

EDUCATION AND VILLAGE IMPROVEMENT

By

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With a Foreword by

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TO
ALL WHO POSSESS A VISION OF PEACE, JOY
AND BEAUTY FOR INDIAN VILLAGE LIFE

FOREWORD

A STUDY of the subjects on which books and articles are written, and published, and sold, and read gives a fairly reliable index of what the literate members of a given country are thinking and talking about. In India a comparison of the books published today with those available twenty years ago would furnish much food for thought and a good deal for hope as well. At that time we would have looked in vain for publications on such subjects as 'Rural Reconstruction', 'Village Uplift', and the like,—terms that were not yet discovered in those days. At the present time these words are slogans found in every newspaper and magazine, and form the topic of discussion in an increasing multitude of books.

Among such publications, Mr Moomaw's book should hold a worthy place. The author combines a thorough knowledge of agriculture and rural science obtained in the west with years of practical experience in an Indian agricultural and vocational school. The result is that these chapters are written with a genuine background of Indian life and thought. Too many books by Europeans leave the impression of being chunks of unassimilated western material; in this, however, every page carries vivid marks of first-hand experience, and is 'dyed in the wool' with the local colour of the Indian countryside.

The Vocational Training School at Anklesvar has a proud record of actual achievement, but even so Mr Moomaw's experience is not confined to the conditions of a school community. He has tarried in many of the villages of Gujarat and has learned through conversation and friendship the difficulties and aspirations of the peasant. Together with the staff and students

of the Training School he has been able to carry out a number of surveys and tabulate fresh information in a variety of subjects connected with rural improvement. When he recommends any daring innovation he speaks from the weight of experience.

A. B. VAN DOREN

N.C.C. Office, Nagpur
November 1937

P R E F A C E

WHEREVER there has been permanent village improvement we usually find that the rural school has performed a useful service, first in shaping the minds of the children and through them influencing their parents. Village life in India today requires that teaching in rural schools should undergo a vital change. In addition to being an institution for mental training, the school must become a channel through which new life may flow into the village. Some teachers have already observed that as they bring the instruction of their classes to impinge upon the life currents of the village, the purely teaching functions of the school become vitalized and standards of scholarship are improved.

The worth of education in village improvement lies in the fact that it awakens and develops the latent powers that already exist in the village. The uplift movement often tends to be imposed from the outside. When 'uplift' is thus brought in as a ready-made 'scheme', which the people themselves have had little or no part in preparing, it often fails to enlist their support and loyalty. Through suitable education we uncover springs that lie hidden, even in backward villages.

The teacher will often find that the most effective way to teach certain lessons is through some practical village service or demonstration in the presence of both pupils and parents. The various chapters of this book suggest examples as to how school-village relationships may be so established that the teaching of the school will impinge directly upon some of the problems of village improvement.

The various chapters represent in brief form the contents of courses in Rural, Social and Economic

Problems conducted with the students of the Vocational Training School during the years 1930-37.

I am deeply grateful to the Staff of the Vocational Training School, to many village teachers and to former students for their generous co-operation at all times. It is a pleasure also to acknowledge the encouragement received from various officers of the Departments of Education, Agriculture and Co-operation. Finally I am especially grateful to Mrs Moomaw for her help in innumerable ways.

It is hoped that the book will be helpful to teachers, students and others in acquiring a measure of rural-mindedness so essential to fruitful service.

Anklesvar
Broach District

I. W. MOOMAW

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