

---

---

## THE INFLUENCE OF THE TRADE SCHOOL ON THE PEOPLE.

C. M. ALCAZAR, Principal of the Trade School at Dumaguete, Oriental Negros.

ANY ONE who has observed the life of the masses in the Philippines will readily agree with me when I say that the majority of them can seldom afford to have nutritious food, sanitary homes, and proper clothing. On account of their poverty, very few can send their children to school long enough to complete the primary course. As a result their children, if they finish the fourth grade at all, are only fit to fill positions which seldom yield a salary of over ten pesos per month.

The establishment of the trade schools, therefore, is a godsend to the poor people. If a parent can keep his child in school through the primary course, he will find a gradual decrease in the expenses for his schooling in the fifth grade and later will be relieved from worry about further payment for clothing and other immediate necessities of the child, while attending school.

Parents of limited means are encouraged to make efforts to send children through the primary course on the assurance that there will be a trade school where they can continue at small expense at first, and at little or no expense for the last year and a half of trade school work, and where they will be able to finish a course beneficial to themselves and their families.

Before the trade schools were organized, furniture making was entirely in the hands of a few natives, some Chinese, and other foreigners. Consequently, the prices were so high that only well-to-do people could afford to have furnished homes. But after the organization of the trade schools, the prices in the shops owned by these men were gradually lowered to compete with the trade school prices which are meant to cover only the cost of material and labor, with a small profit.

As a result, people of small means can now manage to have more furniture in the homes, especially in those homes where trade school boys are living. These houses become decorated first with picture frames of various sizes and styles, as indicative of the pupil's progress in the school. Next, wall-brackets begin to appear; then tables or book-shelves; and finally, pieces of more difficult construction, such as wardrobes and writing desks. The homes are made more attractive and social intercourse is thereby promoted.

This social intercourse brings about an endeavor on the part of each boy in the neighborhood to be more efficient and productive in his school work. As a result, every article produced by the boy, together with his record of progress in the school, is an advertisement for himself and his family. Every family or home thus advertised becomes a part of a union of families. That is to say, a trade school is a help towards widening the social sphere of a family which would otherwise be unknown. It also tends to unite the people of the community by the eventual formation of a bond of sympathy. This bond is strengthened by the fact that the poor and the rich work together at the same bench, machine, or drawing table, are subject to the same treatment from instructors, and are allowed the same rights and privileges.

Moreover, with the present standardization of the trade school work throughout the Islands, rough Chinese finishing and antiquated designs are fast becoming out of date. We notice that furniture and houses that have been built by trade school boys are of more simple decoration, but have more woodwork and are of better construction and finish. It is also noticeable that this line of industrial work in the Philippines is beginning to come under the control of the natives.

Much government work which was heretofore awarded to artisans in different localities is now given to the trade schools on account of the saving usually realized and the generally satisfactory results obtained.

Railroad station counters, cases, and shelvings, constabulary trunks, gymnastic apparatus, high school windows, balustrades, concrete bridges, culverts, office and house furniture, and school furniture of all kinds, are all concrete evidences of the good results derived from the establishment of trade schools.

The trade school work is now carried on upon a solid commercial basis with courses of instruction well systematized. Every business transaction connected with any project for construction within the school is conducted in a business-like way. This gives a pupil training in his trade and at the same time imparts to him business-like principles.

The aims of industrial work and especially trade work are three in number:

1. To train the hand as well as the mind.
2. To teach the dignity of labor.
3. To afford a means of livelihood to every deserving pupil.

At the Bureau of Education industrial exhibit at the First Philippine Exposition, excellent examples of the harmonious training of the hand and the mind were to be seen. Every article in the trade school exhibits was made to conform to the drawing in the hands of the pupil, which was in most cases made by the pupil himself from the oral instructions of the teacher.

It was only twelve years ago that nearly all of the Filipinos hated manual labor because it was thought to be degrading; those that worked did so because they had to, and always with the idea that work with the hands was only for the low-born, and with the desire that they might escape it and become "ilustrados" (refined persons). That the dignity of labor as an aim of industrial training is being taught in the trade schools may be proved by the many examples we see of young men of excellent family who are found daily with the marks of toil on their hands.

I have in mind a certain prominent family in the provinces. One member of the family is now teaching in a provincial high school, while another member was graduated from the same school this year. The family blood being more or less Spanish, it is a matter of interest to note the career of the son who must now be nineteen years of age and is in the employ of a District Engineer. This young man, tired of much book work, entered a school shop where he did excellent work. In his second year, he was persuaded by a provincial official to accept a position with the provincial government. He had fallen so much in love with manual work, however, that whenever he had a leisure day he was sure to spend it repairing house or furniture, or constructing new pieces for the home. At the present time he has one of the best "home shops" that ever belonged to a trade school boy. His tools he has acquired from time to time in mail order lots from the United States.

Another instance: In Iloilo there is a young man who belongs to a well-to-do family. The trade school has made him a lover of manual labor, so that to-day his name is synonymous with the phrase "spirit of industry," or "work of quality." Indeed there are many other instances among rich and poor which might be mentioned where the training received in school shops has directed boys along lines of profitable industry. We count now many machinists, automobile engineers, and other skilled artisans along with the blacksmiths, cabinet makers, wheelwrights, and carpenters, who are the product of the shops maintained in the public schools. Invariably the records of these boys after leaving school have been good. They apply themselves with intelligence

and purpose to the trades which they have chosen and their advance is notable. They are a credit to their schools and to their country.

In conclusion, I wish to say that the trade school, together with improved means of communication such as good roads and bridges, has been the most effective means of winning the appreciation of the Filipinos to the good intentions of the American government in these Islands. It seems to me that industrial instruction through the various trade schools has contributed a great deal towards the pacification of our country. In other words, the trade schools help to elevate the ideals of the masses, to inculcate democratic tendencies in the minds of the aristocratic class, and to spread the industrial spirit among the Filipinos.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—Mr. C. M. Alcazar, who prepared this article originally, is a returned United States scholarship student. Since his return to the Philippines he has been employed in trade school work and is at present the principal of the provincial trade school at Dumaguete, Oriental Negros. This paper was prepared to be read before a conference of industrial teachers.

---

The United States Bureau of Education has recently published Bulletin No. 17, 1912, a thirty-page pamphlet on the Montessori System of Education. Dr. Montessori's booklet *Il metodo della pedagogica scientifica* aroused such keen interest in educational circles that it was immediately translated into English and German, and prominent educators from all over Europe and the United States have gone to Rome to study the workings of the system at first hand. The training of the senses through the muscles and the development of the child's body into something graceful and useful, presided over by a beautiful and orderly mind—this is a doctrine by no means unrelated to the general theme of the PHILIPPINE CRAFTSMAN. Perhaps the most remarkable feature of the Montessori system is its applicability to the case of children who are mentally abnormal. So striking have been the results with this class of children that we find Dr. Montessori making the statement that "mental deficiency presents chiefly a pedagogical, rather than mainly a medical, problem."—J. D. D. \*

---

"A considerable degree of hand-skill, in some directions, gives a child an ability to interpret the vast industrial world about him."