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THE SCHOOL AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF MORAL PURPOSE

Continued from page 7

"The second of those heresies is that education is the acquisition of a body of prescribed knowledge. I say it is the enlargement of social experience. Who knows what you ought to learn. We teach it; we know all about it. That is my business—making curricula. The business of the modern child is to learn what I learned when I was a child. I can teach them that because I am doing that all the time, and because I haven't forgotten it, as the rest of the community have. Who knows what a child ought to know?

"In schools to-day they are teaching spelling. Of course, there is only one way of teaching spelling, and that is by using a list of words an intelligent child ought to be able to spell. You go into a community and you find out the words that that community uses. Now, for example, when my learned friend used that word 'implement' I did not know what he meant. We do not use language that is as fine as that down in Chicago. They take a group of children, and the way they go to work is by listening to them, by getting them to write letters, by finding what their vocabulary is and discovering the sort of words they ought to be able to spell. When I was young I was taught to spell 'ipeacuanha,' but I have never used the word since. It is a mistake to unload a lot of unnecessary knowledge upon children. No wonder they don't care for it. In the little play, 'When Bunty Pulls the Strings,' I know we ought not to get on to religion, but wasn't it here the child said: 'Father, I don't understand the catechism?' and the father said: 'It is not your business to understand it; it is your business to learn it.'

The "Cold Storage" Theory

"Ladies and gentlemen, I offer the proposition that it is not anybody's business to learn anything that he cannot use at once. The cold storage theory of piling up a lot of information for the future—and usually ninety per cent of it gets rotten before you use it—the cold storage theory, I say, has no relation to the great social process of learning the things that are worth knowing. I was brought up in London. I had an early English education. How many of you can give me the names and dates of the kings and queens of England? And you, you great spiritual souls, how many of you can give me the names and dates of the kings of Israel and Judea? You learned them. I cannot say them, and I am a theological professor,

but I can give you the names of the Hebrew prophets, because I live with the Hebrew prophets. I need them, not only in my business of teaching, but in the business of life—but I don't need Jehosaphat.

We shall have to work out the development of moral purpose—which means the enrichment of social experience—so that these representative young scholars, who for eight, ten or a dozen years are practising life, will find out things that are worth knowing in this wonderful world—and there will not be any difficulty about their working hard.

"Then there is that last heresy: the inadequate conception of education that the inculcation of obedience to authority is productive of moral purpose. Oh, I know that a great deal of what I have been suggesting calls for an answer by the exponents of standard pedagogy, but when we look at our great young people's life we see we are not getting the results.

"In my own neighborhood we have a very beautiful system of street lighting. We have some large opalescent globes through which the electric light, all the way down the avenue, gives a beautiful soft light. They are admirable targets. The open season for electric light globes begins on the first of January and closes on the thirty-first of December. Opposite our house the other day a wagon drove up and replaced some globes that had been broken, and they had just got around the corner of the street when a group of boys arrived, and all armed with pebbles. They stood about two hundred feet off and they tried who could hit it first. It costs us \$50,000 a year to replace lamps that are broken by boys. Of course, boys are bad and girls are good. In one community, among the best people, we found a gang of girls, just the nicest, sweetest little girls with ringlets and all the rest of it, who were selling flowers from the gardens of the neighborhood, making them up neatly into bouquets and selling them for the benefit of the Red Cross. You see, they understood patriotism. But we simply had not interpreted to those children the social life of our community, and people are depending on training in obedience to save us.

"Ladies and gentlemen, we are in great difficulty. If we are not careful we are going to make the supreme mistake on this continent, whatever they do elsewhere—misinterpreting the glory of that army, the spectacle of whose devotion was so eloquently depicted this morning—by supposing that drill and uniform can reproduce these results at will.