

ing one member, as previously, but an elector will now vote for the candidates in the order of his preference, instead of voting for one candidate only. This method is an improvement on the old one, but is much inferior to the system of proportional voting in force in Tasmania.

The McGowen (Labor) ministry in New South Wales started with an absolute majority of two, but owing to some by-elections the parties became equal and for some time there was a deadlock. Another by-election has now restored the Government majority. The Ministry proposes to reduce the income-tax exemption, and to restore the stamp duties on checks and receipts, which were abolished a few years ago. The New South Wales budget is thus a great contrast to that of South Australia.

The Federal graduated land-value tax, in its first year of operation, produced nearly £1,400,000, in spite of the high exemption of £5,000. The Federal government intends to establish a Commonwealth bank, which will conduct all ordinary banking business.

ERNEST BRAY.

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## INCIDENTAL SUGGESTIONS

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### ORGANIC EDUCATION.

Fairhope, Ala.

Whoever heard of a grower of fine plants or animals, making requirements of those plants or animals? Instead, the wise student of nature studies the symptoms of health or disease and works in harmony with those symptoms. Whenever the plant or animal responds unsatisfactorily, the treatment is changed at once. So also with the wise physician. He does not blame the patient when results are undesirable, but changes the prescription!

In our school work, however, it is different. We do not study the needs of the child as evidenced by the symptoms; but we plan a course of study and exercises which are designed to help him, but under which he often languishes or becomes restive, indifferent or even vicious. When this occurs we do not change the treatment, but console ourselves with blaming the child.

When the little child grows nervous, near-sighted, and round-shouldered, we put on glasses, give a few "corrective" exercises which often still more exhaust the nervous system, and continue to require the child to spend his time in an unwholesome room, working in an unwholesome way at needless employment.

When the girl's nature does not respond to the requirements in arithmetic, she is counted dull or stupid, or possibly abnormal, but the nature of the requirement is not changed. When the boy grows indifferent, languid, or vicious, refusing to do his best at school, acquiring a distaste for grammar or languages, the school "fails" him, exhorts him to greater effort and brands him "different"—but never once does it enter the minds of the authorities to change the requirements.

Why should education insist upon being uneducational? Our insane desire to "educate" is a fatal barrier to development which is the only true education. Could a child's conscious striving and over-

eating make him taller or broader? Neither will conscious striving and over-study make him wiser or better.

Why not act as reasonably in education as in other things? If the nature of the little child requires freedom, why not give freedom instead of requiring him to sit at stationary desks and be silent? If his nature requires out of doors, fresh air, why not give that? Can't he "learn" anything out of doors? If his seeing should not be at close range, why give him a book at so young an age? Can't he learn anything without books? If his nervous system requires the larger movements first, why put him at writing so young? Are there no other "educative activities" in which he may more safely engage?

We know that many children "fail" in school. We know that many grow indifferent and unhappy. We know that some are not strong enough to meet the "requirements." Then why in the name of education should we continue the treatment when the response is unsatisfactory? Why not sanely and bravely look the little child in the face, and throw away all of the "traditions of the elders" and all of our unrighteous requirements, and simply and religiously meet *his* requirements? How shall we know them? By the symptoms of his response or reaction. For the test of the environment is the reaction of the child. The test of a school is the condition of the child—bodily, mentally, spiritually.

What does the body need? Fresh air in out-of-doors, play, freedom, no stationary desks, no enforced silence, but quiet—only when the occupation requires it; much choice in occupation, physical coordination through creative handwork.

What does the mind require? Time to observe, investigate, think and reason out a few things—often help and guidance from the teacher, but rarely ordered attention; experiences and activities in harmony with age and interests—that is, things of sense in the early years, books, experiences of others and abstractions in the later years.

What is necessary for the spirit? Joy in work, a genuine desire to do it; work which enlists every part of the entire organism. In fact, all half-hearted work is insincere, and we often cultivate dishonesty in the child when we try to develop "will power" by arbitrary requirements.

True education is organic—that is, it develops, strengthens and improves the body, makes the mind more intelligent and the spirit sweeter—in fact perfects the entire organism.

But can it be done? Why not? What is to prevent our taking the desks out of the room, allowing only twenty pupils to the teacher, and removing the "intellectual requirements" of the first grades in any city? Instead of desks, have tables at which the children may work. Instead of requirements in reading, writing, numbers, etc., let the children sing and play, make things of paper card board and textiles, taking care that the nervous system is not injured by too close work. Let them have gardens in which they may plant what they choose, and which they may care for in their own way with the sympathetic assistance of the teacher. Let them have stories of geography, history, and literature. Give them an opportunity to learn to speak some other modern language than their own. Let them have

water colors and clay which they may freely use. Allow the teacher to take them out of doors at any hour she may wish, taking them to parks and museums for the pleasure and profit of going and seeing, rather than to prepare them to "pass" any particular examination. Let them gain fundamental conceptions of numbers by the use of the rule, handling things, counting, estimating, weighing, measuring, etc. Let them hear beautiful poems recited by the teacher, and allow them to recite them also, but do not force the committing.

One year spent in such occupations and activities will make every six-year-old child in any city stronger, sounder, more beautiful of body, more intelligent, alert, and responsive of mind, and sweeter of spirit, even though he has not learned to read or write or "do" arithmetic. He has learned to think and observe and reason as well as a six-year-old mind is able. The integrity of the nervous system has been preserved and the body improved in every way, and the spirit has been happy and has grown finer and more responsive. Is not this education?

Then why not continue the same general scheme for the second, third and fourth grades, enlarging the scope, and using books as soon as they are needed to explain, verify, or broaden the child's experiences?

The School of Organic Education at Fairhope, Ala., is making an effort to literally meet the demands of the child. No requirements are made in the first six years. No so-called "lessons," no grades, marks, or examinations, no home tasks given.

The children come to school to have a good time—to do things—to find out about things; and incidentally they learn many things. The day is full of activity—singing, playing, working, investigating, observing, story-telling, gardening, using numbers and materials, art work, and nature study. No books are used by children under the tenth year, except as the child himself desires to learn to read. No writing is required, no formal numbers nor spelling. At ten the children begin to use books, learning to read very quickly because the desire to read is strong and the nervous system has been strengthened instead of weakened during the previous years. From ten to thirteen all books—literature, geography, and history—are used *with* the teachers, for the simple purpose of enjoying what the book may contain—never as a task to be learned and recited. Learning the true value of books in this way, with the assistance of a sympathetic teacher, a real love of books is acquired.

Formal arithmetic is begun at ten, and with the growth of the fundamental conceptions attained in the previous years, very little difficulty is experienced.

At thirteen and fourteen regular formal work in the seventh and eighth grade studies is begun, but the children have learned to think and reason, have learned to use books, and are keen to get everything possible from the books, so that there are no real "school tasks" even in the grammar department.

At fourteen or fifteen the children begin high school work. Four years of serious, earnest, enthusiastic—for it will be more enthusiastic than ever if the previous years have been well spent—work in mathematics, science, history, language, and litera-

ture, with gardening, manual training, music and art continued, constitutes the high school course.

No "passing per cent" is required in the high school, but if the work is pursued seriously and earnestly, the youth gets from it all that is possible for him to absorb or digest at that time, and what can be the value of forced study or mental indigestion?

Institutions to be educational must meet the demands of the individual, rather than make requirements which he must meet. An institution has no right to ask, "What do you know?" "What have you done?" "Where are your credentials?" But must ask, "What do you need?" "How may we serve you?" The "standards" of an institution are measured by its service, not by its requirements.

Unless the individual emerges from the institution stronger of body, more intelligent of mind, sweeter and more helpful of spirit, the process has not been educational.

MARIETTE L. JOHNSON.

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## NEWS NARRATIVE

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The figures in brackets at the ends of paragraphs refer to volumes and pages of *The Public* for earlier information on the same subject.

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Week ending Tuesday, December 19, 1911.

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### Russian Relations with the United States.

Under the leadership of Congressman William Sulzer of New York, the House of Representatives adopted on the 13th the following concurrent resolution:

Resolved, by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled: That the people of the United States assert as a fundamental principle that the rights of its citizens shall not be impaired at home or abroad because of race or religion; that the government of the United States concludes its treaties for the equal protection of all classes of its citizens, without regard to race or religion; that the government of the United States will not be a party to any treaty which discriminates, or which by one of the parties thereto is so construed as to discriminate, between American citizens on the ground of race or religion; that the government of Russia has violated the treaty between the United States and Russia, concluded at St. Petersburg Dec. 18, 1832, refusing to honor American passports duly issued to American citizens on account of race and religion; that in the judgment of the Congress the said treaty, for the reasons aforesaid, ought to be terminated at the earliest possible time; that for the aforesaid reasons the said treaty is hereby declared to be terminated and of no further force and effect from the expiration of one year after the date of notification to the government of Russia of the terms of this resolution, and that to this end the President is hereby charged with the duty of communicating such notice to the government of Russia.

The purpose of this resolution was to terminate a