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MR. PHILBRICK ON ELEMENTARY EDUCATION.

The children in our Orphan Houses do various kinds of housework and garden work, and take care of the stock; but we do not teach them trades, only three who have discontinued their studies, being employed in the printing office. One great object we have in view, is to prepare them for the trades. The wisdom of this course is set forth in the following extracts from an address recently delivered by the Hon. John D. Philbrick, Superintendent of Public Schools in Boston. Mr. Philbrick said:

Now, everybody knows that a man's success in his particular calling or profession depends not so much upon the accident of his apprenticeship, as upon what sort of a mind and body he brings to it, what kind of intelligence, of conscience, and of physical soundness and aptitude the system of general education has developed in him. Therefore, not only because men are men before they are merchants, mechanics, or farmers, but as a means of making good merchants, mechanics, and farmers, the first and fundamental aim of all education and of all plans of instruction should be to form capable and sensible men. This general "education makes a man a more intelligent shoemaker, if that be his occupation, but not by teaching him how to make shoes; it does so by the mental exercise it gives and the habits it impresses." General education, therefore, must not be undervalued; it must be amply provided for and rigidly insisted upon; the more of it people have the better for them. To sacrifice it to technical education is to kill the goose that lays the golden egg. But its fanciful superfluities must be lopped off, its non-essentials discarded, and its rubbish thrown overboard, and then, by the side of it, and based upon it, and supplementary to it, technical education, especially that great new department appropriate to all industries, must be universally created, organized in all its grades and varieties, and amply maintained. In brief, to make education as useful as possible, it must be made, as far as practicable in both of its great divisions, simple, limited, practical, acceptable to the learner, adapted to his character and wants; and brought home to his particular case by subdivision and selection. A good deal is said at the present day about raising the standard of education. But is there not rather need of providing the means of education, of selecting, organizing, and administering existing knowledge to the best purpose and advantage?

TECHNICAL TRAINING IN COMMON SCHOOLS IMPRACTICABLE.

In attempting to apply these general views and considerations to the common-school-problem, especially with reference to industrial education, it is, perhaps, necessary to say a few words in the first place concerning the practicability of teaching trades or skilled handicrafts; that is the practical department of industrial education in the elementary school. Ever since Rousseau, in his ideal system, prescribed, for his model pupil, apprenticeship to a trade, in connection with his scholastic tuition, the idea of introducing the workshop into the common school has not been without its advocates. In France this question has at different periods occupied the attention of the government, and the system was put in operation in many localities under the auspices of the administration of public instruction. But the experiment was a failure, although made under favorable conditions, and all traces of the workshop have disappeared from the schools where it was introduced. It is safe to say that this idea is condemned by all the best pedagogical authorities in the world. The all-sufficient objections to it are, first, that the whole of the limited period assigned to the common-school course is needed for general education and the acquisition of useful knowledge; secondly, that at the common-schoolage the physical development is not adequate to the purposes of most manual trades; thirdly, that it is too early for the pupils to choose their callings; and fourthly, the impracticability of allowing a choice of trades on account of the cost involved in providing for instruction in several. It must be concluded, I think, that the effect of putting the workshop into the school can be no other than to make a poor school and a poor workshop, and to defeat the great object of common-school-education, that of securing the development of the mind and the acquisition of useful knowledge necessary for success in all industrial pursuits.

HALF-TIME SCHOOLS CONSIDERED.

There is another contrivance for combining school-instruction with industrial manual labor, known as the *half-time system*, which places the workshop, not in the school, but by its side. The theory of this plan is that the pupil is to be kept at school during the period prescribed by law, but that, after arriving at a certain age, say 10 or 12, his time is to be divided between the school and apprenticeship, or manual labor, in some industrial occupation, in the manufactory or on the farm. The schooling is reduced to half the usual number of hours per week. This plan originated in England, where it has found much favor, and it has been in operation to a limited extent in some of the manufacturing towns of Massachusetts. On the continent of Europe it has not made much progress. Very respectable English authorities maintain that where this system has been tried the pupils make as much progress in their studies as those who attend during the whole time; that the results of three hours' schooling daily are equal to those of six hours. If it is true generally that half a school-day is as good as a whole day, there is certainly an enormous waste of time and money in carrying on schools! I can conceive of schools conducted in such a manner that half the ordinary number of hours of attendance would be worth as much as the whole number. But it cannot be true of really good schools. And it is impossible that the half-time course should be generally accepted as the equivalent of the whole-time course, unless the obligatory years of attendance are proportionally extended. Half-time schooling, continued from 12 to 16 years of age, in connection with manual labor in an apprenticeship, might be as good as whole-time schooling, extending only from 12 to 14 years, and perhaps better; but the half-time system, as at present understood, is no solution of the common-school problem, but only a makeshift, a concession to the pressure of poverty and the demands for cheap child-labor in manufacturing establishments.

WHAT, THEN, IS THE PROVINCE OF THE COMMON SCHOOLS?

What, then, is the function of the common school in relation to industrial education? I answer, that the common school must not be appropriated to the teaching of any specialty, as such. It must undertake to teach only those branches which are generally useful in all callings and in the common affairs of life, and not those which belong exclusively to particular occupations. And yet the common school of the present day must accomplish far more than was expected of it in former times, in respect to the range of subjects taught. The elements of what is called the *new education*, namely, science and art with reference to their application to industrial pursuits, must be included in the modern common school course. The introduction of this new education and the readjustment of the old, to adapt it to the new condition of things, seem to me to be one of the problems of common school instruction. The specific thing to do is to introduce as many subjects of general practical utility as possible without overloading to programme. There is but one mode of accomplishing this desirable object, and that is by a judicious limitation of requirements and a simplification in the handling of the subjects. The branches of this new common school education, which are especially applicable to industrial pursuits and at the same time serviceable in the common affairs of life, are drawing, geometry, (with the application of arithmetic to mensuration,) natural history, physics, and chemistry. These are the branches which lie at the foundation of industrial education. I take the ground that a knowledge of the elements of these branches is universally needed, *and that knowledge it is the function of the common school to impart.* This seems to me what is desirable and practicable in the way of industrial education in the schools designed for the mass of children. And in addition to these, or, possibly, in part as a substitute, all girls should be taught needle-work, and the cutting and fitting of garments, and the elements of household economy.

HOW IT SEEMED TO HIM.

Weiser had been naturalized among the Six Nations, and spoke well the Mohawk language. In going through the Indian country, to carry a message from our Governor to the council at Onondaga, he called at the habitation of Canasetego, an old acquaintance, who embraced him, spread furs for him to sit on, and placed before him some boiled beans and venison.

When he was well refreshed, and had lit his pipe, Canasetego began to converse with him; asked him how he had fared the many years since they had seen each other, whence he then came, what occasioned the journey, &c., &c. Conrad answered all his questions; and, when the discourse began to flag, the Indian, to continue it, said, "Conrad, you have lived long among the white people, and know something of their customs. I have been sometimes at Albany, and have observed that once in seven days they shut up their shops, and assemble all in the great house: tell me, what is it for?"

"They meet there," said Conrad, "to hear and learn good things." 'I do no doubt,' said the Indian, 'that they tell you so; they have told me the same; but I doubt the truth of what they say: I will tell you my reasons. I went lately to Albany to sell my skins, and buy baskets, knives, and powder.

'You know I used generally to deal with Hans Hanson; but I was a little inclined, this time, to try some other merchants: however, I called first at Hans, and asked him what he would give for beaver. He said he would not give more than four shillings a pound; 'but,' said he, 'I cannot talk on business now; this is the day when we meet together to learn good things, and I am going to the meeting.'

'So I thought to myself, since we cannot do any business to-day, I may as well go to the meeting too; and I went with him. There stood up a man in black, and began to talk to the people very angrily. I did not understand what he said; but, perceiving that he looked much at me and at Hanson, I imagined he was angry at seeing me there: so I went out, sat down near the house, struck fire, and lit my pipe, waiting till the meeting broke up. I thought, too, that the man had mentioned something of beaver, and I suspected it might be the subject of their meeting.

'So, when they came out, I accosted my merchant. 'Well, Hans,' said I, 'I hope you have agreed to give more than four shillings a pound.' 'No,' said he, 'I cannot give so much; I cannot give more than three shillings and sixpence.' I then spoke to several other dealers, but they all sung the same song—'three and sixpence—three and sixpence.' This made it clear to me that my suspicion was right; and that, whatever they pretend of meeting to learn good things, the real purpose is, to consult how to cheat Indians in the price of beaver.

'Consider but a little, Conrad, and you must be of my opinion, If they meet so often to learn good things, they would certainly have learned some before this time; but they are still ignorant. You know our practice: if a white man in travelling through our country, enters one of our cabins, we all treat him as I treat you: we dry him if he is wet, we warm him if he is cold, we give him meat and drink, that he may allay his thirst and hunger, and spread soft furs for him to rest and sleep on. We demand nothing in return.

'But, if I go into a white man's house at Albany, and ask for victuals and drink, they say, 'Where is your money?' and, if I have none, they say, 'Get out, you Indian dog!' You see they have not yet learnted those little good things that we need no meeting to be instructed in, because our mothers taught them to us when we were children; and therefore it is impossible their meetings should be, as they say, for any such purpose, or have any such effect; they are only to contrive *the cheating of Indians in the price of beaver.*'

Patronize Your Home Merchants.

First. It is your home; you cannot improve it much by taking money away to spend or harvest.

Second. There is no way of improving a place so much as by encouraging good merchants, good schools and good people to settle among you—spend your money at home.

Third. Spend your money at home; because that's where you earn it; it is your duty.

Fourth. Spend your money at home, because when it is necessary for you to get credit it is of your own town merchants you have generally to get it, and they must wait for the money; therefore, when you have the cash in hand, spend it at home.

Fifth. Spend you money at home. It will make better merchants of your merchants; they can and will keep better assortments, and sell at lower rates than if the only business they can do is what is credited out, while the money goes to other cities.

Sixth. Spend your money at home. You may have sons growing up who will some day be the best merchants in the city; it is a duty; it may be your pride in after years to say: "By my trading at the store I got my son a position as a clerk, and now he is proprietor," then you will think it hard if your neighbors spend their money out of town. Set the example now.

Seventh. Spend your money at home. Set the example and this season try and buy your dry goods, groceries, meats and everything at home, and you will see a wonderful change in a short time in the business outlook of the place: therefore, deal with your merchants.

Eighth. Spend your money at home. What do you gain by going off? Count the cost; see what you could have don at home by letting your merchant have been just as well off, besides helping your merchants.