

INDUSTRIAL EDUCATION

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Industrial Education by James E. Russell & Frederick G. Bonser

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THE
SCHOOL AND INDUSTRIAL LIFE

JAMES E. RUSSELL

THE SCHOOL AND INDUSTRIAL LIFE*

The American school is under fire—it is always under fire. Just now it is said that its curriculum is overloaded with fads and frills which burden the child and hamper his training in subjects essential to his success in life. Public opinion is critical of a system which makes easy the advancement of a few to positions of commanding influence, but which provides no vocational training for the many who can not afford to remain in school beyond the elementary grades. The demand is for equality of opportunity in education without regard to social rank or wealth or any special privilege, that kind of equality which enables one to become a good American citizen, and which, as I understand it, is established on the ability to earn a decent livelihood and the determination to make one's life worth the living.

The instruction given in our public schools is chiefly of two kinds: (1) humanistic, including language and literature, history and civics, and the fine arts; and (2) scientific, including mathematics, geography, physics, chemistry, and biology. Our schools also provide for training in the practical arts which are required in the study of these subjects, preeminently the arts of reading, writing, singing, and drawing. Of late years the attention given to hygiene has begotten systematic training in gymnastics and athletic games. Our school work, however, is bookish, a term of reproach with some, but properly understood it stands above criticism. That which is worth knowing about human progress is for the most part contained in books. The scientific studies, as well as the

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