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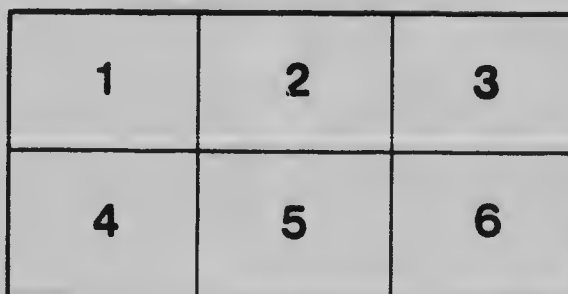
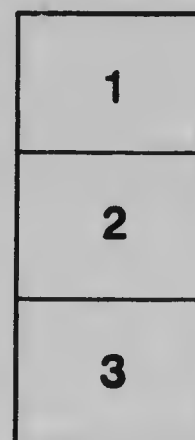
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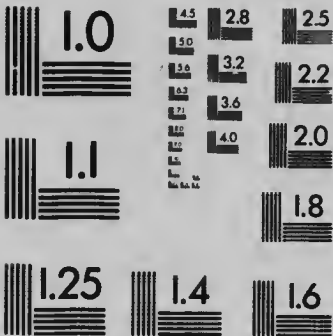
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**EDUCATION FOR THE TWENTIETH  
CENTURY**



**By JOHN MILLAR, B.A.**

*Deputy Minister of Education for the Province of Ontario.*

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# EDUCATION FOR THE TWENTIETH CENTURY.

BY JOHN MILLAR, B.A.,

*Deputy Minister of Education for the Province of Ontario.*



As we approach the close of the nineteenth century every thoughtful citizen is anxious about the future. New problems present themselves to us for solution, and the outlook has its difficulties as well as its hopes. The educational progress of the present century has been marvellous. The contrast between the knowledge of today and that of one hundred years ago is too striking to need illustration. Never was education appreciated more than now. If full liberty is granted to the light of truth, the progress of the nineteenth century will sink into insignificance compared with what the twentieth century may reveal.

The education needed in the century to come will have some features which will cause it to differ considerably from that of the present. To state the matter clearly at the outset, it may be said that the education of the twentieth century will have three main characteristics:

(1) It will be democratic;  
(2) The courses of study will be adapted to modern requirements; and

(3) Character, instead of knowledge, will have first place in the direction of educational force.

(1) Democratic education is, comparatively speaking, new, and its attainable objects are not yet fully understood. It is only within a short period that intelligent people believed in the permanency of democratic institutions. One

hundred years ago democracy was a chimera. The horrible spectacle of the French Revolution was before every one's mind. The admirers of aristocratic institutions hoped for the failure of the American system of government. The overthrow of Maximilian in Mexico, and the failure of the Southern Confederacy, dashed the hopes of those who expected self government to be impossible. The collapse of Louis Napoleon even revived extravagant impressions regarding the instability of republics. Opinions have, however, changed, though some admirers of older systems may yet shake their heads. The people of Anglo-Saxon communities at least recognize that the failure of democracy means the failure of civilization, and its grandest success will undoubtedly be found in those countries over which floats the British flag. Whatever is inseparable from democracy cannot be overlooked. In democratic society the people must be educated, and the education of no class can be neglected. It is only in modern times that this view has gained acceptance. Plato taught that the people who laboured in a model commonwealth needed no education whatever.

Lest this may be regarded as a startling view to come from a philosopher, it should be remembered that not very long ago similar sentiments were held by many intelligent people. It is only about a generation since in the Southern States it was a crime to teach reading to the labouring classes. Universal education in Germany only dates from the First Napoleon. Until their defeat at Sedan, the

French never thought of giving the masses of the people an elementary education. England, one of the foremost nations in higher education, had no system of public instruction for the poor until thirty years ago. Is it not a fact also that even in our own day the statement is occasionally made that there is a danger of "over-education"? So long as people fear evil to the country from having too many educated persons, so long may it be assumed that more education is necessary in order to dispel such illogical conclusions.

Too many persons regard popular education only as if it were a protection against superstition and disorder. They look upon education as a measure of police. They are friendly to education only so far as it may be a means of increasing the material productiveness of the country. By them education is prized, not because it gives the nation good men and good women, but because it secures more wheat, more railroads, more machinery, and more tall chimneys.

It should at once be recognized that the stream of democracy cannot be turned back or permanently checked. Kidd, in his "Social Evolution," has pointed out "that we are face to face with new conditions in the evolution of civilization." The dangers arising from a class privileged on account of birth, are over. There are, however, dangers arising from the existence of a class privileged on account of wealth. The danger which confronts modern institutions is not aristocracy, but plutocracy. The welfare of the nation is not assured if there exists any class of people in the community debarred by artificial circumstances from having their right share in public affairs. The promise of a "full dinner pail" to the mechanic is not enough. The talk of education unfitting poor people

their station in life is repugnant to the belief in the brotherhood of mankind.

Democratic education should inculcate the essential unity of all classes. The endless diversities of function, capacity and achievement among individuals should be recognized as advantageous to civilization. Equality of condition is a phantom; but equality of opportunity should not be overlooked. Progress will not remove all inequalities; indeed, "progress and inequality" are inseparable. It should be a fundamental object of democracy—the elevation of the masses. All civilizing agencies that do not benefit the poor are foreign to the genius of the democratic spirit. The discovery and the development of the ability of every child in the community, should be the aim of democratic education. Society is interested in making the most of every useful gift or faculty which each member of the community possesses. The boy who has natural endowments which would fit him to occupy a high position in public life, should, in the interests of the state, have such opportunities placed within his reach as will enable the community to obtain the full advantages of the gifts which Providence has bestowed.

It is now fully acknowledged that elementary education should be free. Free public libraries are regarded as the necessary complement of free schools. Free text books have been adopted in many places; and wherever adopted they have come to stay. It is to be regretted, however, that the spirit of selfishness induces some communities to close the door of higher education to every one whose father has not money. To the credit of the American people, the High Schools in nearly all parts of the Union are free; indeed, in some of the United States free High

Schools are guaranteed by statute. It is safe to say that the people of the American Republic, judged by their enterprise and progress, have made no mistake in the liberal provisions made for secondary education. In England, where progress is generally sure though slow, the demand for higher education for the masses of the people is making itself felt in the agitation over what is practically secondary education under the control of the Board Schools. Nova Scotia has adopted the policy of the Eastern States in having the High Schools free. In Ontario, it is optional with High School Boards to impose fees, but, unfortunately, in many cities and towns the power is exercised in the interests of the wealthy classes. It would be well for the Province to take warning. If our country is to make progress, all classes should have an opportunity of acquiring that education which will tend to national development. Too often it is heard that those who wish a High School education should pay for it themselves. This sentiment is not only undemocratic, but it is un-Christian. Selfishness is at the bottom of any policy which shuts out the children of the poor man from gaining an education. It should be recognized by all, that the poor boy who rises to honourable prominence in any community more than recoups the public treasury for any outlay it has made in his behalf. It is a fact that among the rich there is often found much intellectual and moral degeneracy. The sons of rich men frequently turn out worthless. It is in the interests of the state to enable the children of the poor to replace the loss which this degeneracy causes.

(2) The courses of study should be adapted to the requirements of the age and the conditions of the country. It is still a debatable question, what knowledge is worth

most. Differences of opinion are expressed respecting the so-called "militarian" and "culture" branches of the programme. Herbert Spencer, having in view the needs of the many, deserves much credit in his battle for an improved curriculum. He has shown, what all will now admit, that Greek and Latin cannot hold the position they had three centuries ago. Mathew Arnold, on the other hand, makes a strong plea for the refinements of literature. One greater than either has said that "Man does not live by bread alone." It may be safely accepted that the education of no person should be one-sided. Every one's training should be such as will enable him to make the best of life.

The knowledge a person should acquire will largely depend upon the position in society which he is to occupy. It should be an object to have each one follow that pursuit for which his ability and circumstances best fit him. It is a fact, however, that the occupation desirable for one to follow can with difficulty be determined in childhood. Under these circumstances the knowledge early acquired should not be special, but general: in other words, the early part of a student's school life should be taken up in gaining such information as every one should have. However desirable it is for a boy to be filled with an ambition to occupy a position of prominence, his studies should be arranged with a conviction that the chances are he will be obliged to follow one of the humbler occupations of life. It is a serious drawback to the young person who becomes a farmer, a mechanic, or a merchant, to find that several years of his student life were wasted in a fruitless acquisition of what mainly concerns the lawyer, the doctor, or the teacher. Specialization is frequently begun too early and the

blame must largely rest with the authorities of universities.

Reading, writing and arithmetic are often regarded as the tools of education. In early childhood the study of nature should receive much attention. The earth and what pertains to it, or what is generally termed "physiography," should be taken up when school life is begun. Natural phenomena of a simple character should receive early attention, and the elements of physics, meteorology, botany, zoology, chemistry, etc., should be presented for the pupil's observation and instruction. Any course for elementary schools which ignores "nature study," is seriously defective. In the lower forms of High Schools, natural science should be continued for every student. Arithmetic, which may be begun in early years, should not be made a leading subject of the High School course. The amount of arithmetic which every one should know is not extensive. Algebra and geometry, but of a very elementary character, may be taught to all pupils. The ordinary mechanic, farmer, etc., has to keep his accounts, and, therefore, elementary bookkeeping should be an obligatory subject.

It is well known that the great majority of children are expected to contribute largely to the daily labour of the household, the farm, or the shop. The woman who understands French or trigonometry, but is unable to cook a dinner or to mend a child's dress, is imperfectly educated. Domestic science, including cooking, sewing, laundry work, sanitation, etc., should be a leading part of every girl's training in the public school. The rapid concentration of population in cities has made it imperative that the manual training which a boy obtains on the farm may be taken up as a course of study in urban schools. Manual training,

like domestic science, should be limited to no class of students. The "culture" which the Professor of Literature may be supposed to possess will not make up for his inability to look after his own furnace, if necessary, or to drive a nail to prevent his gate from falling to pieces. It is now well known that intellectual development recognizes the importance of training the hand and the eye. It is scarcely necessary to add that drawing is a necessary preparation for manual training, and should be an obligatory subject for all students.

Every person should enjoy good literature; and the boy or girl who leaves school without a love for good reading is not educated. There is no reason why the farmer or the mechanic should not enjoy Shakespeare, Ruskin and Tennyson. Indeed, although the majority of boys and girls must necessarily leave school young, they should, by diligent reading and observation, add to their attainments every year. A child is badly educated if he does not acquire a capacity for exact description, as well as a capacity for exact observation. The time given to composition should, therefore, be doubled.

Attention should be directed in early life to what concerns man as a social being. History, civics, and cognate subjects should be taken up by all pupils. In a democratic country the rights and duties of citizens should be known. It is evident that knowledge of this kind has an importance which it did not possess before the Reform Bill of 1832 was passed. It is further evident that the needs of Canadians are not the same as the needs of the Russians. The power to draw reasonable inferences should be mastered. In democratic communities this power is essential to good citizenship. If young men

were trained to be thoughtful, the masses of the people would not be so liable to dangerous delusions as they are at present. The hope of the demagogue invariably comes from a belief in the ignorance of a large portion of the electorate. To become an expert in any department of knowledge is attainable only by the few. To acquire wisdom enough to know upon whom to rely as an expert is within the reach of most persons. Democracy is in danger unless the citizens acquire the power of discriminating between the true and the false leaders of public opinion.

The course of study for all pupils has now been indicated in a general way. It is only when we consider the subjects for secondary schools that difficulty comes up. It should be accepted as settled, that the High Schools are not supported either entirely or mainly for the benefits of those who enter on professional pursuits or become matriculants of a university. The interests of the great majority of students must govern. Indeed, let it be felt that University influences are to dominate, and the maintenance of the High Schools by the Legislature or Municipal authorities is doomed. The progress of High Schools is due to the fact that in recent years their work has become more practical, and, as a consequence, they have gained largely in public sympathy. The division made between elementary and secondary schools is largely an arbitrary one. The subjects of a general education begun in the Public Schools should not be slighted in the High Schools. Latin, Greek, French, German, trigonometry, and some other branches, though valuable in themselves and essential for a few are not essential for those students who do not become teachers, lawyers, doctors, engineers, etc.

It is a fact, however, that there

is lamentable waste in educational methods as a consequence of the ambition to prepare for matriculation or for the professions. Pupils require careful guidance in this matter, and it is unfortunate that High School teachers are exposed to the very serious temptation of urging pupils to take up subjects not best adapted to purposes of general training. The plan of allowing Latin, Greek, etc., to be optional does not meet the situation. The difficulty will never be met until it is as much to the professional honour of the teacher to turn out one who is to become a valuable farmer, merchant, or mechanic, as one who matriculates at a university. The main work of the High Schools should concern the ninety-five per cent. rather than the five per cent. The optional subjects in at least the lower forms of the High Schools should not receive half the attention which they do at present. It will not meet the argument to say that in Germany the interests of intending matriculants are better safeguarded. On this continent the German system is not wanted. There are too many students already wasting their time with Latin. The English and Scotch systems also have their excellencies. Canada would be unwise to copy the system of any country. It may be that the Oxford graduate is two years younger than the graduate of Toronto University. The latter is, however, better informed, and will outstrip the former before the age of twenty-five or thirty is reached. There is much force in the recent statement of Lord Rosebery that "practical universities are the universities of the future."

(3) Character building should receive chief attention in the direction of educational forces. During the present century there has

been an apparent conflict between education and knowledge. This may appear paradoxical, as the ordinary person regards education and knowledge as identical. There is, however, much difference between the two. Psychologists point out that in order to be educated, the emotions and the will must receive due attention, as well as the intellect. There has been too much prominence given to training in knowledge, and too little to the training of the emotions, and especially too little to the training of the will. Doubtless the enormous additions made during the present century to the sum total of human knowledge has had much to do with these conditions. The acquisition of knowledge has too often come to be regarded in our schools as the great aim and end of the student's life.

The growth of democracy, beneficial though it has been, has doubtless had its effect. Every one is anxious to get on in the world, and recognizes that knowledge is power. The modern system of written examinations tends to a wrong idea of education. Unfortunately character has no value in deciding whether or not a candidate is to pass an examination. The boy who fails in algebra may be debarred from matriculation, even though his principles are good. On the other hand, one who has not sufficient will power to abstain from the use of cigars may be admitted to the university by barely making one-third of the marks in each subject. Progress in character does not receive due recognition.

The opinion of Buckle cannot be accepted, that there has been no moral progress in the history of the race. A very slight consideration of the question will set aside this view. At the same time it must be conceded that growth in morals has been far less than

growth in knowledge; and this fact should have weight in shaping our future educational policy. Every day brings disclosures of intemperance, dishonesty, untruthfulness, and corruption. In the face of crimes brought to the public gaze, it is clear there is urgent need of better training in morality. Some of the functions at one time assumed by the Church are now performed by the State; and the ordinary citizen is accustomed to look to the school as the great agency of modern times for assistance in securing the moral as well as the intellectual development of his children. Sectarian schools are relics of former generations. "Secular" schools, in which a neutral attitude on the value of religion is assumed, cannot be thought of. The twentieth century will find national schools where due importance is attached to the essentials of Christianity even more popular than at present.

To secure better moral training, many earnest persons have urged the use of the Bible as a text-book. Without attempting to discuss the question at length, it may be stated that morality cannot be taught by a text-book, any more than football or swimming. The only way to obtain the best ethical training in our schools is to secure better teachers. That teacher is best advancing his pupils morally who is the best disciplinarian. The question as to how ethical training may be best given in our schools is a pedagogical and not a theological one. The demand for religious instruction has not come from educationists, although as a class they attach the highest importance to Christianity as a basis of morals. It should be known that a pupil learns every day morality as an art, and not as a science. If children are to become moral, their tastes and habits must be carefully guarded. It is the function of

the school to train children in habits of regularity, punctuality, industry, quietness, neatness, obedience, truthfulness, and honesty. A good teacher will train his pupils to be courteous, and especially to acquire that self-control which a distinguished German writer calls the "chief thing" in character. The true disciplinarian alone can train the will, which should have among its features decision, firmness, and constancy. A good teacher will strengthen all good tastes which a child has already formed, and will help the formation of good tastes not yet acquired. For this purpose high qualifications are needed in the teacher. In addition to scholarship and professional attainments, he should possess much personal magnetism, great executive ability, plenty of tact, good common sense, and constant vigilance. Will power is essential to the man who leads or governs. The teacher should also possess heart power, and his general attainments and moral character should make him a power in the community.

All artificial incentives should, as far as possible, be abandoned in our schools. The ability to prepare pupils for an examination should not receive so much value as is given to it at present. More power should be given to the teacher in determining promotions, and in granting certificates. All such artificial incentives as prizes and scholarships should be aban-

doned, as they only turn the attention of pupils to wrong educational ideals. Character and not mere knowledge should determine the rewards pupils are to receive; and the doors of universities and the professions should be closed to all students who have not acquired those habits which indicate a high type of manhood. Doubtless a reform of this kind may appear startling, but the signs of the times show that the present plan of attaching chief importance to knowledge, and giving moral character a secondary place, is working much harm. It is degrading the teacher from his true position, and making him a mere instrument for imparting information, instead of a force in building up character.

If an improvement, such as is referred to, can be brought about, it will necessitate much better remuneration to teachers. Teaching will not be regarded by young men as a stepping-stone to other professions. The teacher should be better remunerated than the lawyer, the doctor, or the banker. Comparisons of the incomes received by persons of different professions in any city or town, will show that although the qualifications of the teacher are generally higher than those of the persons in other professions, he is the poorest paid. Higher qualifications for teachers, and better remuneration for their services, should be the educational watchword of the twentieth century.

Toronto, December, 1900.

