

(April 25th.)

Education Through Efficiency.

By GEORGE H. LOCKE, M.A.

ADDRESSING the Canadian Club on the subject of "Education through Efficiency," Mr. George H. Locke said:

Mr. President and fellow members of the Canadian Club,— I have always found both as a speaker and hearer—and I prefer much to be the latter—that the first few minutes of an address are too often lost or indefinitely comprehended because it seems as if it were expected to be similar to the preliminary conversation of two persons, who, before coming to the real point, have as it were, a sort of tuning up, a kind of mental feeling for the proper pitch. It is the external and internal settling down of the audience and putting itself *en rapport* with the speaker. He in turn is taking in his audience and speculating as to the probable effects of his address remembering the parable of the sower and the results of the same seed upon the different qualities of soils. His thoughts, if he is addicted to that pleasurable diversion known as psychology, may be directed towards the consideration of the many different and differing minds before him and the possibility that what he may have to say will be interpreted with as many different shades of meaning as there are minds. I remember a very apt illustration taken from the artist's profession where Hon. John Collier says:—

"Rub a little ivory black thinly over a white canvas, it will appear a distinct brown; mix the same color with white it becomes a neutral grey; brush this grey thinly over a black ground it will have a distinctly bluish tinge; so that the same pigment can vary from a warm brown to a blue gray without admixture with any other color but white, merely in accordance with the relationship to a background. Yellow ochre gives similar results. When lightly brushed over a white

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ground it seems a rich orange; when brushed in precisely the same way over a black ground it seems a sort of green."

This psychological analysis of mental backgrounds is a very interesting subject and I commend it to your hours of relaxation from business because it has not only a theoretical and pleasurable value, but a distinctly practical one; for I think you will agree with me that the successful business man—and by that I mean the man who has made his business successful rather than the man who has been made what the world calls successful by his business—is a psychologist studying, though perhaps unconsciously, this very matter of mental backgrounds in the concrete individual presentation of the persons whom he wishes to influence towards his way of thinking, whether that be to induce him to invest in Cobalt stocks on a falling market, or to induce him to support the building fund campaign of the Y. M. C. A.

This has been called a commercial age especially so in a young country such as Canada where the natural resources are just being uncovered, and where the earth is yielding her increase with so lavish a hand that giving seems not to impoverish her but only stimulates the ambition to get more. I prefer to call this an age of opportunity when as Galsworthy the novelist and poet says: "There is a great visiting wind sweeping into the house of our lives through a hundred doors." The great question with us to-day is the recognition of this opportunity and the means whereby we can make best use of this opportunity.

It is within the memory of even the young men of this Club when our ideal in education seemed to be to get a percentage of our young men through College and University courses to enter the learned professions, medicine, law and theology, and almost no thought was given to the great majority who for some reason could not go on with a University course. It was considered somewhat of a disgrace if one failed to reach one of these goals. It mattered little what the earning power was or the efficiency of his service to mankind. The less fortunate boy who fell by the wayside and donning his overalls went to work at some industrial occupation and earned subsequently \$25.00 a week, was looked on with disfavor by the young man in the gentler walks who found difficulty in making \$12.00 a week. The increased earning power of the young man in overalls represented a higher degree of intelligence and efficiency of service, but at that time, and in some places even at this time, that aspect was not the important one.

Education had not to do with efficiency so much as it had to do with position. The measure was the status in society, not the contribution to social welfare and to the well being of the state.

Scientific and industrial development has wrought a great change in our civilization—so great a change that it is with difficulty that our educational theories and practices have kept pace and demonstrated their values under the changed conditions. And yet these changes in scientific and industrial development have come about through applications of these very educational theories which we sometimes affect to disparage. The development of the individual has gone on until it has been so apparent that this development ought to be applied towards the accomplishment of something for the general good, that in the application we have lost sight of the centuries of development of latent power that was only awaiting a suitable outlet. The responsibility upon us is to furnish a suitable outlet for this so called efficiency.

We have almost reluctantly—and yet how gladly after all—abandoned the idea that education meant the attainment of a state of mind that could contemplate the universe with a calmness, and in many cases a laziness, that separated its owner from mingling with the "common crowd." We have abandoned this for the larger idea that education is a process that is capable of indefinite expansion and development terminated only by death itself; that it means a continuous reconstruction of our experience with the object of making us socialised individuals contributing to the enlightenment and the comfort of our fellows.¹ This view of education taken apart entirely from the narrow view point of instruction accounts for the marvellous power that is now ascribed to it and which makes us feel that through education all things are possible. We recognize that it quickens our energy and intelligence, that it induces and develops efficiency, and that it establishes habits of moral action.

The philosophy of the Eighteenth Century was to make the individual free, to remove him from the thralldom of church and state as they existed in that century, but it was the Nineteenth Century that was to indicate how that freedom could best be used, and to set up a standard for that individual which should be a social standard developed from within the individual, not superimposed by an artificial social aggregation. This standard was truth, the intellect, or as some would call it reason, which has been aptly defined as

"glorified intelligence." We emerged into that freedom spoken of in Holy Writ. "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free."

The self sufficient individual is becoming, in the twentieth century, the socially efficient individual, for never in the history of the world has there been the effort of developing a spirit of social service as we see to-day in our country as well as in all the other democratic nations of Christendom. I need mention only a few of the many movements for civic and social betterment such as the Laymen's Movement, Playground Movement, the expansion of the Y. M. C. A., Y. W. C. A., and the development of Guilds of Civic Art.

This efficient individual measures his efficiency by what he can do to improve the social conditions of others; *the recognition of obligation and responsibility is the education that he is receiving by reason of his efficiency* and this education, as I said before, is recognized now as a process that is a part of his life, no matter what the particular occupation may be. Culture still is our standard but our view of culture has developed until still believing that education makes for culture, we recognize that it is not so much our work which determines whether or not we are cultured, as our attitude towards our work. The washer woman may possess more real culture than the president of a bank, and the village blacksmith, if there is one left, than the railroad magnate. Indeed increase in riches does not ensure increase in culture any more than are grey hairs an infallible sign of wisdom.

Efficiency is too often looked upon from the one side of individual progress or prowess. The individual side of efficiency means the fitting of the individual to pursue successfully his calling in life; that is bread and butter efficiency. But there is also to be considered to what use that success is to be put. The social side of efficiency means that he shall be a good man and a good citizen, that he shall be a contributor to the common good, thus making his contribution to the fund of educational experience from which he drew so heavily in order that he might attain his individual efficiency.

This very recognition of social obligation marks the highest point of educational excellence in a man's life. Efficiency ought to educate him to this idea of responsibility for what has been given him, and an obligation to repay with heavy interest in contribution to social welfare. I say advisedly "what has been given him" for it is one of the absurdities of modern diction to speak of self made men. I recog-

nize that such a term is used and generally by the man himself. The only excuse I can see for its use by some men is that it seems as if it were relieving the Almighty of an accusation of having erred badly. The so called "big" men (which term is too often misnamed "great") are the product of their times and their fellows; they are the resultant in a more or less mechanized world, but they too often act as if they were an "efficient cause."

Efficiency connotes action not possession. The standard is what we can do not what we have. A homely but apt illustration of this which I think will appeal to you occurred in connection with the organization of a ball team in a High School. One of the boys came to the principal and said "The boys don't want me to be catcher. I got up the team. I am captain. I own the catcher's mask. I am the only one who has a catcher's mit and I have a five dollar chest protector. Don't you think I ought to be catcher? The principal turning towards him and looking him squarely in the face said "Can you catch?"

If efficiency in action were our standard of education as we grew older in as large a proportion as when we were younger the world would be happier and more productive. Efficiency produces and promotes independence in thought and action, a quality much in need in our world which is becoming so dependent upon large aggregations of capital which stifle competition and beget the spirit of acquiescence and obsequiousness. The exponent of such aggregations would have us adopt an educational regimen as would fit girls and boys to become docile and useful helpers in stores, factories, machine shops and offices, in fact the exponent's idea is to make money by the hands of other people. These people he hopes will be content to remain in the positions to which they have been called, and he says this with unctious and sincerity quite worthy of him. His mental reservation is that he too is content to remain in his present position to which he fondly imagines that Providence called him. The kind of education that we need is that attained through efficiency, through the development of an individual's capacities in construction, production and creation, and in such a manner that instead of being absorbed in the individual and the selfish he will be enlisted in all his powers in the service that is social.

The most notable trend of modern life is the socialization of human knowledge, human activities and human relationships. This can be seen in an illustration taken from the

business world and therefore applicable in this Club. The world needed better artificial light and as you are aware the needs of the world to a very great degree condition the avenues of educational research in this practical age. The discovery of Karl von Welsbach that thorium and cerium were brilliantly incandescent when heated together was not enough to furnish the light. A mineral called monazite sand possessed the qualities necessary towards making the discovery useful and it has to be brought from Brazil and scientifically purified; ramie a China grass has to be cultivated in India and in Italy to be woven into mantels; long fibred asbestos scientifically made in Belgium forms the loop; the oxides of berillium and aluminum are used to vitrify the upper end of the mantle; and the label is painted in with uranium nitrate. The efforts of thousands of men are employed to utilize rare minerals which a few years ago were of interest only to academic science and every night millions of people are benefitted thereby.

The test is efficiency for social service and it is through that efficiency we are making and remarking our education that it may produce still greater social benefits. And even if we looked at things from the material side we can say that with the exception of electricity no science has made greater progress in the past thirty years than has the science of education, but, as I have been trying to point out, education has a wider and deeper connotation in the moral realm which as a human science differentiates it from the so called natural sciences.

Lest some one here of an artistic bent of mind should think that I have dwelt upon material things to a partial exclusion of artistic let me say that the artistic must accompany or rather be a part of and glorify the material and so has a distinct part to play in education through efficiency as it is part of the efficiency.

Ruskin says:

"You may read the character of men and of nations in their creative work as in a mirror. A man may hide himself from you, or misrepresent himself to you, every other way. But he cannot in his work; there to be sure you have him to the inmost. All that he likes, all that he sees, all that he can do, his affections, his perseverance, his impatience, his clumsiness, his cleverness, everything is there. If the work is a cobweb, you know it was made by a spider; if a honeycomb, by a bee; a worm cast its thrown up by a worm; a nest wreathed

by a bird; and a house built by a man, worthily if he is worthy, and ignobly if he is ignoble."

Efficiency is not shown alone by the production of masterpieces that are delightful to the eye, but also by the same masterly handling of the every day objects that have to do with our lives. It was Reinach I think who said that if all the productions of Greek architecture, sculpture and painting had vanished, the evidence of utensils and household vessels would convince us of the fine artistic feeling of this highly gifted people. Efficiency ought to develop an education that would go far towards breaking down that artificial wall which some of us are helping to erect between the fine and the useful arts. Here again it is not the work but the attitude and the interest and the training through these, that makes for excellence and distinction.

Let me emphasize in closing, that, as members of the Canadian Club, the obligation is upon us, the responsibility is ours to develop the individual to efficiency and then that this efficient individual may feel his obligation to make his contribution to social happiness and well being, to be a "soldier of the common good" as Russell puts it.

Let me leave with you the thought that efficiency does not always show itself in concrete and tangible form but there is an efficiency which is of the individual himself, in his inner life, which makes life to him a joy and which gives him inspiration and motivation in the carrying out of the problems of life. This element of desire, of imagination, of inspiration apart entirely from the reproduction in tangible form is what we might well call the idea, and the danger in a so called practical age is that we shall neglect the idea for the substantial element and so become a nation of imitators instead of a nation of idealists. The artisan can easily be trained and can always be bought, but the true artist needs careful development and is a product of time and culture. There is a want, a desire in most of us that cannot, I hope, be satisfied with these material elements. Possession of these do not make for the soul satisfaction unless that soul is an earthly production—and if it is, then it is not worth having, for life in its full sense cannot be comprehended by it.

Kipling in one of his later and less known poems has given us a picture at which I hope you will look many times, for it will repay you with new beauties, new thoughts, and new suggestions as you look deeper into it. It has a particular

application to what I have been trying to bring before you to-night.

As Adam lay a-dreaming beneath the Apple Tree,
The Angel of the Earth came down, and offered *Earth* in fee.
But Adam did not need it,
Nor the plough he would not speed it,
Singing:—"Earth and Water, Air and Fire,
What more can mortal man desire?"
(The Apple Tree's in bud.)

As Adam lay a-dreaming beneath the Apple Tree,
The Angel of the Waters offered all the *Seas* in fee.
But Adam would not take 'em,
Nor the ships he wouldn't make 'em,
Singing: "Water, Earth and Air and Fire,
What more can mortal man desire?"
(The Apple Tree's in leaf.)

As Adam lay a-dreaming beneath the Apple Tree,
The Angel of the Air he offered all the *Air* in fee.
But Adam did not crave it,
Nor the voyage, he wouldn't brave it,
Singing:—"Air and Water, Earth and Fire,
What more can mortal man desire?"
(The Apple Tree's in bloom.)

As Adam lay a-dreaming beneath the Apple Tree,
The Angel of the fire rose up and not a word said he.
But he wished a fire and made it,
And in Adam's heart he laid it,
Singing:—"Fire, Fire, burning Fire,
Stand up and reach your heart's desire!"
(The Apple Blossom's set.)

As Adam was a-working outside of Eden-Wall,
He used the *Earth*, he used the *Seas*, he used the *Air* and *All*;
And out of the black disaster
He arose to be the master
Of Earth and Water, Air and Fire.
But never reached his heart's desire!
(The Apple Tree's out down!)
