

THE TREE-DWELLERS

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The Tree-Dwellers by Katharine Elizabeth Dopp

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• TREE-DWELLERS •



A map of the Tree-dwellers' country, showing the relative position of the geographical features referred to in this book.

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TO MY MOTHER
Janet Meyer Dopp
I DEDICATE THIS BOOK

• PREFACE •

THE series, of which this is the first volume, is an attempt to meet a need that has been felt for several years by parents and physicians, as well as by teachers, supervisors, and others who are actively interested in educational and social progress. The need of practical activity, which for long ages constituted the entire education of mankind, is at last recognized by the elementary school. It has been introduced in many places and already results have been attained which demonstrate that it is possible to introduce practical activity in such a way as to afford the child a sound development—physically, intellectually, and morally—and at the same time equip him for efficient social service. The question that is perplexing educators at the present time is, therefore, not one regarding the value of practical activity, but rather one of ways and means by which practical activity can be harnessed to the educational work.

The discovery of the fact that steam is a force that can do work had to await the invention of machinery by means of which to apply the new force to industrial processes. The use of practical activity will likewise necessitate many changes in the educational machinery before its richest results are realized. Yet the conditions that attend the introduction of practical activity as a motive power in education are very different from those that attended the introduction of the use of steam. In the case of steam the problem was that of applying a new force to an old work. In the case of practical activity it is a question of restoring a factor which, from the earliest times until within the last two or three decades, has operated as a permanent educational force.

The situation that has recently deprived the child of the oppor-

tunity to participate in industrial processes is due, as is well known, to the rapid development of our industrial system. Since the removal of industrial processes from the home the public has awakened to the fact that the child is being deprived of one of the most potent educational influences, and efforts have already been made to restore the educational factor that was in danger of being lost. This is the significance of the educational movement at the present time.

As long as a simple organization of society prevailed, the school was not called upon to take up the practical work; but now society has become so complex that the use of practical activity is absolutely essential. Society to-day makes a greater demand than ever before upon each and all of its members for special skill and knowledge, as well as for breadth of view. These demands can be met only by such an improvement in educational facilities as corresponds to the increase in the social demand. Evidently the school must lay hold of all of the educational forces within its reach.

In the transitional movement it is not strange that new factors are being introduced without relation to the educational process as a whole. The isolation of manual training, sewing, and cooking from the physical, natural, and social sciences is justifiable only on the ground that the means of establishing more organic relations are not yet available. To continue such isolated activities after a way is found of harnessing them to the educational work is as foolish as to allow steam to expend itself in moving a locomotive up and down the tracks without regard to the destiny of the detached train.

This series is an attempt to facilitate the transitional movement in education which is now taking place by presenting educative materials in a form sufficiently flexible to be readily adapted to the needs of the school that has not yet been equipped for manual training, as well as to the needs of the one that has long recognized practical activity as an essential factor in its work. Since the experience of the race in industrial and social processes embodies,