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A QUESTION OF IMPORTANCE

What Should be the Education of a Business Man?

BY JOHN BRISBEN WALKER.

If, at the beginning of the twentieth century, education does not accomplish that which may reasonably be expected of it, the indifferent results must be ascribed chiefly to the failure to determine clearly in advance the purposes for which studies are to be pursued. While our great schools are organized in the most complete way for instruction and administration, I have found, by personal examination covering nearly a dozen of our leading universities, that there exists no board or commission of disinterested men whose duty it is to determine what education should be.

One can scarcely expect that the influential professors of Latin and Greek, whose dignity has come down through three hundred years, will give to their own offices. Yet to them has been largely committed the task of determining the all-important and fundamental question, "What is education?" Until some university appoints a commission of disinterested scholars and men of wide attainments to consider in formal session this subject which is preliminary to true education, we may expect prejudice and the customs of the ancient schools still to hold the chief sway.

In attempting therefore to outline what should be the education of the modern man who has chosen the business world for his career, I have but little to guide me. The libraries show that small attention has been given to the subject; I base my conclusions upon an experience of thirty-five years in association with, or in handling, men—young and old, in publishing, manufacturing and in general business—to determine the things which most contribute to the moral and material successes in the business world.

The time allotted any man in which to seek an education in the schools is all too short. No matter whether he has at his disposal two years, four years or six years, all are insufficient to cover the field of important knowledge. It therefore becomes essential to arrange with the utmost precision the order for the period of time available. But before this can be done so that the result will be without waste, the student must determine.

"What do I hope to obtain by education?"
The answer to this must embrace certain things which apply to all students. Every man seeks:

First, happiness—not enjoyment merely, not pleasure, but that deeper felicity which can be founded only upon right living—a condition of the soul which is given out as well to those round about us.

Secondly, the tools with which to accomplish business results. It goes without saying that the nearer one comes to truth—that is, to a clear understanding of the conditions which surround us—the more certain is he to achieve happiness, the more certain to accomplish results.

If the youth starts out in a fog of deception, his every effort must be hampered. If he com-

prehends but dimly the causes at work about him, he is likely to deceive himself and to deceive others.

Therefore, in the acquisition of knowledge, comes first and fundamentally some comprehension of the Universe. As a preliminary and an accompaniment to business training there should be brief studies of the known facts, first concerning the universe itself, and secondly, of our own globe. If one starts in ignorance of things which concern all life, there will be endless groping in the dark. Having some knowledge of the world in which he exists—Astronomy—and of the globe upon which he lives—Geology—he must next know something of the things round about him—Botany and Chemistry. Then comes the even more necessary knowledge concerning his own body—Physiology; health stands first and foremost in human acquisitions, and health will not last long without knowledge. Lastly some understanding of his own mind—Psychology.

Do not say that these are the advanced studies of the university, and that there is no opportunity for them in a short business course. They must become an important part of the mind of the business man must ever remain confused. They enable one to comprehend; they give the power to see. The time will soon be here when they will be recognized as essentials in every education—as preliminary to all right thinking. To know where we are—upon what; to have some comprehension of the phenomena going on around about us; to understand our own bodies and so preserve that health which nine scholars out of ten now sacrifice through ignorance; to have some insight into our own mental process, and the workings of the minds of those with whom we come into contact—this knowledge belongs at the beginning of all true education, and its assimilation should move concurrently through all courses.

And kept parallel to this must be a scientific study of human happiness. What is true happiness, and how is it to be attained for one's self and for one's neighbor?—in acquiring health and vigor, in aiding good government, in wise business planning, in perfected organization, in economic production?—these things concern the problem of happiness and should be constituent parts of all education. When once their true place of essential preliminaries is recognized, humanity will advance with extraordinary strides. These studies do not mean the use of such numerous text-books as are now employed in our colleges, but of simply written little volumes from such really great minds as have that grasp, that power of bird's-eye view, which enables them to give much in little, which makes clear the greatest subjects, which in simple language, touching only the salient points, conveys that knowledge which so many writers have seemed to delight in making abstruse.

We now come to the tools which education furnishes for the accomplishment of lifework. Of these, certain ones are necessary to all. To mention them in the order of their importance:

First. How to take that physical exercise necessary to the proper care of the body; because if one falls into ill health, all things else become insignificant.

Second. A knowledge of one's

own language.

Third. Ability to make analysis.

Fourth. A knowledge of the use of figures.

Fifth. An understanding of the principles of classification and organization.

Beyond, come the courses of specialization to fit the student for the work he has elected to pursue, and into these it is not necessary to go. If, for instance, he is to become a bookkeeper, he must have already laid the groundwork in his study of analysis and of the principles of classification and organization; for these underlie all successful accounting. That bookkeeper is always a failure, except in the humblest work, who is not grounded in these preliminaries, which are also essential to all education. And oh, the pitiful failures that I have personally witnessed—failures that might so easily have been made successes if their minds had been properly opened in their preliminary training.

Take for instance the study of Analyses. In whatever business a man may find himself, success or failure depends upon the power to analyze the problems which present themselves during every hour, at every turn in life. Failing to understand the conditions, he can make no real analysis—failing in his analysis, he goes to meet his problem improperly equipped, and only fortunate accident may save him from disaster.

The successful business man makes an analysis on paper of every important problem, before venturing upon action. Tabulating, with brackets against every phase of the undertaking—following each probable result out to its furthest limits—he reaches a point beyond which he cannot go. He has now before him a bird's-eye view of the situation. If failure comes subsequent to his venture, he can see the cause of it.

And this tabulated analysis must be applied to the smallest as well as the largest affairs of business life, if one would act upon premises clearly thought out.

Much of what has been given here as essential to the training of business men is known in the schools as "science." Scientific knowledge comes into play in practically every branch of modern business. Its lack handicaps every man who would accomplish. To the manufacturer, in the use of materials; to the merchant, in the intimate knowledge of goods; to the contractor, in carrying on his work to economic advantage; to the man engaged in transportation; to the investor, seeking opportunities which will bring him fortune; and above all to the young clerk, who would advance himself by becoming useful—to all these science presents itself as necessary, as indeed it is to any career which would rise above the most commonplace.

Knowledge of one's own language is an important factor in business success. The study of grammar and Rhetoric, of synonyms, and of the best literature, is essential to that choice of words which brings conviction to the hearer—to that concise style so necessary in modern correspondence—to that clear and exact statement so essential to contracts, either oral or written.

But beyond his own tongue, no one should waste upon languages ancient or modern, the precious minutes of the all too short a time which he can give to education. The man seeking a business education is a runner in a race. He has but so many seconds to win his goal; and he must keep constantly in mind the course he has set himself to pursue. If he deviates, he loses.

Modern languages are a thousand times more valuable to the student than the Greek and Latin in which for so many centuries were deemed the only education; but to defend which, in this age, is to be ridiculous. But even French and German must be eliminated from the instruction of the young man who desires a mastery of the essentials. Languages may be acquired at any time, by any one, in spare hours. They are no part of the funda-

mentals of either a business or a liberal education, so wide is now the field which must be covered in other directions.

In conclusion, I would urge that above all, before beginning actual studies, there should be a carefully matured, well-thought-out plan for the education of each individual. This work is now done in a haphazard way. But at least a week at the beginning of the school-year should be given up to the careful consideration of what the young man proposes to accomplish. During this time he should not be rushed. It should be a week of quiet thought and attendance upon lectures which shall show the purposes of the several courses, and their usefulness and their bearing upon the various employments of life. Each student should have, in the preparation of his table of studies, the personal counsel of his professors and instructors. Each should have pointed out to him the purposes and advantages of the proposed courses. No matter how crowded the term of studies, an entire week is not too much to give to this preliminary, so all-important is a clear comprehension, in advance, of what the student aims at and proposes to accomplish.

Running throughout the course of the business man's education, should be taught Organization—its lessons ingeniously contrived to become a part of his daily life—because an understanding of Organization is, after the power and knowledge necessary to comprehend things, the secret of all success in business life. The keeping of accounts—everyone should have some knowledge of accounting—the art of filing papers and above all, the making of analysis, have to do with that organization which is interwoven with every affair of business life.

One other teaching must run throughout the business course. That institution fails which does not provide for constant lectures. "Career." Every First Requirement should be discussed; difficult situations should be presented and the temptations of business life shown up. Because these things are neglected, or imperfectly explained, in our schools and colleges, thousands of youths annually wreck themselves upon the sophistries of the business world. Upon every business field lie these wrecks of men, who would very likely have seen the way to honorable fortune had they been instructed in advance concerning the temptations they were to encounter. A love of truth and the possession of a personal integrity above temptation, constitute the highest capital of the youth who would seek business success.

I am aware that there are many who think differently. But I have followed the careers of a thousand men who have sought success by unscrupulous ways, and have watched their brilliant ability go down to poverty, where honor would have brought prosperity; while in the case of those dishonorably succeeding, fortune was invariably embittered by the contempt both of self and of neighbor. Eventually, "respectable" thieves are always recognized in every community.

Such are the requisites of a business education, as they seem to me after a long and perhaps unusually broad experience in affairs. I am aware that in a measure I am departing from certain accepted standards. But the business world is changing rapidly and education must be advanced to meet the requirements of the new conditions.

THE GREAT DESTROYER.

Startling Facts About the vice of Intemperance—Whiskey: What it Does Inside a Man—A Striking Address by Sir Frederick Treves, Bart., K. C. V. O., LL. D.

The following is from an address delivered by Sir Frederick Treves, Bart., K. C. V. O., LL. D. in the great hall of Church House, Westminster, London,

F. M. FARR, President.

J. D. ARTHUR, Cashier.

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before the Woman's Union of the Church of England Temperance Society, May 4, 1905. Sir Frederick is physician to King Edward.

The point with regard to alcohol is simple enough. It is, of course, distinctly a poison, and it is a poison which, like other poisons, has certain uses, but the limitations of the use of alcohol should be as strict as the limitations of the use of any other kind of poison. Moreover, it is a curiously insidious poison, in that it produces effects which seem to have only one antidote—alcohol again. This applies to another drug equally as insidious, and that is morphia, or opium. Unfortunately, the term poison is by no means an exaggerated one, when it is realized that with alcohol as drunk by the majority of the poorer classes there is mixed a virulent poison in the form of fusel-oil.

There is no disguising the fact that alcohol is year by year less used by the medical profession. It is said that it has a certain position as a medicine, and no one will dispute that, but looking back over hospital drugs for the past twenty-five years, there is no question that the use of alcohol is emphatically diminishing. Let us take two or three points—and remember that I am only speaking of the very here can use of alcohol. In the first place, it is a little before a day. It is, as the French say, an aperitif appetizer, and helps digestion. What are the facts? First of all, no appetite needs to be artificially stimulated. If the appetite wants food it clamors for it; if there is no appetite, there is no need for food. Therefore there is no need, supposing the belief were true. So on that ground I do not think there is much to be made out for its use.

Then it is said that it is strengthening, and that it gives great working power. We hear a great deal of this in the advocacy of British beef and beer. That sounds very well, but let us view the facts. Alcohol, curiously enough, modifies certain constituents of the blood in the nourishment of the body. The process that underlies the building up of the human frame is very much modified. The output for carbonic acid is very much lessened, with the result that the drinker at once becomes ill-nourished—obviously so. No man dreams of going into training and taking alcohol. He must reach the acme of physical perfection, and that must be without alcohol.

It has a somewhat stimulating effect, and that is the unfortunate part of it. The effect, however, lasts only for a moment, and after it has passed away the capacity for work falls enormously. It does this: It brings up the reserve forces of the body and throws them into action, with the result that when these are used up there is nothing to fall back upon. Its effect is precisely like a general throwing the bulk of his army into the fray and then bringing up, as fast as he can, all of his reserves and throwing them in also. The immediate effect may be impressive, but the inevitable result is obvious.

As a work producer it is exceedingly extravagant, and like all other extravagant measures, leads to a physical bankruptcy. It is also curious that troops cannot march on alcohol. I was, as you know, with the relief column that moved on Ladysmith, and

of course, it was an extremely trying time by reason of the hot weather. In that enormous column of 30,000, the first who dropped out were not the tall men, or the short men, or the big men, or the little men—they were the drinkers, and they dropped out as clearly as if they had been labeled with a big letter on their backs.

With regard to the circulation. Of course it produces an increased heart-beat, a fuller pulse and redder skins, but the moment the effect has passed off the action of the heart is absolutely and emphatically weakened. Consequently the temporary effect is produced at an enormous cost. Then there is its action on the central nervous system. Here its action is that of a poison. It first stimulates the nervous system and then depresses it, and, as with other poisons which act upon this part of the body, the higher centres go first. They become a little dull—a little less quick and acute. It is very trifling, but there it is; so that the man who does his work on alcohol—even a very moderate amount—is not at his best.

"Leaks" in Crop Reports.

Advance information regarding crop estimates of the Department have frequently been intimations that officials in the department were in collusion with outsiders, and sold to them "tips" as to the condition of the crops. Suspicion was aroused by the course of the market just prior to the publication of the June cotton report, and Secretary Wilson, on complaint of the Southern Cotton Association, made an investigation, and dismissed an associate statistician of the department for selling advance information to speculators.

Glass Bricks.

The manufacture and use of paving and building bricks made of devitrified glass have attracted some attention recently in Europe, especially in France. Broken bottles, broken windowpanes and other glass refuse are turned, by a patented process, into tiles, paving squares and flags for sidewalks. A rough surface like that of common brick can be given to them. In the city of Lyons a piece of street pavement formed of this material has withstood as hard usage as any pavement would be subjected to. The makers claim that it possesses greater resistance than stone, is impermeable to water, and is a "poor conductor of cold." In Hamburg, Germany, translucent glass bricks have been used for the walls of buildings which are required to be at once fire-proof and windowless.

POINTED PARAGRAPHS.

Most men who pay as they go are very slow travelers. Gossip and ice cream spoons open many feminine mouths.

No man with a torpid liver can be a successful optimist.

It sometimes happens that a man lies when he smiles and says nothing.

A woman in politics is about as ornamental as a diamond in a mud puddle.

There would be no such as a silent tomb if women had their way.

If all donkeys had long ears it would be necessary to change the style of masculine headgear.