

Education Out of School

By W. A. McIntyre, LL.D.

WHEN Dr. Suggalls visited Western Canada last year he said among other things that two kinds of school were required in Canada. and the United States—schools for children and schools for adults. There are things that cannot be done in the ordinary day schools, and unless they are done by some other agency our civilization is imperilled.

Among the schools for adults the following are typical. (1) For workers in departmental stores. (2) For factory workers. (3) For workers in rural communities. (4) For non-English citizens. (5) For fathers and mothers. The nature of the work to be done in each of these schools and the plan of organization can not be determined accurately without trial and experiment, but it is not difficult to give a general outline that may serve as a suggestion.

The Department Store

Here there are hundreds of young people from fifteen to twenty-five years of age. They have to wait on the public. They should therefore be intelligent, courteous, refined and well-informed regarding the wares they have to sell. It is a pleasure to meet at the book counter a young lady who knows books, authors and publishers. It is an equal pleasure to find at the flower counter one who knows the bulbs and flowers as if they were her friends. A greater pleasure still it is when a young lady is well-dressed, well-spoken, free from affectation and paint-powder, and cheerful in her manner.

All of these bright young people are in the store for a few years. Then they leave to take positions in homes. What opportunities have they to prepare themselves for their life-duties?

To meet the problem, it is proposed to establish in the departmental stores classes of instruction open to all clerks. Such classes can be held during the regular hours of the day, each clerk being relieved for a few periods each week. The following outline of study is suggested.

(1) Lessons on Salesmanship. The management of the stores will naturally see that these are given. They include lessons in receiving, arranging and displaying goods. Lessons on manufacture and quality of goods. Lessons in selling—including such a wide range of topics as selecting goods to meet customers' needs, and fitting—in such departments as boots and shoes, millinery, dressmaking and the like. In such departments it is more necessary that the clerk should be a good adviser than a 'good sales-girl.'

(2) Lessons in speech and behaviour. These are not only necessary to salesmanship, they are necessary for those who are later to become wives and mothers and members of society. It is important to know how and what to read, how to speak, how to meet people, how to dress, how to behave on the cars, on the street, in a public gathering. Above all it is necessary for a salesgirl to be so gently-mannered and courteous as to commend the store to the customers. Often one goes back to a store, or keeps away from it because of the clerks. Care of the person, language, voice, manner, dress are factors in inducing or preventing custom. One doesn't care to buy goods from a girl who chews gum. It will clearly pay employers to relieve their clerks from duty for a few hours each week, to take lessons in behavior.

(3) Lessons in home occupations—such as cooking, ornamentation of the home, choice of clothing, sewing and repairing, care of children, first aid. The list may be indefinitely extended. It may be thought that this is not part of an employee's duty, but it surely is not right that any young lady should for five or six years shut herself away from home life and then plunge into it without preparation. It will cost something to give such instruction of course, but this should be considered as part of an overhead expense. An employer who arranges for such instruction will have

no difficulty in getting good employees. He will save money by spending it for such a purpose.

(4) General education—in English composition, art—as may be necessary.

All of this work is profitable and possible and the day is coming when in every large store there will be schools of instruction. Smaller stores will continue for the same purpose. It will be easy to find in the staffs of the stores competent instructors.

Factory Hands

The instruction of these will be somewhat similar to the last.

(1) Technical instruction—related to the work in which they are engaged.

(2) General Education—English, mathematics, science and history as may be necessary.

(3) Civic duties as citizens, as partners in industry. Most of the troubles in trade and industry are due to ignorance and suspicion.

(4) Department—Every factory hand looks towards promotion. His chances are small unless in speech, manner and general behaviour he commends himself to his employers and to the public.

In most factories specialization is carried out to a wonderful degree. It takes over thirty-six operatives to make a pair of boots. Each one of these is likely to become narrow in his outlook and sympathy. A broad course of instruction is necessary to offset the evil of the present system. It has been found that the large factory is not a good place to train apprentices, unless instructional classes are provided. Where instruction is carefully given the unanimous testimony is that the employees adopt a new attitude to their work. There is a great difference between an intelligent workman and a drudge.

For non-English Citizens

The night schools have been doing a good work among these, but night schools are not organized in many places. In every non-English community there can be provision made in the winter months for teaching.

(1) English language—speaking, reading, writing.

(2)—Canadian history and Government.

(3) The elements of household management, care of stock, agriculture, and the like. There lessons should be arranged to meet the needs of both men and women.

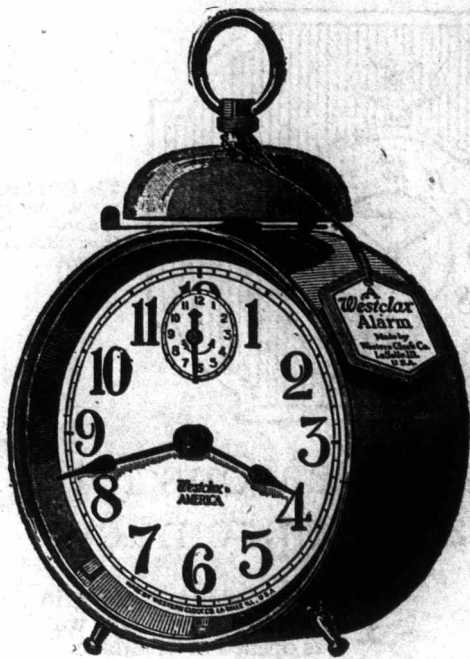
The schoolteachers, the doctors and the best mothers of the districts can be instructors. It is just as necessary to keep a school of this kind going as it is to teach the children in the day school. Each school has its own function to perform.

School for Parents

It is not necessary to elaborate on this here. In the effort to get elementary education established, schools for parents have been overlooked. Conferences between teachers, parents and others specially qualified, would be of great value. Such topics as health, private and public morals, public entertainments, reading, recreation, occupation of children out of school, might all be discussed. It is clear that education is so broad that no one person alone can direct it. All the institutions of civilization must co-operate in their effort to shape young lives right. Hence conference. The idea that education is ended when one leaves school must give way to the idea that it is a never-ending process, demanding the attention of every good citizen. In the ideal community everybody teaches and everybody goes to school.

GOOD TESTIMONY

A good tale is told of how a simple country fellow silenced a barrister. It was, the question of the age of a mare. "How do you know that such is the age of the mare?" shouted the barrister. "I had it from the mare's own mouth," replied the witness.—Tit-Bits.



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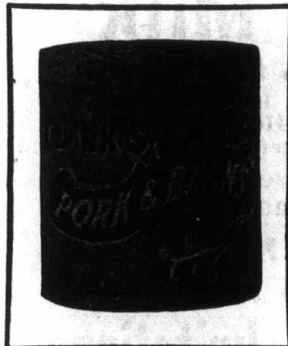
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