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Career Control

One of America's largest industries operates without a production schedule. The tragedy of the educational system which trains without regard for the markets of the future, and a plan for career control, are discussed by Miss Beecher.

WHEELS in its largest, one of the world's oldest, industries begin turning again this month. Surveys of the Federal Office of Education tell us that approximately 30,000,000 students will return to the factories of our grammar and high schools, colleges and universities, both public and private; 23,500,000 to elementary and grammar schools; 4,800,000 to high schools; 1,100,000 to colleges, and 500,000 to special schools. So our educators resume the gigantic task of manufacturing our future citizens; the men and women who will inherit the success, or failure, in our various attempts to reconstruct a crumbling economic and social structure; the men and women who will take their places in government, industry, the professions, agriculture and commerce.

As we observe this annual resumption of the operation of the American educational mill, we are appalled to note how, with a few rare exceptions, this training of future citizens is being done without great regard for the needs of the markets of tomorrow, or of the changed viewpoints of those about to undergo training. The creation of square pegs for round holes goes on apace. Today many thousands begin arduous preparation to participate four, seven, or eight years hence in professions already overcrowded, and which in a future day will be even more glutted. The situation is not particularly new to this year of 1933, but assuredly it has been greatly aggravated by special conditions coming out of the Depression, by the remorseless advance of technological unemployment, and also by the drastic measures now being undertaken by older practitioners to curtail future membership in their particular professions.

Any attempt to hold old carrots of "education, general or vocational," before the donkeys nose will fail. This generation of students remembers the maladjustment of war, the "Depression" and 12,000,000 unemployed. These future citizens have learned to a surprising degree to distinguish between facts and fallacy. They are a realistically thinking body, which has seen an older generation fail miserably; which has seen every economic law, formerly used to keep the scales of human justice balanced, go down to defeat. They have heard the lusty songs of Big Business ballyhoo their theme songs of "Service" and "From office boy to President." Youth's scales are weighing the theory of democracy's "one for all and all for one," as applied to 1929-1933 dismissals and salary cuts. They have learned at last the definition of "executive"—to them it is a person who hums "Depression I Love You" while drawing an annual salary of $100,000 or more, and earns it by adding a few more hundred to the rolls of the unemployed. A nice new sheepskin is no longer the key to a job. The pattern to the opportunity key seems to have been lost. Youth means to find it. They are demanding their rightful heritage, the unquestionable right of any citizen of any country—the right to earn a living.

"The New Deal" means more to youth than just a catch phrase applied to various undertakings of the Administration. It means we, as a nation, are at the crossroads, and behind us, eager to follow in our footsteps, if we succeed, waits the rest of a suffering world. It means that the pioneer in man, that deep-rooted instinct which has been responsible for all progress, must find a new outlet. That instinct has geographically allotted and peopled the world. The dynamic force of it has expanded trade, and developed such speed in communication and transportation that we have become an intimate and interdependent family of nations. The perfecting of the economic and social structure provides the new frontiers. One field alone remains in which there can be mass participation in pioneering. It has been a sadly neglected one down through the ages. It is the field of human relationships and the mastering of the lost art of living.

At the crossroads of our current dilemma stands our greatest industry—Education—receiving the raw material of children, which must be conserved and molded into men and women equipped to contribute democracy's pattern to the world of the future.

With our national consciousness awakened to "planned economy" and "controlled production," as a possible solution to unequal distribution, we must not allow monetary stabilization, trade balances and national poppings in and out of the League of Nations to blind our vision to the problem that lies at the root of all our chaos; the great and unwieldy problem of equalization in the distribution of the efforts of Man; a commodity which has been handled in a haphazard fashion since time immemorial.
and especially since the industrial revolution that began in America in 1870.

Looking closely at the educational thread which is to be found running through the economic and social evolutions of civilization, we find spasmodic individual attempts to put man's welfare at the base of each economic adjustment. These attempts have usually followed economic upheavals and been led by the then existing educational and religious leaders. Some new theory applicable to, and evolved out of, the human needs uncovered at that period has been produced. Socially minded leaders have been born, and have endeavored to integrate more practical—or as we now term it—vocational education, and some form of planned correlation with future employment. It has been a form of education planned to augment the needs of the masses and directed at the actual requirements of trades and professions. Its origin is traceable to the Egyptians in 2500 B.C. It thrived in the guild schools between 1300-1800. Vocational education found its greatest impetus in the Industrial Revolution in England, where the crowding of people into congested areas, when factories began to supplant home manufacture and wholesale factory employment of children created a serious health condition that brought both legislation and the first “model factory,” established by Robert Owen at New Lanark, Scotland, in 1816. He created the first “factory school,” an experiment watched closely by scientists. Owen was a student of Pestalozzi. He was a champion of environment versus heredity. Persecution drove him to America in 1825.

Education, general and vocational, originated as an indulgence for the rich and a means of controlling the poor, or laboring classes. The Greek model of scholarship, which was without any thought of using knowledge to prepare for specific trade or profession, gave birth to our colleges. Trade, or vocational, schools had their origin in private, or religious philanthropies where vocational aptitudes could be used partially to defray the expenses—the conscience of the rich making a gesture to the masses, for the purpose of controlling society. Our public schools are Democracy's contribution.

Unpleasant as anything based upon class distinction sounds to a proclaimed democratic people, we must accept the fact that the American educational system's pattern is on a framework of indulgence for the rich and control of the poor or laboring classes. It still remains the gesture of conscience until we establish some form of direction in the choice of educational facilities and practical correlation with jobs. We must acknowledge the great work of those educators who are endeavoring to expand the purposes and uses of vocational education and make of it a national model for a democratic people. Here it is well to remember Robert Owen's purpose in coming to America in 1825. It was to establish a "new moral world," where education would be followed by immediate employment in the field chosen. It failed, even as Maclure's Pestalozzian school failed in Philadelphia in 1805. Its failure has been credited to lack of parental and industrial coöperation.

Those educators who cling to the academic, or liberal arts, form of education do so believing that to teach a man to think prepares him for the reality of life. This is true of certain types of minds, but not all—and this is a democratic country. For some students a liberal arts course means marking time on the wrong side of reality. The advocates of vocational education are striving to establish a democratic system based upon the theory that certain types of minds should follow Fellenberg's idea which was: "Instruction should be followed by action as closely as the lightning by thunder, and the life should be in complete harmony with the studies" (in "Sketches of Hofwyl" by William C. Woodbridge, Boston, 1831). It is interesting to note here that Fellenberg's teachings were based, not upon class distinction, an autocracy of capital and labor, but upon a firm conviction that some men were meant to lead and others to follow, leaving no room for dispute of the relative importance of each, so long as each man fulfills his destiny in occupation.

The educational problem that we face today is not one of limited opportunity. America affords vast educational resources under development in different forms planned to meet the needs of a heterogeneous people. It therefore becomes apparent that the fault lies, not in the various educational methods, or institutions, but in the individual's choice of the many educational facilities at his, or her, command.

What are some of the reasons children choose different schools after the period of compulsory education has been completed? Why are the 30,000,000 American students enrolled, many of them haphazardly, as they are today?

1. Because a longer period of education is an easy way for mother to indulge in adult education and club or other activities.
2. Because John plays football, and athletics are open to personal and financial opportunity.
3. Because "the gang" is going, or the favorite member of "the gang."
4. Because daughters and sons are excellent advance agents for social climbing parents and finishing schools; colleges and universities give splendid opportunities for social contacts.
5. Because the tradition is that a child must receive his or her education in school, an excuse which the post-war generations have clung to for purposes of postponing responsibilities and decisions on future fields of occupation.
6. For the too rare reason that a child's natural talents can be best developed in the selected institutions of learning.

What are some of the reasons children choose a profession or trade?

1. Natural talents which have been fostered and developed by fortunate circumstances surrounding the individual—mostly coincidence.
2. Desire to duplicate the profession of one parent, or the other; parents more often making this choice for their children, based upon some unfulfilled wish of their own. Desire to emulate some idol in history.
Desire “to be just like” the most popular person in contemporary community life.

3. Because certain schools afford special courses in vocations which have been over-publicized as money-making possibilities in recent years, such as motion picture professions, radio, industrial engineering, or advertising profession.

4. Serious and constructive study of the occupational trends of the time. (This is rare.)

5. Accidental finding of a job open. (Another rare occurrence in the fields open to beginners.)

What are we, as citizens, going to do about the huge “overhead tax” we pay for mismanagement in the handling of our raw material? We are paying, first, in the daily toll of human lives—waste of our precious raw material, and second, in the very literal form of taxes. As taxpayers, we support state and private institutions, (private philanthropic endeavors), filled to overflowing with misfits, (our “seconds”), who fall by the wayside under the pressure of unaided adjustment to the industrial world; third, by the destruction of life and property, which is the result of organized crime, the 20th century example of how social misfits fight for power and money. Organized crime makes use of all the scientific methods available and of all of society’s neglect of responsibility for the causes of crime.

Our first duty is to educate ourselves and our neighbors to the realization that we are today in a new age. It has arrived. We, with the aid of science, have made it. We will determine its success or failure. Success lies in our individual ability to cope with the machine which we have erected. This must mean centering our attention on why people are as they are, and not on what they do after they leave school and are thrown into the chaos of changing conditions. This means perfecting methods of career control at the source—childhood. All modern inventions and methods have constructed an inanimate monster at the service of man for the purpose of “labor saving.” More irony! Labor saved means life wasted, unless we keep scientifically in step with the educational processes which teach man to use his newly created leisure.

Man, in collaboration with science, has produced the prognostic and preventive methods which now operate for the more efficient manufacture and merchandising of commodities. Markets are studied years in advance of manufacture. It is to be noted that we do this today in all lines except education. Nations vie with each other for new ideas that will produce greater efficiency in the merchandising of inanimate raw and manufactured materials. By the results of distribution and its ramifications national supremacy has been determined. Nations consciously battle for power alone, but individuals within nations consciously battle for power and money (money meaning security in this age). Yet since the Egyptian Feudal Age to this, the Industrial Age, the loss of national supremacy is directly traceable to the failure in improving sociological conditions in proportion to improvement through new methods applied to the business of material gain. Power and prosperity have made people and nations lust for more. The greed of man has turned the tide of civilization and the struggle starts all over again.

At these times in history, what we now call Vocational Education—a term as greatly overworked as “psychology,” by the charlatan and headline seeker—has persistently raised its head and moved a few steps ahead in the pace set by the economic stride. But then, even as now, a radical educator got as much isolation as a leper. The ramifications of greed are geared to retard human progress. Public blindness and public vision are ever with us. Many people are totally ignorant of what has been done in this country in vocational education. Hundreds shy from it and its scientific tests which are still in the experimental stages as though they were an X-Ray that would uncover all the family skeletons for centuries past. It is largely regarded as a new idea—a fad that won’t last. How many laymen today know that our systems of trade tests, I-Q tests and others, which partially aid in assisting children in planning their life work, as well as in personnel administration, are literally a memorial to Wilhelm Max Wundt, who established the first accepted psychological laboratory at the University of Leipzig in 1799, one hundred and thirty-four years ago?

Wundt began experiments to produce a scientific method which would serve man in his search for the “value received” in life—a living wage in normal community life. He built the bridge between the mental philosophers and the physical scientists. Over that bridge have journeyed Ebbinghaus, Darwin, (who is better known for his “Origin of Species” than for his very fine studies of the mental development of children), G. Stanley Hall, Francis Galton, the heredity advocate, whose work laid the frame work for all our tests now in operation. Many others have labored for better and more scientific methods in the efficient and humane manufacture and marketing of the commodity of Man and his talents. A history of persecutions would furnish many names. Teachers who have contributed the original theories now being applied have found the very students they serve, due to ignorance, their adversaries. Higher education is rapidly remedying mass opposition. But adult education is not a preventative method. It leaves much room for waste.

Today, civilization is again at the crossroads. But today there is a persistent and consistent undercurrent of awareness of causes, and a means to the correction of causes on the part of the masses. The right to express that awareness is the contribution of our democracy.

Are we going to harken to past warnings? There is a world-wide movement of youth that says most emphatically “Yes.” Youth has learned through the recent experience of World War and the Depression that the omega of education is really the alpha of life. Youth says, “Give us the same advantages that you give to your inanimate raw material; we want new values; show us how to assume those responsibilities you have made our
The answer, in terms of cooperation, provide a large problem. As usual, we have two sides, the Academician who believes firmly that the omega of education is almost the theta of life, even though reality turns theory upside-down for the student who tries to meet occupational competition of today with weapons of a Liberal Arts course, which invariably results in a period of drifting and discouragement which is moral murder on the part of a proclaimed intelligent society. Then we have the exponents of vocational education, who are attempting to secure better balance, preparation and participation with a logical follow-through from school days to work days. It really seems as though the vocational educators would—if they are given proper cooperation—produce a truly democratic form of education. Liberal arts colleges and courses are fitted to specific mental types, with certain study habits not possessed by those who get results from various methods employed by vocational educators.

The problems of administration include teacher selection and training. That should be true of either the academic or vocational system. Only those with natural gifts for teaching should be trained and admitted to the teaching profession. We have in it too many who seek to escape from life and to wallow in theory. And by far too many who regard only the pay cheque—those who have drifted into it for an economic stop-gap. Trade and industrial schools need teachers who have had practical experience. Selecting natural teachers from the technical, or practical, fields of commerce and industry presents another problem, part of which is the “money craze” and prosperity experience of recent years. Appropriations for architectural wonders in educational buildings run high. We might stop decorating the landscape and start the interior decorating job of putting constructive mental equipment in the mental houses of our children.

First, to achieve a sound “production schedule” in our educational mill we need preliminary, supervisory units in grammar school, functioning as an observation body, maintaining records which will be forwarded with the student to high school, or whatever is the next educational step. The grammar school child is more apt to have retained natural occupational inclinations that can be directed in a choice of education. Grammar school is where competent scientific methods should determine whether a child needs liberal or vocational education. The use of the term “vocational education” must not be confused with methods employed in trade and industrial schools, which are not diagnostic or preventive, but emergency and temporary mediums applied by industry and education as a sort of stop-gap to waste in industrial overhead and human life.

Another very large problem is the perfecting of employment systems in high schools and colleges and universities. Again we come to the task of selection of an administering personnel. They must be natural counselors—youth today is not easily fooled. They have lost an alarming amount of faith in us, but not in themselves. These occupational advisors—and they should possess sufficient practical experience—must be closely tied to those making studies of occupational trends, so that alternative occupations can be considered by students, while they are in the course of preparing themselves for work. Theorizing, but trained, employment counselors are much more destructive than untrained, natural counselors.

There are many objectors to any control of the professions. It is regarded as undemocratic. Is there anything in democratic principle that says all of the one hundred and twenty-two millions of us shall be Presidents of the United States? There are natural leaders and natural followers. Of course, if making money is our standard and the developing of native abilities in, let us say, law, might forbid one from becoming a movie star at $10,000 a week, then we have the explanation of the chronic objector! But if guidance in preparing for the job of assuming responsibilities in America in particular, and the world in general, without waste of the individual’s natural gifts is undemocratic, so are the modern methods of business that earn the money the objectors are afraid they might lose.

School equipment for vocational education represents the largest problem. Modern improvements are going at such a pace and cost of equipment is so enormous that an easy and immediate solution of this is doubtless. It is possible that under the present controlled production of industry—industrial leaders may turn philanthropic and work on some plan to loan plant, equipment and instructors to experimental educators at certain intervals of periodic slack seasons. This has been tried in small ways.

Another hurdle presents itself—parental objection, that old nemesis of other educational developments. Parent-Teacher organizations are striving toward that solution. On this problem we come face to face with our first duty—the realization of the new age. It is here. We made it. Women have freed themselves from home responsibilities. Adam handed back the apple and Eve has eaten. In digesting the result women must realize that the duties of parenthood have been transferred to the educators. Women must now work toward producing better results in education.

Youth has accepted the new world—this industrial perfection which has been built with mortar and bricks, manufactured out of billions and billions of crushed human lives. They know the new age is a sociological one.

We are at the crossroads! The frontiers are open once more. Youth points the way to the educational challenge.

So in reviewing all the available material on education in America, we come up for air with three facts clutched in a determined fist: The first fact is that our educational chaos is, in a large measure, responsible for the present disgrace of unemployment; the second fact, that we must perfect a democratic system of education which will function now; and a third fact, that the solution lies in planned administration of education and adequate financing.

The foregoing proposal is based upon the acceptance of vocational education as defined by Herman Harrell Horne in his “The Democratic Philosophy of Education” published by Macmillan, 1932, which is, “To find out what one is fitted to do and to secure an opportunity to do it—is the key to happiness.” It is also based upon a conviction that ample methods in vocational education are available through successful usage, begun as far back as 1809 when Dewitt Clinton led the Masons in the fight for free education as the birthright of every American child. As a result, free schools, which now exist as our public schools.
came under state control in 1818. The Masons at Utica
in 1892 and the Loyal Order of Moose at Mooseheart,
Illinois, have produced excellent examples of voca-
tional education as it should function for the children of
this country, irrespective of economic or social status. Utica
is for fatherless children of Masons; Mooseheart for
orphans.

If we must have a practical proposal, here is one:

The forming of a National Citizens' Educational Com-

munity Chest to function apart from, but supplementary
to, Federal, state and municipal activities and appropri-
ations; its purpose to be the providing of adequate finances
for research and administration. The following depart-
ments should represent its social purpose and act in a co-
operative and coördinating manner with individual efforts
now struggling with problems of finance and administra-
tion:

1. A Public Relations Department concerned with
publicizing vocational education and the indirect
education of parents and future employers.

2. A Research Department producing surveys of occu-
pational trends made available to active groups in
primary and secondary schools maintaining voca-
tional and educational guidance units.

3. A Department of Educational Psychology, con-
cerned with teacher training, perfecting of job analy-
sis, perfecting of tests used in vocational and educa-
tional guidance.

4. A Financial Department
   a. Fund Raising Division
   b. Educational Loan Division
      1. To schools, colleges and universities.
      2. To individuals.

3. To teachers' training.

5. A Department of Employment Coördination. Prac-
tical and free employment agencies established in
high schools, colleges and universities.

At the present time, educators are fighting over com-
parative values in methods of liberal and vocational educa-
tion while youth goes on being mutilated. Industry and
commerce continue to pay overhead in a stop-gap process
made available through coöperative schools, industrial
schools, trade schools and trade extension schools such as
are furnished by R. H. Macy & Co., General Electric,
National Metal Trades, Radio Corporation of America,
Yale & Towne Manufacturing Co., Westinghouse Electric
Manufacturing Co., the New York Central Railroad,
labor organizations and social agencies such as the
Y. M. C. A., Y. W. C. A., Y. M. H. A., K. of C. and
various individual and church groups.

An exceedingly valuable experiment is now being con-
ducted under the sponsoring wing of George Gordon Bat-
tle and the National Committee on Prison Labor. E.
Stagg Whitin, Ph.D., Chairman of the Executive Council
is collaborating with Dr. J. L. Moreno, Psychiatrist, who
has prepared a "group method" for classification and thera-
petic use. These experiments among our social misfits,
catalogued as criminals or potential criminals, have pro-
duced sufficiently satisfactory results to justify its trial in
schools and Dr. Moreno is now working on the develop-
ment of a technique in group classification, teacher train-
ing and the preparation of a psychological geography. This
experiment, if successful, will provide the first test capable
of placing the child in an imaginary life situation and
thereby provide a greater guide to an individual's poten-
tial abilities, which is the real need today of our entire
educational system.