

THE FOUNDATIONS OF EDUCATION

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The foundations of education by Levi Seeley

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LEVI SEELEY

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OF EDUCATION**

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OF
EDUCATION

BY

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NEW JERSEY STATE NORMAL SCHOOL



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PREFACE.

THE foundations of teaching are not to be sought, absolutely complete, in any school curriculum, or in any series of directions to school-teachers. There are many important matters both in teaching and in schooling which lie outside the printed schedules for teachers and the text-books for students. Not only do they lie outside, but they lie deeper—they are matters fundamental; and yet they hardly can be stated in official directions, much less classified. Still, the neglect of them as if they were side issues is quite largely responsible for many of the weaknesses in our educational product. The purpose of this book is mainly to impress upon both the teacher and the parent the grave importance of certain of these matters as foundations of teaching.

No one will claim that we have yet attained perfection, either in method or result. We spend vast sums of money, we claim the devotion of a great army of men and women in the schoolroom, great minds are bestowing their very best thought—and no one would withhold a particle of this treasure, this consecration, this energy—yet we are confronted with evils which education has not eliminated, and faults in our national character which seem rather to grow than abate.

It were presumptuous of me to propose a panacea for all our educational ills. But may I not hope to contribute

some suggestions, born of long experience and wide observation, rather outside the beaten track — thoughts which may help in the correction of these ills, and possibly even strengthen the weak places? Far be it from me to cherish a pessimistic view of our condition. On the contrary, we have great reason to rejoice and to take courage. Yet we shall do well honestly to face the situation, and eschewing self-complacency, seek to improve. My purpose is not to point out errors so much as to indicate positive factors which should be incorporated into our training and comprise a more intimate part of our practice, in directing childhood, both at school and in the home. Little attempt has been made to preserve a continuity between the chapters of this book, each being practically independent of the others.

My earnest desire is to set young teachers to thinking upon the matters here set forth, hoping thereby to lead them into a completer conception of what education really implies. Older teachers again, and even the parent, may find suggestive material here which will prove helpful in the all-important duty of the proper education of the child. It seems to me that parents are returning once more to the idea which prevailed before the days of schools and school-teachers, namely, that the child is a gift of God to the home, and that the first and most sacred duty of parents is rightly to educate their children. Whatever be the conditions, no person and no scheme of education can withdraw that responsibility wholly from the parents, nor deprive them utterly of that privilege. It is my sincere hope that in these pages the parent, especially, will find help in the discharge of this blessed privilege, this God-given duty.

Because many of the questions treated underlie the for-

mation of character, they are truly fundamental. Hence the appropriateness of the title "The Foundations of Education." Convinced that teachers should give closer attention to these questions than is their wont, I have tried to be entirely practical in theme, logical in treatment, and lucid in illustration, avoiding such technical terms as might obscure my meaning. Language is the vehicle of thought; and if undue concentration be required because of the language used, little strength will remain for the main thing, which is the thought.

Many agencies enter into the education of the child. I have alluded to two, the teacher and the parent; and of all the agencies these two are the most important. If the teacher and the parent should be led to work together, each aiding and supplementing the other, and if both should acquire a broader conception of the true meaning of education, through the perusal of this work, its mission and the devoted wish of the author will be fulfilled.

For many valuable criticisms and suggestions in the preparation of this book, I wish to extend my hearty thanks to Dr. E. F. Carr, of the Trenton Normal School.

LEVI SEELEY

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