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Brief Information: This charity of solidarity and education, located in Rambouillet (Seine-et-Oise), was founded and is directed by Sébastien Faure. It raises around forty children of both sexes. There are no rankings; no punishments, no rewards.

Its Program: Through outdoor life, a regular diet, hygiene, cleanliness, walking, sports, and exercise, we develop healthy, vigorous, and beautiful beings. Through rational teaching, through engaging study, through observation, discussion, and critical thinking, we develop cultivated minds. By example, through gentleness, persuasion, and tenderness, we develop upright consciences, firm wills, and affectionate hearts. "La Ruche" is not subsidized by the State, the Department, or the Municipality. It is up to men of heart and intelligence to support us, each to the best of their ability.

For what purpose and how I founded La Ruche: For some twenty-five years, I have been giving lectures aimed at propagating the convictions that inspire me and the feelings that are dear to me. Favored by circumstances, I have had the good fortune to gradually acquire a certain notoriety. I have built up, so to speak,

a large clientele of listeners in most of the cities that I visit periodically, and it is not uncommon that, however large they may be, the rooms in which I invite the public to come and hear me are still insufficient. At the door, I charge an entrance fee. My expenses (travel, room, advertising, etc.) paid, I am left with an appreciable profit, and these profits added together represent, each year, a fairly round sum. I naturally asked myself what should be done with this money that my propaganda brings me. … For twenty years, I did as all my friends did: attributing all that I earned to works of propaganda, to agitation campaigns, to educational efforts, to gestures of solidarity that await and solicit at every step the educator of the crowds. However, a day came when, during one of those halts that bring a little calm to the feverish march of the apostle and confer on him the momentary rest that is so necessary, I examined, calmly and coolly, whether I was making the best, that is to say, the most fruitful use of the resources placed at my disposal by my conferences. From reflection to reflection, I was led to consider that it would be preferable to concentrate on a single work all the resources that, until then, I had scattered, according to circumstances, needs or requests. This point having been established, it only remained for me to specify the nature and character of this single work. Now, during my already long career as a propagandist, I had been led to make the following two observations: First observation: of all the objections raised against the admission of a free and fraternal humanity, the most frequent and the one that seems the most tenacious is that the human being is fundamentally and irreducibly perverse, vicious, wicked; and that the development of a free and fraternal environment, implying the need for worthy, just, active and supportive individuals, the existence of such an environment, essentially contrary to human nature, is and will always remain impossible. Second observation: when it comes to people who have reached old age or simply mature age, it is almost impossible, and when it comes to adults who have reached the age of 25 or 30 without feeling the need to get involved in the social struggles

day soon, stirring the ashes of these memories, on which my old heart blows, will still find some warmth there, will make some sparks spring forth, will rekindle the flame and will try to set up and carry out a new “Ruche”. The experiment they will attempt will be made easier for them by the indications they will find here; I like to hope that they will be assisted by more favorable circumstances and that La Ruche of tomorrow will be the precious crucible where they will elaborate, on a small scale, the forms of the society of well-being, freedom and harmony to the advent of which libertarian militants dedicate the best of themselves.

leagues, our children, and I prolonged the existence of "La Ruche," although this existence became more difficult and more precarious every day. But, from the beginning of the winter of 1916–1917, it seemed certain that, from this stubborn struggle, we would emerge definitively defeated. Products of all kinds essential to the life of the population were becoming scarcer month by month. Paris suffered from rationing, although the capital was sufficiently supplied so that the inhabitants of the Parisian agglomeration were not driven to insurrection. The same was true of the major provincial centers, whose uprising the Government could fear: but the rural population, from which the public authorities considered they had nothing to fear, was increasingly sacrificed. At "La Ruche", it was becoming impossible to obtain sufficient supplies, especially coal, and we had to reserve for cooking the little of this product that we were able to obtain. Our dear, family home could no longer withstand the harsh winter temperatures and, as soon as night fell, our children, to escape the cold from which they would have suffered, huddled under the thickness of the warm blankets of which, fortunately, we had a sufficient supply. We had to face the facts and separate from them. Those who still had families returned to them. I made all necessary arrangements for the others to find shelter in friendly circles. None of them remained abandoned. One by one, our collaborators dispersed. It was, for everyone, young and old, a painful separation. But one must endure the inevitable and the end of "La Ruche" had become inevitable, both due to supply difficulties and the inadequacy of our resources. In February 1917, "La Ruche" died, a victim, like so many other lovingly built works, of the forever abhorred War. If I were at the age where it is reasonably permissible to look to the future with confidence, I would not hesitate to lay the foundations of a new La Ruche. I was 46 years old when I founded this work of solidarity and education. Nearly thirty years separate me from that time and it is not at my age that one ventures into such an undertaking. But I nourish the hope that others, younger, one

of their time, it is very difficult to attempt successfully the desirable and necessary work of education and conversion; on the other hand, nothing is easier than to accomplish it on still young beings: the little ones with virgin hearts, new brains, and flexible and malleable wills. No more hesitation: the work to be founded was found. The idea was to bring together 40 to 50 children in a large family circle and to create with them a special environment where, as far as possible, from now on, although enclosed in today's Society, a free and fraternal life would be lived: each bringing to the said family circle, according to his age, his strengths and his aptitudes, his contingent of efforts, and each drawing from the whole nourished by the common contribution his share of satisfactions. The older ones pouring into the family group thus constituted the product of their labor, the fruit of their experience, the affection of their heart and the nobility of their example; the younger ones pouring in their turn the small contribution of their still delicate arms, the grace of their smile, the purity of their clear and sweet eyes, the tenderness of their kisses. The older ones becoming young again through contact with the childishness and naivety of the younger ones, and the younger ones gradually becoming serious and reasonable through contact with the gravity and laborious and sensible gestures of the older ones. Interviewed in this way, the unique work responded to the double concern formulated below: to prepare children, from their first steps in life, for the practices of work, independence, dignity and solidarity of a free and fraternal society; to prove, by the fact, that the individual is only the reflection, the image and the result of the environment in which he develops, so much is the environment worth, so much is the individual worth, and that, to a new education, to different examples, to conditions of active, independent, dignified and united life, will correspond a new being: active, independent, dignified, united, in a word contrary to the one whose sad spectacle we have before our eyes. The die was cast, my resolution was made, I was going to found La Ruche. I searched and finally found an estate that suited me: a fairly large building, a

large vegetable garden, woods, meadows, arable land, all covering a total area of 25 hectares and located three kilometers from Rambouillet (Seine-et-Oise), and 48 kilometers from Paris. I rented this estate.

What is la Ruche?: La Ruche is not, strictly speaking, a school. In any case, it is not a school like any other. A school is an establishment founded for the purpose of teaching and having no other purpose. Teachers come there to give their lessons and students to attend them. The teachers' mission is to teach what they know and the students' duty is to learn what it is essential or useful for them not to be ignorant of. This is, practically, the purpose of a school. The school is open to all children from the same neighborhood, the same town or the same region. It must not, without serious and specific reason, close its doors to anyone. The students remain with their families who are responsible for housing them, clothing them, feeding them, caring for them if they are sick, etc., etc. The school that is responsible for providing accommodation, food, and care for the child, the school that, to put it simply, replaces to a certain extent the child's family and acts as its substitute, is a boarding school. The boarding school receives from the child's family, whose instruction, education, housing, and food it provides, a pension representing these costs and services. La Ruche is not a boarding school, and no child is admitted or is there on a "paying" basis. Some parents, who, thanks to their work, are able to spontaneously send some money to La Ruche on a regular or occasional basis, make it a point of conscience not to fail to do so. These parents are right and they voluntarily fulfill a duty. Their payments go into La Ruche's coffers; their child is neither better cared for nor more loved than the others; but these small sums are intended to avoid leaving the child entirely in charge of the work and have the result of diminishing my personal effort. Finally, La Ruche is not an orphanage. We only have a few orphans and they have become so since they have been with us. To be an orphanage, La Ruche would have to have a regular situation, provided for and regulated by law

to prolong himself in the educated one, to substitute his judgment for the latter's judgment. This is not how I conceive the role of "Elder Brothers" that we are. The mission of the "big one", the highest, the noblest, the most fruitful mission of all, but also the most delicate — consists of projecting into the obscure brain of the "little one" the clarities that guide, to make penetrate into his fragile will the habits that vivify, to make descend into his heart the feelings that move him towards what is just and good. The educator must be an example, a guide and a support: no less, no more, if we want the child to remain himself, for his faculties to flourish, and for him to subsequently become a strong, worthy and free being. I understand that the Educator and the Father have joy in reflecting themselves, in seeing themselves in the child they raise; this desire to shape the educated in the image of the educator is human; it is no less condemnable and must be condemned. Where would we be in terms of progress, if children had always been only the exact reproduction, the faithful image of their fathers, if schoolchildren had always been only the scrupulous photograph of the Masters? Each of us considers that his feelings are the noblest, his convictions the healthiest, his ways of seeing the most justified. And this is undoubtedly why each of us believes he is authorized to use all means in his power to have them shared and adopted by the child. This is a serious fault. And then, we are still poorly accustomed to considering that the child belongs neither to his father, nor to his Master, nor to the Church, nor to the State; but that he belongs to himself. At La Ruche, my colleagues and I have never lost sight of this truth, still little known today, but which is destined to be admitted without dispute, when the despotism of the State and the abusive authority of the father of the family have disappeared.

The War Killed "La Ruche": The War, the infamous and cursed War, killed "La Ruche" (it killed so many people and so many things!) Only the product of my lectures kept it alive, and during the hostilities, some were ordered to kill or be killed and others were forbidden to speak. As long as we could, my col-

furniture and flashy furniture, that is, elegant, graceful, light, but fragile. The former is not pleasing to the eye, but is durable; the latter is pleasing to the eye, but does not last long and hardly withstands the boisterous misbehavior of the children or the shocks of a move. La Ruche would be doing a great service to the working class of Paris and the major provincial cities by providing them with furniture that would avoid this double defect: rusticity, fragility, that is, a piece of furniture that is both elegant and robust, graceful and solid. The same observation applies to bookbinding: it is either luxury or too rudimentary. Luxury means it costs too much; too rudimentary means it quickly gives way with use. For the Labor Exchanges, the Unions, the Cooperatives, the Popular Libraries and the comrades who are called upon to constitute our clientele, we need a binding that is simply comfortable, whose price does not exceed the very limited resources of this clientele and whose solidity is sufficient. It is not enough, it is true, to produce well and in advantageous conditions, we must also ensure outlets. For La Ruche, this question is resolved in advance. Our outlets exist; they are the Unions, the Cooperatives, the Popular Universities, the Labor Exchanges, the Avant-Garde Groups, all friends of La Ruche, and also the multitude of comrades who, individually, follow with interest the development of the latter. It will be enough to appeal to these outlets for them to open up. We are assured of this, because it is these comrades and these organizations which, since its foundation, have formed the clientele of our printing house. This one has been in operation for a year and orders are coming in from all sides. What is happening with the printing business will happen with the bookbinding and carpentry business; there is no doubt about that.

The child must be himself: I do not recognize the right to devote the child in advance to the convictions that are mine and for which I have opted only in the fullness of my independence and my reason. The "little one" must not be the pale reflection of the "big one"; the role of the father is not to outlive himself, to perpetuate himself, as is, in his descendants; the educator must not tend

or by the statutes of a regularly constituted company; or it would have to have ties with the Public Assistance which, for a fee, would entrust to it — as it does for other organizations — the children it has taken in and who continue to belong to it. La Ruche is therefore neither a school, nor a boarding school, nor an orphanage. It is, at the same time as a work of solidarity, a sort of laboratory where new methods of pedagogy and education are experimented.

Management: There is a Director in La Ruche; but he is so little so, that, if we give to this expression the meaning which is usually attributed to it, we can say that there is none at all. Elsewhere and, perhaps, we can say everywhere, the Director is a Master, who gives orders, whom we are obliged to obey, whom we fear, whose will is sovereign, who applies with inflexibility an already formidable regulation and, if necessary, substitutes his will for the rule; some flatter him in the hope of obtaining favors from him; others fear him and hide from him; both snitch on each other out of ambition or greed, to serve their interests or their rivalries. None of these abominations exist in La Ruche. If the Director were this despot, he would necessarily be the culmination of a complicated hierarchy, where a whole series of subordinate despotisms would be layered, under the weight of which, at the very bottom, the weakest and most submissive would be crushed. So, no more family, no more communist-libertarian milieu. One of us — it's me, for the moment — has the title of Director. For the owners, of whom we are only tenants, for the suppliers, for the families who entrust their children to us, for the groups who, by the hundreds, and for the comrades who, by the thousands, follow with interest the progress of La Ruche, for the authorities and the administration, a director is needed, because someone responsible is needed. To commit, to respond, to sign, to act as guarantor, such is the role of the Director. To mediate in all negotiations with the outside world; to write, to speak in the name of La Ruche, such is his function. Poor Director! But as soon as this Director ceases to be turned towards the public and to face the suppliers, the own-

ers, the bankers, the tax collector, the constituted authorities, the groups and the comrades, he turns towards his colleagues and falls into line; he becomes one of them again, a unit like each of them, no more, no less. If there is a decision to be made, he has a voice in the matter just like the others; he expresses his opinion and puts forward his opinion like the others, and his opinion does not borrow any particular value from the title he carries. He is right, if he is considered right; he is wrong, if he is judged wrong; he is superior to no one; he is inferior to no one: he is the equal of all. We live in a society so rotten with authority, discipline, and hierarchy, that the above will seem to most people implausible or greatly exaggerated. To my colleagues and me, this seems entirely natural and quite fair. In a communist, libertarian environment, things could not happen differently. Within la Ruche, the Director's function is to centralize all services and coordinate all efforts, so that each service, while remaining autonomous, maintains with neighboring services the cohesion necessary for regular overall functioning, and also so that efforts do not neutralize each other, but, on the contrary, relying on each other, helping each other, one obtains, with a minimum of effort, the maximum useful effect. From this point of view, one can say that there is, in La Ruche, a Directorate; but it is entirely objective; it is only a function like the others; it is only a service; it is only the overall recording, and like the general control of divided attributions, scattered responsibilities.

The collaborators: Our collaborators are neither paid nor salaried. All functions at La Ruche are absolutely free. Salary, treatment, future, advancement are things completely unknown there. The comrades who, in various capacities, work at the La Ruche, do so in the most selfless manner. Each of them must, however, meet conditions of capacity, diligence at work, sobriety and morality which would allow him, outside, to rise to the level of the most favored of his party. Our collaborators willingly renounce these material advantages to live at La Ruche. It is not that they work less there and lead a more comfortable existence there: on the

lectual workers, of putting their hands to the dough, of using their arms with dexterity, of making, in the factory or in the fields, a suitable figure and useful work. La Ruche has the high ambition and the firm will to launch into circulation some types of this species. This is why we conduct general education and technical and professional training there simultaneously.

Our Workshops: Until now, our workshops have not produced anything for the outside world. Only the printing shop has been an exception. Carpentry, blacksmithing, sewing, lingerie, and bookbinding have only worked for the needs of La Ruche. In reality, these workshops have been and still are services rather than workshops; some, in all likelihood, will retain this character; others, such as carpentry, bookbinding, and perhaps sewing, while remaining services and meeting the current needs of the Work, will undoubtedly become, in the near future, production workshops as well as apprenticeships. When, at the age of about sixteen, a child, boy or girl, has sufficient general education and professional training to allow him or her to work outside and, as a worker, to meet his or her needs, he or she may, at his or her will, leave La Ruche or remain there. He or she is free and makes his or her choice in complete independence. It is likely that a certain proportion of these adults will remain at La Ruche. They will cease to be among our wards and will take their place among our collaborators. We already have a few who are in this situation. They work in the workshop in which they did their apprenticeship and practice the trade they learned. The time is near when our seamstresses, our carpenters and our bookbinders will be able to properly carry out the work assigned to them and when, in each workshop, there will be enough of them for their production to exceed the constant needs of La Ruche. We are therefore already foreseeing the possibility of working for the outside world. We propose, in the carpentry shop, to make furniture. In working-class centers—where we will find almost all of our clientele—low-income households have to choose between coarse, unpolished, poorly packaged, but relatively solid

when judgment is formed; no matter! He must go to the workshop or the fields; it is time for him to work. "And then," say the parents, "is it useful for him to become a scholar, to make a peasant or a worker?" What happens? The first of these two boys will perhaps reach an appreciable degree of intellectual culture: artist, scholar, writer, philosopher, he will have his value, I do not dispute it; but he will be of a lamentable ignorance and of a remarkable clumsiness, as soon as it is a question of planing a board, of striking a hammer, of repairing or handling a tool, in a word of engaging in any manual work. The second will perhaps be, in his part, a sufficient worker: mechanic, tailor, mason; I do not deny it; but, outside of his trade, he will be of a crass ignorance and of a deplorable incomprehension. Both will have developed suitably in one direction, but they will have totally neglected to develop in the other. The first will be a theoretician, not a practitioner; the second will be a practitioner, not a theoretician. One will know how to use his brain, not his arms; the other will know how to use his arms, not his brain. The son of a bourgeois will be inclined to consider manual labor as beneath him and those who live from it as inferior to him; the son of a proletarian will be inclined to bow before the superiority of intellectual labor and to humble himself, admiring, respectful and submissive, before those who exercise it. Result: from the individual point of view, neither of them will be a complete being; this one: vigorous muscles, weak brain; that one: vigorous brain, weak muscles: both, incomplete men, halves of men, fragments of humanity. From the social point of view: rivalry between manual and intellectual workers; intellectual labor more highly regarded and better paid than manual labor; the latter continuing indefinitely to be inferiorized, poorly paid and humiliated. The purpose and result of Education must be to form beings as complete as possible, capable, despite their customary specialization, when circumstances permit or require it: manual workers, of tackling the study of a scientific problem, of appreciating a work of art, of conceiving or executing a plan, or even of participating in a philosophical discussion; intel-

contrary, they work much more than they would work: teachers in a school, manual workers in a factory, in a workshop or in the fields. Certainly, they are fed, housed, heated, lit, maintained as are all members of the same family; but they are content, in all these respects, with a very modest diet. They are also free to have some pocket money; they draw, for this purpose, from the common fund, and take from it what they need, without having to justify it: they are and remain the sole judges of the needs they feel, and I am happy to say, to the praise of all, that for nearly ten years that La Ruche has existed, all our collaborators have brought to it the greatest discretion and the most meritorious reserve, so as to weigh as little as possible on our budget. As we can see: the material advantages attached to the title of collaborator of La Ruche are rather slim. And yet, no one thinks of complaining; all work with ardor and contentment, devoting themselves to this work, because they taste moral satisfactions and joys of the heart which largely compensate for the advantages which, deliberately, they renounce. … It happens that, at certain times, we need to add some temporary collaborators; for example, when there are a large number of shoes to repair, masonry work to be carried out without delay, or again, in the spring, in the gardens or, at harvest and hay time, in the fields, when there is a lot of work to be done. We call, in these cases, either on particular friends of La Ruche, or on our comrades from the Parisian unions, who never refuse us the necessary help, and these temporary collaborators also come, without remuneration of any kind. All the services are autonomous; each collaborator knows the attributions and responsibilities attached to the function he exercises. All rely on the capacity and conscience of each person in charge. Once a week, more frequently, if the need arises, all the collaborators meet in the evening, the day is over, when the children are in bed. Those of our older children who are 15, 16 and 17 years old and are in apprenticeships attend these meetings and take part in them in the same way as the employees themselves. The

purpose of these meetings is to strengthen the bonds that unite us and to discuss everything that interests La Ruche. Everyone says what concerns them, shares the project they have formed, the idea they have had and submits this idea, this project, this concern to the others. We talk about it; we discuss it; we leave the idea or the project for study if we do not yet have sufficient elements for a determination. Everyone has the right to inquire about the functioning of a particular department: teaching, cash register, accounting, kitchen, etc., etc., to make observations, to give advice, to suggest improvements. Thanks to these frequent meetings, all our colleagues and our older children (boys and girls) are informed and kept informed of everything that is happening, constantly know the situation of La Ruche, participate in the decisions taken and contribute to their implementation. It is life in broad daylight; it is full confidence; it is the exchange of views, simply, frankly, with an open heart. It is the surest and best way to prevent intrigues and the formation of cliques that silence encourages. Education is more particularly entrusted to those of our comrades who, responsible for teaching, are in constant contact with the children. These spend their lives with these children, and it is certain that, constantly mixed with them, they exercise a great influence on them. It is no less necessary that all the colleagues of La Ruche be educators. On the one hand, all are more or less called upon to initiate our children, as they grow up, into the technique of their trade: cooking, sewing, laundry, linen, forging, carpentry, farming, gardening, etc., etc.; on the other hand, they are often involved in the games and distractions of our children. They must therefore be a living example and a practical, patient, gentle and affectionate guide for these little ones, just as, in the family, all the elders must be guides and models for the younger ones. Our children La Ruche raises about forty children of both sexes. How do they come to us? Oh! In the most natural way and without it being useful for us to seek them out. These are interesting situations that signal themselves or that

here and his studies there, between the training of his mind and that of his eye and his hands, between his general culture and his technical apprenticeship. And when, after two or three years of this pre-apprenticeship, he specializes, his choice, well balanced, will be based on this intellectual and manual culture, without one being sacrificed to the other; moreover, the two will complement each other, will adjust for the greatest satisfaction and the greatest good of the adolescent. I am not saying that, under these conditions, the child's choice will always be judicious, the best, and should be considered definitive; but I am saying that, on the one hand, there will be every chance that this will be so and that, on the other hand, we, with regard to this child, will have accomplished our duty, our entire duty.

Complete Beings: The role of Education is to bring all the child's faculties to their maximum development: physical, intellectual and moral. The duty of the Educator is to promote the full blossoming of this set of energies and aptitudes that we find in everyone. And I say that by providing the children entrusted to us with all the general culture they are capable of receiving and the technical training toward which their tastes and strengths will most lead them, we will have fulfilled our duty towards them, our entire duty. For, we will have, in this way, formed complete beings. Complete beings! These days, we find very few of them; I could even say that we do not find any. And this is one of the fatal consequences of social organization and the educational methods that result from it. Here, he is a bourgeois son whose parents aspire to be a master of mathematics or a master of mathematics, but who would believe they would be giving their offspring an education unworthy of their rank and the social situation to which they intend this offspring, if he learned to work with his hands metal, wood or clay. There, he is a more or less needy proletarian son, whom the family takes away from school at the age of twelve or thirteen. He can barely read, write and count; he is at the age when intelligence opens to understanding, when memory begins to store,

it permissible to say, now, that there is no need to take into account the tastes, the aptitudes, the strengths of the child, and that the manual worker can exercise, indiscriminately and indifferently, any trade? Without doubt, the worker who goes to his work like the slave to his chain has neither taste nor aptitude for any task, and it is indifferent to him whether he works at this or that; this is the fate which awaits the sad apprentice of whom I spoke above. But there are workers who do their job with joy, who would miss the tool as much as the painter misses the brush, who have the love of a job well done, of a finished job, who are passionate about their job, for whom overcoming a difficulty is winning a battle without the horror of bloodshed and who, all things considered, try, experiment, work in their studio with as much ardor as the scientist in his laboratory. Will anyone dare to maintain that there is no difference between these workers and the others? Well! We ardently desire that our children will, later on, be among these elite workers. How can we achieve this result or, at least, group together all the conditions likely to favor this result? Here: For two or three years, each of our children circulates among our various studios, staying and working three, four, five or six months in one, as much in the other; he thus has the time and opportunity to study his tastes, to specify his aptitudes, to measure his strengths. He does not have, from the age of twelve to that of fifteen, to worry about the choice of a profession; he tries out several and each of them long enough to establish between them the necessary comparisons and of which he remains the center. At the same time, he continues his studies: not only because he is far from having acquired the sum of general knowledge which, in the future, whatever the profession he does, will be indispensable to him; not only because he has reached the age where, having become more reasonable, he will profit better from the teachings which will be given to him; but also and above all because, working alternately, every day, regularly, in class and in the workshop, he will inevitably establish, probably even without his knowledge, a very useful relationship between his work

organizations and friends make known to us and recommend to us. Alas! There is no shortage of children! The fate of workers is often so lamentable, the working family is so deplorably disrupted by illness, unemployment, accident or death: internal quarrels so frequently ravage the family environment, quarrels of which the child becomes the innocent victim, that a hundred Ruches, a thousand Ruches, could quickly be populated with little ones to shelter and educate.

The little ones — the middle ones — the big ones: Our children form three groups: the little ones, the middle ones and the big ones. The little ones are those who, still too young to engage in any apprenticeship work, do not attend any workshop and divide their time between class, play and the small household services they can provide: cleaning, sweeping, peeling vegetables, etc. The middle ones are those who are in pre-apprenticeship. Their day is devoted half to study, half to manual work. The big ones are those who, their studies properly speaking being completed and their pre-apprenticeship time over, enter apprenticeship. It is well thought out that there is no fixed, invariable age separating, mathematically, the elements that compose these three groups. The latter are more precocious; the former are less robust; and it is the physical and cerebral development of each child which, more than his age, determines the moment when he passes from the little ones to the middle ones and from the middle ones to the big ones. In fact, our children remain among the youngest until the age of twelve to thirteen; from twelve or thirteen to about fifteen, they are among the middle-aged; and, above fifteen, they are ranked among the older ones. Until the age of twelve or thirteen, they only go to class; from twelve or thirteen to fifteen, they spend part of the day in class, the other part in the workshop or the fields; and, from the age of fifteen, they stop going to class and only go to the workshop or the fields. Nevertheless, when evening comes, as the older children do not go to bed until around ten o'clock, they read, follow the supplementary lessons that our teachers give them, work with them,

chat, question, exchange ideas and thus complete their small stock of general knowledge.

"Pre-apprenticeship": From the age of twelve to thirteen, almost all children who belong to the working class leave school. The child has his primary school certificate; his family considers that he knows enough. In any case, they think it is time for him to start a job that pays. For many, the essential and most urgent thing is that the child ceases to be a burden, that he gets by on his own, and that he even increases the family salary by a few cents a day. The privileged enter into apprenticeships. They enter it straight away and haphazardly. It is indeed a question of the child's tastes, his aptitudes, his strengths! His tastes? Does he know what he likes! His aptitudes? Does he know them himself? Has he had the opportunity to discern them? The family says: "He will do as the others do; it is by learning a trade that he will acquire and develop the necessary aptitudes." His strengths? He is thirteen years old; he must be strong enough to work, otherwise, "it's laziness." And the child becomes an apprentice. We know how he is, nine times out of ten: he is the one who cleans, sweeps, runs errands and shopping; he is responsible for all the chores; he is more of a servant than an apprentice, and this lasts until he is fourteen or fifteen; in reality, it is only at that age that he begins to seriously learn the trade he intends to do. What trade? The one his father chose for him; the one a neighbor recommended; the one circumstances—often the most fortuitous—have indicated. The result is that often, very often, when he reaches the age of sixteen or seventeen, this young worker realizes that the profession he is practicing suits neither his tastes, nor his aptitudes, nor his temperament. What to do? Leaving this trade that, he senses, he will never do with pleasure and in which he will always be inferior? There is no point in thinking about it. He would have to do a new apprenticeship and it is too late. The adolescent resigns himself; he continues, sadly, without ardor, without enthusiasm; he becomes and remains all his life a mediocre worker; a sort of convict condemned to forced labor for life. Sad ex-

istence! We thought that it was necessary at all costs to spare the child the unpleasantness and disadvantage of being dedicated, from the age of twelve to thirteen, to a trade that may displease him. I have heard the opinion commonly held that, for a worker, all jobs are the same, or almost. Those who express this opinion claim that the condition and salary of the worker being, more or less, the same in all industries, it matters very little whether he works in wood, leather, fabrics or metals; that the choice of a trade should not, consequently, be determined by the tastes, aptitudes or strengths of the individual but by the salary and, more generally, the working conditions; that moreover, as mechanical tools are constantly multiplying and improving, it is indifferent whether one handles wood, metals, fabric or leather. This opinion is false, and I do not know of any that would have more regrettable consequences for manual work. First, it is obvious that if machinery invades everything and if the worker is condemned to be more and more a driver, a supervisor or an auxiliary of the machine, it is not at all indifferent that, without taking into account his tastes, his aptitudes and his strengths, he does one job or another: one job is dirtier; another more dangerous; one can, in the long run, be done mechanically and almost without thinking about it; the other requires constant attention; the first involves meticulousness, delicacy; the second vigor, endurance; the latter leads to such a disturbance of the muscular organism; the former to such nervous disorders; in one job, there is no need for imagination, initiative, ingenuity; in another, a great deal is needed; one can do one without knowing anything about drawing or mathematics; it is impossible to do the other without possessing a fairly extensive knowledge of mathematics and drawing, etc., etc. I would never finish, if I wanted to enumerate here, without stopping at any of them, all the distinctions, all the differences, all the oppositions. And I am not speaking of the parts of the body which are activated more specifically by the trade practiced; of the noise which is made, of the odors which are exhaled, of the dust which is raised, of the air which circulates, etc., etc. Is