

Chapter XV.

SOME HINDRANCES TO THE MOVEMENT

The whole upward movement of society has been in the direction of acquiring freedom. The consolidation of the various social groups into a national unit was necessary to prevent defeat. The result was national freedom. Following this came the struggle for individual freedom. Throughout the middle ages and down to the middle of the nineteenth century the great fight was against feudalism, serfdom, slavery, and despotism. Having obtained political freedom, the next step was social freedom. We are to-day in the midst of this great struggle for social emancipation, and one of the most potent influences in this direction is the "universal education" which we have advocated in this paper.

Great as is the importance of this movement, yet there are many hindrances to its advancement. We have referred to the attitude of many manufacturers who openly oppose any form of education for their employees, for fear it will raise their wage bill. Then there is a large number of indifferent employers, who say—"I am getting fair results, leave well enough alone." Both these classes are undoubtedly real hindrances to the movement, and the necessity of convincing them of the value of training marks the next line of advance.

Another difficulty arises from the fact that leaders in this movement, having become saturated with the experience of foreign countries, are inclined to try to force this foreign practice upon our schools without sufficient evidence that it is suited to our special conditions. This has in some cases resulted in failure, and has given a temporary setback to the movement.

Another great obstacle is the attitude of the learned professions. It has been considered fashionable to speak of the courses in arts and medicine as general and liberal as opposed to technical. We feel confident that an examination of the facts will discover that the students taking these courses in our colleges are taking them in preparation for a definite career, and consequently we see no reason why the courses in arts and medicine should not be called vocational just the same as those in plumbing and carpentry.

Those who talk the most about this commercializing of education are teachers in schools of the conventional type. One would hardly expect that such criticism would come from this