

ANARCHISM IN MODERN PEDAGOGY.

IN Tolstoi's school, the children are not subjected to any restraints whatever; they may learn or play as they choose and leave the school at any time they please. The teacher there must wholly rely upon his skill to secure the pupils' interest for the matter he wishes to present to them. The whole school, in fact, is an organization conducted on anarchistic principles that exclude exaction of obedience. The description reads well and there are probably some who see in it a picture of an ideal school community. But even the assurance that Tolstoi's school is a success will not lull a thoughtful educator into the belief that a school of this kind exerts a healthy educative influence upon the youthful minds.

Tolstoi's plan is not new. Rousseau proposed the same thing 132 years ago; he wanted Emile, his imaginary pupil, to be brought up in this way. Speaking of Emile's education at the age from twelve to fifteen years, for instance, he says: "This is also the time for accustoming the pupil, little by little, to give consecutive attention to the same subject; but it is *never constraint but always pleasure or desire*, which should produce this attention. Great care should be taken that attention does not become a burden to him and that it does not result in *ennui*. Therefore keep a watchful eye over him, and, whatever may happen, abandon everything rather than have his tasks become irksome; for how much he learns is of no account, but only that he does *nothing against his will*." Dr. William H. Payne rightly condemns this plan in the following note to his translation of this paragraph: "In the actual conduct of life the path of duty often crosses that of inclination and Emile will have a sorry prepara-

tion for living if he does not learn to bend his neck to the yoke of authority. This is a fundamental and fatal vice in Rousseau's ethical system, and he is here following the bias of his own disordered life." And the same may be said of Tolstoi's plan.

The child who has been allowed to have his way in all things will never be fit for the present civilization. The world does not wait for him to make up his mind whether or not to respond to its demands upon him. Each adult has certain obligations which he cannot escape, and if he has never learned to bow to anything he will find life a most disagreeable road to travel. Thus on utilitarian or eudemonistic grounds the no-restraint plan is indefensible.

But even the much extolled "natural education" idea can hardly be sufficiently stretched to serve as a cloak. The mongrel term "natural" has in these days been given some needed limitations in pedagogy. It means no longer what Rousseau saw in it. The American child is not to grow up as a savage, but as a civilized being in a civilized community. He is born into a peculiar environment differing widely from that of a Fiji islander. But he is just as much dependent upon the conditions under which he is to grow up as the latter is upon those which limit his course. The demands of civilization cannot be evaded in the education of the one, any more than can the physical environment be disregarded in that of the other. The "natural" education of a child living in a civilized state, accordingly is one that best prepares him for his destiny, and hence the same criticism that must be brought against Tolstoi's plan from a utilitarian or eudemonistic standpoint applies here with equal force.