

We now have the social ideal before us in distinction from the ecclesiastical, the industrial, and the political. If any one of my readers can be contented with the narrower ideals of churchman, or economist, or politician, nothing that I have to say will appeal to him. Where ideals are radically opposed, it is useless to talk of methods and policies. If you care for nothing but the "soul" of your child; if you value nothing but the wages he can earn; if you think of nothing but the vote which he may cast; if you look down upon the great mass of children as doomed to lives of dull drudgery and unenlightened toil; then in the name of all that is progressive, all that is hopeful for the future of humanity; in the name of all who love little children and have faith to believe that every child is capable of noble manhood or womanhood; in the name of the social spirit that animates the modern world, I bid you farewell.

Such as love children; such as believe in the possibility of a joyous and noble manhood and womanhood for every man and woman, regardless of station or occupation; such as look for a unity of spirit amid diversities of service in the members of society; such as hope to see common sources of enjoyment shared by persons of very different degrees of wealth; such as believe in a socialism of the intellect and a communism in the enjoyments of the mind—such, and such alone, I ask to consider with me the social mission of the public school.

This world in which we live is established through wisdom; founded on truth; governed by law; clothed in beauty; crowned with beneficence. The business of the school is to open the mind to understand that perfect wisdom; to appreciate that wondrous truth; to respect that universal law; to admire that radiant beauty; to praise that infinite beneficence.

Humanity, of which we are members, has brought forth great men and glorious deeds: it has formed languages and reared civilizations; it has expressed its ideals and aspirations on canvas and in stone; it has uttered its joys and sorrows, its hopes and fears, in music and poetry. The province of the school is to interpret to the scholar these glorious deeds of noble men; to open to him the languages and civilizations of the past; to make him share the pure ideals and lofty aims of artist and architect; to introduce him to the larger world of letters and the higher realms of song.

Nothing lower than this interpretation of nature and humanity to man can be accepted as the end of education. To make one at home in the world, and friends with all which it contains, is the object of the school. The forms of natural objects, the laws of life in plant and animal, the principles of mathematics and physics, the languages which nations speak, the literature in which they have expressed their sorrows and joys, their hopes and fears, their achievements and aspirations; the laws of economics, the institutions of society, the insights of philosophy, the ideals of ethics and religion—all these things are man's rightful heritage, and it is the aim of education to put man in possession of this rich inheritance.

It is the attempt to reconstruct the common schools with a view to the realization of this social ideal of education which, consciously or unconsciously, is behind the various changes in programmes, methods of instruction, and principles of administration which, taken together, constitute what is called the new education. Viewed separately, out of connection with this controlling aim, these innovations doubtless look like whims, fads and excrescences. Viewed in the light of their common purpose, and in their relation to what I have called the