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ART EDUCATION

A BRIEF historical survey of the background of education reveals a number of outstanding developments leading up to the situation with which we are confronted today. The three R's were taught originally to benefit those fortunate young men who looked forward to commercial pursuits in counting houses, offices of the merchant marine, and trading centers at home or abroad. Drawing was first introduced to bring benefit to the manufacturer through the visual and aesthetic training of the future worker. Vocational education, meaning trade training, was the outgrowth of a proper desire to fit the young boy or girl, who could not spend his adolescent years in school, for intelligent service in industry, thus avoiding the "blind alley."

When the earliest schools were organized in this country we were a pioneer group requiring the importation of nearly everything not made by members of the family in the home. Schooling was essential only for those people engaged in the import business. When drawing was made compulsory in Massachusetts a great nation had been born and in addition to agricultural and mining pursuits manufacturing had sprung to the front, particularly in this state. Educators were now confronted with a different important aim in education, aid for the manufacturers. When vocational education first lustily cried for support, within very recent years, the nation no longer was an infant among the civilized countries of the world, but it had come to be a mighty power, even richer than all others. We found new and pressing needs for school training, "practical" education for those who would work as soon as the law allowed, education for the trades in order that some degree of

efficiency might be expected to benefit industry.

In the pioneer days men lived on a common plane. They may have been English, or French or Dutch, but their environment immediately levelled their class differences and they were one. During the times of the Civil War, and for some years later, the country was still, racially speaking, closely knit and single in its American quality. Since then, up to the present day, marked changes, due to enormous immigration, have revolutionized our outlook and greatly complicated our problem. Our desire for the same sturdy American character of the older days meets with the opposition of segregated masses of illiterate peasants of many foreign countries, willing, perhaps, but necessarily lacking in so much that was inherent in our children of the earlier periods.

In those early days much work was done by hand. There was pride in good workmanship. This was still true in the 70's, though manufacture was making great strides. But pride in quality even at the expense of both time and quantity still dominated the spirit of industry. Otherwise, Art Education never would have come into being.

But since that time the age of invention, bringing in its train the wonders of electricity, the discoveries of chemistry, and the automatic machine, has witnessed different standards of civilized attainment measured in terms of speed, quantity, minimum cost, excessive profit, quick sales, and low intelligence in the worker.

Such is a very hasty glance at the past, enough to present a picture of the educational situation, and to indicate two outstanding facts: (1) that education has been based primarily upon an ever insistent de-

mand for more or less definite vocational instruction for the worker; and (2) that education has been promoted more or less directly by the growth and development of social and economic conditions, largely industrial.

In other words, the worker has demanded education for increased earning power, and industry consciously or otherwise has directed the trend of that education. It has even gone so far that correspondence schools and private schools with abbreviated courses, highly intensified, have thrived on the one hand, and on the other, such uneducational procedure as the exclusive use of factory methods entailing the assembling of parts and quantity production have been forced upon youngsters hardly out of babyhood in more than one so-called vocational school.

Perhaps this is all as it should be. Possibly it is the function of the schools to meet just such demands from those who make up the personnel of the schools and from those who receive the school's product. No doubt education is for the masses and, therefore, should cater to their wants. But are the people themselves the best judges of their educational needs and can industry be anything but biased in its requirements? The answer can best be found by a review of the world's history. Where education was developed for selfish purposes its growth was handicapped, but where it was promoted for what John Galsworthy calls "a higher and wider conception of the dignity of human life" its progress was marked indeed.

Just now we are forced to accept as a necessary phase of industrial life the "Iron Man."

Automatic machinery has come to stay and we would be unwise not to accept it as a fact. But with it attend all its evils, which, Arthur Pond says, "develop a chronic dissatisfaction, which cannot be explained away without reference to nerves.

It seems to be proof against high wages and good conditions. Welfare work, bonuses, shop-councils, even profit-sharing do not drive it out. Clatter and haste are contributing factors; so, also, are indoor confinement, monotony of tasks, distance from the real boss, repression of personality, strict regimentation of effort, and the scant opportunity afforded for the play of the craftsman instinct, the joy in production."

With these, too, come added hours of leisure. And with leisure the new responsibility of its proper use. This is an element entering the lives of city people at least, which has only recently been thought of in the field of education. We have always offered training for the man on the job; now should we not offer training for the man off the job? Undoubtedly we should, but whether the man is off the job or on, I wonder if our concern has not been too closely confined, like industry, to "quantity production" and "quick sales." I wonder if we haven't allowed the slogan of the business world to mold altogether too rigidly the school lives of our children. Have we kept always before us the "higher and wider conception of the dignity of human life"?

I know a school principal who is so keenly alive to the great importance of graphs showing the high averages in his school that in this direction at least factory procedure rules—"speeding up" is his motto.

I know of a small town superintendent whose name is written in the educational history of a certain state as the shark at arithmetic. His children can almost figure in their sleep, much to the gratification of the Board of Education.

I know of a city superintendent who glories in the industrial achievements of his boys and girls, children who pass from their school factories into the cities' industries with scarcely a perceptible break in the transition.

All excellent in their way, and yet is there not something vital to human existence sad-

ly lacking? "History, literature, science, art, music—all these," says the author of "Iron Man," "give to life meaning, and to leisure inspiration; a reasonable concern in all that man has done, is doing, or is about to do upon this planet; with such equipment any fool could use leisure aright. To sow that seed is the first duty of educators, now as always, now more than ever."

"Beauty and the love of it is surely the best investment modern man can make," we read in the *Yale Review*; "for nothing else—most certainly not trade—will keep him from destroying the human species." "Modern civilization is, on the whole, camouflaged commercialism, wherein to do things well, for the joy of doing them well, is rarer than we think."

Therein lies the broad definition of Art Education, the study of the elements of Beauty with the very definite purpose of producing Beauty in life and the things of life, the doing of things well "for the joy of doing them well."

The great truth of Beauty is one of the universal gifts to humanity which we cannot escape. The love of it is instinctive in us; its possession is one of the joys of living, second only to the greater joy of its understanding.

Art Education is one of the most important and valuable opportunities we have for counteracting the present tendency to increase further the more sordid and mercenary views of present living. A country of barter and commercial competition cannot survive; a nation with a love and appreciation of Beauty not only can survive but will make permanent its greatness.

But let us take another aspect of the situation. Let us accept the need for competition, let us approve the striving for industrial supremacy; let us thoroughly support the present feverish race that man runs in his work of the day. It is here, and whether we would or would not we are quite unable to stop it. But what of its future? In this direction just as surely as in the bigger

field of general human endeavor competition in business is successful in just that measure in which art or beauty is put into it.

One or two illustrations will suffice to prove it. This is an age of advertising—they say it pays. It has come to a point where the best artists of the country are employed to bring to bear their talents for the single purpose of competition through advertising display. In one year \$1,300,000,000 was spent in this one direction alone—\$400,000,000 of that total went into color. When we learn that the bill for the design on one of the most commonly used toilet powder cans of today was \$1300 you can venture a guess as to the proportion of the huge total paid directly for the art quality in the competitive game of advertising. Moreover, the finest art in illustration today is not to be found in connection with the written articles of a magazine but within the advertising pages.

Take another illustration. England awakened to the fact that her pottery industry was falling off. She investigated. She found other nations, particularly Germany, sending out more beautiful wares than she was and ready to flood the world with more. Consequently a meeting of the manufacturing potters of the British Isles was called; they united in employing one of England's greatest artists to assist them in redesigning their products.

Look about you for illustrations of this need for beauty: the shop windows, the automobile, the clothes we wear, in fact, all of the hundreds of articles of manufacture which surround us. If a final proof were needed, we have but to look to the German nation, which, up to the time of the insane outbreak in 1914, was leading the entire world industrially, in great measure through the art quality of her product.

But, unfortunately, art thus purchased and sold for the sake of business competition alone is an artificiality, lacking soul, and is, moreover, forced upon an unintelli-

gent public. An enlightened people with a real appreciation of beauty, demanding things of art quality for their own sake and selecting their purchases with discriminating taste soon can make what is now so spiritless into a breathing, living force for future good. Art Education, then, must develop aesthetic intelligence, a sense of fitness, a knowledge of what is good and what is not so good—a people of discernment.

It is the right of every school child to have told to him the few great truths underlying beauty. It is the right of every school child to be taught the practical uses of these principles. It is the duty of all educators to enrich the lives of our boys and girls through the intelligent teaching of the universal language. Art Education in the grammar and high school is not to make artists, though I am sorry to say that the average art teacher herself is ever ready to use professional standards as her measuring stick. No, art education is to develop higher standards of taste for the public, which is a most unconscious but prodigious art consumer.

I would urge, therefore, not only a continuance of the subject in the school curriculum but a broader and more tolerant view of its importance. I could not demand an appreciable extension of time, but I do ask for a clearer understanding of its purpose and systematic support in the application of its principles throughout the work of the school. Surely intelligent observation is as important outside as it is inside the drawing period—unquestionable order, unity, symmetry, balance, harmony are as essential to the other activities of the boy or girl as to design. Certainly accuracy, neatness, precision are as valuable in other classes as in handwork. These are laws of Beauty. Art Education teaches them, and through them we should expect—yes, demand better things in life and more intelligence in our use of those things.

We are believers of art; we buy it; we surround ourselves with it; we pass on its

message with every gift we make. Therefore, let us resolve to know more of it; to live it with our children; and to build strongly now for those who are to follow.

ROYAL B. FARNUM

THE ENRICHMENT OF LIFE THROUGH PUBLIC SCHOOL ART

Art Education: To enrich the life of a child and satisfy his creative instincts and his natural love for beauty; to meet the needs of the nation for creative artists and finer taste and citizenship.

THE charge has been made again and again that Americans are a restless, money-grabbing and altogether inartistic people, far removed from interests in Art and the creation of and affection for the more beautiful and finer things of life. It has been said that "moderns" have "eyes for the movies, ears for the radio, a nose for news, the gentle touch; and all that is lacking is taste."

For thousands of years man has responded to a passionate urge and beautified the product of his labor. These things have come down through the years as the most priceless and precious possessions of mankind, to satisfy the hunger for beauty that dwells eternally in the human breast. When a supreme quality of goodness and beauty abides in these creations, man calls them Art. The pleasure that may be found in a cultivated enjoyment of these things is called Art Appreciation.

In Art is found the revelation of the spirit of man, his deepest feelings and his highest aspirations, and the nations may come and go, but Art remains, an enduring record of a nation's highest attainments. Greece lives in her Parthenon and her Praxiteles, Italy in her Madonnas, her Raphaels and her Botticellis, France in her cathedrals.

There is a growing realization of the need for beauty and art in social and industrial life. There is likewise a growing realization of public school art as the most