of the future in which there's a computer on every desk wired up to the teacher's computer, so that the teacher can see what every child is doing. And then the teacher's computers are wired up to the principals computer, so the principal can see what every teacher is doing. And all the principals are wired up to well, you know where. Nothing could be more hierarchical.

The computer is not an agent that will determine the direction of change. It is a medium through which different forces for change can express themselves with special clarity. One might describe its role as sharpening the choices. In traditional school there is a mixture of centralized and decentralized. If you contrast the LEGO/Logo workshop with the image of the wired-up school, you see a purer form of each than can easily be found in traditional schools. It is for us to choose.

The response of schools to computers brings other issues as well into sharp relief--for example, the issue of megachange vs. Band-Aid. The first microcomputers I saw in classrooms were brought there by visionary teachers who saw the computer as a way to improve the general learning environment of the classroom. This was a small step . . . but a step in the direction of megachange. In the last 10 years there has gradually been a process of "normalization"--like a living creature, the education system has known how to make the foreign body part of itself. As the school administration took control from the individual teacher conservatism set in. "Computer Rooms" were set up that isolated the computer from the learning environment of the classroom. In many places a curriculum was set up replete with tests on precisely defined fragments of knowledge about computers. In other places the computer was used to deliver the most technical and rote parts of the traditional curriculum. The computer accentuates the choice. It is for us to make it. Which image will guide the long-run growth of educational computing.

But what about the short run? I said that schools recuperate the computer from being an instrument of revolutionary change and make it a Band-Aid. But that doesn't always happen. There's room for insertion of individual acts to subvert the normalization. I have found useful the metaphor of the Trojan horse. LEGO/ Logo is a very good Trojan horse. It looks acceptable to people who just want to do "technology studies," so these kids will be "computer literate" and "technology literate." This way the bureaucracy will accept it, because it seems to be innocuous. But, in fact, within it is a seed you can nurture, a seed of real deep restructuring of relationships and ways thinking about education. The system has an inherent tendency to use you for its ends. But you don't have to be used.

There's another way in which the computer lab normalization is breaking down. We're beginning to see in the United States that there are now too many computers to put into a computer lab. And so they're overflowing back again, so that the question arises of what

to do with the computers. Will they go back in the mainstream of learning? Or will you make another computer lab with another specialized computer teacher? You can be influential in the decision whether to let them spill them over into the main stream of learning.

My last words are about what this implies for the status of computer teachers, of whom there are many here present at WCCE. Some of things I've said might be felt uncomfortable for a computer teacher cast in the role of agent of the reaction. I don't mean to do that. Although it's true that the system might be using the teacher in that role, the teacher doesn't have to follow the script. As the computers spill out of those labs back into the mainstream, the person who knows about the computer will have the opportunity to take on a new role and a much more exciting exalted role within that school. Now there is an opportunity to become the person whose job is to facilitate rethinking the whole learning environment of the school, the whole structure of education. We are entering a period in which the person who was "the computer teacher" has the chance to become the educational philosopher and the intellectual leader of the school, of the education world.

It was said at one of the reflection sessions this morning that, compared with the previous World Conference on Computers and Education, this one was much less about computers and much more about education. I'd like to push this trend by asking: Well, how many more WCCEs should we have? Isn't it time for us to grow up? And as we grow up, we should stop seeing ourselves as specialists of computers in education, because that casts us in the role of a kind of service profession. Accepting the role allows that other people are the ones to decide the big goals of education, what the curriculum is, how learning happens, what's a school. And at our conferences we talk about how their decisions can be served by the computers. Well, fine, up to a point. This certainly allows revolutionary actions as long as we are at the stage of crafting Trojan horses to throw into the system. But at some point we have a responsibility to break out of that marginal role and take on our true vocation, which is not one of service but one of leadership. At some point it will be as ridiculous to have a world conference in computers and education as to have a world conference on pencils and education. And with that I'll stop. And thank you for listening to me.

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# Situating Constructionism

By Seymour Papert and Idit Harel

The following essay is the first chapter in Seymour Papert and Idit Harel's book [\*Constructionism\*](#) (Ablex Publishing Corporation, 1991).

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It is easy enough to formulate simple catchy versions of the idea of constructionism; for example, thinking of it as "learning-by-making." One purpose of this introductory chapter is to orient the reader toward using the diversity in the volume to elaborate--to construct--a sense of constructionism much richer and more multifaceted, and very much deeper in its implications, than could be conveyed by any such formula.

My little play on the words construct and constructionism already hints at two of these multiple facets--one seemingly "serious" and one seemingly "playful." The serious facet will be familiar to psychologists as a tenet of the kindred, but less specific, family of psychological theories that call themselves constructivist. Constructionism--the N word as opposed to the V word--shares constructivism's connotation of learning as "building knowledge structures" irrespective of the circumstances of the learning. It then adds the idea that this happens especially felicitously in a context where the learner is consciously engaged in constructing a public entity, whether it's a sand castle on the beach or a theory of the universe. And this in turn implies a ramified research program which is the real subject of this introduction and of the volume itself. But in saying all this I must be careful not to transgress the basic tenet shared by the V and the N forms: If one eschews pipeline models of transmitting knowledge in talking among ourselves as well as in theorizing about classrooms, then one must expect that I will not be able to tell you my idea of constructionism. Doing so is bound to trivialize it. Instead, I must confine myself to engage you in experiences (including verbal ones) liable to encourage your own personal construction of something in some sense like it. Only in this way will there be something rich enough in your mind to be worth talking about. But if I am being really serious about this, I have to ask (and this will quickly lead us into really deep psychological and epistemological waters) what reasons I have to suppose that you will be willing to do this and that if you did construct your own constructionism that it would have any resemblance to mine?

I find an interesting toe-hold for the problem in which I called the playful facet--the element of tease inherent in the idea that it would be particularly oxymoronic to convey the idea of constructionism through a definition since, after all, constructionism boils down to demanding that everything be understood by being constructed. The joke is relevant to the problem, for the more we share the less improbable it is that our self-constructed constructions should converge. And I have learned to take as a sign of relevantly common intellectual culture and preferences the penchant for playing with self-referentially recursive situations: the snake eating its tail, the man hoisting himself by his own bootstraps, and the liar contradicting himself by saying he's a liar. Experience shows that people who relate to that kind of thing often play in similar ways. And in some domains those who play alike think alike. Those who like to play with images of

structures emerging from their own chaos, lifting themselves by their own bootstraps, are very likely predisposed to constructionism.

They are not the only ones who are so predisposed. In Chapter 9 of this volume, Sherry Turkel and I analyze the epistemological underpinnings of a number of contemporary cultural movements. We show how trends as different as feminist thought and the ethnography of science join with trends in the computer culture to favor forms of knowledge based on working with concrete materials rather than abstract propositions, and this too predisposes them to prefer learning in a constructionist rather than in an instructionist mode. In Chapter 2, I make a similar connection with political trends.

It does not follow from this that you and I would be precluded from constructing an understanding about constructionism in case you happened not to be in any of the "predisposed groups" I have mentioned. Of course not. I am not prepared to be "reductionist" quite to that extent about arguing my own theory, and in the following pages I shall probe several other routes to get into resonance on these issues: for example, stories about children are evocative for more people than recursions and can lead to similar intellectual positions.(1) But there is no guarantee; I have no argument like what is supposed to happen in formal logic where each step leads a depersonalized mind inexorably along a pre-set path. More like the tinkerer, the *bricoleur*, we can come to agreement about theories of learning (at least for the present and perhaps in principle) only by groping in our disorderly bags of tricks and tools for the wherewithal to build understandings. In some cases there may be no way to do it one-on-one but a mutual understanding could still be socially mediated: for example (to recall the context of discussing how to use this volume) we might both find ourselves in tune with Carol Strohecker and her evocative descriptions of working with knots. (2) Through her we might come together. But what if we didn't find a route to any understanding at all? This would be tragic if we were locked into a classroom (or other power ridden) situation where one of us has to grade the other; but in the best phases of life, including real science and mathematics, it turns out much more often than is admitted in schools to be right to say: *vivent les differences!*

I might appear in the previous paragraph to be talking about accepting or rejecting constructionism as a matter of "taste and preference" rather than a matter of "scientific truth." But a distinction needs to be made. When one looks at how people think and learn one sees clear differences. Although it is conceivable that science may one day show that there is a "best way," no such conclusion seems to be on the horizon. Moreover, even if there were, individuals might prefer to think in their own way rather than in the "best way." Now one can make two kinds of scientific claim for constructionism. The weak claim is that it suits some people better than other modes of learning currently being used. The strong claim is that it is better for everyone than the prevalent "instructionist" modes practiced in schools. A variant of the strong claim is that this is the only framework that has been proposed that allows the full range of intellectual styles and preferences to each find a point of equilibrium.

But these are not the questions to guide research in the next few years for they presuppose that the concept of constructionism has reached a certain level of maturity and stability. The slogan *vivent les differences* might become inappropriate at that stage. But when the concept itself is in evolution it is appropriate to keep intellectual doors open and this is where we are

now. To give a sense of the methodology of this early "pre-paradigmatic" stage I shall tell some stories about incidents that fed the early evolution of the idea.

More than 20 years ago, I was working on a project at the Muzzey Junior High School in Lexington, MA, which had been persuaded by Wally Feuerzeig to allow a seventh grade to "do Logo" instead of math for that year. This was a brave decision for a principal who could not have known that the students would actually advance their math achievement score, even though they didn't do anything that resembled normal school math that year! But the story I really want to tell is not about test scores. It is not even about the math/Logo class. (3) It is about the art room I used to pass on the way. For a while, I dropped in periodically to watch students working on soap sculptures and mused about ways in which this was not like a math class. In the math class students are generally given little problems which they solve or don't solve pretty well on the fly. In this particular art class they were all carving soap, but what each students carved came from wherever fancy is bred and the project was not done and dropped but continued for many weeks. It allowed time to think, to dream, to gaze, to get a new idea and try it and drop it or persist, time to talk, to see other people's work and their reaction to yours--not unlike mathematics as it is for the mathematician, but quite unlike math as it is in junior high school. I remember craving some of the students' work and learning that their art teacher and their families had first choice. I was struck by an incongruous image of the teacher in a regular math class pining to own the products of his students' work! An ambition was born: I want junior high school math class to be like that. I didn't know exactly what "that" meant but I knew I wanted it. I didn't even know what to call the idea. For a long time it existed in my head as "soap-sculpture math."

Soap-sculpture math is an idea that buzzes in the air around my head wherever I go (and I assume it was present in the air the students who wrote the chapters in this volume breathed). Has it been achieved? Of course not. But little by little by little we are getting there. As you read the chapters you will find many examples of children's work that exhibits one or another of features of the soap-sculpting class. Here I mention two simple cases which happened to move me especially deeply.

Last year, at Project Headlight of the Hennigan School in Boston, MA, I watched a group of children trying to make a snake out of LEGO/Logo. They were using this high-tech and actively computational material as an expressive medium; the content came from their imaginations as freely as what the others expressed in soap. But where a knife was used to shape the soap, mathematics was used here to shape the behavior of the snake and physics to figure out its structure. Fantasy and science and math were coming together, uneasily still, but pointing a way. LEGO/Logo is limited as a build-an-animal-kit; versions under development in our lab will have little computers to put inside the snake and perhaps linear activators which will be more like muscles in their mode of action. Some members of our group have other ideas: Rather than using a tiny computer, using even tinier logic gates and motors with gears may be fine. Well, we have to explore these routes (4). But what is important is the vision being pursued and the questions being asked. Which approach best melds science and fantasy? Which favors dreams and visions and sets off trains of good scientific and mathematical ideas?

Last week, I watched a tape of children from Project Mindstorm at the Gardner Academy in San Jose, CA. A fifth grader who was in his second year of working with LogoWriter was showing a

spectacular sample of screen graphics he had programmed. When asked how he did it, he explained that he had to figure angles and curvatures to obtain the greatest "grace." His product was no less desirable than the soap sculptures, and its process much more mathematical than anything done in a usual math classroom. And he knew it, for he added with pride: *I want to be a person who puts math and art together.* Here again I hear answers to questions about taking down walls that too often separate imagination from mathematics. This boy was appropriating mathematics in a deeply personal way. What can we do to encourage this?

I'll tell another story to introduce a second idea. At the time of the Muzzey project in Lexington, Logo had not yet acquired the feature for which it is best known to most educators: It had no graphics, no Turtle. In fact, at Muzzey School there was no screen, only clanging teletype terminals connected to a distant "time-shared" computer. (In fact, the origination of the Logo Turtle was inspired by the soap-sculpture image and a few others like it.) About 10 years later, I was working with Sherry Turkle (5) and John Berlow at the Lamplighter School in Dallas, TX, the first elementary school where there were enough computers for children to have almost free access to them. The first space shuttle was about to go up, and in the tension of waiting for it appeared in many representations on screens all over the school. "Even the girls are making space ships," one girl told us. But we noticed that although everyone had space ships they did not make them the same way. Some programmed their space ships as if they had read a book on "structured programming," in the top-down style of work that proceeds through careful planning to organize the work and by making subprocedures for every part under the hierarchical control of a superprocedure. Others seemed to work more like a painter than like this classical model of an engineer's way of doing things. The painter-programmer would put a red blob on the screen and call over her friends (for it was more often, though not always, a girl) to admire the shuttle. After a while someone might say: "But its red, the shuttle is white." "Well, that's the fire!"--came the reply--"Now I'll make the white body." And so the shuttle would grow, taking shape through a kind of negotiation between the programmer and the work in progress.

This and many other such incidents initiated an intense interest in differences in ways of doing things, and during the next few years (6) (which means into the time when the work in this volume was starting), "style" was almost as much in the air as the "soap-sculpture." I was very much troubled by questions about whether styles were categorical or a continuum, whether they were correlated with gender or ethnic cultures or personality types. These two key ideas set the stage for the evolution of constructionism.

Constructionism's line of direct descent from the soap-sculpture model is clearly visible. The simplest definition of constructionism evokes the idea of learning-by-making and this is what was taking place when the students worked on their soap sculptures. But there is also a line of descent from the style idea. The metaphor of a painter I used in describing one of the styles of programmer observed at the Lamplighter school is developed in Chapter 9 by Turkle and Papert in two perspectives. One ("bricolage") takes its starting point in strategies for the organization of work: The painter-programmer is guided by the work as it proceeds rather than staying with a pre-established plan. The other takes off from a more subtle idea which we call "closeness to objects"--that is, some people prefer ways of thinking that keep them close to physical things, while others use abstract and formal means to distance themselves from concrete material. Both of these aspects of style are very relevant to the idea of constructionism. The example of children

building a snake suggests ways of working in which those who like bricolage and staying close to the object can do as well as those who prefer a more analytic formal style.

Building and playing with castles of sand, families of dolls, houses of Lego, and collections of cards provide images of activities which are well rooted in contemporary cultures and which plausibly enter into learning processes that go beyond specific narrow skills. I do not believe that anyone fully understands what gives these activities their quality of "learning-richness." But this does not prevent one from taking them as models in benefiting from the presence of new technologies to expand the scope of activities with that quality.

The chapters in this book offer many constructions of new learning-rich activities with an attempt to reach that quality. A conceptually simple case is the addition of new elements to LEGO construction kits and to the Logo microworlds, so that children can build more "active" models. For example, sensors, miniaturized computers that can run Logo programs, and motor controllers allow a child (in principle) to build a LEGO house with a programmable temperature control system; or to construct forms of artificial life and mobile models capable of seeking environmental conditions such as light or heat or of following or avoiding one another. Experiments carried out so far still fall a little short of this idealized description, and, moreover, have been mounted systematically only in the artificial contexts of schools or science centers. But it is perfectly plausible that further refinement of the components (combined, be it noted for further discussion below, with suitable marketing) might result in such "cybernetic" activities (as we choose to call them), thus becoming as much part of the lives of young children as playing with toys and dolls, or other more passive construction kits. It is also plausible that *if* this were to happen, certain concepts and ways of thinking presently regarded as far beyond children's ken would enter into what they know "spontaneously" (in the sense in which Piaget talks about children's spontaneous geometry or logic or whatever), while other concepts--which children do learn at school but reluctantly and not very well--would be learned with the gusto one sees in Nintendo games.

This vision advances the definition of constructionism and serves as an ideal case against which results that have been actually achieved can be judged. In particular, it illustrates the sense of the opposition I like to formulate as *constructionism vs. instructionism* when discussing directions for innovation and enhancement in education.

I do not mean to imply that construction kits see instruction as bad. That would be silly. The question at issue is on a different level: I am asking what kinds of innovation are liable to produce radical change in how children learn. Take mathematics as an extreme example. It seems obvious that as a society we are mathematical underperformers. It is also obvious that instruction in mathematics is on the average very poor. But it does not follow that the route to better performance is necessarily the invention by researchers of more powerful and effective means of instruction (with or without computers).

The diffusion of cybernetic construction kits into the lives of children could in principle change the context of the learning of mathematics. Children might come to *want* to learn it because they would use it in building these models. And if they did want to learn it they would, even if teaching were poor or possibly nonexistent. Moreover, since one of the reasons for poor teaching

is that teachers do not enjoy teaching reluctant children, it is not implausible that teaching would become better as well as becoming less necessary. So changes in the opportunities for construction could in principle lead to deeper changes in the learning of mathematics than changes in knowledge about instruction or any amount of "teacher-proof" computer-aided instruction.

This vision is presented as a thought experiment to break the sense of necessary connection between improving learning and improving teaching. But many of its elements can be related to real experiments described in the book. The potentially engaging qualities of the cybernetic construction kit is well established through work on the simpler version of it known as LEGO/Logo. The direct spill-over of LEGO/Logo onto mathematical learning is not discussed in this book, but a spill-over of something else in the same spirit was created and documented by Idit Harel for her doctoral dissertation (7). Her experiments show that children's attention can be held for an hour a day over periods of several months by making (as opposed to using) educational software—even when the children consider the content of the software to be utterly boring in its usual classroom form. Moreover, here we do see statistically hard evidence that constructionist activity—which integrates math with art and design and where the children make the software—enhances the effectiveness of instruction given by a teacher in the same topic (in the case in point, fractions).

Although most of the examples in the book use computers, some do not. Most strikingly, a "knot lab" has children building such unorthodox entities as a family tree of knots. Why is it included in this volume? Its designer, Carol Strohecker, would say "why knot?" (8) Constructionism and this book are about learning; computers figure so prominently only because they provide an especially wide range of excellent contexts for constructionist learning. But common old garden string, though less versatile in its range, provides some as well. The point is that the Knot Lab, the Software Design Studio, LEGO/Logo workshops, and other learning environments described in this book all work in one way; while instructionist learning environments, whether they use CAI or the pencil-and-paper technology of traditional classrooms, work in a different way.

The assertion that the various constructionist learning situations described here "work in one way" does not mean they are not very different. Indeed, in form they are very different, and intellectual work is needed to see what they have in common. The construction of physical cybernetic creatures is made possible by novel hardware. In a closely related example, Mitchel Resnick opened a new range of activities by creating a new software system: an extension of Logo called \*Logo which enables a child to create thousands of "screen creatures" which can be given behaviors to produce phenomena similar to those seen in social insects (9). Judy Sachter created a software system for children to work in 3-D graphics (10). Idit Harel used existing hardware and software; her invention (like Carol Strohecker's) was on a social level. She organized children into a Software Design Studio within which they learned by teaching, which gave cultural, pedagogical, as well as technical support for the children to become software designers.

There cannot be many research groups in education with the capability of innovating in so many ways. (Is this one result of constructionist environments?) Still, what makes the Epistemology and Learning Group unique is not this diversity as such, but the search for underlying unity. The

creation of a multitude of learning situations (sometimes called learning environments or microworlds) is a great asset, but what gives constructionism the status of a theoretical project is its epistemological dimension.

Instructionism vs. constructionism looks like a split about strategies for education: two ways of thinking about the transmission of knowledge. But behind this there is a split that goes beyond the acquisition of knowledge to touch on the *nature of knowledge* and the *nature of knowing*. There is a huge difference in status between these two splits. The first is, in itself, a technical matter that belongs in an educational school course on "methods." The second is what ought properly to be called "epistemological." It is close to fundamental issues that philosophers think of as their own. It raises issues that are relevant to the nature of science and to the deepest debates in psychology. It is tangled with central issues of radical thinking in feminism, in Africanism, and in other areas where people fight for the right not only to think what they please, but to think it in their own ways.

Concern with ways of knowing and kinds of knowledge is pervasive in all the chapters in this volume (11) and this is what creates connection with a contemporary movement that goes far beyond education. Indeed, manifestations of the movement in question do not always label themselves as directly concerned with education. And even when they do, the educational concerns they express seem at first sight to be disconnected. This is demonstrated by the complexities of some common issues that appear in different guises in my own contributions to this collection. My chapter with Sherry Turkle ("Epistemological Pluralism and the Revaluation of the Concrete," Chapter 9) distills an epistemological essence from inquiry into the sociology of knowledge. My closing speech at the World Congress on Computers and Education ("Perestroika and Epistemological Politics," Chapter 2) looks at the same epistemological categories through political metaphors (which may well be more than metaphoric). And my chapter with Idit Harel ("Software Design as a Learning Environment," Chapter 4) looks at them through the lens of a particular educational experience. The understanding that my concerns with ways of knowing and kinds of knowledge are not disconnected from educational concerns grew out of my concerns with knowledge appropriation and styles of thinking (or one's style of making a piece of knowledge one's own); it is time to pick this thread up again.

In the chapter by Turkle and Papert the question of style takes on a new guise. The issue has shifted from the psychological question--Who thinks in one style or the other?--to the epistemological question of characterizing the differences. In that chapter we take a new look at the confluence of "noncanonical" epistemological thinking from sources as diverse as the ethnographic study of laboratories, intellectual movements inspired by feminist concerns, and trends within computer cultures. It is clear enough that each of these streams taken separately carries implications for education. But to capture a common implication one has to look beyond what one might call "a first impact," which in each case tends to be specific rather than common, focused on educational content rather than on underlying epistemologies. Thus, feminism's first and most obvious influence on education was tied to issues that very specifically affect women, for example, the elimination of gender stereotypes from school books, without in any way discounting its importance (and the likelihood that the waves it creates will go much further). I call this a "cleanup" because in itself it is compatible with similar books. While this can be, and usually is, implemented as a very local change, the implications of feminist challenges to

received ideas about the nature of knowing run radically deeper. For example, traditional epistemology gives a privileged position to knowledge that is abstract, impersonal, and detached from the knower and treats other forms of knowledge as inferior. But feminist scholars have argued that many women prefer working with more personal, less-detached knowledge and do so very successfully. If this is true, they should prefer the more concrete forms of knowledge favored by constructionism to the propositional forms of knowledge favored by instructionism. The theoretical thrust of "Epistemological Pluralism" is to see this epistemological challenge as meshing with those made by the other two trends it analyzes.

The need to distinguish between a first impact on education and a deeper meaning is as real in the case of computation as in the case of feminism. For example, one is looking at a clear case of first impact when "computer literacy" is conceptualized as adding new content material to a traditional curriculum. Computer-aided instruction may seem to refer to method rather than content, but what counts as a change in method depends on what one sees as the essential features of the existing methods. From my perspective, CAI amplifies the rote and authoritarian character that many critics see as manifestations of what is most characteristic of--and most wrong with--traditional school. Computer literacy and CAI, or indeed the use of word-processors, could conceivably set up waves that will change school, but in themselves they constitute very local innovations--fairly described as placing computers in a possibly improved but essentially unchanged school. The presence of computers begins to go beyond first impact when it alters the nature of the learning process; for example, if it shifts the balance between transfer of knowledge to students (whether via book, teacher, or tutorial program is essentially irrelevant) and the production of knowledge by students. It will have really gone beyond it if computers play a part in mediating a change in the criteria that govern what *kinds of knowledge are valued* in education. The crucial thesis of "Epistemological Pluralism" is that while computers are often seen as supporting the abstract and impersonal detached kinds of knowing (which have drawn fire from feminists), computational thinking and practice has been shifting in the opposite direction towards a potential synergy with the feminist position.

Ethnographic studies of science provide a final example of a contrast between a superficial--though as in the other cases still valuable--first impact, and a potentially deep epistemological one. Work by Latour, Traweek, Keller, and many others has produced a picture of how scientists actually work that should be shared with children: But telling children how scientists do science does not necessarily lead to far-reaching change in how children do science; indeed, it cannot, as long as the school curriculum is based on verbally-expressed formal knowledge. And this, in the end, is what construction is about.

### Footnotes

(1) I understand Piaget better when he lets the concrete thinker in him emerge in his playing with extracts from children's dialogue than when he writes as a "formal" thinker. This does not mean that I do not agree with the essential core of Piaget's thinking, though I am less sure that *he himself* always does.

(2) In Chapter 12 of *Constructionism*.

(3) This math/Logo class is the source of several anecdotes in my book *Mindstorms* (1980); it is also discussed in my paper *Teaching Children Thinking* (1971).

(4) For further descriptions of LEGO/Logo and LEGO Creatures learning environments, see Chapters 7, 8, 15, 188, and 19 of *Constructionism*.

(5) Sherry Turkle has written a theoretical analysis of this experience which should be read by everyone interested in children and computers: *The Second Self: The Human Spirit in the Computer Culture*. See also Chapter 9 by Turkle and Papert in *Constructionism*.

(6) Observations on differences in styles of Logo programming were reported in Papert, Watt, diSessa, & Weir (1979). Sylvia Weir, who participated very actively in the pre- and early periods of the Epistemology and Learning group developed an approach to style in her book *Cultivating Minds: A Logo Casebook* (1986).

(7) See Idit Harel's dissertation *Software Design for Learning: Children's Construction of Meaning for Fractions and Logo Programming* (1988) which was revised and published as *Children Designers: Interdisciplinary Constructions for Learning and Knowing Mathematics in a Computer-Rich School* (1991). See also Chapters 4, 5, 6, and 22 in *Constructionism*.

(8) See Carol Stroheker's dissertation (1991), and Chapter 12 in *Constructionism*.

(9) See Chapters 11 and 19 in *Constructionism*.

(10) See Chapter 17 in *Constructionism*.

(11) See especially Part III, "Thinking about Thinking: Epistemological Styles in Constructionist Learning," Chapters 9 through 17 in *Constructionism*.

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*One educator's opinion (long before he was a competent writer)...*

## **Integrated Learning Systems - The New Slavery**

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These are curious times for public education in the United States. While millions of children suffer in our nation's schools, hordes of educators and corporate pitchmen are declaring themselves futurists - the person with the perfect solution for all of our educational ills. Too often the message of these emerging leaders is accompanied by a package of services or product to be purchased by schools in search of the miracle cure. For many of these "experts" technology is the key to educational reform. While I agree that new technologies will play a vital role in creating future learning cultures, the uses of technology often prescribed by the pundits are predicated upon misguided notions of behaviorism, drill, and expensive teaching machines. Unfortunately, many of our educational leaders equate educational restructuring with *plugging kids into anything that plugs in*. The ultimate result being "the injection of more misery into a school day which is already far too miserable for far too many students."<sup>1</sup> There may be no better example of insensitive educational policy, unnecessary spending, or inappropriate use of technology than the proliferation of integrated learning systems.

Broward County should be ashamed of themselves for their obscenely reckless and irresponsible expenditure of \$13.5 million on integrated learning systems. In an age of scarce financial resources, troubled students, deteriorating school facilities, and outdated curricula, county bureaucrats decided to invest in Orwellian technology rather than kids. One might ask how school libraries, music, and art programs are faring in Broward County. How many disenfranchised students will stay in school because of the ILSes? How many others will drop out because of the lowered expectations and reduced human contact? In my opinion, the money would have been better spent buying the students lots of crack cocaine and passing out job applications for a lifetime career in local fast food restaurants.

The harsh metaphor between ILS installations and the drug trade is deliberate due to several similarities in the process of selling drugs and selling ILSes. First of all, the claims of educational euphoria made by ILS manufacturers are at best exaggerated. All of society's ills and educational shortcomings can be erased by hard-wiring students to integrated learning systems. You can buy thousands of prepared lessons, for all grade levels, interests, subject areas, and levels of difficulty in one package. The absurdity of this claim may be revealed by asking a group of teachers, "How long does it take you to perfect a lesson? How long would it take you to perfect thousands of lessons? How long would it take to communicate the subtleties of those thousands of lessons to a team of software designers?" Other claims along these lines suggest that "kids will like it" and test scores (the very same ones that every educator of conscience - even ETS themselves argue against) will rise. Henry Jay Becker's recent research on the research claims of the major ILSes provides convincing evidence of how shabby the ILS research actually is. Other research demonstrates that any gains in basic skills are short-lived, lacking in

context, and are likely to widen the gap between the average and the remedial students because the remedial student spends his/her time drilling disjointed facts while their peers are more likely to be engaged in more creative and intellectually stimulating activities.

Integrated Learning System companies disproportionately choose states with large populations of rural and urban socioeconomically disadvantaged students for their marketing. Many of these states have centralized decision-making where purchasing decisions are made by detached bureaucrat and politicians. It should come as no surprise that states like New Jersey with 600+ independent school districts have a much lower number of ILSes than more centralized states (or counties). Monetarily and/or educationally disadvantaged district administrators are made to feel intimidated and guilty for "denying their students access to cutting-edge technology and thereby reducing their students prospects for a successful life" if they don't install an ILS. Are academically successful, well-financed, pedagogically secure school districts or poor, disadvantaged, desperate school districts likely to embrace the ILS message?

Integrated Learning Systems often cause an unwelcome cycle of financial dependency. The painful expense of installing an ELS is disguised by the ELS representatives through a myriad of deferred payment strategies designed to give the impression of "something-for-noting." Sales are closed with small downpayment/high interest lease-purchasing plans, wining and dining of administrators and politicians, "free" trials, and by interfering with the process of local educational decision-making. How many teachers are approached by the ELS proponents for their input? There are legions of horror stories in which the counsel of school principals, teacher unions, and computer coordinators is ignored by politicians or state department officials enticed by the purveyors of ILSes.

While a generation of children log-in at three and out at eighteen, future generations of illiterate Americans will be paying the debt incurred by the purchase of integrated learning systems. Buy the cool multimedia encyclopedia set-up for \$1-2,000 and then the truck backs up with an ELS lab to be paid for into perpetuity.

Sure, the claims continue, "our system teaches problem solving." As if problem solving could or should be taught as a separate body of facts. Ask a scientist or artist about the problem solving process and you will learn that one of the key elements of true problem solving is the ability to decide which problems are relevant and worth solving. A kid using an ILS is never afforded this opportunity. The "problems" offered by an ELS are often the equivalent of "brain teasers" or "bar tricks" - little challenges outside of any meaningful context for learning.

Another disingenuous claim of the ILS proponents is that they aren't just for remediation or well-funded Chapter I programs. Why you can "do" whole language or the NCTM Standards on your ILS. In fact, we'll even load LogoWriter onto your system. If schools actually cared about students telecommunicating internationally, solving problems collaboratively, or sharing information, they would urge the hardware manufacturers to produce low-cost durable notebook computers and FM networks so that the computing experience can be truly personal and learning may occur anywhere.

The notion that the spirit or intellectual empowerment inherent in constructivist/learner-centered innovations, such as whole language or the NCTM Standards, can be achieved in a top-down instructionist ILS environment is absurd. The chances that an ILS will help a student fall in love with learning, express themselves creatively, or enjoy the type of educational culture envisioned by Seymour Papert is less than the likelihood that West Point will graduate a generation of great jazz musicians.

These systems will influence schools to become less democratic, less exploratory, less risky, and less personal. An ILS has its own set of rules for behavior, interpersonal interaction, [and] pedagogy. The content has been predetermined and is "closed" regardless of the number of "If...then" statements built into the management system. The idea that a computer can teach a student is only slightly more absurd than the misguided notion that the computer will identify student interests and aptitudes and steer that learner towards a world of intellectual stimulation. Dr. Seymour Papert said in an address at NECC '91 that, "at best these systems possess marginal intelligence and another word for marginal intelligence is stupidity. We don't want stupid systems teaching kids."

This "tabula rasa" view of education stands in stark contrast to the educational directions endorsed by educators and people of conscience, such as the before mentioned NCTM Standards, whole language movement, or even Headstart. The idea that learners of all ages construct their own knowledge through experience and being immersed in a culture of powerful ideas has been ignored by the ILS developers. The model of drill and practice and behaviorism on which the ILS industry is based (the industry will deny this claim) will do little to enhance America's economic viability or leadership in democracy, science, or the arts. The nation of Jefferson, Dewey and Papert must do better for its children.

There is nothing empowering or humanizing in the philosophy behind the ILS. Teachers are especially at-risk in a world of "managed instruction", "delivery systems", "CMI", "CAI", "intelligent tutors", "turn-key and teacher-proof systems." Any teacher who believes that they can be replaced by a machine, probably should be. Teachers must stop referring to themselves as "facilitators" and proclaim their important role as teachers. In the age of the ILS, a facilitator is barely distinguishable from the minimum-wage earning clerk who tears off the student printouts at the end of day. Today's teachers have an important role to play as social activists and protectors of children.

Robert Pearlman's question about whether the Mac is up to the task of being part of an ILS borders on the ridiculous.<sup>2</sup> Of course it is. Technologically, the Mac hardware and human interface surpasses the hardware requirements of a DLS. After all, the role of the ILS has changed marginally since 1963. That is unless we want the addition of spiffy sound effects and hypnotic QuickTime graphics to manipulate the learner like a consumer watching a Pepsi commercial. These new multimedia technologies are only exciting and empowering if used by students in open-ended environments like LogoWriter and HyperCard as vehicles for self-expression.

The real question regarding the Macintosh and ILSes is why has Apple Computer sold its soul to the devil. Two years ago at NECC, I asked Bernie Gifford (Apple's V.P. for Education), how Apple reconciled its view of individual empowerment with their growing relationship with ILS manufacturers. Dr. Gifford told me that he shared my concerns and that Apple was working with the D-S manufacturers to make their systems "less dogmatic." This is quite oxymoronic. By their very nature ELSes are dogmatic. Dr. Gifford's concerns have obviously been neglected. Since my brief conversation with him, Apple has announced the "Apple Event Education Suite," an innovation that will make ELS systems less costly to develop and more pervasive. -

I recently saw a poster in an Apple office containing a quote by John Sculley (Apple's CEO), stating (paraphrase) "at the heart and soul of Apple is the belief that every person should have a personal computer." If Mr. Sculley actually believes this, why doesn't Apple produce a low-cost notebook computer for education in the price-range of the Toshiba 1000SE? Would it not be educationally sound and profitable to sell a school hundreds of personal notebook computers than twenty-five Macs bolted to counters in a computer lab? How can the company so closely associated with the work of Seymour Papert and Alan Kay endorse technological uses so abhorrent to the extraordinary vision of these men and their contemporaries?

The new person responsible for education marketing at Apple Computer, Bert Cummings, recently repudiated Apple's long-standing support of individual empowerment and child-centered learning in an interview with *The Computing Teacher*. If this article has not yet convinced you of the ELS threat, read the following quote.

*...Within the next five years, we're going to see another generation of Instructional Learning Systems-something that I've called Mediated Learning Systems\* Mediated Learning Systems will be much smarter and incorporate far more sophisticated management systems than we have currently. They'll be a lot richer in video content, and easier to customize for individual students, And they'll be used in mainstream education-not just for remediation. All students need feedback and reinforcement, but the timing has to be right. You\* have to seize the teachable moment. Mediated Learning Systems will enable us\* to do this on an hour-by-hour, or even minute-by-minute basis finally.*

<sup>3</sup> Electronic Learning Magazine's Special Edition, *ILS Vendors Embrace the Mac*. March, 1992 <sup>4</sup> I've underlined the word, *You*, to emphasize that a human is uniquely capable of seizing the teachable moment. The thought of a computer intervening in a sympathetic and effective manner is foolish. <sup>5</sup> Who is US? Is it corporate America? Is it a politician in the state capital?

*Picture this: a student sitting at a work-station tries to solve a quadratic equation gets it wrong. Within seconds, she is shown a three-minute video that takes her through the process of solving that equation-or a similar one. Then she tries again.<sup>7</sup> The reason I'm emphasizing instruction is that Apple has traditionally been a vigorous champion of computers as tools-as bicycles for the mind. We're certainly not backing away from that.*

*The computer-as-a-tool metaphor is with us and I don't see it changing. However, along with tools, you have to have architectural plans.\* And that's the role I see for Mediated Learning.* (The Computing Teacher, April 1992)

Wake up! Your suspicions have been realized. Apple Computer Corporation is a computer company - not a partner in education. This actualization will benefit schools in the long run. Schools should buy the most appropriate technology at the best price and not depend on computer manufacturers for educational solutions. General Electric ovens don't come with pot roast workshops and curriculum materials. If it seems as if I'm unfairly picking on Apple it is because D3M has always supported the tyranny of a few computers imposing on the will of the many. A wise educator is wary of corporate altruism

Why is it that the parent groups, legislatures, teacher unions, and journalists who found the prospect of Whittle's Channel One and two Snickers ads a day so offensive are not alarmed by curriculum being determined by the manufacturers of school rings? Several recent developments point to the genesis of an unholy alliance of large corporations, politicians, and defense contractors. The following stories are plucked from recent news stories and personal interviews.

**Gifford Leaves Apple Computer.** Dr. Bernard Gifford resigned as Apple's Vice President of Education and will be forming a corporate partnership with Jostens Learning Corp. to develop higher education software. Jostens is the nation's largest ELS manufacturer. *Remember that this is the man who found ILSes to be dogmatic.* (Electronic Learning May/June 1992)

**Jostens Learning Corp. to Merge with Wicat** Jostens recently purchased one of their chief competitors in the ILS market Jostens has spent the past several years buying up educational talent and pieces of software companies, including a large share of Optical Data Corp. (Electronic Learning May/June 1992)

**Felix Rothyn Finds Money for New York City Schools** This well respected economist and Chair of the Municipal Assistance Corporation, know as Big Mac, has released \$40 million dollars for competitive grants. New York City Schools are being forced to compete for these funds which may only be used to purchase integrated learning systems. Why would a school district with a written policy against workbooks want a million dollar workbook? How can a school administrator say no?

**Whittle Announces the Edison Project** Advertising czar Chris Whittle announced his plans to build 1,000 for-profit schools. These schools promise to be technology-rich and Whittle hopes to see their technological innovations to unsuspecting (and under-funded) public schools. Want to guess the model of technology use likely to be implemented? One guess, a room full of kids with headsets on, in front of colorful screens makes great photo-ops.

**George Bush Announces America 2000** President Bush's cynical plan to fund handsomely one "community-based" model school in each congressional district while the remainder of the nation's schools rot has major defense contractors salivating over their grant proposals.

There is a misguided notion in the world of the ILS that school must compete with MTV. Every good teacher, and there are tens of thousands of good teachers in America, knows that a student would much rather spend time interacting with a teacher who nurtures and respects the student's ideas, dreams, and skills than in front of a TV set. In fact, most people agree that to alleviate the currently shameful condition of America's children is rooted in the lack of personal interaction between children and sensitive adults. No computer is going to replace the artistry of the teacher or alleviate the devastating effects of our society's shameful neglect of children.

So what are teachers-of-conscience to do? We must be vigilant in our desire to affect educational progress and improve the lives of our students while avoiding the temptation to go for the "quick fix." We must share our successes and reflect on our challenges at every opportunity. Publish and exhibit your students' work, speak at public hearings, write articles, vote! There are a multitude of examples of educational innovation we can all learn from and replicate - but not if we allow ourselves to be distracted by the seductiveness of inappropriate technology and thoughtless centralized decision-making.

Trust your instincts; unite with colleagues, parents and kids to improve your school. Take responsibility for educational decisions. Integrated Learning Systems are degrading and oppressive to both the student who is victimized by them and the teacher who is trivialized by them. Our children deserve much better, our teachers can be much better if given a stake in the process, and our society demands much better than we can expect from cybernetic teaching systems. Just say no to integrated learning systems.

**Notes:**

1 Jonathan Kozol

2 Electronic Learning Magazine's Special Edition, *ILS Vendors Embrace the Mac*.  
March, 1992

3 The euphemism "du jour"

4 I've underlined the word, *You*, to emphasize that a human is uniquely capable of seizing the teachable moment. The thought of a computer intervening in a sympathetic and effective manner is foolish.

5 Who is US? Is it corporate America? Is it a politician in the state capital?

6 You can't make this stuff up!

7 Note the paradigm of right and wrong answer-based learning being used to support this argument.

8 Huh?

# Balance

By Gary S. Stager  
November 2014

Ah, balance!

Balance is the Fabreze of education policy. It is a chemical spray designed to mask the stench of a two year-old tuna sandwich found in the minivan with the artificial bouquet of an April rain dancing on a lily pad.

- Balanced literacy got us systemic phonics.
- Balanced math begot Singapore Math worksheets.
- Balanced standards produced The Common Core.
- Balanced policy debates produced No Child Left Behind and Race-to-the-Top
- A balanced approach to educational technology made computer science extinct in schools and has now taught two generations of children to find the space bar in a computer lab-based keyboarding class.

I could go on.

Balance is elusive. It is fake and lazy and cowardly and sad. Balance is embraced by those who don't know or can't/won't articulate what they truly believe. Balance fills the void left by the absence of alternative models and excellence. It is anonymous.

Educators are told that passion should be tempered. Every pedagogical idea is just fine as long as it is "for the children." We should just do our jobs and not complain about outrageous attacks on our dignity, paycheck, curriculum, working conditions, or the living conditions of the students we serve.

Balance fills the school day with mandates and directives and lots of interruptions that while offering an illusion of options make it impossible for a learner to focus on anything long enough to become good at it.

Balance teaches children that teachers are helpless pawns in a system they don't control or cannot understand.

Balance is the absentee parent of incrementalism. As educators take "baby steps" towards what they know is right or righteous they lead a long and meandering hike after which the followers cannot remember the original destination.

"This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the [tranquilizing drug of gradualism](#)." (Martin Luther King, Jr., 1963)

Educators are to remain neutral and seek consensus at all-costs. Balance programs us to find the silver lining in tornados. There MUST be SOMETHING good in what Bill Gates

or Sal Khan or any number of a million corporations with *ED* or *MENTUM* or *ACHIEVE* or *VATION* in their names happen to be peddling. That simply is not so.

The laws of the political universe, and education is inherently political, greet each embrace of "balance" as ten steps in a more conservative direction. There is no balance - just weakness.

**When schools seek balance, the weeds always kill the flowers!**

I urge you to read [one of my favorite passages](#) ever written about "balance" in education. It is from a lesser-known classic, [On Being a Teacher](#)," by the great American educator, Jonathan Kozol. Please take a few minutes to read, "[Extreme Ideas](#)."

# The Personal Road to Reinventing Mathematics Education

Math education has fascinated me for a very long time. I was always good at arithmetic and despite having a pretty bleak elementary school experience; I could do what they called, “math.” Test scores in the 6th grade indicted that I was mathematically gifted and earned me a place in something called *Unified Math*. “Unified” was an accelerated course intended to rocket me to mathematical superiority between grades 7 and 12. Rather than take discrete algebra, geometry, trigonometry, etc., Unified Math was promised as a high-speed roller-coaster ride through various branches of mathematics.

Then through the miracle of mathematics instruction I was back in a low Algebra track by 9th grade and limped along through terrible math classes until my senior year in high school. In 12th grade, I enrolled in a course called, “*Math for Liberal Arts*.” Today this course might be called, “*Math for Dummies Who Still Intend to Go to College*.” I remember my teacher welcoming us and saying, “Now, let’s see if I can teach you all the stuff my colleagues were supposed to have taught you.”

This led to two observations:

1. Mr. O’Connor knew there was something terribly wrong with math education in his school.
2. I looked around the room and realized that most of my classmates had been in Unified Math with me in 7th grade. These lifeless souls identified as mathematically gifted six years ago were now in the “Math for Dummies Who Still Intend to Go to College” class. If this occurred to me, I wondered why none of the smart adults in the school or district had observed this destructive pattern?

Two things I learned in school between 7th and 12th grade kept me sane. I learned to program computers and compose music. I was actually quite good at both and felt confident thinking symbolically. However, majoring in computer science was a path closed to me since I wasn't good at (school) math – or so I was told.

I began teaching children in 1982 and teachers in 1983. I was 18-19 years old at the time. While teaching others to program, I saw them engage with powerful mathematical ideas in ways they had never experienced before. Often, within a few minutes of working on a personally meaningful programming project, kids and teachers alike would experience mathematical epiphanies in which they learned “more math” than during their entire schooling.

In the words of [Seymour Papert](#), “They were being mathematicians rather than being taught math.”

Teaching kids to program in Logo exposed me to Papert's “[Mathland](#),” a place inside of computing where one could learn to be a mathematician as casually as one would learn French by living in France, as opposed to being taught French in a New Jersey high school class for forty-three minutes per day.

I met Seymour Papert in 1985 and had the great privilege of working with him for the next 20+ years.

Papert was a great mathematician with a couple of doctorates in the subject. He was the expert Jean Piaget called upon to help him understand how children construct mathematical knowledge. Papert then went on to be a pioneer in artificial intelligence and that work returned him to thinking about thinking. This time, Papert thought that if young children could teach a computer to think (via programming), they would become better thinkers themselves. With Cynthia Solomon and Wally Feurzig, Papert invented the first programming language for children, called Logo. That was in 1968.

What makes Papert so extraordinary is that despite being a gifted mathematician he possesses the awareness and empathy required to notice that not everyone feels the same way about mathematics or their mathematical ability as he does. His life's work was dedicated to a notion he first expressed in the 1960s. Instead of teaching children a math they hate,

why not offer them a mathematics they can love?

As an active member of what was known as the Logo community, I met mathematicians who loved messing about with mathematics in a way completely foreign to my secondary math teachers. I also met gifted educators who made all sorts of mathematics accessible to children in new and exciting ways. I fell in love with branches of mathematics I would never have been taught in school and I understood them. Computer programming was an onramp to intellectual empowerment; math class was a life sentence.

It became clear to me that there is no discipline where there exists a wider gap than the crevasse between the subject and the teaching of that subject than between the beauty, power, wonder, and utility of mathematics and what kids get in school – math.

Papert has accused school math of “killing something I love.”

Marvin Minsky said that what’s taught in school doesn’t even deserve to be called mathematics, perhaps it should just be called “Ma.”

Conrad Wolfram, says that every discipline is faced with the choice between teaching the mechanics of today and the essence of the subject. Wolfram estimates that schools spend 80% of their time and effort teaching hand calculations at the expense of mathematics. That may be a generous evaluation.

Over the years, I’ve gotten to know gifted mathematicians like Brian Silverman, David Thornburg, Seymour Papert, Marvin Minsky, and Alan Kay. I’ve even spent a few hours chatting with two of the world’s most preeminent mathematicians, John Conway and Stephen Wolfram. In each instance, I found (real) mathematicians to embody the same soul, wit, passion, creativity, and kindness found in the jazz musicians I adore. More significantly, math teachers often made me feel stupid; mathematicians never did.

### **Time for Action**

The 1999 National Council of Teachers of Mathematics Standards said, “50% of all mathematics has been invented since World War II.” This is the result of two factors; the social science’s increasing demand for number and computing.

These new branches of mathematics are beautiful, useful, playful, visual, wondrous, and experimental. Computing makes some of these domains accessible to even young children, and yet you are unlikely to find the likes number theory, chaos, cellular automata, fractal geometry, topology... in the K-12 math curriculum.

Hell, I dream of a day when a math textbook uses the symbol for multiplication used on computer keyboards for a half century. It makes my head explode when a high school student doesn’t know how to ask a computer to multiply two numbers.

Since *No Child Left Behind*, parents, politicians, and educators have been engaged in a death match known as the **Math Wars**. The prescribed algorithmic tricks proscribed by The Common Core have thrown dynamite on the raging fire about how best to teach math. Ignorance, fear, and superstition are a volatile brew and impediment to learning.

Conrad Wolfram estimates that 20,000 student lifetimes are wasted each year by school children engaged in mechanical (pencil and worksheet) calculations. Expressed another way, we are spending twelve years educating kids to be a poor facsimile of a \$2 calculator. Forty years after the advent of cheap portable calculators, we are still debating whether children should be allowed to use one.

We are allowing education policy and curriculum to be shaped by the mathematical superstitions of Trump voters. Educators need to take mathematics back and let Pearson keep “math.”

## **Hard, Not Fun**

When Barbie said, “Math is hard,” the politically-correct class expressed their faux outrage, but Barbie was speaking a ubiquitous truth only tacitly acknowledged by the brave or those severely damaged my school math. If math is hard, fixing mathematics education is even harder.

Study after study tell us that kids hate math, computers are less likely to be used in a math class than anywhere else in school, teachers have little confidence in their own mathematical abilities and were poor math students, formidable gender gaps still exist – even the stupid test scores by which some measure “achievement” are static or worse.

Faced with an abundance of research, personal history, and good old-fashioned intuition while screaming from the rooftops that math education is a shambolic failure, we just double down on what does not work.

## **Hope**

Against this backdrop of panic, misery, and despair there is room for optimism.

There is a renewed attention being paid to the importance of S.T.E.M. and S.T.E.A.M.

We live in a complex society awash in data. Citizenship depends on strong mathematical thinking and modeling skills.

Computational power has never been cheaper, easier to use, or portable. Today, you can ask your phone any question found in the K-12 math curriculum and receive an immediate answer. It can even “show all work.” How will math education respond to this reality?

The maker movement has reenergized timeless craft traditions and supercharged such creative human expression with new tools and computational materials.

Kids are miserable. Parents are fed-up. They are not only opting out of standardized testing, but rejecting that which is tested and the way it is taught.

## **Why Progressive Educators Should Care About Reinventing**

## **Mathematics Education**

I had a conversation with Dr. Papert in 2004 in which he was on-fire about the need to revolutionize math education with all the urgency our society can muster. When I asked if his focus on math education was because he was a mathematician, Papert rattled off more than a dozen reasons why this was a priority.

One argument in particular stayed with me while I have forgotten others.

Papert said that no pedagogical innovation of the past century has had any real impact on math education and if that were not disconcerting enough, it ultimately meant that in practice, no matter how progressive or learner-centered a school aspired to be, there was one point in the school day when “coercion was reintroduced into the system.” Math class was when kids felt badly about themselves and were being taught irrelevant tricks they might need one day.

Papert argued that this scenario was corrosive to any other constructive efforts undertaken by a school, eventually undermining efforts like project-based learning, authentic assessment, student led inquiry, and other aspects of constructivist teaching. There is no way to make a noxious math curriculum more palatable.

Papert would ask how math class could feel more like art class, where students would become lost in their work, think deeply, act creatively, and produce an artifact they were proud of?

Most discussions of math education define “reform” as devising a clever new teaching trick or test intended to fix the kid and make them understand what’s in a textbook relatively unchanged since the advent of movable type. This is the time for action.

# George Lakoff

George Lakoff has retired as Distinguished Professor of Cognitive Science and Linguistics at the University of California at Berkeley. He is now Director of the Center for the Neural Mind & Society ([cnms.berkeley.edu](http://cnms.berkeley.edu)).

## A Minority President: Why the Polls Failed, And What the Majority Can Do

NOVEMBER 22, 2016 *By* George Lakoff *in* POLITICAL 4 COMMENTS

*By* George Lakoff

### 1. The American Majority

Hillary Clinton won the majority of votes in this year's presidential election.

The loser, for the majority of voters, will now be a minority president-elect. Don't let anyone forget it. Keep referring to Trump as the minority president, Mr. Minority and the overall Loser. Constant repetition, with discussion in the media and over social media, questions the legitimacy of the minority president to ignore the values of the majority. The majority, at the very least, needs to keep its values in the public eye and view the minority president's action through majority American values.

The polls failed and the nation needs to know why. The pollsters and pundits have not given a satisfactory answer.

I will argue that the nature of mind is not a mere technical issue for the cognitive and brain sciences, but that it had everything to do with the outcome of the 2016 election — and the failure of the pollsters, the media, and Democrats to predict it. They were not alone. The public needs to understand better how the human mind works in general — but especially in politics. There is a lot to know. Let us go step by step.

## 2. The Mind

I am a cognitive scientist. I study the human mind. Our minds are neural minds. The mind is physical, constituted by the neural circuitry of our brains and bodies. Most thought is unconscious, since we don't have conscious access to our neural circuitry. Conscious thought is a small part of thought — estimates by neuroscientists vary between a general "most" to as much as 98%, with consciousness as the tip of the mental iceberg. We do know that people tend to make decisions unconsciously before becoming consciously aware of them. How the neural unconscious functions in decision-making is vitally important for politics.

## 3. Worldviews and Worldview Differences

Our fixed worldviews are made up of complex ideas carried over by relatively fixed neural circuitry. Our worldviews determine how we think the world operates, as well as how we think it *should* operate. In short, our worldviews are constituted by neural circuitry for what we understand as normal, and what we take as right and wrong.

There are, of course, radical differences in worldview, and we see those differences in politics, religion, culture, and so on.

Here is the crucial fact about worldview differences: **We can only understand what our brain circuitry allows us to understand.** If facts don't fit the worldviews in our brains, the facts may not even be noticed — or they may be puzzling, or ignored, or rejected outright, or if threatening, attacked. All of these happen in politics. A global warming denier does not say, "I am denying science." The facts just don't fit his worldview and don't make sense to him or her.

Consider some all too real examples.

- If you have an evangelical religious belief that the End Days are near, when the believers will be swept up to Heaven and the evil people left behind destroyed. The issue will be whether *you* will be saved, not the planet.
- Suppose you believe, as many do, that laissez-faire capitalism is both natural and supremely moral. The most important, natural, and *right* thing to do would be to maximize your profits, and those of the firms you invest in, while you are alive on earth. Then it will make sense to maximize fossil fuel profits. Passing them up for the sake of the planet will not make sense.
- Suppose you are a small-time rancher with a small herd of cattle in a remote area of a red state, living next to a federal nature preserve where there are endangered species. You work hard, have a hard time making a living, cannot afford expensive feed for your cattle, and think you should be able to have your cattle graze on the "unused" publicly-owned land next door so you can make ends meet. So you just tear down the fence and drive your cattle in. The feds tell you to leave, but the Republican governor tells the state police to leave you alone, and the Republican elected judge rules for you over the government. You feel morally vindicated.

**You can only make sense of what the neural circuitry characterizing your worldview allows you to make sense of.**

What about undeniable all-important facts that violate one's moral worldview, like the Trump election? That can result in shock, physical shock. We will discuss why below.

#### 4. **What is a Political Moderate?**

- A moderate has a major worldview and an opposite minor worldview.
- A moderate conservative has mostly conservative views, but some progressive views.
- A moderate progressive has mostly progressive views, but some conservative views.
- There is no political ideology shared by all moderates.
- There is no consistent political "middle."

#### 5. **Bi-conceptuals**

In order to be a moderate, you have to hold two opposing worldviews at once, but apply them to different issues. How can you have two opposing worldviews in the same brain, when each is a fixed neural circuit? Easy. They "inhibit" each other: turning one on turns the other off. This is called mutual inhibition. It is common in the brain.

Political change has worked through bi-conceptualism — through moving minor worldviews in a more major direction, by "strengthening" minor worldviews until they become major.

#### 6. **Frames**

A worldview is an overall conceptual framework you use to understand the world. It is made up of mental "frames," which are used to understand situations. A restaurant frame contains waiters/waitresses), customers, tables and chairs, a chef, a menu, food, a check, and so on, together with expectations about what each will do. Political worldviews are complexes of political frames that fit together coherently.

Words have meanings that are defined relative to conceptual frames. If you hear "Here's the dinner menu", you know you're in a restaurant. If you hear, "What's the easiest way to eliminate the Department of Education?", you know you're with the Trump transition team.

#### 7. **Language in Politics**

In politics, institutions, and cultural life, words tend not to be neutral. Instead their meanings are defined with respect to political worldviews. There are conservative and liberal vocabularies. "Save the planet!" is liberal. "Energy independence" is a conservative 'dog whistle.' It means dig coal and drill for oil and gas, even on public lands, and don't invest seriously in solar and wind. Some might think those are politically neutral expressions. If you take them literally and ignore worldview differences, you might think everyone should want to save the planet and everyone should want energy independence. Liberals want literal energy independence, but through sustainable energy like solar and wind. Conservatives don't believe in man-made climate change and want energy independence through maximizing coal, gas, and oil. Politically charged meanings put the other side in a bind. The opposition cannot answer directly. You won't hear conservatives say "I don't want to save the planet," nor liberals say, "I'm against energy independence." Instead they have to change the frame.

In general, negating a frame just activates the frame and makes it stronger. I wrote a book called “Don’t Think of an Elephant!” to make that point. Liberals are often caught in this trap. If a conservative says, “we should have tax relief,” she is using the metaphor that taxation is an affliction that we need relief from. If a liberal replies, “No, we don’t need tax relief,” she is accepting the idea that taxation is an affliction. The first thing that is, or should be, taught about political language is not to repeat the language of the other side or negate their framing of the issue.

The Clinton campaign consistently violated the lesson of *Don’t Think of an Elephant!* They used negative campaigning, assuming they could turn Trump’s most outrageous words against him. They kept running ads showing Trump forcefully expressing views that liberals found outrageous. Trump supporters liked him for forcefully saying things that liberals found outrageous. They were ads paid for by the Clinton campaign that raised Trump’s profile with his potential supporters!

The basic lesson comes from a legendary story in framing circles. Lesley Stahl interviewed Ronald Reagan, bringing up stinging criticisms of Reagan. The morning after the interview ran on tv Reagan’s chief of staff called Stahl and thanked her for the interview. “But I was criticizing him,” Stahl replied. The response was jovial, “But if you turned off the sound, he looked terrific. The presidential image is what will be remembered.”

The more neural circuits are activated, the more the stronger their synapses get, and so the more easily they can be activated again and the more likely they will become permanent. The more the public hears one side’s language, or sees one side’s images, the more that side’s frames will be activated, and the more that side’s worldview will be strengthened in the brains of those who watch and listen. This is why political communication systems matter.

Think for a moment of the conservative Leadership Institute’s 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary boast that they had trained over 159,000 local conservative spokespeople from all over America in 20 years. Think of 159,000 trained conservative local leaders and spokespeople spread over all those red states on the 2016 presidential electoral map, in addition to Fox News and Rush Limbaugh. That is how working white men and women, who might have started out as liberals or moderates years ago, gradually became more conservative by hearing conservative language day after day.

And it was through such repetitive exposure every day to Trump’s forceful language and forceful image, through free media and social media, that a great many people were affected.

## 8. Metaphors We Vote By

Much of unconscious thought is metaphorical. Not fanciful or “poetic” metaphors, but everyday ones we generally don’t notice. We understand More as being Up, as in “Turn up the radio,” which does not mean to throw it up to the ceiling. We understand achieving goals as reaching destinations: “You’ll get there. There’s nothing standing in your way. We can see the light at the end of the tunnel.” The many metaphorical expressions reveal the presence of a *conceptual* metaphor, a mode of metaphorical thought. There’s nothing special about metaphorical thought. Given commonplace experience in the world and given a neural system, thousands of everyday metaphorical thoughts arise spontaneously. It happens around the world, and it mostly goes unnoticed, carried out by your neural system.

Certain kinds of metaphorical thought, which go largely unnoticed, are central to our politics, as we shall see.

## 9. Values Over Demographics

Briefly, the polls failed because they work by demography, using census data, and other readily accessible data. The census tells us where people live, their age, gender, ethnicity, educational level, marital status, income level, etc. These are objective data, and this kind of data is easy to get and sample. But demographic data leaves out what is most important in elections and in political polling generally: Values! One's sense of right and wrong. That omission was crucial in this election.

It is not just crucial in polling. It is also crucial in journalism. Most people in the press also talk as if demography were the gold standard of political truth: the suburban educated women, the Hispanics, the white working class — all defined by demographics. But the relationship between voting and demographics is not one-to-one. This election showed that in spades. Many progressives think the same way: Demography and issues — issue by issue. Democrats looking for donors will ask, "What is your most important issue?" Instead, the **values** that define one's deepest identity are what matters most. Polling issue-by-issue misses the overall values that are all too often primary in elections.

Indeed, the very question, "What is your most important issue?" almost guarantees that climate change will barely enter the electoral debate. What comes to mind when the question is asked are relatively immediate concerns — jobs, health care, immigration, poverty, student debt, and so on. Global warming is not seen as imminent — it comes in about number 20 on the list of voters' "most important issues."

Part of the reason is that the causal link between global warming and weather disasters is not direct, but is a result of systemic factors in the ecosystem. High temperatures over the Pacific produce more evaporation, which means high energy water molecules go into the air, blow northeast and in winter come down as snow in Washington — more than ever before! The weather disasters throughout the country — severe hurricanes, floods, droughts, fires, — are often systemically caused by global warming and they should be named as such — a global warming hurricane, a climate change flood, a global warming drought, global warming fires — with illustrations of the systemic steps involved in the cause. To establish a frame, you need a name.

I've been studying such matters from the perspective of the neural mind for two decades, starting with *Moral Politics* (now in its Third Edition) and in seven books and dozens of papers, as well as with those doing survey and experimental research. Because this perspective has not been part of the public discourse, it is worth going over in some detail.

## 10. All Politics Is Moral

When a political leader proposes a policy, the assumption is that the policy is right, not wrong or morally irrelevant.

No political leader says, "Do what I say because it's evil. It's the devil's work, but do it!" Nor will a political leader say, "My policy proposal is morally irrelevant. It's neither right nor wrong. It doesn't really matter. Just do it."

When political leaders have opposing policies, that means they have opposing moral worldviews.

### 11. Why do voters vote their values?

Everyone likes to think of himself or herself as a good person. That means that your moral system is a major part of your identity — who you most deeply are. Voting against your moral identity would be a rejection of self.

That is why poor conservatives vote against their material interests. They are voting for their moral worldviews to dominate, and for public respect for their values.

### 12. The Mystery

In the 1990's, as part of my research in the cognitive and brain sciences, I undertook to answer a question in my field: How do the various policy positions of conservatives and progressives hang together? Take conservatism: What does being against abortion have to do with being for owning guns? What does owning guns have to do with denying the reality of global warming? How does being anti-government fit with wanting a stronger military? How can you be pro-life and for the death penalty? How do these conservative positions make sense together? Progressives have the opposite views. How do their views hang together?

### 13. The Nation as Family Metaphor

The answer came from a realization that we tend to understand the nation metaphorically in family terms: We have founding *fathers*. We send our *sons* and *daughters* to war. We have *homeland* security. The conservative and progressive worldviews dividing our country can most readily be understood in terms of moral worldviews that are encapsulated in two very different idealizations of family life: The Nurturant Parent family (progressive) and the Strict Father family (conservative).

### 14. Why Idealizations of the Family?

What do social issues and their politics have to do with idealizations of the family? We are first governed in our families, and so we grow up understanding governing institutions in terms of the governing systems of families. Those governing institutions can be classrooms, teams, armies, churches, businesses, and so on. Nurturant and Strict family models pervade our culture.

### 15. Idealized Nurturant Families

Nurturance starts with empathy. In nurturant families, caring for a child requires knowing what the child needs and wants. It requires open, two-way conversation. Parents have to take care of themselves if they are to care of their children. For their well-being, children need clear limits and guidelines (Don't put your hand on a hot stove. You'll get burned.), personal responsibilities ("Brush your teeth"), and family responsibilities ("Take care of your sister. Set the table.") Children also need to empathize with others and act on that empathy. If not, as Barack Obama said in his 2008 Father's Day speech, we'll have a generation of people who don't care about anybody else. Children also need to be fulfilled in life, and for this they need education, exercise, good health, a connection to nature, and a warm social life. And if some children require special attention, either because they are very young, or ill, or injured, or have other inherent problems, the rest of the family has to step up to help out.

## 16. Nurturance and Progressive Values

These family values map via metaphor onto progressive political values: Citizens care about other citizens and act through their government to provide public resources for all, for both businesses and individuals. That's how America started. The genius of the founding fathers centered on public resources. The public resources used by businesses were not only roads and bridges, but public education, a national bank, a patent office, courts for business cases, interstate commerce support, and of course the criminal justice system. From the beginning, **the private depended on public resources** — both private enterprise and private life. In private life, there were laws to protect freedoms and basic rights, as well as resources like police protection, public education, a national currency, access to banks for loans, courts for redress of grievances, and goods made available through interstate commerce.

Over time public resources have grown to include sewers, water and electricity, government protections in the form of “regulations” to keep unscrupulous corporations from harming the public, and to keep banks, mortgage holders, and investment houses from cheating the public. As commerce grew, the need for protective regulations grew into whole regulatory agencies of government. Modern life now depends on even more public resources, such as research universities and research support: computer science (via the NSF), the internet (from ARPA), pharmaceuticals and modern medicine (via the NIH), satellite communication (NASA and NOAA), and GPS systems and cell phones (satellite systems maintained with security and unbelievable precision by the Defense Department).

Private enterprise and private life utterly depend on public resources. Not on “the government.” But on “the public.” What these public resources provide is freedom: freedom to start and run a business, and freedom in private life. You're not free if you are not educated; your possibilities in life are limited. You're not free, if you have cancer and no health insurance. You're not free if you have no income — or not enough for basic needs. And if you work for a large company, you may not be free without a union. Unions free workers from corporate servitude — free working people to have a living wage, safety on the job, regular working hours, a pension, health benefits, dignity.

All of this arises from basic progressive values — empathy and care for one another — at the level of the nation.

## 17. The Strict Father and Conservative Values

In the strict father family, father knows best. He knows right from wrong and has the ultimate authority to make sure his children and his spouse do what he says, which is taken to be what is right. Many conservative spouses accept this worldview, uphold the father's authority, and are strict in those realms of family life that they are in charge of.

When his children disobey, it is the strict father's moral duty to punish them painfully enough so that, to avoid punishment, they will obey him (do what is right) and not just do what feels good. Through physical discipline they are supposed to become disciplined, internally strong, and able to prosper in the external world. What if they don't prosper? That means they are not disciplined, and therefore cannot be moral, and so deserve their poverty.

This reasoning shows up in conservative politics in which the poor are seen as lazy and undeserving, and the rich as deserving their wealth. Responsibility is thus taken to be *personal responsibility* not social responsibility. What you become is only up to you; society has nothing to do with it. You are responsible for yourself, not for others, who are responsible for themselves.

## 18. The Moral Hierarchy

The strict father logic extends further. The basic idea is that authority is justified by morality (the strict father version), and that, in a world ordered by nature, there should be (and traditionally has been) a moral hierarchy in which those who have traditionally dominated *should* dominate.

The hierarchy is: God above Man, Man above Nature, The Disciplined (Strong) above the Undisciplined (Weak), The Rich above the Poor, Employers above Employees, Adults above Children, Western culture above other cultures, America above other countries. The hierarchy extends to: Men above women, Whites above Nonwhites, Christians above nonChristians, Straights above Gays.

On the whole, conservative policies flow from the strict father worldview and this hierarchy. Trump is an extreme case, though very much in line with conservative policies.

## 19. Strict Father Complexities

There are political policies that follow from strict father morality. As we discuss them, please bear in mind that many if not most conservatives are bi-conceptual, that is, that have a strict father major worldview and a nurturant minor worldview on some issues or other.

**In-Group Nurturance:** More importantly, it is common for conservatives to show in-group nurturance — care for members of some in-group. What counts as an in-group varies.

- The minimal in-group is your family.
- The in-group can be members of your church or your religion — and the church or religion may offer help to the needy members of the church or religion.
- The in-group can be in the military, with military family getting housing, education, health care, and cheaper goods on the military base, and where platoon-members (“bands of brothers”) are taken care of and never left behind.
- In small towns all over America where people are mostly conservative, the in-group can be community members and whoever lives in the town. The small-town nurturance for long-term neighbors can override differences in politics, race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and so on.

This means that in national or state politics, one may be a typical conservative, but those political views can be adjusted locally by moderation or in-group nurturance. Part of the conservative revolution of 1994 was the move by Newt Gingrich to rid the Republican party of moderates by running extreme conservatives against them in primaries.

It is also important to remember that moderate progressives are biconceptuals, that they have a minor conservative worldview on a certain issues, and that they can be made more conservative by repeated conservative language

## 20. Strict Father Political Policies

The most obvious strict father political policies are the following, group by group.

### **White Evangelical Christians:**

Right-wing white evangelicals offer you a strict father God you are to fear — who can send you to burn in hell for eternity. Sinners get a second chance, to become “born again.” After that, sinners who don’t follow his commandments will burn in hell. Those who follow the commandments will be “saved.”

The moral hierarchy creates a white evangelical politics:

- God above Man: Churches get major tax breaks, and seek public funding for religious schools.
- Men Above Women: Men get to decide on reproduction. Against Planned Parenthood, abortion, and morning-after pills. For laws requiring spousal and parental notification prior to abortion.
- Marriage between a man and a woman: no gay marriage.
- Child-rearing should follow the strict father model.
- Religious Christmas scenes in public places funded by public money.
- Large crosses erected on public land.
- The Ten Commandments in courtrooms.
- Political candidates must proclaim their religion.

### **Laissez-Faire Free Marketeers:**

Corporations and those who own and run them are metaphorical strict fathers. Corporations are “persons” who can engage in political lobbying, who seek to maximize their profits, set rules for their employees and can punish them in various ways, ultimately by firing them or laying them off.

Corporate conservatives want laissez-faire free markets, where wealthy people and corporations set market rules in their favor with minimal government regulation and enforcement. They see taxation not as investment in publicly provided resources for all citizens, but as government taking their earnings (their private property) and giving the money through government programs to those who don’t deserve it. This is the source of establishment Republicans’ anti-tax and shrinking government views. This version of conservatism is quite happy with outsourcing to increase profits by sending manufacturing and many services abroad where labor is cheap, with the consequence that well-paying jobs leave America and wages are driven down here. They profit from many cheap imports important for business profits, such as steel, building materials, electronic parts, etc.

They also want to privatize public resources as much as possible: eliminate public schools, publicly financed health insurance, drill and mine on public lands, build private highways, and so on.

### **The White Working Class:**

Many members of the white working class have strict father morality, even those in unions. Many have their strict father views limited to their home life, but many have them as a major worldview. As conservatives, they believe in individual responsibility not government “handouts;” they may resent union dues and prefer “right to work” laws; and they may implicitly accept the moral hierarchy and believe they are superior to nonwhites, Latinos, nonChristians, and gays and should be in a higher

financial and social position. Conservative women may accept their position as inferior to their men, but still see themselves above the rest of the hierarchy. The white working class has been hit hard by income inequality, globalization and outsourcing, computerization, the decline of coal mining, low-wage chain stores driving out small business, and if older, ageism. They are largely uneducated and see themselves as looked down on by the educated “elite” who tell them that everyone should go to college to merit today’s jobs. They also resent “political correctness,” which directs resources to those who need them even more, but are lower on the conservative moral hierarchy. They want the respect of being on the right side of politics, of having their moral views— and hence their deepest identity — confirmed.

## **Political Correctness**

Nurturant parent morality puts a premium on helping those in the family who need it the most: infants, sick or injured children, and so on.

In liberal politics, those lower on the conservative moral hierarchy are seen to have been victimized by those who are more powerful. The result is a reverse moral hierarchy, in which the less powerful are more deserving of assistance than the more powerful: the poor more than the non-poor, non-white more than white, women more than men, immigrants more than residents, and so on.

The white working class calls this view “political correctness.” It leaves out poor whites, especially in nonurban areas, who have had to face the problems of a culture that, as we have just seen, has been devastated by corporate greed (income inequality, globalization and outsourcing, computerization, and low-wage chain stores driving out small business) and factors like the decline of coal mining.

All three of these groups — evangelicals, corporatists, and the white working class correctly saw the Supreme Court issue as central to upholding their values across the board, on all issues.

## **The Main Issue Is Identity**

For each type of conservative, the main issue is one’s identity, which is defined by strict father values. One can have a religious version, a business version, or a working class resentment version, but in each case self-identity is the issue. That is why those who voted for Trump didn’t care if he constantly lied, or if he treated women outrageously, or if he was ignorant of foreign policy. What mattered was the voter’s moral identity, the voter’s sense of right and wrong, the voter’s self-respect as a conservative.

Trump and those in his campaign understood this. Those in the Democratic party, the media, and pollsters did not.

## **21. Why the Moral Indicators Were Missed**

Corporatist Republican leaders tended to study business economics in college, and as a result studied marketing. Marketing professors study the mind and how people really think: using frames, metaphors, narratives, images, and emotions — mostly applied to advertising. These Republican leaders learned how to market their ideas.

Progressives who go to college with a primary concentration on politics tend to study political science, law, public policy, and economic theory. Those courses of study almost never include cognitive science, neuroscience, and cognitive linguistics — and so progressives interested in politics don't learn about the Neural Mind, that is, about unconscious thought, frames, conceptual metaphors, moral worldviews, the role of language, etc.

Instead, they are taught a version of Enlightenment reason, following René Descartes around 1650, namely:

- that all thought is conscious
- that reason is a matter of logic, as in a mathematical proof
- that since reason defines what means to be human, all rational people reason according to logic
- and therefore, if you give everybody the facts, they ought to all reason to the right conclusion.

This is an utterly false theory of reason — taught as rationality and “critical thinking.” It was vitally important during the Enlightenment because it taught that people could think for themselves and did not have to follow the thinking the kings and religious leaders. One might like it to be true, but it isn't.

## **2. False Reason, False Analyses**

The polls, the media, and the Democratic Party all failed to understand conservative values and their importance. They failed to understand unconscious thought and moral worldviews. While hailing science in the case of climate change, they ignored science when it came to their own minds. The pollsters, given easy access to demographics via census and other data, came up with their own view of mind, that demographics reflects public opinion, and that public opinion understood this way, drives elections. This amounts to a strange demographic theory of mind, that demography determines thought.

The demographic theory of mind is naturally paired with the view that people simply vote their material interests, that their interests vary, and hence that issues are separable. This is widely assumed, despite the well-known facts that poor conservatives and rich liberals often vote against their material interests.

But it does make polling — and fund raising — easier. Just ask people what their most important issues are, or to what degree that are for or against a particular policy.

### **The Justifications**

This type of polling has its justifications.

First, people with similar worldviews can tend to cluster in some demographic categories.

Second, most of polling is done by advertisers selling products. If the polls miss by differences as small as those between Trump and Clinton, they are doing well by their clients.

Incidentally, polling methodology used in advertising leads to the view that candidates are products, to be sold like cars, pharmaceuticals, and beauty products, and have to establish a recognizable, popular brand.

It is true that moral worldviews generalize over specific issues, and so a specific issue can activate a general worldview. But the general moral worldview is not studied or discussed.

### **An Alternative**

There is a way out that may be simple, but need to be tested. One can include questions about values, even if the values are unconscious. The technique was developed by Elisabeth Wehling, Matt Feinberg (U. of Toronto), Laura Saslow (U. of Michigan), and myself. It was based on the conceptual metaphor of the Nation As Family, with two types of families — strict and nurturant. Technically, a conceptual metaphor is a neural mapping, linking the frame structure of one domain (e.g., the values of a type of family) to another domain (e.g., political views about the nation).

Beginning with the theory proposed in my 1996 book, *Moral Politics*, we constructed two mappings linking family values to political values. We separated the family values from the political values and randomized each. We then asked, in surveys and experiments, the randomized questions to see if the correlations fit the predications of the mappings.

The correlations were overwhelming, and are reported in Elisabeth Wehling's 2013 doctoral dissertation, *A nation under joint custody: How conflicting family models divide US-politics*. The basic idea is that of a Moral Politics Scale that can be used in surveys, and that might be included in future polls. Questions about family values can be used as indicators of the moral values used in political worldviews. Other studies have been done and are in the publication pipeline.

A few early studies do not, and should not, create a field, but it is a beginning. Polling studies using these ideas need to be done.

### **23. Clever Trump**

Democrats and most of the media looked upon Trump as a clown, a dimwit, a mere jerk, a reality show star, who did not understand the issues and who could not possibly win when he was insulting so many demographic groups. I am anything but a Trump fan, but I estimated that he would get about 47% of the vote. Although I was sure he wouldn't quite win, I kept warning people that he could, especially given the Democrats' failure to understand the role of values.

Nine months before the election I wrote about how Trump used the brains of people listening to him to his advantage. Here is a recap of how Trump does it, with examples taken from his campaign.

Unconscious thought works by certain basic mechanisms. Trump uses them instinctively to turn people's brains toward what he wants: Absolute authority, money, power, and celebrity.

The mechanisms are:

1. Words are neurally linked to the circuits that determine their meaning. The more a word is heard, the more the circuit is activated and the stronger it gets, and so the easier it is to fire again. Trump

repeats. *Win. Win, Win. We're gonna win so much you'll get tired of winning.*

2. Framing: *Crooked Hillary*. Framing Hillary as purposely and knowingly committing crimes for her own benefit, which is what a crook does. Repeating makes many people unconsciously think of her that way, even though she has always been found to have been honest and legal by thorough studies by the right-wing Benghazi committee (which found nothing) and the FBI (which found nothing to charge her with.) Yet the framing worked.

There is a common metaphor that Immorality Is Illegality, and that acting against Strict Father Morality (the only kind of morality recognized) is being immoral. Since virtually everything Hillary Clinton has ever done has violated Strict Father Morality, that makes her immoral to strict conservatives. The metaphor makes her actions immoral, which makes her a crook. The chant "Lock her up!" activates this whole line of reasoning.

3. Well-known examples: When a well-publicized disaster happens, the coverage is repeated over and over, and watched on tv and read about many times. Neurally, the repetition activates the frame-circuitry for it over and over, strengthening the synapses with each repetition. Neural circuits with strong synapses can be activated more easily than those with weak synapses, and so the probability that they will be activated is higher. And so the frame is more likely to be activated.

Repeated examples of shootings by Muslims, African-Americans, and Latinos make it seem probable that it could happen to you. It thus raises fears that it could happen to you and your community — despite the miniscule actual probability. Trump uses this technique to create fear. Fear tends to activate desire for a strong strict father to protect you — namely, Trump.

4. Grammar: *Radical Islamic terrorists*: "Radical" puts Muslims on a linear scale and "terrorists" imposes a frame on the scale, suggesting that terrorism is built into the religion itself. The grammar suggests that there is something about Islam that has terrorism inherent in it. Imagine calling the Charleston gunman a "radical Republican terrorist."

Trump is aware of this to at least some extent. As he said to Tony Schwartz, the ghost-writer who wrote *The Art of the Deal* for him, "I call it *truthful hyperbole*. It's an innocent form of exaggeration — and it's a very effective form of promotion."

5. Conventional metaphorical thought is inherent in our largely unconscious thought. Such normal modes of metaphorical thinking are not noticed as such. Consider Brexit, which used the metaphor of "entering" and "leaving" the EU.

There is a universal metaphor that states are bounded regions in space: you can *enter* a state, be *deep in* some state, and *come out of* that state. If you enter a café and then leave the café, you will be in the same location as before you entered.

But that need not be true of states of being. But that was the metaphor used with Brexit; Britons believed that after *leaving* the EU, things would be as before when they *entered* the EU. They were wrong. Things changed radically while they were in the EU.

That same metaphor is being used by Trump: *Make America Great Again. Make America Safe Again.* And so on. As if there was some past ideal state that we can go back to just by electing Trump.

6. There is also a metaphor that A Country Is a Person and a metonymy of the President Standing For the Country. Thus, Obama, via both metaphor and metonymy, can stand conceptually for America. Therefore, by saying that Obama is weak and not respected, it is communicated that America, with Obama as president, is weak and disrespected. The inference is that it is because of Obama.

The corresponding inference is that, with a strong president like Trump, the country should be strong, and via strict father reasoning, respected.

7. The country as person metaphor and the metaphor that war or conflict between countries is a fistfight between people, leads to the inference that just having a strong president will guarantee that America will win conflicts and wars. Trump will just throw knockout punches. In his acceptance speech at the convention, Trump repeatedly said that *he* would accomplish things that, in reality, can only be done by the people acting with their government. After one such statement, there was a chant from the floor, "*He will do it.*"
8. The metaphor that The nation Is a Family was used throughout the GOP convention. We heard that strong military sons are produced by strong military fathers and that "defense of country is a family affair." From Trump's love of family and commitment to their success, we are to conclude that, as president he will love America's citizens and be committed to the success of all.
9. There is a common metaphor that identifying with your family's national heritage makes you a member of that nationality. Suppose your grandparents came from Italy and you identify with your Italian ancestors, you may proudly state that you are Italian. The metaphor is natural. Literally, you have been American for two generations. Trump made use of this commonplace metaphor in attacking US District Court Judge Gonzalo Curiel, who is American, born and raised in the United States. Trump said he was a Mexican, and therefore would hate him and tend to rule against him in a case brought against Trump University for fraud.
10. Then there is the metaphor system used in the phrase "to call someone out." First the word "out." There is a general metaphor that Knowing Is Seeing as in "I see what you mean." Things that are hidden inside something cannot be seen and hence not known, while things are not hidden but out in public can be seen and hence known. To "out" someone is to make their private knowledge public. To "call someone out" is to publicly name someone's hidden misdeeds, thus allowing for public knowledge and appropriate consequences.

This is the basis for the Trumpian metaphor that Naming is Identifying. Thus naming your enemies will allow you to identify correctly who they are, get to them, and so allow you to defeat them. Hence, just saying "radical Islamic terrorists" allows you to pick them out, get at them, and annihilate them. And conversely, if you don't say it, you won't be able to pick them out and annihilate them. Thus a failure to use those words means that you are protecting those enemies — in this case Muslims, that is, potential terrorists because of their religion.

I could go on, but I think you get the idea. Our neural minds think in certain patterns. Trump knows how to exploit them. Whatever other limitations on his knowledge, he knows a lot about using your brain against you to acquire and maintain power and money.

#### 24. The Media

It is vitally important for the public to be aware of how their brains can be used against them. Can the media do such a job? There are many forces militating against it.

First, there is obvious pressure on those reporting on politics in the media to assume that thought is conscious and not to talk about matters outside of public political discourse, that is, don't talk about things your audience can't understand.

Second, many in the media accept Enlightenment Reason. It is common for progressive pundits to quote conservative claims in conservative language and then argue against it, assuming that negating a frame will wipe it out, when instead negating a frame activates and strengthens the frame. They are ignoring the warnings of *Don't Think of an Elephant!*

Third, there is the metaphor that Objectivity is Balance, that interviews are about opinions and that opinions should be balanced.

Fourth, there are political and economic levers of power that are being used on the media. Trump is choosing the new members of the Federal Communications Commission, which has the power to take away broadcast licenses. The Congress has the power of the purse over National Public Broadcasting and one can already see where NPR correspondents are hesitant to challenge lies. Similarly, corporate advertisers have that power over radio and tv stations, as do their corporate owners.

Fifth, there are ratings, which mean advertising money. The head of CBS, Leslie Moonves, for example, said that CBS benefitted by giving Trump free airtime during the campaign. *"It may not be good for America, but it's good for CBS," he said.*

Sixth, it is virtually impossible during an interview to do instant fact-checking and constantly interrupting the interviewee to confront his lies, or at least report them. It would of course lead the interviewee to refuse future interviews with that reporter or that station — or keep him or her out of the White House Press Corps.

The result is media intimidation and steps toward the loss of the free press. The question is whether people in the media can join together in courage when their careers, and hence their livelihood, are threatened.

One possibility is for journalists to use more accurate language. Take government regulations. Their job is to protect the public from harm and fraud composed by unscrupulous corporations. The Trump administration wants to get rid of "regulations." They are actually getting rid of protection. Can journalists actually say they are get rid of protections, saying the word "protection," and reporting on the harm that would be done by not protecting the public.

Can the media report on corporate poisoning of the public — through introducing lead and other cancer-causing agents into the water through fracking and various manufacturing processes, through making food or toiletries that contain poisonous and cancer-causing ingredients, and on and on. The regulations are there for a purpose — protection. Can the media use the words POISON and CANCER? The public needs to know.

Seventh, there are science-of-mind constraints. Reporters and commentators are expected to stick to what is conscious and with literal meaning. But most real political discourse makes use of unconscious thought, which shapes conscious thought via unconscious framing and commonplace conceptual metaphors, as we have seen. Can the media figure out a way to say what is in this article?

More than ever we need courage and imagination in the media. It is crucial, for the history of the country and the world, as well as the planet.

## 25. What the Majority Can Do

A strong American Majority movement is necessary, and its backbone has to be a citizens' communication system — or systems — run through the internet, framing American values accurately and systemically day after day, telling truths framed by American majority moral values — and appealing honestly and forthrightly to those in-group nurturant values in small towns across America. The idea that must be brought across is empathy for those in your in-group, your town. This is basic progressive thought: citizens care about citizens and provide public resources for all, maximizing freedom. It fits in-group nurturance. And it undermines — rather than negates — strict father morality.

### What a Strict Father Cannot Be

There are certain things that strict fathers cannot be: A Loser, Corrupt, and especially not a Betrayer of Trust.

Trump lost the popular vote. To the American majority, he is a **Loser, a minority president**. It needs to be said and repeated.

Above all, Trump is a **Betrayer of Trust**. He is acting like a dictator, and is even supporting Putin's anti-American policies.

He is betraying trust in a direct way, by refusing to put his business interests in a blind trust. By doing so, and by insisting on his children both running the business and getting classified information, he is using the presidency to make himself incredibly wealthy — just as Putin has. This is **Corruption** of the highest and most blatant level. Can the media say the words: **Corruption, Betrayal of Trust**? He ran on a promise to end corruption, to “drain the swamp” in Washington. Instead, he has brought a new and much bigger swamp with him — lobbyists put in charge of one government agency after another, using public funds and the power of the government to serve corporate greed. And the biggest crock in the swamp is Trump himself!

The Trump administration will wreak havoc on the very people who voted for him in those small towns — disaster after disaster. It will be a huge betrayal. The \$500 billion in infrastructure — roads and bridges, airports, sewers, eliminating lead water pipes — will probably not make it to those thousands of small rural towns with in-group nurturance for the townspeople. How many factories with good-paying jobs can be brought to such towns? Not thousands. Many of those who voted for Trump will inevitably be among the 20 million who will lose their health care. And they will become even further victims of corporate greed — more profits going to the top one percent and more national corporations, say, fast food and big-box stores paying low wages and offering demeaning jobs will continue to wipe out local businesses. Will this be reported? Will it even be said? And if so, how will it be said in a way that doesn't wind up promoting Trump?

The American majority must create an online citizen communication network — or multiple networks — to spread its positive American values and truths as antidotes to those small towns with in-group nurturance as the Trump swamp swamps them!

The message is not merely negative, they are being betrayed. That's the *Don't Think of an Elephant!* trap. Rather it is that the town's in-group nurturance *is nurturance*. It works because care is morally right.

Right now the majority is fighting back, pointing out what is wrong with Trump day after day. In many cases, they are missing the message of *Don't Think of an Elephant!* By fighting against Trump, many protesters are just showcasing Trump, keeping him in the limelight, rather than highlighting the majority's positive moral view and viewing the problem with Trump from within the majority's positive worldview frame. To effectively fight for what is right, you have to first say what is right and why.

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## 4 responses

PATASHU (@PATASHU0) says:

February 5, 2017 at 6:21 pm

Not sure how there are no comments yet. Loved this article – very insightful, and it's Changing how I think about politics and the media.

MICHAELHB says:

February 14, 2017 at 1:02 am

This makes more sense, and frames the root of the problem more clearly, than anything I've read since the election.

TIFFANY MERCURIO says:

February 14, 2017 at 3:32 pm

Just want to say Thank you for sharing this knowledge. It's been a complete game changer for me mentally and I've been sharing it with as many people as I can.

BLAIR KILPATRICK says:

February 18, 2017 at 10:48 am

A lot to ponder here. Will share.

George Lakoff

*Blog at WordPress.com.*

