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## Books of Special Interest

## Education and the Future

EDUCATION FOR A CHANGING CIVILIZATION. By WILLIAM HEARD KILPATRICK. New York: The Macmillan Co. \$1.

Reviewed by I. L. KANDEL

Teachers College

UNREST in education is no new theme, but at no period has it been so widespread and universal as in the last decade. Everywhere the chief preoccupation is with the reform of content and methods of instruction. Outside of the United States there is the additional complication that arises out of the new attempts to evolve systems of educational organization that are more consistent with the demands of democracies. In general the unrest is caused by a recognition that much that was taught whether in the elementary or secondary schools failed to carry over into life activities, that education in general had become encrusted with tradition and formalism, and with content that had lost its meaning for modern societies. The keynote of the new movements is a desire to cultivate personality through content that has at once meaning for the individual and value for social progress. So stated the problem seems apparently simple and the very simplicity of statement has elicited greater interest among parents and laymen than educational questions have done hitherto. It is only as one examines the professional proposals for reform that revolve around this central aim and that are appearing in almost every important language of the civilized world, that one realizes the essential difficulties involved in the problem.

Professor Kilpatrick presents in the first two of his three lectures on "Education for a Changing Civilization" an excellent and clear statement of the problems that confront education and society today. Starting with the thesis that the chief characteristic of the present age is rapid change due to the rapid development of science and the changed mental attitude consequent thereon, to industrialization, and to democracy, he draws attention to the intellectual, moral, and social "lag" between the school and society as it is coming to be. Authoritarianism, while declining to some extent in the intellectual field, still dominates the religious, moral, social, legal, and political outlook. While a critical attitude and tested thought characterize modern science they do not carry over into other activities of life. The task of education is to develop a new freedom which asks why and demands an answer before it accepts. The tempo of modern life is rapid, old solutions will not satisfy, and the new generation is facing an unknown future, for which youth should be prepared. The cultivation of dynamic personality able to face new problems and situations is, then, the problem, or, in Professor Kilpatrick's words, "Our problem then would seem to be to help our young people make the shift from external authority to internal authority."

The solution of this problem lies in a close approximation between education and its processes to immediate life and its educational processes. In other words, the content of the school must have meaning for the pupil and be of value for life in society, while the methods must follow the methods common in life outside of the school. The separation between education and life resulted in formalism, conservatism, and neglect of the individual, and the establishment of a purely literary and bookish ideal of education. "Only as the school is placed on a basis of actual living can certain necessary social-moral habits and attitudes be built, certain necessary methods of attack upon problems and enterprises be developed." The purpose of education from this point of view is, then, to develop a critical attitude, a scientific habit of mind, ability to judge and open-mindedness, breadth of view and readiness to cooperate in the interest of social progress and well-being even at the risk of questioning the validity of existing institutions.

Up to this point no one who holds a rational conception of liberal education would differ from Professor Kilpatrick's main thesis. It may be objected that he does not state how many pupils could profit by such an education and takes no account of the contributions of the psychologists on individual differences. One may question both the economy and validity of "the internal authority of how it works when tried" in any type of activity, without pointing to crime statistics and moral stand-

ards due to some extent to the elimination of external authority in our education, while still another criticism may be found in the still inadequate knowledge of the factors that make for progress. Yet in the main his thesis on the aims of modern education may be accepted without following Professor Kilpatrick in all his implications.

The third lecture, in which these implications are worked out, is, as the author admits, the most controversial. Here Professor Kilpatrick develops his ideas on curriculum and method. Taking as his point of departure the necessity of preparing the younger generation to face an unknown future and to be prepared to meet unsolved social problems, he is prepared to discard "for most pupils" Latin as well as Greek, mathematics, much of present history study and modern foreign languages, while "English and the sciences need remaking from within rather than rejection." He leaves, then, for major consideration the study of social problems. This is a serious indictment of current practices, all the more serious because it finds wide acceptance among educators. And yet it may be seriously questioned whether the indictment can ever be against subjects as such. Those who criticize subjects because of their failure to achieve anything, fail always to take into account what is today a far more serious indictment of our systems of education, and that is the large number of teachers who are either inadequately prepared in, or entirely unfamiliar with, subjects that they profess to teach. Before subjects can be discarded, it would be well to discover what can be done with good teaching; otherwise the time will not be distant when "social studies," too, will follow the rest into the discard. Assuming, however, that Professor Kilpatrick's contention is sound, can the unknown future be anticipated, can the future social problems be foreseen? Attempts to discover lines of future interest have been made, as, for example, in the sciences. Newspapers and magazines were analyzed to discover the major scientific trends of the day; ten years later it was found that the emphases had shifted. The same would no doubt be true in any field. It would be unjust to Professor Kilpatrick, however, to leave the impression that he wishes to discard everything that has come from the past. "Many old demands remain substantially unaltered." "Accordingly, to such of the older limited stock of precise subject-matter as should survive from this generation to the next, there must be added certain more generalized methods and attitudes of attack that especially fit for meeting novel situations."

Knowledge of what has been done and said in the past is still essential, and without knowledge new methods of attack cannot be developed. It is highly problematical, however, whether teachers can go beyond this, whether education can undertake more than transmission of the inheritance of the race and adjustment to the present through content that has meaning and by new methods that would be valid in new situations. Granted that "we face as never before an unknown shifting future," how can "children learn to adapt themselves to a situation which we, as teachers, can only partially foresee"? Dealing with similar proposals for an education in civic and social preparedness Walter Lippmann in "The Phantom Public" offers a criticism and suggestion that apply in the present instance. "If the schools attempt to teach children how to solve the problems of the day, they are bound always to be in arrears. The most they can conceivably attempt is the teaching of patterns of thought and feeling which will enable the citizen to approach a new problem in some useful fashion." And again, "No scheme of education can equip him (the citizen) in advance for all the problems of mankind; no device of publicity, no machinery of enlightenment, can endow him during a crisis with the antecedent detailed and technical knowledge which is required for executive action."

How great is the difficulty of anticipating the educational demands of a "shifting future" can best be realized by a comparison of the varied "job analyses" and enumeration of objectives for adult life. The criticisms offered of the solution proposed by Professor Kilpatrick do not affect the value of his analysis of the present educational situation. Indeed, Professor Kilpatrick does not claim to legislate; he recognizes, as has been long recognized in England and is today in a new sense recognized in Germany, that the ultimate solution of the educational problem can only be

found in a well-prepared teacher enjoying a freedom that is limited only by sound professional knowledge and insight. Such a condition is still remote and especially in the United States, where the chief danger lies not in inadequacy of theory, solutions, and panaceas, but in preaching the philosophy of freedom for the pupil and in denying it for the teacher by a welter of courses of study, textbooks, supervisors, and experts. The older theory lent itself to such a hierarchy of controls. If Professor Kilpatrick's general survey has any value, it lies in directing attention to the incompatibility between new theories of education and old systems of organization.

How difficult is the task of reform is well illustrated in Miss Josephine Chase's "New York at School," whose publication was made possible by the Public Education Association. The volume does not attempt to do more than present a descriptive account of the public educational system of New York City. The task is well performed and one cannot read it without realizing the immensity of the educational problem that confronts New York. Obviously the danger lies in the development of a vast machine. While schools have been set aside for various experiments, New York City is still far from encouraging that variety and freedom that is found in the educational system of the London County Council. It is unnecessary, however, since the volume does not invite it, to enter into any considerations of the quality of education offered in New York, the size of buildings, the inbreeding of teachers, and other questions. As a survey of the fabric of the educational system "New York at School" is a valuable contribution for giving the parents and taxpayers an intelligent insight into the largest educational enterprise in the world.

## How Names Arise

SURNAMES. By ERNEST WEEKLEY. Dutton. 1927. \$2.50.

IT was an excellent idea to reprint, after a decade, this book whose earlier editions must have received little attention in the war years. This is a sort of by-product of Mr. Weekley's resources toward a dictionary of English surnames, whose completion, he confesses in his introduction (dated 1916), continually recedes into the future. Meanwhile some six thousand English names and their derivations, with some hundreds in French and German, are here listed. It is a book to be kept and nibbled at, from time to time, with that curious sort of pleasure which some people derive from browsing in "Who's Who" or the dictionary.

"The Study of Surnames," Mr. Weekley observes, "may be regarded as a harmless pastime or as a branch of learning. As a pastime it is as innocent as stamp collecting, and possibly as intellectual. As a branch of learning it is an inexhaustible, and hitherto practically unworked, branch of philological knowledge. A complete dictionary of English surnames would not only form a valuable supplement to the 'New English Dictionary,' but would in great measure revolutionize its chronology." Again and again he cites occupational names (all surnames, one learns, are derived from baptismal names, locality, or occupations, or are nicknames) appearing on medieval rolls a century or two before there is any trace in the language records of the nouns and verbs of which they are composed.

There are a good many surprises for the lay reader in this volume. The older a name is the more likely it is to have been corrupted and abbreviated "to a cacophonous monosyllable distinguished by great economy of vowels." So, says Mr. Weekley, Germans named Bugge, Bopp, Dietz, Dankl, and Kluck have as much right to look down on most of their polysyllabic neighbors as our own Bugg, Bubb, etc., on such upstarts as Napier, Pomeroy, Percy, and Somerset. Names that sound alike have been assimilated, so that Mr. Smith's ancestor who, some time between the beginning of the Crusades and the Renaissance bestowed his personal cognomen as a legacy to his descendants, may have been a blacksmith, or have lived on a "smeth" or plain, or have been a "smethe," i.e., smooth or slippery, person. Medieval names were extraordinary and not always complimentary—e.g. William Thynnewyt and Ralph Badintheved; no doubt most of us are lucky if we are unable to trace our ascent.

On the other hand, some names have kept their early form with little or no change; one is grateful to Mr. Weekley for reminding us that the name of that tough person, the present (at this moment of writing) Premier of France, means exactly what it seems to mean. "Raymond Squarefist"—it sounds like the First Crusade.

*A Selected List of New Books That Are Thoroughly Entertaining and Decidedly Worth While*

By the Author of "WILD GEESE" and "THE DARK DAWN"

**THE MAD CAREWS**By Martha Ostenso

"About 'The Mad Carews' there lingers the atmosphere of a pagan summer day awaiting the onset of an electric storm. In prose that bursts into passages of wild beauty the author dramatizes each and every member of the Carew family."—*New York Times*. \$2.50

**A VAGABOND IN FIJI**By Harry L. Foster

The fiercely joyous adventures of this well-known travel author, who went through Samoa, the Tongas and the Fijis in search of cannibals. The story is told with the same humor and vividness which have distinguished the author's earlier travel narratives. Richly amusing. Illustrated. \$3.00

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A new tale of Old Graustark in which the daughter of a robber chieftain marries a colonel of the Dragoons. \$2.00

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