

However, our weakness in educational as in national affairs had been an over-reliance on our resources, without appreciating the real need for system and control ; an extreme deference to individual and local considerations ; and the entrusting of expert and professional matters too much to lay administration. We could surely introduce more co-ordination and economy of effort, dependent on a wholesome amount of social and national discipline, without approaching the type of regimentation and autocracy against which we are fighting.

Our educational system must lead the way in a keener sense of national co-ordination and efficiency, in a readiness to abandon useless forms and practices, in a demand for a higher standard of work and of life ; in short, in an application of the simple axioms that "A straight line is the shortest distance between two points," and "The whole is greater than its part."

### *Realities.*

All educational effort must in future be devoted to dealing with realities as contrasted with abstractions, formalisms, and pedantic studies. Modern kindergarten and Montessori methods at the one end, and the reformed methods of teaching such subjects as practical applied science and economics at the other, condemn a great deal of what lies between as mere beating of air. All education must concern itself with actualities and activities of life, and (in proportion to its advanced nature) must increasingly justify itself by what it does for the community.<sup>11</sup>

This is not a utilitarian, materialistic standard. When a subject ceases to be studied for use it ceases to be of value for culture. Language is for the development and communication of thought and knowledge ; mathematics for calculation ; science for power to use the forces of nature as well as to understand them ; yet thousands of secondary scholars are spending a fifth of their time at Latin, in which not 1 per cent. of them can ever read, or think, or express themselves. They spend another fifth on mathematics, by which not 5 per cent. of them will ever calculate or reckon anything. They spend about a tenth of their time to a study in science, which in the form adopted in many cases does not widen their personal interest in nature, nor enrich their lives, nor render them of any service to the world of industry about them. This does not deny that a small percentage of our secondary and university scholars do carry the study to as fruitful an issue as the present somewhat academic instruction permits them. The fact remains that the great majority of the scholars receiving the most expensive education we can provide spend under these three headings alone, as above indicated, about half of their time in what is for them mere futile pedantry and study of abstractions.

### *Mental Discipline and Culture.*

The claim for such formal, abstract, unapplied study—that it provides good mental discipline and culture transferable to other activities—is now fighting in the last ditch all the world over. Such production of chaff for a grain of wheat has as much justification as would the pounding of the earth with one's fist for several hours a day to develop muscle when that purpose, and a much greater one, could be secured by getting a blacksmith's hammer and doing something. Surely if the proper methods of teaching are used and powers of thought developed, an even greater mental discipline and culture can be secured by studying real things in a practical manner. There is no real antithesis between culture and vocational study. That false distinction is merely a relic of old class barriers and of an age when the best educated people were not expected to be or to do anything outside a very limited sphere.

### *The Old Order changeth.*

It can be safely said that primary education with all its faults is more progressive, more in harmony with the best educational thought and with the nature and powers of children, better organized, better controlled by inspection, more valued, and more heartily supported by public opinion than is higher education. The reason is that it is the type of education provided for the whole community, so that its universal needs and benefits constitute a claim for general concern and general study resulting in a fairly close realization of its possibilities.