

**EDUCATION AND
LIFE, PAPERS AND
ADDRESSES**

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Education and life, papers and addresses by James H. Baker

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JAMES H. BAKER

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EDUCATION AND LIFE

PAPERS AND ADDRESSES

BY

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PREFACE.

THE papers and addresses constituting this volume were prepared for various occasions. They naturally fall into two groups: papers on Education, and addresses that come under the broader title of Education and Life. The subjects of the first group are arranged in a somewhat logical order, namely: a general view of the field, especially as seen by Plato; secondary education and its relation to the elementary and higher; some principles and problems of the elementary and secondary periods; higher education; the practical bearing of all mental development.

Some of the leading views presented in this book may be expressed in the following propositions: While our educational purpose must remain ideal, all education must be brought in closer touch with the work and the problems of to-day. For the safety of democracy and the welfare of society, the social aim in the preparation for citizenship must be given more prominence. Although methods that make power are the great need of the schools, mental power without a content of knowledge means nothing; each field of knowledge has its own peculiar value, and, therefore, the choice of studies during the period of general training is not a matter of indifference. Studies belonging to a given period are also good preparation for higher grades of work—

a view to be more fully considered by the colleges. In the readjustments of our educational system, the entire time between the first grade and college graduation must be shortened. Some common-sense concepts which have always dwelt in human consciousness, properly kept in view, would often prevent us from wandering in strange pedagogic bypaths. We have suffered from false interpretation of the doctrines of pleasure, pursuit of inclination, punishment by natural consequences, and following lines of least resistance. Evolution and modern psychology, in their latest interpretations, are reaching a safe philosophy for school and life. At the close of this century we have almost a new insight into the doctrine of happiness through work. The heroic, ethical, and æsthetic elements of character are of prime importance. We often find some of the best principles of teaching and rules of life in literature which does not rank as scientific, but contains half-conscious, incidental expression of deep insight into human nature, and in some of the writers referred to in the addresses we find, not only good pedagogics, but fresh hope for both romance and practical philosophy. For our view of life and for our theory of education, we are to interpret evolution and judge the purpose of creation, not by the first struggle of a protozoan for food, but by the last aspiration of man for Heaven.

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