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The American Teacher

Democracy in Education; Education for Democracy

VOL. I No. 1

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GREETING.

SEVERAL TEACHERS of the public schools of New York City have formally agreed to "co-operate in the establishment of a journal devoted to the examination of school conditions, and to publishing information and discussions calculated to improve the professional and social status of the teachers and the work of the schools."

Although the editors of THE AMERICAN TEACHER are the official subordinates of those in charge of a great educational system, they desire to work with their official superiors in a public way, on the basis of mutual interest in the ultimate welfare of the children. In the common endeavor of all the workers, members of the Board of Education, superintendents, principals and teachers alike, who are giving their time, energy and spirit to the social obligation of educating the young, a large portion of the constructive ideas presented for general consideration should come from the teachers themselves. The public has the right to expect this, because the teachers come in direct contact with the facts of teaching. Their experience ought to supply the material for ideas that should be no less useful than the ideas yielded by administrative experience.

THE AMERICAN TEACHER is taking the initial steps in this city in bringing to official and to public notice the usable experience of teachers here and elsewhere. If one result of the undertaking is the stimulation of teachers to think more and more of their experience, not the least of the ideals of the editors will have become effective.

THE EDITORS.

TEACHERS' MOVEMENTS ABROAD.

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THERE is no profession, no field of human thought and endeavor, in which the expression of half-baked opinion is more prevalent and at the same time more disastrous than in the field of pedagogy. It is extremely difficult to find any statements of fact, theories, hypotheses, or conclusions, either in the science or art of pedagogy, that have been scientifically established. Instead of scientifically determined conclusions, we find surmises, conjectures and assumptions that are—or are not—confirmed by adroit reasoning. Of late we find a few desultory, ill-considered, inconclusive quasi-pedagogical experiments. But that is all.

The absence of logical faculty, the lack of concentrated thought, the want of scientific insight are glaringly apparent throughout our work. The teacher who can satisfactorily defend his method of teaching is very uncommon. What is even worse, he is not expected to do so. If he can quote some psychological, ethical, logical, sociological, anthropological or philosophical authority, who knows even less about teaching than he does, all is well.

Educational autonomy and teachers' independence can come only as the result of incessant fighting for the betterment of our profession. The fact that so many of the progressive teachers are continually abandoning the authority of related sciences for the light and guidance of the new experimental pedagogy is an omen of a brighter future.

What is the result of this new professional movement in Europe?

First, politics, religion, cast and schools of thought no longer hold their former grip on the teaching profession. This alone is a hopeful symptom pointing to a favorable prognosis. To doubt is to think; to think is to investigate; to investigate is to look for truth; truth makes men free.

Second, the profession is beginning to progress on the basis of scientific evolution. Pedagogic studies are made by trained experimentalists and trained teachers in experimental schools, school clinics, free schools, out-door schools, etc., etc. All of this will eventually build up an independent science of pedagogy.

Third, a new conception of teachers' training, social and economic status, and professional organization is at hand. This is the most fundamental prerequisite for professional

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advancement. In this respect the teachers in Europe are far ahead of us. All teachers' organizations are federated into one large representative union, which includes about 500,000 members. This is called "Bureau International des Fédérations d'Instituteur." Some of the associations that are affiliated with the central federation are:

National Union of Teachers (England)	68,000 members
Fédération des Amicales (France)	65,000 "
Deutscher Lehrerverein (Germany)	120,000 "
Deutsch-österreichischer Lehrerverein (Austria)	20,000 "
Fédération générale des instituteurs (Belgium)	7,000 "
Schweizerischer Lehrerverein (Switzerland)	7,000 "
Zemsky Ustredni Spolek (Bohemia)	8,000 "
Danmarks Løerforening (Denmark)	8,000 "
Nederlandsch Onderwijzers (Holland)	9,000 "
Bond van Nederlandsche Onderwijzers (Holland)	8,000 "
Vereeniging van Hoofden van Scholen (Holland)	2,000 "
Sverges Løerforening (Sweden)	12,000 "
Norges Løerforening (Norway)	10,000 "
Asociación Nacional (Spain)	15,000 "
Sindicato dos Professores Primarios (Portugal)	4,000 "
Union des Instituteurs (Bulgaria)	4,000 "

—as well as the new teachers' associations of Hungary, Italy, Croatia, Finland, Servia, Montenegro, Greece, etc.

The aim of the Bureau International is to propagate advancement in education and teaching as well as to improve the material and social conditions of the teachers. The members are bound by the new professional spirit and mutual friendship and solidarity.

Some of the means of reaching these aims are: 1. Yearly meetings of delegates. 2. Organization of international congresses every fifth year. 3. Publication of material dealing with school and teachers' organizations. 4. Publication of a year book. 5. Exchange of publications from various federations. 6. Organization of international excursions.

The President of the Bureau is chosen yearly. Each association pays 40 francs and 2 francs additional for every thousand members yearly. Discussion is allowed in all languages, with the exception that resolutions, etc., must be written either in French, German or English. The next general congress will be held in Amsterdam, August, 1912.

In Belgium there is an international monthly magazine, called "North and South," which treats of new movements in modern education in general, and at the same time devotes a good deal of space to political, economic and religious movements affecting teachers and teaching.

Recently the editors of various pedagogical periodicals united into a federation with headquarters at Breslau, Germany. The aim of this new organization is to fight openly for the improvement of schools and of the teaching profession.

These are a few of the results of the professional struggle of thinking European teach-

ers. In addition they have succeeded in establishing their own sanatoria, summer colonies, teachers' libraries, teachers' homes, laboratories, etc., etc. These will be treated in later articles.

All of this shows a strong tendency to disregard the old pedagogy of books and authority in favor of professional and scientific pedagogical experimentation. The teachers of Europe are awake to the situation and are trying to make the best of it.

EFFICIENCY IN EDUCATION.

BENJAMIN C. GRUENBERG.

AT THE DECEMBER meeting of the High School Teachers' Association of New York City, Mr. Harrington Emerson, the well-known efficiency expert, spoke on the general principles of efficient management. He believes these general principles to be of universal application to all kinds of processes, including the management of personal and domestic affairs. Because no extensive application of these principles to the educational problems of a large public school system has as yet been attempted, it may be worth while to present to teachers a brief statement of what the principles are, and to point out the lines along which they may be applied.

Mr. Emerson began by telling what efficiency is *not*. It is not the same as *strenuousness*; that is the attaining of a slightly greater result with the expenditure of a much greater effort. *Strenuousness* he would probably identify with excessive exertion beyond the point of diminishing returns. In place of Mr. Emerson's examples we may take illustrations from school work. A teacher who stays long hours after school, gets insufficient rest and perhaps no recreation, throwing all her energy into the work with deep earnestness, is leading a strenuous life; she may be also efficient, but if she is in spite of her strenuousness, not because of it.

Another thing that is not synonymous with efficiency is *system*. Orderliness is essential to efficiency, but system must be subordinated to the purpose in hand. Too much red tape interferes with efficiency. In the school systems this may show itself in various ways. If a requisition is made out on a pink blank instead of a yellow one, it may delay the delivery of supplies long enough to interfere with the proper operation of the plant. If there is a general rule, for example, that teachers may be excused to visit other schools only on Mondays, the strict observance of the rule will simplify the keeping of records for some clerk in the auditor's department, but it will also frequently defeat the very purpose of the by-law which permits teachers to absent themselves from school in order to visit other schools. Your absence on Monday may cause the greatest inconvenience in your particular school; the program of Wednesday may be

the most instructive for you, in the school that you wish to visit.

A third thing that is not efficiency is *material*. That is, efficiency does not confine itself to terms that have a material limitation, it sees in the industrial processes more than land, labor and capital—it is concerned with ideas and ideals and imagination. The philosophy of efficiency seeks to accomplish maximum results with least waste, through the application of intensive thinking. Teaching that depends upon strenuousness, system and material equipment cannot be efficient. It may be that for certain ends special equipment is necessary, but the strenuous, systematic energizing of the equipment is not sufficient; there must be ideals and hard thinking as well. Thus no teacher may be considered efficient who mechanically follows the instructions of the syllabus or the directions for executing a scientific demonstration, no matter how systematic and how strenuous she may be.

There are four essentials to every efficient plant:

1. The aims or ideals must be definite and clear, but not strenuously systematic or materialistic. From the great variety of criticism directed against school work of the present day, the teacher is often inclined to conclude that the critics do not know what they are talking about; one critic commends what another condemns. The difficulty may really be that the teachers and the supervisors are all strenuously and systematically working at cross-purposes. Many are actuated by traditional ideals of imparting culture; some have in mind the training of pupils through the formal processes of the school "discipline"; others think they are preparing pupils to become better wage-earners and loyal servants of employers; a certain number are intent upon making "good citizens" and preventing the outcropping of natural depravity, and perhaps there are teachers who have no ideal beyond being approved as satisfactory and getting an increase of salary. At any rate, there can be no doubt about the failure of our school systems in this regard: The aims or purposes of the school plant are not definite and they are not clearly formulated for the guidance of the workers.

2. The organization must be adequate. The rapid development of our industries and institutions during the past fifty or sixty years has left many an organization completely swamped by the demands made upon it. School organizations, among others, have not been flexible enough to readjust themselves to the new demands made upon them. Leaders of educational thought have realized the necessity for introducing types of work in which the older teachers knew of nothing. The systems have grown, and the organization either by adding new functions or departments already overworked, or by adding new departments without correlating them closely with what had gone before. The crying need for school action in the matter of luncheons

and in the matter of health inspection has been met not by rearranging the functions of different departments to make room for a new department; it has either been ignored or it has been arbitrarily assigned to members of the school system not especially prepared for the new activities, or new officials have been placed in charge of the work who are not in sympathetic relations with the rest of the system. In the past our organization has grown in the same haphazard manner and efficiency has suffered. The organization must be one specially calculated to maintain and to further the ideals of the system.

3. The equipment must be such as will enable the organization to attain and to maintain its ideals. Except in communities where the growth of population has been very rapid, the equipment of our school systems has been on the whole fairly adequate. Where we try to teach "manual training"—according to the syllabus—without workshops and tools, or where we try to teach sewing and science without anything but books and stationery, the equipment is obviously lacking, and the deficiency should be made good as soon as possible. It is necessary to inquire whether the ventilation and the lighting, the desks and the hallways, the text books and the ink bottle are the best that may be obtained, or the most effective in each particular case.

4. The supreme need is for a strong and able executive to carry out the ideals of the system by means of the organization and the equipment. Many cities in this country have at the head of the school system strong and able executives. In many of these the schools are nevertheless inefficient, because of the weakness at one or more of the other points. That is, there may be a magnificent plant, a splendid organization of enthusiastic workers, but a haziness or diffusion of purpose; there may be a strong and able superintendent at the head of a fine organization imbued with a common ideal, but not supported adequately by the "taxpayer." Or the failing may be in the character of the teachers.

The four essentials of any plant or system, namely, ideals, organization, equipment and executive, must all be subjected to the test of twelve principles of efficiency. It should be sufficient to enumerate the twelve principles with little or no comment, since the terms are almost self-explanatory. These twelve principles are:

1. *The ideals must be high.* This is, of course, purely relative. The efficiency of your achievement must in any case be measured by your ideals, but low ideals are such as are not in harmony with the more lasting forces at work in nature and in society and must eventually fail of realization no matter how well equipped you may be. Thus a school system that seeks merely to produce efficient workers must eventually disintegrate because a society composed of men who understand no more than their work cannot endure. A teacher whose ideals do not extend beyond keeping

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her work at a minimum and raising her salary to a maximum, to take an extreme case, cannot succeed; she has in this purpose insurmountable obstacles to overcome. On the other hand, a school system, a single school, or a class-room that is actuated by high ideals has the co-operation of numberless agencies that must sooner or later come to its assistance, and it is working in harmony with the general trend of events. This is but another way of saying that wisdom is but a higher form of prudence, yet those who are actuated by prudence rather than by the high ideals will fall short when it comes to the test.

2. *Common sense or good judgment must be observed.* This hardly calls for comment. No matter how high the ideals, how good the will, how accurate the instrument, judgment is essential to every process.

3. *Competent counsel must be obtained.* This is a corollary and extension of the preceding. As our life becomes more complex it becomes increasingly difficult, and eventually impossible for any individuality to command sufficient knowledge of the problems involved in any undertaking to judge adequately of all the factors in the processes that call for judgment. It is therefore incumbent upon those who are seeking to achieve efficiently any high end, to make use of the points of view and experience and training of others. In a school system, every large undertaking should first be well considered not only by those who have the immediate responsibility for execution; they should make use also of the counsel of any and all who are competent to furnish valuable judgment. Too frequently those in charge of the administration of schools, or of school systems, make the mistake of ignoring entirely the counsel of the persons who have, perhaps, the most valuable experience on certain problems, namely, the class-room teachers. On the other hand, many a teacher could receive valuable help in the solution of her special problems if she consulted older teachers, or principals or superintendents; here we make the mistake of not encouraging the teacher to make use of this counsel. Superintendents take counsel of one another, and so do principals, and so do many teachers; we have an elaborate hierarchy in which the individuals have intercourse only with those of their own rank. We do not sufficiently utilize the resources of the adjacent layers.

4. *There must be discipline and order.* That is, there must be the larger discipline which means the welfare of society, not the narrow discipline, which is concerned merely with punishments and regulations.

5. *The system must be compatible with the fair deal.* This principle might preclude ends and means that would involve the exploitation of some individuals for the benefit of others, or it would preclude operations that were subversive of democratic ideals.

6. *Records must be immediate, reliable and accurate.* Most teachers are in general well

aware of the importance of records. There are, however, many principals and superintendents who do not know the relative value of records, or who do not make provision for adequate records. The making of records involves work which is for the most part clerical; where this work devolves upon teachers and principals who feel that they are already overburdened, this part of the machinery is likely to be weak.

7. *There must be planning.* That is, the work should be conscious. In most schools teachers are required to keep "plan-books," but very few principals or superintendents could show on short notice what their plans are for the immediate future. It is not sufficient to have a program and a syllabus; the details must be arranged for the purposes of economizing time and energy, and for insuring results—in other words, for efficiency.

8. *There must be schedules.* Our work must be open, subject to inspection, so that one may compare what we are doing with what we claim we are trying to do. A principal should be able to find out what supplies he may count on for the next year's work. It should not be necessary for a person in line for promotion to "see" a commissioner or an alderman. Now this openness and certainty of operation in a system can be obtained only if the operations and processes are duly charted where all who are concerned may read and know. In some cities this principle is carried much farther than it is in others, and there is a corresponding difference in the efficiency of the work, in the satisfaction of the teaching force, and in its confidence in and respect for the administrative force.

9. *There must be standardized conditions.* This implies a definition of the lowest conditions of work that may be tolerated. It also means that where conditions are not uniform, as of necessity they cannot be in any large school system, there should be a carefully calculated method of weighting the different variable factors in making estimates of results. For example, it is not fair to rate teachers on the basis of percentage of pupils promoted, if attention is not at the same time given to the fact that the ventilation in some schools is atrocious, while in others there is none at all; some teachers have to deal with pupils to whom English is a foreign language, while others have pupils from homes in which the art of expression is naturally cultivated by the daily routine. Some teachers have full-blooded joyous children to teach; others have miserable, underfed anemics who spend all of their "free" time assisting in the family income, etc. Not only are these heterogeneous conditions unfair to the teacher; they are cruelly unfair to the pupils, but above all, their neglect serves to defeat the very purposes of education in a democracy.

(To be continued)

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THE AMERICAN TEACHER AND DEMOCRACY.

THE NAME AMERICA has stood for nearly a hundred and forty years as the symbol of Democracy. To be sure, it has also stood for raw culture, for the spirit of brag, for graft and for dollars. But to millions abroad, as well as to millions here, it has meant Democracy.

THE TEACHER has been the chief instrument for converting the children of darkness and the children of Europe into men and women of the kind needed by a democratic society. The original purpose and still a main purpose of the public school has been to serve our Democracy; and the teacher has been the chief agent, the chief worker.

The American teacher is expected to teach Democracy, but the relations of this teacher to his fellow worker, his relations to those above him and his relations to those below him are not such as naturally cultivate the spirit and the virtues of Democracy. Under the circumstances the American teacher can teach these things only formally. He can teach what Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin and Patrick Henry said; he can teach phrases from Washington and Lincoln; he can teach whole passages from the Declaration of Independence and from the Federal Constitution. He can teach something about the machinery by which we select our officials and the rule for finding the date of the next election. But under the circumstances he cannot impart the spirit and the virtues of Democracy.

On the contrary. In the midst of an elaborate machinery devised for the avowed purpose of securing to each person the opportunities of personality; in spite of a formulary that affirms the fundamental worth of individuality; within the sound of the endless iteration of our freedom and equality, the

teacher and the pupil, the principal and the superintendent find themselves enmeshed in a system that restricts initiative, stratifies intercourse, suppresses individuality, frowns upon originality, cultivates servility and penalizes sincerity.

Yet no one is to blame for this. These conditions are the natural fruit of a policy that for four generations has made a fetish of the doctrine that what is everybody's business is nobody's business. And education is pre-eminently everybody's business. The concrete causes have been many and their interactions have been complex. There have been at work political factors, social factors, economic factors as well as educational and philosophical and scientific. But here we are. This is the situation. What is the way out?

Society depends upon its educators to lead the way, but our teachers have not been leaders. They have been readers, rather, followers, loyal, devoted, self-sacrificing; bearers of messages, but not givers of directions; conscientious for the most part, but not conscious. When the teachers of this country become conscious of the glaring discrepancy between the actual status of their profession and the ideal conditions essential for democratic living and social progress, we may expect the educators to lead the way.

To bring together those who feel the need for this educational rebirth, and to arouse those engaged in education who are still asleep are among the purposes of this magazine. Are you with us?

CRITICISM.

IN OUR EDUCATIONAL systems the necessity for criticism is constant, and its exercise constantly gives rise to heart-burnings and bitter resentment. It must be admitted that very many teachers, in criticising their pupils, do not take the trouble to find out about the cause of tardiness, or the greasy note book, or the unprepared lesson. Imagine yourself selling a Frenchman ten yards of cloth, which you measure off conscientiously, and then your mortification and resentment when he scuriously announces that you are a cheat, since you gave him only nine and a half. There is much ill-feeling and heart-breaking and recrimination; in the end it appears that he used his old meter-stick to measure his purchase. It is all a matter of standards. It should be worth while for human beings who have many dealings together to agree upon a set of standards; then our judgments about one another may have value.

It was Matthew Arnold, I believe, who defined criticism as "a disinterested endeavor to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world." This is not in exact accord with the prevailing notion that attaches to the word "criticism." As used vulgarly to-day, criticism is of two kinds, namely, "muck-raking" and "constructive." And muck-raking criticism is deprecated by

many good people because they proceed upon the theory that ignorance is bliss; they say, "Let sleeping dogs lie," and think thereby to have argued away all reasonable excuse for "destructive" criticism. On the other hand, these same people mean by "constructive criticism" the utterance of all the favorable judgments that a smooth tongue and a ductile conscience can concoct.

It was Benjamin Disraeli who said that "the critics are the men who have failed in literature and art." By which he merely gave vent to his feelings, incidentally lending the weight of his authority to the foolish superstition that the critic is a fault-finder, and that he is a fault-finder because he is a failure. This is on a par with the logic that would discredit the peace-advocate by calling him a "molly-coddle." The critic does indeed frequently find fault, and much fault there is to find on every side, but that is only a part of the process of appraisement. It is the critic's business also to discover and point out merit, and of that too there is much on every side. That he finds more to deplore than to applaud may be due to his disposition or to his liver, but it may also be due to the fact that we have not reached perfection as yet. At any rate, there are those who undertake to formulate just judgments about contemporary thought and institutions and conduct and men. The value of criticism is in proportion to its justness, and not in proportion to its "destructiveness" or "constructiveness." It is a mark of undeveloped intelligence to reply to the critic, "Could you do any better?" If we do not agree with him the best we can say is, "You don't understand."

For the essence of criticism is understanding. It is for this reason that the first principle of criticism is to judge from the point of view of the person criticised, and not from some personal or arbitrary extraneous point of view. If I say that I do not like your latest novel, I am not criticising it; I am simply classifying my own taste. If I do not take into consideration the novelist's purpose, my observations can never pass beyond the stage of description, they can never be criticism. It is for this reason that much of the complaint and much of the muck-raking of to-day fall short of being useful criticism. The would-be critics fail to adopt the point of view of the persons or the institutions they attempt to judge. And it must be said, in defense of the critic, that one of the weak spots in our modern thought and in our contemporary systems and institutions and leaders is the very vagueness and indefiniteness of their aims. I cannot tell how well you are succeeding if I do not know what you are trying to accomplish. One visitor says that your discipline is too strict, but he does not ask whether your ideas of discipline are military; another says that he observed a good language lesson, not knowing that you were at the time trying to teach elementary science.

Criticism is essential to progress, and is never feared by an honest man. THE AMERICAN TEACHER will try to criticise according to the ostensible aims of those it criticises, but it will also criticise aims according to society's major purposes.

A CONFUSION OF IDEALS.

DR. JAMES SULLIVAN, Principal of the Boys' High School of Brooklyn, recently made an impromptu address before the pupils of the Jamaica High School.

He said that only millionaires and tramps can do what they like. Few of us can be millionaires, and none of us wish to be tramps. We must therefore be content in doing what we don't like. In fact, the speaker said, it is the common lot of us all between the extremes of economic standing mentioned, to be constantly doing with the best grace possible whatever work we may have to do. Dr. Sullivan believes that only those people of the middle class are really content who have reached the age of about sixty-five; and then they seem satisfied merely as the result of the habit of trying to appear so.

The temptation is strong within us to point out a few of the fundamental errors in this philosophy. For the time being we shall content ourselves with the reflection that in spite of what Dr. Sullivan implied, he is a young man, cheerful, interested in his pupils' success, and is telling the truth when he conveys the impression that he stands for good citizenship and sound scholarship. Either he likes these ideals or he does not. He does, of course.

NEWSPAPER REPUTATIONS.

"To establish rational work standards for men requires indeed motion and time studies of all operations, but it requires in addition all the skill of the planning manager, all the skill of the physician, of the humanitarian, of the physiologist; it requires infinite knowledge, directed, guided and restrained by hope, faith and compassion. The promise partly fulfilled and clearly held out as to the future is that greater and greater results shall follow constantly diminishing effort."

HARRINGTON EMERSON,
in *The Engineering Magazine*.

THE ABOVE was written by a man who has gained a newspaper reputation as an efficiency expert. To the average "man-in-the-street" he has been pictured as a hard, calculating materialist who has placed himself at the service of employers seeking to grind out profits from the overworked and undernourished servants. The fact that Mr. Emerson is an idealist of the highest kind, that his aims are concerned with increasing human happiness rather than with increasing dividends may come to many, as it came to the writer, as a happy disillusionment. This may only indicate, however, how incompetent is the American press, on the whole, to deal with ideals and idealists.

TEACHING SOCIAL SCIENCE
THROUGH NEWSPAPERS.

MARK HOFFMAN.

PUPILS ARE GRADUATED from our schools to-day with no sense of the social unrest. Such problems practically do not exist for them. The history that they have memorized gives them no glimpse of society in its throes of improvement and progress. Their minds are wholly taken up with petty and personal things. We send them out "finished" and they believe that they have no other work in this world than to pounce upon their fellow human beings and get a bigger share of the world's goods.

Should our pupils be given some insight into the workings of the social organism? Does the study of the subject occupy men's minds to-day? If it does, and we believe that men to-day are more intensely interested in this than in any other subject, then it should find some place in our curriculum. What nobler ideal can we instill into the boy and girl than to make them believe that their task has just "commenced" and that they are to go out into the world and help make it better? Our "commencement" preachers tell the boys to have noble ideals, but they do not tell them what is wrong.

If we are agreed that the subject should find some place in the curriculum (probably under History), then a most vital question presents itself to us. How is the subject to be approached and studied? In what way could it be made to appeal to the young mind? The most effective way of killing interest in this subject would be to hand a boy a text book (even a so-called elementary text book), to set him daily tasks and to examine him at the end of the term. This would be the traditional method of approaching a new subject and it would be a failure at its very inception. We believe that the subject should be begun in the most natural, matter-of-fact way; not through a text book with predigested theories of social reform, but through the columns of our daily newspapers—the reputable ones to be preferred. News about Trust Busting, The Indianapolis Mayor Selling Potatoes at Cost Price, Hunger Riots in France, Strikes and Dynamite Outrages, Commission Form of Government would make a boy think harder than all the bookish theories. Many boys know much about these matters to-day; nearly all our pupils know about the minor and transient events of the times. Can we get all of them interested in those events which mean ultimate social reconstruction or betterment? We believe that this can be done even with the same newspaper in which the boy reads the sporting news and the tales of horrible crime.

In this work the teacher must beware of committing himself to any propaganda. The pupil's mind must be open and the thought must be made to go as far as it will. In an

experiment of this sort, tried in one of our high schools, the most disagreeable feature of the work was the necessity for repressing those callow youths already committed to some social philosophy which they did not understand and which they had taken on hearsay or on a few specious arguments. The primary object of this work should be to arouse the young mind to thinking on these subjects, and not to paste on them social labels of any kind.

We believe that only the most sympathetic teachers and those who know best the adolescent mind can properly conduct work of this kind. It would be a failure in the hands of the teacher who has no social outlook, sympathies or ideals, and with such a teacher it would degenerate into mere news gossip. Pupils could never be made to see the general in the particular, if the teacher had no social perspective. With a sympathetic study of this kind, the news of the day would mean more to the future citizen than a mere string of disparate facts. He would be made to study causes and he would not be thrown off his mental balance and unhinged by this commonplace atrocity or that vulgar crime. The future citizen would learn to discern the stream of tendency and he could be of real help in the improvement of society. With thoughtful men and women, society might learn to solve all its problems.

A NEW PROPHET.

ADELE MILN LINVILLE.

IN McCLURE'S MAGAZINE for May and for December, 1911, appear two valuable articles on the career and the methods of a new worker in the kindergarten.

Not only has Madam Montessori started the revolution of the educational system of Italy, but her theories and methods are being discussed by educators in every civilized country. Already Switzerland has passed a law establishing the Montessori system in its public schools. Paris has two Montessori model schools. Similar schools are to be started this year in England, India, China, Mexico, Corea, Argentine and in Hawaii. In the United States we have Montessori schools in New York and in Boston. These remarkable inroads into old school systems have been made, notwithstanding the fact that it is but four years since Madam Montessori started her first kindergarten school in Rome, and began to demonstrate the value of her educational theories.

In 1898 Madam Montessori was director in a school for feeble-minded children in Rome. The work she did there was indeed remarkable, for her children were able to pass examinations that normal children of the same age were required to pass in the regular schools. She says:

"While everyone was admiring the progress of my idiots I was meditating on the reasons that could keep the happy and healthy children on so low a level that my unhappy pupils were able to stand beside them. It was that the boys from the asylum had followed a different path from that pursued in the public schools. They had been aided in their psychic development, while the normal children had been hampered and depressed. I thought that if one day the special education which had thus marvelously developed the idiots could be applied to the development of the normal children, the miracle would vanish and the gulf between the inferior and the normal mentality would reappear, never again to be bridged."

In 1906 the opportunity came for Madam Montessori to try her methods on normal children. She was given entire charge of some infant schools to be started in Rome. These schools were called *Casa dei Bambini*, or "Houses of Childhood." They were established for children under seven years of age. So successful has this great teacher been with very young children that there is now under way a movement in Rome to establish under her supervision schools in which the children will be taught in the kindergarten grade as well as in the higher grades though the adolescent period.

The first thought of Madam Montessori in founding a school is to see that the school environment shall be one that will permit the child to be unrestrained. Self-activity is the keynote of all her work. She insists that the child shall be free to express his own individuality, and yet so trained as to be able to carry himself with ease and grace through his material surroundings. He is trained to respect the rights of others, and to conform to the laws of good breeding. The teacher feels that the environment of her school and the manner of approaching the children accomplish this end. Her children have remarkable grace of carriage. They are trained to know how to use their bodies as well as their minds.

The furniture of the school is made light so as to be easily carried about, thus giving the child plenty of opportunity to learn how to carry things from place to place, as well as to be self-dependent. All the furniture has been made especially for Madam Montessori, and has been thought out adaptively to meet the needs of the children at every point.

Madam Montessori has arranged for the care of many animals in her schools, thus enabling the children to care for and to study them. When it is not convenient to have certain animals as inmates of the institution, toy reproductions are installed there instead.

Not only has Madam Montessori placed in her schools the kinds of toys known to the craft, but she has added many of her own invention. Arrangements are now being made to have her teaching materials put on sale in New York, with books of instruction explaining their uses.

An account of Madam Montessori's educational methods will be given in some detail in the next number of *THE AMERICAN TEACHER*.

[The Federation for Child Study has arranged for a course of three lectures on the methods of Madam Montessori, by Miss Grace George, who studied with the great teacher in Rome. The lectures will be given in the afternoons of three Wednesdays in March, the 7th, 14th and 21st. Further particulars may be obtained from the Secretary of the Federation, Mrs. Thomas Seltzer, 219 West 100th Street, New York.]

"There are, it is true, insolent schoolmasters, Mr. School Commissioner, and there are submissive schoolmasters; of both more than enough; I am striving to increase, by one, the number of self-respecting schoolmasters."—*Flachsman als Erzieher, Otto Ernst*. Translated by H. M. Beatty.

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