

Looking at Ourselves and the Future

Youngsters show more concern for developing ideals and philosophies and preparing for careers and marriage than we ordinarily think them capable of

Educators can find in these honest expressions a clue to the importance youth places on character growth and a basis for judging the extent to which moral fibre is being developed in young Americans.

SCHOOL LIVING has led my character along profitable lines, my sense of honor is established, and that of duty and responsibility growing. Though self-confidence is lacking, and an inferiority complex tortures me dreadfully, still in high school one either learns to laugh at himself, or someone will do it for him. I have learned to look for the truth and beauty in life. I wonder where I would be without high school friends. My teachers have been so worthwhile that I love some of them, respect most of them, and have learned of life from all of them.

¶ In my experience, I have found that school, although unpleasant at times, is absolutely necessary. Every time that I begin to wonder if it is worth it to work hard on studies, I use reasoning. If I know that I have to go to school and spend a certain amount of time there each day, why should I waste this time when I can make it work for me? Why should I turn my back on the splendid education that is within my grasp, if all I have to do is to apply myself?

Before entering this high school, I had never directed much thought along this line. I had had a "good time" in junior

high and never worried much about my studies. Then one day I had a talk with an advisor provided for the purpose of seeing that students entering high school get a good start. What she said enlightened me. High school has taught me to think about and to plan my education.

We Want to Face the Future Unafraid

ONE OF the most important things school living has given me is confidence in myself. Though by no stretch of the imagination an honor student, I have managed to keep up with most of my classes in fair competition with my classmates. Being able to hold my own in school gives me reason to believe I have a good chance to do the same in later life.

¶ If I had lacked school living, I'm sure I would not have as much courage to face the world. Putting me on my own, making me think, and teaching me to get along with people have been such a great part of school living that I know, when I'm finally on my own, I will realize how lucky I was to have had the schooling America offered me.

¶ There are things that the average student gains from school life that I have not gained; I do not blame school, but myself. I have taken part in few school social activities and made few good friends. I have acquired a certain variety

of inferiority complex that seems to have developed into a dislike or indifference toward school associates and a feeling that they and some of my teachers are against me.

I have come to the conclusion that I am an introverted introvert and would have been better off with a private tutor all my life. But I do think schools are fine for the average person because they offer opportunities for education, association, character development, and the valuable things of life that help make citizens worthy of existence.

❏ I don't think that school as it is today leaves a person unafraid to face the world. They might teach a class in senior problems and it will help the senior a lot, but what of the underclassmen? They have just as many problems as the seniors. There should be a class in social problems for all grades of high school. This would help many out of a lot of difficulties.

❏ I feel that I owe a definite indebtedness to society for the education I have received. This education has provided me with the tools necessary for either starting out in life or continuing my education in college.

As a system designed to suit the mass, it functions very well, although, as it is with all systems designed to cover a large field, there are some cases in which it is not as efficient as it might be. For example: too much choice is left to grammar school students as to whether they wish to participate in affairs. True enough, this system develops initiative, but the bold ones who already have it are bound to volunteer every time, and the more reticent students are likely to

have every spark of initiative snuffed out because their reticence becomes a habit. These students require more pushing. Of course, the handling of this situation rests a great deal more with the individual teachers than with the system, but the system can correct the defects of its teachers.

Attending public schools as I have, I believe that I have a great advantage over private school students as far as facing the world unafraid is concerned. It is amazing the number of people one comes in contact with at school. Included in this number are people of all types, races, and creeds. One of the greatest problems for a person to overcome when he starts into the world on his own is that of meeting and impressing people. At school, one becomes used to this and the battle is almost won before you start.

In thinking back over my life, I am more thankful for the instruction I received in becoming a better American citizen and in becoming a more pleasant, well-liked, and successful person than for any other instruction I have been given. Schools all over the world have excellent courses in math, languages, and geography to cite a few examples, but here in America the principles of humanity and bettering, not only of yourself or your country, but the bettering of mankind as a whole are taught. To my way of thinking, here lies the reason for the American school system being the successful generator of democratically minded American citizens that it is.

❏ School has, primarily, prepared me for a job or career; although only the surface has yet been scratched, I have

gotten the background and foundations for more learning in college, and even with what little I now know, a fairly good position would not be hard to find.

I have already learned more, in general, than many successful men. Through references from high school teachers and counselors, I have had several fine jobs which are on the path to better ones in later life. Perhaps through wiser planning, I could have studied more necessary subjects, but on the whole I feel content about what I have learned so far and about my desire and willingness to learn more.

¶School has not solved my problems of the future at all. The war seems to have put a crimp in things. I have always known the desire to fly, but that was all through when I took the Air Corps test and found that I was partly color-blind.

This left me somewhat startled because I never suspected such a thing to

be wrong with me. I have studied aeronautics and math just to fly, and now it seems all lost. I don't know what I want to do now. I will make the best of the Army in June, and see what happens after the war. I am already 18 and it is too late to try something new.

¶An extremely important thing that should be taught in high schools is a course dealing with the relations between man and wife that would give students a clear, unembarrassed outlook on marriage and parenthood.

¶A fundamental subject that should be taught in school is a knowledge of sex and how to meet certain problems when one is married. So many marriages are broken up because the couple does not have the right relationship due to lack of proper knowledge. Where but in school can one get the "proper" knowledge if he does not get it at home?

THE DEFENSE RESTS

In what I have said in the few lines, from beginning to end, I have given considerable thought. If only time and paper permitted, I could go on and on with this subject. All things, good or bad must have an ending sooner or later. I am putting an end to this theme, composition, essay, or what have you.

In closing let me add that I, like so many other students, am about to ring down the curtain on twelve years of the best, maybe not the happiest, but years full of enjoyment in learning. I face the world of tomorrow unafraid, and with courage. Such things as these make the world of tomorrow!

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