

THE NEW POINT OF VIEW IN EDUCATION

IN all the progress that our modern age can show there is nothing more important than the change of attitude towards education. At last we have come to recognize that education is essentially a training for the business of life. And we are beginning to recognize that the most essential thing in life is the gaining of a livelihood. If we do not know that we do not know anything. If we cannot get that we cannot get anything. Provided we can get a living, everything is open to us. It is true of every class of people, from the day laborer to the professional man without exception.

Hence we are becoming direct in our methods and are going to teach the knowledge which shall enable men and women to live. Anything which does not forward that object is to be ruled off the curriculum. Not only are methods of instruction to be improved, but the whole subject-matter is to be most closely scrutinized. A great deal of useless matter is to be ruled off to make way for what will help directly in the attainment of the object desired.

What kind of education is necessary?

Evidently the modern world is on a business basis. Everyone, willingly or unwillingly, must take a part in the business world. Everyone must enter into commercial relations. The man and woman best fitted for these will get the largest prizes; others will receive their rewards in proportion to their ability and application, but neither the finest natural ability nor the most assiduous application can hope for the highest awards without proper training. A part of this training can only come from actual practical experience. But those who begin with the right sort of training will have all others at a decided disadvantage.

What constitutes proper training?

The most elemental is that which opens to us the field of knowledge, which enables us

to make simple calculations upon it, and which empowers us to communicate to others the sum of our knowledge—in the loose language of earlier days, “the three R.’s.”

The consensus of opinion of business men to-day is that not one of these elements is well taught. The youth of our day cannot read and understand any ordinary selection, cannot with accuracy make the simplest calculations, and cannot communicate to others, either in oral or legibly written language the few ideas they may wish to convey. The most elemental instruction is not imparted in such a way as to make it available for use when occasion demands it. Evidently we must secure the elements, the foundations first.

Those secured, we can pass to the most essential knowledge. Evidently this is the knowledge which is required in every-day business life. Personal finance may be considered, first, as relating most directly to the individual—insurance and other forms of saving, and the keeping of accounts. Next comes the larger commercial relations which are only an expansion and extension of the personal affairs.

What commerce is concerned with, how it is carried on, production, transportation and distribution. The individual who does not understand something of these cannot enter intelligently into ordinary commercial life.

Hence such subjects as the Geography of Commerce and the Economics of Industry, with some knowledge of Industrial Processes, are to be given a place in the curriculum of those who are to enter intelligently upon the business of life.

Those who possess this practical knowledge will experience no difficulty in finding a place in the world of commerce. Others will seek in vain to sell unmerchantable in-