

VOCATION VERSUS CULTURE.

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(Continued from January Number.)

THE so-called "practical" education claims to give the child what he will most need in life, while the education for culture claims that its intellectual discipline gives such a solid basis of character and such versatile powers of thought that it will in the end prove far more practical than the narrow and concrete curriculum which is supposed to fit the pupil for business.

It does not appear that nations divide on this question into two opposite tendencies. Rather it seems that, in each national system of education, both tendencies are active and in a state of unreconciled tension against each other.

Inasmuch as the school ought to have both these tendencies and have them properly balanced, there is a legitimate effort on the part of each to find a more suitable form in which it may offer its curriculum to the school. New devices are invented from time to time and commended for adoption.

But it often happens that a really good device in education gets recommended at first on wrong grounds. For example, the kindergarten was advocated on the ground that it utilized the children's play for serious ends. But that seemed to wise educators to ignore the true use of play itself, which is of great service in developing a sense of personality in the child. By perfect freedom in acting out his own caprices in play, the child comes to know himself—play is a sort of self-revelation.

But to turn play into work is to

destroy this feature of it. So to turn work into play on the other hand is a serious mistake, for it prevents the development of the secondary and deeper personality which feels satisfaction in subordinating itself for rational purposes. For, in work, the man gives up his own likes and dislikes, his whims so to speak, and conforms to the requirements of some external necessity. He gives up his subjective preferences and adopts what is objectively necessary. This is what we call "rational."

This first ground of the advocates of the kindergarten was therefore a bar in the way of the progress of its adoption as a link or member of the school system.

But when it came to be discovered that the true kindergarten does not turn play into work, nor work into play, but that it furnishes a very ingenious graded course of school exercises which develop in the child an interest in doing serious tasks, while it at the same time preserves and protects in the gentlest manner the delicate individuality of the young pupil, then the kindergarten began to commend itself to all wise educators as a sort of transition from the education of the family to the more severe and exacting education of the school as it is and has been.

So, too, in the case of manual training which has been pleading for a place in common school education. It was at first defended on the preposterous ground that it is educative in the same sense that arithmetic, geography, grammar and natural science