

Some have conceived it to be a novel device invented by astute educators, some method heretofore unknown, some sleight of hand performance by which the youth can be educated for the duties of life. But it has a deeper and different meaning. In this as in every comprehensive subject, one must go behind the printed words to discover the full meaning. It is an undisputed fact that until recently (and not uncommon today) the methods of instruction and discipline in use in our schools were most unscientific and irrational. Within recent years there has been a genuine and marked awakening among educationists and a distinct educational effort to devise and establish better methods of teaching, aiming thereby at the attainment of the best results in the shortest possible time. This attempt at educational reform has given rise to the New Education. In fact, it is identical with the New Education.

To say exactly where this originated or with whom, would be as difficult as to say exactly where and with whom the revival of letters in the sixteenth century had its origin. It is claimed authoritatively on the one hand to be a Western idea. Says the man of the West, "It began in the West, and extended eastward until at length the conservatives of Quincy and Boston showed signs of life." Another with a degree of sarcasm would make it distinctively Eastern and even European: "Some time ago a few original and philosophic souls brought over from Europe a slip of something which they set out and watered with anxious economic tears, and when it took root and grew, they called it the New Education. But exact time and place are immaterial. The great fact is, a substantial impulse has been given in the way of educational reform. It is shown in the prevalence of educational gatherings and discussions, in the great diffusion of educational literature. New and advanced methods of teaching are being promulgated, educational ideas and educational spirit are becoming widely diffused. Through the medium of educational press and educational association the whole field of education is being thoroughly gleaned, and as it were planted anew with seed which, as past experience tells us, profited best. This seed may be said to be the new education. It has taken fast root, and already has attained a good growth. It gives promise of good results in the future.

The New Education proceeds philosophically, establishes its foundation by demonstrating that the mind is capable of education, and that there is a right way to educate, based upon scientific psychological laws. It argues that man is by nature susceptible of education; that he is endowed with the capacity to know and to do, at first of course, latent and undeveloped. The organs of sense being the media through which the capacities of the mind are addressed, and since we cannot believe that it was intended that they remain in an undeveloped state, there must be suitable forces for exciting them and drawing them out; there must also be methods for applying the forces to the capacities, and right methods as against

wrong methods. Upon this latter point the New Education has laid particular stress. Much error has prevailed in the past in the use of wrong instead of right methods, to which most of us can testify, I venture, when we think back over our school days. I recall teachers under whose surveillance I have passed who, I cannot but believe, never dreamt that there was right and wrong in teaching, whose conception of teaching never went further than that their pupils were objects fit only to be yelled at or buried at with crude and indigestible facts; never thinking that within there was a delicate nature that needs delicate and judicious handling, a heart that might be softened by a kind word well put, a mind that could be controlled, trained and developed by the application of mild incentives.

The paramount object of the New Education is to rectify such wrongs and impress upon the profession that education is a science, that the mind in its development obeys laws as certain as does the body in its growth. A leading proposition it sets forth as fundamental is, that all true modes of education proceed in exact harmony with the nature, design and growth of man's faculties. Therefore, at no stage of growth should the educational forces interfere with the natural order of development.

Certain truths, then, of the New Education naturally arising from this principle are a clearer and fuller recognition of the child's native powers as the basis of all right effort to educate it. A teacher must study the capacities and tendencies of children as a physician must study the human body. Growing out of this is greater effort to develop and train a child's powers, and less to fill its memory with facts or perhaps with words about facts. Growing out of the same is also less of hardness and physical force in the treatment of children and more of kindly stimulation, inspiration and leading, and an effort on the part of the teacher to make the schoolroom joyful rather than oppressive.

The distinctive feature, then, of New Education is method. It does not consist in newness. In this particular it is a misnomer and misleading. More truthfully it is a revival of old methods. To say there has been a discovery of principles of education unknown and unused in the past is untrue. The modern school master knows no attainment which was not known to the philosophers of the past: Plato, Aristotle, Bacon, Locke, Pestalozzi and others. Properly, then, there is no new education, any more than there is a new politics. Progress has been made in education as in other human interests. Now the principles, methods and means are being more generally better understood and better applied.

We hear a great deal about object teaching, industrial education, art education, manual training, laboratory methods not alone as applied to chemistry and physics, but literature and history also. These are outgrowths of New Education. New methods of teaching reading, language without grammar, and grammar without language, methods of sense education, teaching by pictures

and colors, modes of oral, written and practical instructions, and such like, are hauled upon our attention without number. They have all come upon the advancing wave of new education.

It is, no doubt, in the study of child nature that its impress for good is being felt the most. "This movement," says one, "is a revival of faith in human nature, as that nature reveals itself in childhood." Instead of imposing a theory on the child to mold and fashion him into a given shape on the one hand, or concentrate all his powers on the work of making him a practical success in life on the other, New Education proposes to develop the child into the most complete manhood or womanhood possible for his order of ability and natural endowments. It believes in child-nature and studies it with the hope of finding out the beautiful, divine ways by which the child shall become the woman or man. And it believes that the child thus trained for character and such ability as belongs to it, will in the end be a more valuable member of society than if molded into imitation of any other man, or fashioned to a machine for any special work.

This theory drives to the wall of course those who, with sanctified mein, come to us to tell us that the school boy is consigned to the teacher's hands plastic clay to be molded into an ideal manhood. The school profession ought to be thankful that it does, for the latter theory is not a true one. No boy ever came into my school room in a state of plasticity except from a mud hole, and such, it is the general testimony, are pretty hard to manage, not to say mold. I believe in regarding a boy, even a very young one, as having individuality, and you can't mold that kind of an article. The teacher can govern, guide and direct it, but he can't eradicate pre-natal causes or the influences of the home. Every system of philosophy admits it. A boy is pre-eminently a progressive being. His nature urges him onward. A teacher's province is not to retard or repress this inborn disposition, but to study it, to stimulate it, to guide and direct it into proper channels and feed it proper food.

The New Education holds fast the following familiar truths: Exercise is the fundamental law of growth, we therefore learn by doing. Each faculty must be exercised in accordance with its own laws of unfolding. The chief aim of all primary teaching is mental development. Nothing should be done for a child which he can do for himself. Interest on the part of the pupil is the indispensable condition of all satisfactory progress. There is a proper order for the faculties which in general statement is, first, the perceptive faculties, then the memory, power of language, imagination, and last of all the reasoning powers.

To attempt to write the full expectation of the New Education would require volumes. A realization of its expectations would exact of teachers a thoroughness and fullness of knowledge which, I mistake not, now few possess. Though it may never realize its ideal, the spirit it is sending abroad through the profession cannot but tend