

Education and Economics

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It has been pointed out that justice is the very highest virtue, because the latest in development.

We have the strange spectacle of preachers and teachers calling upon people to strive for love, and in fact trying to develop a conception of divine love, and at the same time these same preachers and teachers are quite indifferent to conditions of the most glaring injustice! Why is it that men thrill and glow and feel the whole being respond to an expression of true, deep, lasting love, but in the very moment of emotional response to a feeling of love, will ignore the most savage injustice?

Thousands of people all over our land admire and are deeply moved by an account of the strong suffering to help the weak, or the efforts of brave souls seeking the lost, lifting the fallen, befriending the homeless, giving hope to the hopeless, food to the hungry, clothes to the naked, fathering the orphan, protecting the widow, and "giving work" to those who are

discouraged or have met financial failure. Thousands I say, approve and admire, yes, strive to imitate such deeds, and at the same time will not even consent to investigate the conditions which caused the sickness, sorrow, weakness, failure, despair or misery they so long to alleviate. Why? Why do men seem to have a conception of love and yet fail to even recognize injustice?

A conception of anything is not attained by preaching or teaching but by experience.

Children have felt parental love from birth and a conception of that virtue has grown into the very being with the unconscious development. Has justice had the same opportunity to enter the human conception?

The child enters school at six years of age where tasks are assigned, and requirements made regardless of his natural interests or desires. He cannot see the justice in the requirements, neither can he feel it.

If his nature happens to thrive under the requirements, he succeeds and does not really understand why success is his, but imagines he is a favored being, "smarter" or "brighter" or "quicker" than the rest. He gets the idea that all might succeed if they would do as he does never once realizing that it is the natural thing

for him to do as he does and would be the unnatural thing for others to do the same. He cannot conceive that he has been favored, has had a "special privilege" in having a course of study or a school system to which he naturally responds. A bird cannot understand why a fish lives in water and does not fly as he does!

If the child's nature does not respond to the tasks or requirements, he is a failure. His life is made miserable by reproof and exhortation, by all sorts of expressions of the displeasure of those in authority. He knows he fails, but does not understand why. He grows discouraged, idle, vicious, is called "bad" or "deficient." Even when he strives honestly and faithfully he still may fail. He sees the "bright" child succeed with little effort, he finds himself a failure even after great effort. He acquires a misconception of justice.

Any school system under which some may flourish and others languish cannot be called a true educational system, and can never develop a conception of justice in the minds of the nation.

When young people have experienced the deadening effect of such a system is it any wonder that they enter the business world unable to note the unjust conditions which they meet?

The successful man credits his success to his superior ability, the unsuccessful man curses his

luck or deprecates his "poor business ability."

Both are equally incompetent from the very nature of the training and experiences during the growing formative years of their lives to perceive that economic injustice is really the cause of one's failure and the other's success. The power to conceive of a condition of justice has never been allowed to develop and they are intellectually unable to recognize unjust conditions or conceive of a condition of justice or equality of opportunity.

Now suppose our school system from the kindergarten through the university were to remove all requirements and simply strive to meet the demands of the growing mind and body? Suppose little children were allowed to work and play, sing and dance, hear stories and tell them, study nature and make things to their hearts content. Learn to read and write when they really need it, and want to, but never stimulated to desire things belonging to older years.

Suppose the "smart" child were allowed to be smart and quick and competent but given so much to do happily and wholesomely that he would never be conscious of being "ahead" of anybody.

Suppose the "dull" child were allowed to plod along in his own slow way, never feeling that he is "behind" anybody; doing, poorly, perhaps, but as well as he can the things he loves to do, the things that belong to his stage of development, associated

with other children of his age, and not humiliated by being "kept back" or "put back" for reasons, which, however wisely explained, must always be incomprehensible to him.

Now suppose these "bright" children and "dull" children go on working and playing and studying through the school years, without striving to "get ahead" or "keep ahead" of anybody, without even a temptation to "crib" or "cheat" or appear to know when they do not know, never dreaming of failure but realizing that all are succeeding, that some are doing one way, some another and that each has the sacred right to his own way! If the school will provide an environment which will allow all children to grow uninterruptedly, then their conception of justice will be A FREE FIELD AND EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY, for they have experienced equality of opportunity and conceptions come through experience. Their conception of injustice will be "WARTING OR OBSTRUCTION" of the individual right of development.

When these young people, I say, who have gained a conception of justice by living it, enter the adult world, they will not only be quick to recognize injustice—the obstructing of an individual's progress—but they will be strong and quick and true to remedy the wrong and establish a condition of equality of opportunity. A fully developed being cannot be happy

in the presence of injustice to others. The individual who has had so free and natural a development as to have gained a conception of justice—a development such as organic education designs for every child, knows what equality of opportunity really means. His sympathies have been quickened and he is bound to become an active force in establishing equality of opportunity to the earth—the fundamental condition of universal brotherhood.

No great economic reform can be effected by people who have been trained during the growing years to believe that success lies in "passing" at school and in "making money" in after life.

Unless one has experienced justice and equality of opportunity it is a most difficult thing for him to acquire a conception of justice or equality.

We must begin with the children. We must inject into our school system a different meaning of the word education. The requirements must be removed and development must be allowed to continue in childhood unconsciously, uninterruptedly, without strain, or striving or worry. The school must provide for the entire organism—must be organic—every child must grow stronger and sounder of body, more intelligent of mind, sweeter, more helpful of spirit.

When our public schools can turn out a crop of young people who have lived in environment suit-

ed to their physical, mental, moral needs; when they have experienced equality of opportunity to develop in harmony with the laws of their being, then they will demand equality of opportunity to nature's bounty. Then and not until then may we hope for permanent economic freedom.

The School of Organic Education at Fairhope, Ala., is an effort to show that true education does give equality of opportunity to develop in harmony with the law of the being. It is trying to prove that the desire for knowledge and the "inner impulse" may be safely followed—that children will "know as much" and be stronger of body, more intelligent of mind, and sweeter of spirit if the natural desires (not caprices) are followed and the child really allowed to do the things that its nature demands at the time. It is striving to develop a conception of justice, by making no requirements under which some may naturally thrive, while others may languish. It strives to do no repressing nor forcing, but provide ample opportunity for the quick child and ample opportunity for the slow child, by allowing each to progress at his own rate of development.

Organic education is a true agent in establishing equality of opportunity, in ushering in the brotherhood of man and should have the sympathy of every lover of justice—of every lover of his fellow men—of all who long for economic freedom.