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The Ferrer Modern School

Harry Kelly

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1920

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vengeance upon their children for the outrages they suffered at the hands of their parents. It is only because there is something irrepressible in life, that society has progressed at all. But this school is maintained by men and women who have kept some spark of their youth alive, who have some recollection of the thoughts and feelings of their childhood. Haunted by the appalling sadness of that old Greek proverb “Whom the Gods love, die young,” they have sought to champion the cause of youth and keep its spirit aglow.

THE ELIXIR OF YOUTH

They too, like valiant Ponce de Leon, have searched the universe for the Quintessence of Spring and the Elixir of Youth. But, wiser than he in the ways of nature, they realize that the true approach is not only by way of the body, but by way of the mind and spirit. They have already seen a few men and women, untrammelled by the bonds of habit and tradition, keep their minds flexible and receptive, and their spirits radiant to the very last; and they wish to make the chosen band ever larger and mightier. In this idea of a Modern School, these seekers — have they not discovered the true Fount of Eternal Youth?

and women sink into economic bondage through ignorance and lack of common contacts, it is not only foolish but criminal not to fully describe its dangers to those who may be caught in its meshes. None are so blind as those who do not wish to see: almost all schools ignore these glaring injustices of our civilization, and whether consciously or unconsciously, proceed to train children to become virtual wage slaves. The Modern School will not acquiesce in so deliberate an establishment of slave morality. By considering the special aptitudes of each child, it attempts to guide the child to the work and profession which will give it the fullest measure of self expression and creative activity. But in the largest sense the Modern School can merely take a negative stand: it can merely present it with all the facts concerning such institutions as our economic system, the State, war, patriotism, and the like, and so prevent the child from entering upon the world blindfold. It must leave to the individual itself what action it chooses to take upon these issues in later life. By such impartial and objective criticism it finds an effective way of imparting information on controversial issues, without imposing the teachers' personal opinions on the child. "The real educator," says Ferrer, "is he who can best protect the child against the teacher's own ideas and will; he who can best appeal to the child's own energies. The whole value of education consists in respect for the physical, intellectual and moral faculties of the child."

YOUTH VS. AGE

For the first time in the world's history a school has arisen which has taken the part of the child in the universal drama of youth versus age, revolutionary exuberance against rigid convention. Generation after generation has perpetuated the vicious circle, the fathers and mothers moulding their sons and daughters to traditional habits, and they in turn wreaking

Rich labor is the struggle to be wise
While we make sure the struggle cannot cease.
---Meredith.

FROM THE CHINESE

There is a Chinese fable of ancient repute setting forth the relations between pupil and teacher and world. A disciple climbed up to the hut of a sage on the mountain side and knocked at the door, enquiring "Master, show me the way to Eternal Truth." The hermit without even opening the door, made answer: "Go live among plants and animals."

After a half score of years elapsed, the disciple came again to the hermit saying joyously, "Open, Master, I am great with the wisdom I have gathered. The birds have sung my praises; the flowers have blossomed forth to show me beauty, and the fish have leapt in the sunlight to show me strength. Horse and cow and bamboo and rice have yielded me service. All creation renders homage to me as the Lord of Life. I am ready now to walk upon the Way to Eternal Truth." Still without opening the door the hermit replied: "Test thy greatness in the Wisdom of Sages."

A score of years passed this time before the disciple again toiled up the mountain side and said, "Master, I am humbled at my former presumption and pride. I now despise the world and lowly things; my spirit chafes within its body and longs to be free. I am weary of my limitations. I have pored over the Wisdom of the Sages only to find that all my thoughts have been voiced before. My mind is perplexed by the tumult of conflicting opinions and contentious doctrines. Do but open and teach me the Truth of All Truths." Again without opening the door of his cell the sage made answer: "Kindle thy life anew in the world of Ten Thousand Things."

Another score of years elapsed before the disciple approached the hermitage speaking these words, "I am both great and small; I sense the bitter-sweet of life. I embody both mountain and marsh, both hovel and pagoda. I bear witness to the Relativity of the World. Open the door that I may gaze on Truth." And behold, the sage opened the door and disclosed the entrance, not of a meagrely furnished hut, but of a vantage-point whence might be seen a broad undulating plain teeming with shining cities and cultivated fields beside serene, peaceful rivers. Pointing to the prospect below and to the mountains beyond, the hermit said: "At last thou hast spoken truly. Behold the abode of Truth. Truth is everywhere and nowhere. Truth is but the Doing, the Becoming, the Flux, the Path, the Tao."

FLUX

This old Chinese legend symbolizes much of the philosophy of the Modern School. This school also attempts to teach its pupils as much by their own experience as the old hermit did in the fable. It, too, cherishes an ideal of constant flux and progress. It aims especially to prevent a crystallization of the mind, a drying up of the judgment into hard and fast ruts. The greatest tragedy of the human race is the spectacle of buoyant creative youth gradually congealing into senile inertia. A pale, cold moon shining only by reflected light, is one symbol of man's debasement and degeneration. And the ordinary education with its emphasis on mere words and formulae and tradition has done much to bring about such a state.

FRANCISCO FERRER

The schools, and with them the older generation, dislike creators and innovators, the upsetters of the placid categories

their own specious comforts and promises, and eager to sell a soul for lip service or barter away eternity for a pittance of time. The Modern School, by its principle of impartiality and non-interference, cannot and would not restrain those who wish to be slaves: it can merely point out the promised land and let those who will, attain it. But it hopes and believes that even if those who have once had a taste of freedom do drift away to reaction and bondage, they never can swing the pendulum over quite so far; that their attitude will always be modified and qualified by a larger and broader point of view.

BEYOND CLASSIFICATIONS

And as the Modern School is superior to the petty differences of religions, so it is to other of Society's classifications. Among its children it makes no disparaging distinctions of race or nation or sex. It welcomes individuality anywhere. In fact, it is the aim of the Modern School to protest against any vague, lazy-minded classifications which shackle the individual in the bonds of a class. It accepts the dictum of modern science that a member of one race or sex is just as capable of development as another. It opposes the pettiness and narrowness of provincial prejudices with the spirit of true internationalism — a respect for the best in other nationalities. Toward this end, the Modern School advocates for youth a wider opportunity for travel and exchange of ideas, but it realizes that in so doing it often acts like the doctor who prescribes rest and fresh air to sweat-shop workers.

CONTROVERSIALS

It does not, however, refrain from laying before the children this and every other divorce between the ideal and the actual. In our present society, when untold numbers of men

Religion — Group and Mob Emotions.
Evolutionary and Revolutionary Activity.
Customs and Conventions, Their Origin and Influence.

IDEALS

It will be noticed that in the above outline there is no provision for formative religion. The Modern School does not teach any dogmatic religion. Its religion, if it may be so called, is that of nature and art, a striving toward harmony with nature, and worship of beauty in man and world. Toward the development of character it offers the cardinal virtues of Courage, Self-reliance, Honesty, Sensitiveness, Reverence for one's Ideals. It draws emotional fervor, not from the hope or fear of a future existence, but from the epic of evolution, the ascent of mankind, the continual struggle of life, the divine curiosity of man, the poetry of nature, the cycle of birth, death, growth, decline of man, season, and world. It reverences freedom as the gift most precious to man, but never forgets that true freedom is forever linked with responsibility. It finds ethical guidance in the uncompromising yet benevolent morality of nature, the inevitable punishment, without passion or revenge, which nature exacts of those who outrage its canons. It finds the ripest wisdom in the knowledge of the possibilities and limitations of man, and discovers in activity a justification for existence.

FOR FREE SPIRITS

This is a religion for free, independent spirits, for the "Yea-Sayers" of life. Those who are not satisfied with such sturdy fare, must seek consolation elsewhere, in the miasmas and stagnant swamps of civilization. There are always interested persons, to whom they may go, people deluded by

of existence. Never would they exclaim as did Francisco Ferrer, "Let us not fear to say that we want men capable of evolving without stopping, capable of destroying and renewing their environment without cessation, of renewing themselves also; men whose intellectual independence will be their greatest force, who will attach themselves to nothing, always ready to accept what is best, happy in the triumph of new ideas, aspiring to live multiple lives in one life. Society fears such men; we therefore must not hope that it will ever want an education able to give them to us." The Modern School, instead of crushing the latent personality of the pupil by means of pressure from without, strives to develop and transform it into creative will. Thus the pupil when called upon to meet strange and unexpected problems in after-life, will not be burdened with the awkward and hardened shell of routine and prejudice, but will respond to every stimulus with open mind and concentrated powers. It is the philosophy of flux and the dynamic gospel that alone can keep one eternally young and maintain one in the state,:

"Where nobody gets old and godly and grave,
Where nobody gets old and crafty and wise,
Where nobody gets old and bitter of tongue."

TOWARDS SCEPTICISM

Coordinate with this spirit of intellectual daring and flexibility of mind is the sceptical attitude. The world is crying out for sceptics, challengers of institutions, free from cant, with a keen eye for the shams and hypocrisies of society. Men and women are by habit such good-natured credulous dupes that to criticize and to doubt are almost in themselves virtues. We must rid ourselves of the tyranny of journalistic opinions and combat this inherent infallibility of parent, preacher and politician. We must throw off the burden of all secondhand knowl-

edge. Too many even of our own ideas are faded and worn with much usage and passing from one to another. Much rather to possess a little knowledge, limited but genuinely arising from our own experience and intimately a part of our life, than to strut about like the ass with the lion's skin.

JOHN DAVIDSON

“Good people, honest people, cast them off
And stand erect, for few are helped by books.
What! will you die crushed under libraries?
Lo! thirty centuries of literature
Have curved your spines and overborne your
brains!
Off with it-all of it! Stand up; behold
The earth, life, death, and day and night!
Think not the things that have been said of these;
But watch them and be excellent, for men
Are what they contemplate.”

TRUE CULTURE

No individual has either the time or the ability to be really interested in many pursuits at one moment. He should not pretend to mastery over all knowledge. The ordinary schools with their uniform curriculum attempt to impose the same interests on all; they force children to become hypocrites, to simulate an interest in a subject or a branch of knowledge for which they may have neither talent nor enthusiasm. And furthermore, they attempt to impose this interest at a definite arbitrary time without considering whether the child has forged ahead or lagged behind the mythical average period of development. The assumption of universality of taste implied by a uniform curriculum, and the idea that taste is capable of being

KNOWLEDGE OF THE WORLD

Evolution and Cosmogony.
Primitive Man.
History of Peoples and Countries.
Geography and Exploration.
Foreign Languages.

KNOWLEDGE AND SCIENCE:

1. SCIENCE AS MEANS

Industry as Education--
Knowledge and Practice in Some of the Fundamental or Primitive Industries:
Agriculture, Pottery, Printing, Spinning
and Weaving, Building, Metal Working.
Industry as the Web of Society--
Manufactures.
Transportation.
Inventions, Their History and Influence.

2. SCIENCE AS GOAL

Spirit and Philosophy of Natural Sciences,
Mathematics, etc.
The Scientific Temper and the Quest for Truth.

KNOWLEDGE OF MEN

Character and Morality.
Sex Relations, Their Ethics and Psychology.
Social Relations — Cooperation and Individuality.
Economic Relations — Parasitism, Exploitation, Labor and Capital.
Civic Relations — Evaluation of Government, War, Patriotism.

PLAY

Games.
Swimming.
Dramatic Expression.

BACKGROUNDS

AESTHETIC SENSITIVENESS

Harmonious Dress.
Harmonious Surroundings — Studies in Color and Arrangement.
The Language of Drawing.
Folksong and Chorus.
Dancing.

KNOWLEDGE OF LITERATURE

Poems, Stories, Folklore.
The Poetry of Nature.
Original Imaginative Expression.

KNOWLEDGE OF NATURE

Nature Lore. Earth, Water, Air.
The Cycle of Seasons.
Familiar Stars, Rocks, Flowers, Birds, Trees, Plants, and Animals.
Woodcraft.

taught rather than developed, are responsible for almost all the current cant and hypocrisy in the culture and art of today. The Modern School, accepting the dictum that the impulse for genuine culture must come from within, makes the pivot of the curriculum the interest of each individual child.

INTEGRATION

That wise old German painter, Albrecht Durer, once gave some excellent advice on the development of an artist: "A man must read (about his art) with great diligence and learn to understand what he readeth. And taking a little at a time he must practice himself well in the same until he can do it, and then only must he go to something else, for the understanding must begin to grow side by side with skill, so that the hand have power to do what the will in the understanding commands. And these two must advance together for the one is naught without the other." This saying might well be a precept for all education. Whatever we take in we must be able to give out again. All our intellectual food must be digested into action or pregnant thought. There must be no stagnant pools in our mind. Said William Blake: "Expect poison from standing water." To become fruitful we must become integrated: we must coordinate our actions with our ideals. Too often our actions do not tally with our philosophy, too often they lag behind in sloth and cowardice. Too often we erect impervious compartments in our conscience by which we do not let our left hand know what our right hand doeth.

JOHN DEWEY

This coordination of head and hand is a keystone in John Dewey's psychology of education. A child, he says, learns and remembers by doing; practice is the bridge between the her-

itage of the world's knowledge and the child's individual experience. Such an idea is bound to revolutionize school methods and school discipline. Not immobility. not a passive helplessness, but willing attention and interest and active occupation become the standards of discipline. And out of this same conception arises a recognition of the cultural value of manual labor. It is not degrading except in excess, but is, like eating or sleeping, a common attribute of humanity, and a socializing force between man and man, and a great chastener of unproved theories. The great importance of Dewey's studies in educational amid child psychology lies in the fact that he has placed on a definite scientific basis many ideas which other writers, such as Rousseau, Ferrer, etc., felt intuitively to be true. They have been put in such a clear and intelligible form and on such a firm foundation that they mark a definite milestone of progress and discovery.

FOR CHILDREN

In the above paragraphs I have tried to sketch the underlying spirit of the Modern School, its intellectual daring, its insistence on genuine culture, its hatred of hypocrisy, its integration of thought and action, its consistent application of libertarian ideals. But these, one may say, are broad vague principles and have little if any connection with the life of the child. I shall therefore indicate more definitely what the Modern School actually means to the child. First of all, it is a place to which he comes willingly. It is a bright, beautiful, joyous yet serious place where he may engage in any activity that interests him, within the limits of equal liberty and the rights of his fellow pupils. It is a place where his individuality is honored, his likes and dislikes are respected within the same limits as adults. It is not the place where he is treated as a renegade fallen from grace, with every natural impulse wicked, to

the order of their quantitative importance. I have divided the outline into two large divisions, a Foreground of immediate practical usefulness and a Background of culture and training, desirable but not rigidly essential in its entirety.

FOREGROUNDS

FOUNDATIONS THE THREE R's

Reading. Writing. Arithmetic.

SELF HELP

Clothing — Making and Mending.
Food — Cooking and Gardening.
Housing — Washing and Cleaning.
Dexterity — Familiarity with Tools and Processes.

SELF KNOWLEDGE

Elementary Physiology, Psychology, Hygiene,
Sex Knowledge, First Aid.

SELF GUIDANCE

Initiative.
Fair Play.
Honesty — Before Oneself and Others.

SELF EXPRESSION

Ability to present ideas or facts simply and effectively before a group of people.

lem, with an infinite number of individual variations, difficult to integrate to a universal. George Bernard Shaw in his famous preface on *Parents and Children* has hit off the common essentials with characteristic idiom:

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

“The rights of society over it (the child) clearly extend to requiring it to qualify itself to live in society without wasting other people’s time: that is, it must know the rules of the road, be able to read placards and proclamations, fill voting papers, compose and send letters and telegrams, purchase food and clothing and railway tickets for itself, count money and give and take change, and, generally, know how many beans make five. It must know some law, were it only a simple set of commandments, some political economy, agriculture enough to shut the gates of fields with cattle in them and not to trample on growing crops, sanitation enough not to defile its haunts, and religion enough to have some idea why it is allowed its rights and why it must respect the rights of others. And the rest of its education must consist of anything else it can pick up, for beyond this society cannot go with any certainty and indeed can only go this far rather apologetically and provisionally, as doing the best it can on very uncertain ground.”

FOUNDATIONS

As to what should be added to or subtracted from this ground work no one, or rather, every one can say. I give my own outline as the expression of an individual ideal. It is to be understood that this curriculum is flexible and free, and is to be offered to both boys and girls alike in the libertarian spirit previously indicated, The contents are surveyed as a whole; no attempt is made to arrange the headings chronologically or in

be licked and whipped into the enlightened state of adult man. It is the exposition of this persistent discrediting of a child’s personality, the unflagging attempt to break a child’s will, that makes Samuel Butler’s novel “*The Way of All Flesh*” the most inspired account that was ever written of how not to educate a child.

WITHOUT CONSTRAINT

A child should enter school not only willingly but without artificial constraint. The school should merge into his stream of consciousness merely as one incident of his daily round. He should enter it with the same joy and earnestness with which he drinks in the other experiences of his life; sunshine, rainy weather, meals, sleep, games, conversation at the table, comradeship with his friends and parents. The atmosphere of the school should not be remote from daily life, and the subjects taught should be approached from the child’s sphere of activity. The actual and the present are the true stepping stones toward larger horizons; knowledge assimilated in this organic way becomes real and vital to the child, and he unconsciously acquires the habit of applying what he has learned.

KNOWLEDGE

In the ordinary school, children learn a great store of unrelated facts which have no bearing on their life; they usually learn them under protest and proceed to forget them when the immediate use is over. Knowledge is seldom an end in itself. It is a waste of precious energy to litter the mind with useless material. There is no reason why a child with a decided bent toward music or art should drudge along with mathematics, or a child intensely interested in machinery and mechanics should stumble through languages. Time enough to take these things

up when he finds he needs them in the profounder study of his life-profession. The moment the child realizes that it is necessary to have knowledge of a certain thing he will undergo whatever drudgery is involved in its acquisition. The point is to have him know the reason himself.

INITIATIVE

This voluntary assumption of work to further his studies, this cultivation of initiative, is the most moral and valuable training a child can have. The child, after he has grown up, will not, or at least should not, have a superior person, a parent or a teacher, to direct him and impose upon him his task. The imposition of external authority inculcates habits of servility and automatic obedience and subtly undermines all growth of self-respect and spiritual independence. The discipline obtained by imposing tasks on the child by such external authority is most unstable and degrading: it reduces mankind to the level of sheep.

THE AVERAGE CHILD

This is indeed an ideal school, the critic may say, but it postulates a child with decided preferences, and furthermore with decided will power. What about the average children with no initiative and no definite interests, the dunces, who as Anatole France has put it, have consecrated themselves to their stupidity? The question is well worth considering. The Modern School does not carry to absurd limits a cultivation of individual and disorganized lines of preference; it assumes that there is a certain common stock of knowledge which it is wise, even necessary, for humans to possess in order to live in this world. It is this that all children are consistently urged to acquire. It is offered to them not with an air of finality and arbitrary author-

posed without reference to the social order... Applying the results of our study to pedagogy, we must decide that since the majority of young children utterly ignore laws and rules they should not exist in the discipline of the school or family." However much the child may ignore abstract laws, he does recognize and respect the collective opinion of his comrades. All the more so when, under intelligent guidance, he himself takes part in the shaping of this collective opinion. He will obey the rules of his own making where he will disregard the categorical imperatives which adults find useful in preserving social order.

SELF-EXPRESSION

Such a creative self-discipline provides the structure for free activity and expression where the ordinary schools seem deliberately to cultivate inhibition and inarticulateness. The regular school has left its mark on all of us in destroying our spontaneity and individuality of expression; those who have retained these qualities in after-life have done so in spite of the school, or have brought them through with diminished force. The expression of children among themselves is simple, spontaneous, and natural; it is only when they are subjected to the rigid constraint of the school room that the poison of inarticulateness blights their spirit. The nervous strain of hanging on the teacher's words and the incubus of painfully memorizing borrowed opinion, crushes the tender sprouts of a personal and individual reaction on life, so charming and valuable in after years.

COMMON KNOWLEDGE

But what, one may ask, are the children going to express; what is the content of this common stock of knowledge? The shaping of such a common stock is naturally a thorny prob-

dom and shirk responsibility was brought around by their collective pressure.

INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIAL

Such a class-morale, under proper direction, gives a child valuable training in what might be called group-living, the give and take of social relations, a code that is visualized dimly, if at all, by adults even after they have played their part in society. Man is perhaps not a social animal by instinct; he has to acquire his communistic sense, his knowledge of the structure and fabric of society, by painful experience and the dire necessity of making a living. The ideal is to preserve an exquisite balance between social and individual activity, to obtain all the benefits of cooperation without completely sacrificing one's individuality. The ordinary school and, to a large extent, the ordinary home, do not even realize that such a problem exists. The Modern School by constructing a miniature society attempts to show children the methods and advantages of working together, while insisting on preserving their individuality intact. An ingrained sense of the scope and limitation of cooperation is a positive contribution to social and personal morality.

LAW AND THE CHILD

There is a further argument in favor of the plan of allowing a flexible group to make its own rules, as opposed to the enforced routine and arbitrary regulations of the ordinary school; namely, the child's own attitude toward law. Professor Earl Barnes and his assistant made some researches in this field which were published in his *Studies in Education*. "From this study we can make one safe generalization important in its bearings upon discipline in school and family. Young children regard punishment as an individual and arbitrary matter, im-

ity but in a spirit of friendly advice, an authority sanctioned by long experience in the ways of the world.

This constitutes the common stock in trade for average and gifted child alike. The carrying through of a somewhat definite program will furnish enough stimulus to shape the activity of the ordinary child, and yet will refrain from burdening its mind with useless learning. It remains flexible enough at the same time to accommodate the idiosyncrasies of the exceptional child and allow it to develop freely in a favorable environment. A healthy child, who steadfastly and consistently fuses to acquire some phase of the common stock of learning, displays qualities of will power and special aptitudes in other directions that more than compensate for the hiatus in his knowledge.

THE EXCEPTIONAL CHILD

In spite of its easy adaptation to the needs of the ordinary child it must be said, however, that the Modern School lays special stress on the development of gifted children, perhaps because they are the ones most often bruised by the ordinary schools. Such a policy, moreover, will sometimes bring out the individual qualities of a child considered dull merely because its special aptitudes have been repressed and never allowed to come to fruition.

This conscious development of individuality has a philosophic and scientific justification in the important role that variation has played in the course of evolution. It is the individual, the organism that takes a separate step, the variation from the norm, that has contributed most to the progress of the world. So in the cultivation of distinctions and individualities the Modern School sees a potent spring for the enhancement of life.

SELF-DISCIPLINE

“But what of discipline?” the critic asks, “what prevents the school from drifting about in chaos? Can it be taken for granted that children will learn anything except under compulsion?” The discipline, we say, is supplied largely by the children themselves. The way for children to acquire discipline, as the truism runs, is for them to practice it themselves. The directive guidance is more or less supplied by the teachers, who, discovering the various aptitudes in children, lead them to the paths which they follow with accelerating interest. It cannot be denied that the task is exceedingly difficult for the teacher, that it requires infinitely more personality, tact, patience, inventiveness, insight, knowledge of the subject and of children to teach in a Modern School than in a conventional school. Never is incompetency bolstered up by authority, or stupidity put at a premium as in the ordinary schools. Teachers must be respected for their own worth and not by virtue of their position.

PSYCHOLOGY OF THE CHILD

But there are several other factors beside the personality of the teacher that make for discipline, not, of course, the trance-like constraint of the ordinary school room, but the discipline of concentrated and creative effort. First, the natural curiosity of the child to try out all experience. Second, a premise in attendance at the Modern School, that the child's presence in the room implies its willingness to play the game according to the rules. The class is there for those who wish to learn. If a child is not inclined to pay close attention, no restriction is put on its playing or doing whatever it pleases elsewhere. Freedom to play is an absolute necessity in the development of a child. There seems to be a deep inherent purpose of Nature, an orderly step in the growth of an organism, in this opportunity

for physical activity and this leisure for the following out of whims and fancies. Of course a child who consistently refuses to take any part in the intellectual life of the school, labors under some physical or mental defect, and, as such, has no place among normal children. In problems such as these it is possible to make use of the discoveries of the psycho-analysts in regard to the actual content of the child mind and its progressive development. Indeed the knowledge of what goes on in the mind during the early years is at all times tremendously valuable in determining one's attitude and approach toward children and in preventing complexes and repressions dangerous in after-life.

UNANISM

The third, and perhaps most important factor toward discipline, is a certain group-consciousness, a unity of purpose, a class-morale that in some way arises when a small group work together for a period of time. The discovery of this collective consciousness has been so recent and its practice so empiric and experimental that it is difficult to say much more about it than that it just grows like Topsy. It has been found that it cannot be projected at once in a large disorganized company, but must be set in motion gradually and in a comparatively small unit, and then increased by slow infiltration. Its actual working out is admirably shown in Tolstoy's educational experiments in Yasnaya Polyana, or the school founded by the Hutchinsons at Stony Ford, New York. At Stony Ford, for example, a group of about ten children practically conducted their own school, the teachers merely giving them the necessary direction and advice. They made programs, saw that they were carried out, modified them to meet new situations, settled disputes, and discouraged infractions of their rights. It was interesting to see how effectively a newcomer who was inclined to abuse free-