

EDUCATION—IT'S WORTH

WHAT education is of most worth?

The question has echoed through the centuries, receiving the varying answers of different generations that have walked the path of life in a changing world. In the old days, a devotion to ancient cultures and dead languages was believed to fit a man to the demands of his times. Later, the "weary-tramping Muses" lost their charm, and retracing the steps into a moldy past cluttered with dead glories and glorious failures was consid-

ered sheer waste of the years of youth which could be put to better use. A revolution, both industrial and educational, then set in, and a study of more realistic things than disembodied monarchies became the guiding principle in education. Physical and biological sciences, technology and trade were introduced in the schools, and so much were they in accord with the spirit of a reorganized world that they have become permanent fixtures in the school curriculum.

Advanced educational meth-

ods, however, has not diminished political corruptions, sexual irregularity or violent crime, and there is a charge laid to modernity to the effect that certain virtues once prominent in our forbears have lost standing in this generation which is skilled in unmoral cleverness. Emphasis on science seem to bring no visible rise in the intelligence of the people and neither fruitfulness of leisure nor the dignity of peace. These conditions are due, of course, to economic rather than educational changes, but still the

educator begins to wonder if the schools have offered too weak a resistance to the forces of disorder and decay. Now, one may well ask, what education is of most worth?

Health

Will Durant, eminent educator, answers the problem thus:

"That education is of most worth which opens to the body and the soul, to the citizen and the state, the fullest possibilities of their harmonious life." He believes that three basic goals should determine education and define its goals: the control of life through health, character, intelligence and technology; the enjoyment of life through friendship, nature and art; and the understanding of life through history and science, religion and philosophy.

Departing from generalities, Mr. Durant proceeds to clarify his views on the processes of an education which would most enrich the life of his children. Education which fosters health and places it next to godliness follows a sound principle. For health undoubtedly is the strongest instrument for happiness, the one weapon which can down the minor and even the major tragedies of present-day living. An accumulated knowledge on the functioning, the structure, the care and healing of the human body is a sound investment of time for a man or woman who passes the years of youth in school. The practice of preventive medicine in the classroom might reduce the "fashionable scissoring" of bodies in hospitals. The mysteries of diet, the value of exercise, the unbelievable wonders wrought by cleanliness are things that should be given more attention in the schools.

Character

Next to the sound foundation of the body, the formation of character, according

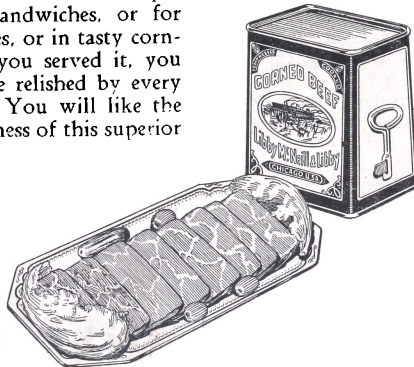
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 to Mr. Durant, should be the task of the schools. Morals and manners can be greatly influenced by the teachers themselves, and these should be chosen not only for their technical competence but also for their innate refinement and understanding of the part that they play in the lives of the young. "I would separate the sexes in school hours," Mr. Durant proposes, "though educating them in the same schools; I would have the boys taught by educated gentlemen, and the girls by educated mothers.... I should base moral instruction upon a deliberate exaltation of family life.... restore the ancient stigma that was attached to celibacy, and would suggest, as delicately as might be, the moral wisdom of marriage at a natural age."

Instilling a disdain of violence, a respect of law and liberty as the essence of personality, should be a further aim of school instruction. The ability to discipline one's self is a basic skill that every teacher should impart to his pupils. In the act of self discipline, intelligence merges with character. This intelligence which enables an individual to use experience for the clarification and attainment of his desires makes it difficult for him to lapse into folly or crime.

Usefulness

Education should further increase usefulness not only in the business world but also in the world of the home. A man should know the simple processes of repair in his home and his land, and every girl should learn the secrets of cookery and the other demands of practical house-keeping. The pleasure in the simple work of the hands is part a well-educated person's delight, and the ability to sample it once in a while should be his.

"Education," Mr. Durant continues, "should teach us not only the technique but the limits of control, and the art of accepting these limits gra-

ciously. Everything natural is forgivable."

The art of give-and-take, the development of tolerance which a lone can nourish friendship, the understanding of love and its demands and complications, a sensitivity to the terrors as well as the beauty of Nature, and enjoy-

ment of literature and its manifold aspects, an understanding of life through history which is often a record of human behaviour, the ability to escape into the dear delight of philosophy — these constitute the rest of that education which Mr. Durant considers so desirable. Educa-

tion that is well rounded, which can allow the individual to soar to the most ideal heights or penetrate the most mysterious depths not only of the world about of him but of his own being, seems to be the education that is of most worth in these, our times.



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