

# The American Teacher

*Democracy in Education; Education for Democracy.*

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## TEACHERS AS SOCIAL AGENTS

**I**T IS NOT merely your extensive knowledge or your modern methods that make for efficiency in education. It is your purpose that counts.

Are you performing an indifferent or an unpleasant daily task for financial reasons? Or are you consciously helping society to improve the character of its future citizens?

Do you say that if you were paid better, and if conditions were more nearly ideal, you could do better work? Cease fondling that vain delusion!

If your heart and soul were in the constructive work of education, in the effort to uplift the human race, you would do your best, despite all these limitations and obstructions.

This does not mean that you are to lie supine and make no effort to redress grievances or eradicate evils. You are to be militant, but you are not to vent your dissatisfaction on the boys and girls. You are not to betray the trust of the public by indifference or aversion to your sacred office.

Do not let your really noble work of teaching be hindered by concern about low salaries, autocratic government or rigid courses of study. If you have faith in progress and faith in your own purpose, be sure that progress will overtake educational affairs, be sure that your work will make for progress.

# CIVIC BIOLOGY

C. E. A. WINSLOW

College of the City of New York

THE PRIMARY REASON why Biology is of supreme importance is that the life of every individual is one long biological experiment. Huxley's famous parable of the chess player in his essay on "A Liberal Education and Where to Find It,"\* emphasizes the importance of learning the rules of the game of life, in one of the most stirring prose passages in the English language. The happiness and the success and the usefulness of every man depends first and foremost on the management of the complex living machine, which is in his charge, on the application of the laws of hygiene so as to secure proper food, air, exercise, and rest, and on the avoidance of the conditions which favor the spread of microbic disease.

Behind this personal and individual biology there is opening up more and more clearly the field of Civic Biology which deals with man in his social relations under the conditions of modern city life, so difficult at present but so full of promise for the future. In primitive communities the family is a more or less self-sufficient unit. Each farm has its own well, its own cow, its own vegetable patch, its own chicken yard. The million families concentrated in the neighborhood of Manhattan Island have the same primary needs. For each of them there must be a cow and a chicken yard and a vegetable patch and a source of water supply. The million farms which serve them are scattered over many states, however, and the task of bringing all these products to their doors, reasonably fresh and pure and cheap, requires efficient administration and expert knowledge of the highest order.

The story of yellow fever is only one dramatic example of what is going on year by year in every city, as science advances and applies its conclusions to human needs. Seven hundred and fifty

deaths a year on the average had been the toll of this dreadful disease in the city of Havana when the American Army of occupation went there in 1898, and without knowledge as to how the malady was spread no appreciable progress could be made in its control. In 1901, Reed, Carroll and Agramonte, three American Army Surgeons, whose names will go down in history as among the great benefactors of the human race, discovered that yellow fever was spread by the bite of a certain mosquito. At once yellow fever was preventable, by a simple destruction of the breeding places of the dangerous mosquitoes. In the rest of 1901, there were six more deaths from yellow fever in Havana, and since that time there has not been one, except a few imported cases which developed in the neighborhood of the wharves. The scourge of centuries was wiped out in a single year. The construction of the Panama Canal was made possible, and the whole world of the Tropics was opened to development.

This story of the application of science to the safe-conduct of human life is more picturesque, but no more important, than the regular routine of the Health Department of a large city. The results attained by the organized efficiency of the New York Health Department in its campaign against infant mortality last summer is one of many cases in point. As Dr. Osler says, in his preface to the new edition of Pasteur's life, "The future belongs to Science. More and more she will control the destinies of the nations. Already she has them in her crucible and on her balances."

The spirit of patriotic citizenship is not sufficient to meet the problems of to-day, without the methods of technical science. The city needs not merely devotion to the common good, but the highest expert service and the widest co-operative intelligence. New York must have trained lawyers and financiers and administrators, trained teachers, trained engineers to

\* In Volume III of the *Collected Essays*.

build docks and bridges, to plan transportation, to bring pure water and dispose of wastes, trained physicians in the hospitals, trained public health experts, medical, biological, chemical, trained sociologists to administer the difficult tasks of relief and correction. The highest branches of its educational system should prepare the men needed for these pressing tasks and offer an open gateway from the High Schools to the service of the city. The College of the City of New York is striving in many lines to meet this need for men and the day may come when the Normal College shall broaden its field to include the technical training of women for public service in other lines than that of education. Behind all

this special preparation of the city's experts must lie, however, a diffused knowledge of the scientific laws of communal life which will ensure the intelligent co-operation of the citizen, man and woman, so as to make the work of the official really effective. There is no more hopeful sign for the future than the splendid way in which the High Schools of New York are addressing themselves to this new and difficult task. What has been so far accomplished is, however, only a beginning; and the teachers of the high schools and of the elementary schools have an inspiring opportunity in the development of Civic Biology into a discipline of central significance in the school curriculum.

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## THE WORK OF AN EFFICIENCY COMMITTEE

EDWARD A. FITZPATRICK

THE EFFICIENCY COMMITTEE of The High School Teachers' Association of New York city was appointed to investigate the efficiency of New York city high schools, and to do whatever might lie in its power to develop that efficiency. Therefore, it will be the business of the committee to describe situations as they really are, and to make constructive suggestions as to remedies. It is the purpose also to make the committee the clearing house for complaints, appreciations, criticisms, remedies, and suggestions that may be helpful in any way. This cannot be done unless, as has been so often insisted upon, the work becomes a vast coöperative enterprise, engaging the earnest, sincere, devoted and persistent efforts of the majority of high school teachers.

The investigations will deal with facts—verifiable facts. The committee has nothing whatever to do with persons, except perhaps to commend their good work when occasion arises. The entire reliance must be placed on the impersonal appeal of the facts themselves.

The questionnaire method of research, so far as it might be used to collect a mass of personal opinion, is tabooed. It is true that this method has great names behind it; that may make it respectable, but not necessarily servicable.

Coöperation from all useful and available sources is to be sought. The help of principals is especially desired. Many of the high school principals of the city have already responded cordially to our invitation to coöperate.

We have plans for undertaking a series of investigations of the studies in the curriculum. The method agreed upon is being tried out with stenography (Edward J. McNamara, Jamaica High School, chairman of sub-committee) and with typewriting (David H. O'Keefe, Jamaica High School, chairman of sub-committee). The efficiency of these subjects is more easily determinable and more definitely measurable than is the case with some other subjects. Certain questions as to investigations of subjects will arise here in their simpler forms. The experience gained from their being

met may be turned to good account in studying the efficiency of subjects exhibiting more complications.

Beside these investigations of the course of study other problems are being taken up, namely, Superior Teaching, Organization, Supervision, Forms and Records, Program, Admission to High School, Assignment of Teachers, and what the High School Teachers' Association can do in coördinating the coöperative agencies.

An interesting phase of our method

will be tried out in connection with the problem of the assignment of teachers. A study of the plan of assigning teachers and the way it is carried out in one of the high schools will be examined. The result of the inquiry will be submitted to teachers in all the high schools of the city. We hope to get from the teachers expressions of their judgment on any inequalities they may observe and the remedies for them. Then a more complete investigation of this particular problem will be made.

### PROGRESSIVE PROGRAM FOR MINNEAPOLIS SCHOOLS

A COMMITTEE of twenty principals was appointed by the city superintendent of schools of Minneapolis over a year ago, to study the local situation with reference to the course of study in the schools. This committee, under the chairmanship of Albert Gullette of the Prescott School, has just reported its findings and recommendations.

The first radical change recommended is a deep cut into the arithmetic. Not only is the arithmetic to be simplified and reduced, but it is to be presented in terms that have some relation to daily life. After mastery of the fundamental processes thru drill, which is to be largely oral, and which should be continued until the pupil recognizes the sum or the difference of any combination at sight, the exercises for power should deal largely with concrete numbers. "The arithmetical operations of every day are very simple, but success in them requires that they be performed with accuracy and with rapidity."

The language work should be planned to correlate grammar, reading and spelling. The aims of the work are stated to

be to cultivate the child's language that he may acquire habits of talking clearly, distinctly and well; also of writing correctly and effectively." A special point is made of fixing habits of using correct speech forms, and the cultivation of a "literary sense" is recommended, thru the use of selected readings. Simplification of the grammar work is urged, and the use of dramatizations and games in the lower grades is urged. The committee is not prepared to recommend a course in language work and asks that the study of this subject be continued for another year.

The importance of oral English as against written work is strongly emphasized; most people have little use for writing except for an occasional letter, whereas all have to speak in social and vocational relations. Since the schedule time that may be allowed for oral language work is very short, correct speech and correct use of voice should be insisted upon at every opportunity that the school offers, in recitations and in other relations between teachers and pupils. The recitations in all the subjects should afford opportunity for training in correct speech, correct use of the voice and in clear thinking.

Geography should begin at home, and

a study of the home city should include a knowledge of the local industries and a correlation between their location and the physical features of the region. Formal geography should begin in the fourth grade; before this Robinson Crusoe should be read and used as a basis for constructive work. In the later study the work should be so thoro that it need not be repeated later. Among other aims the committee lays stress upon these: To cultivate the imagination; to encourage independence and self-confidence; to make the children feel the interdependence of the members of the human race. This is an opportunity for social education that is only too frequently neglected by teachers.

Aside from its examination of the course of study, the committee went thoroly into the larger problems of organization and administration. Thus, the position of the defective child in the classroom with normal children is shown to be a hardship to the individual and an injustice to the rest of the class, and segregation is recommended in a radical manner. In the same way the segregation of chronic truants and incorrigibles is planned, with a centrally located parental school. Changes in administration recommended include the appointment of district superintendents to supervise all work, including high schools; a clearer definition of the functions of principals; a truant officer, or rather an attendance officer, prepared to furnish vocational guidance, for each of the high school districts.

In the organization of the individual schools, the number of children to each teacher is to be reduced to thirty-five; promotions are to be made quarterly; admissions of new pupils to be allowed only during the first two weeks of each term.

There is great need for improved styles of buildings and the committee recommends that the best available talent be employed to this end. Among the specific features called for are plans that allow for extension when needed; abundant lavatories and cupboards; room for all special school activities; the employ-

ment of competent engineers and matrons.

Higher schedules of salaries, and arrangement for better service from substitutes are also included in the report. One feature of the salary schedule is especially interesting. This provides for leave of absence on half pay for the purpose of study or investigation of a kind that is likely to contribute to the improvement of the service. The teachers to be granted leave are to be selected by the superintendent and the board of education; and it is recommended that the leave be made conditional upon an agreement to teach in the system at least one year after returning. Increase of salary is to depend upon demonstrated efficiency.

Provision is made for the introduction and extension of industrial training along various lines. The importance of differentiated school work is evidently appreciated. Better correlation between the high schools and the elementary schools is also needed; the high school should provide courses to meet existing conditions. Presumably the existing conditions in Minneapolis are pretty much the same as we find them in other parts of the country: the vast majority of pupils leaving school before the "elementary" course is completed; most of the pupils who enter high school never getting beyond the first year; and most of those who stay getting nothing directly related to the lives they will have to live after they get out.

Whether or not most of the recommendations of this committee are adopted — or even if none are adopted — the appointment of such a committee is an important matter for the development of the public schools of this country. It shows that there is a growing disposition to look to those who do the work for light upon the problems of a system. Those who believe that all wisdom must come from above would do well to study this report. The next step is to see how much light the class-room teachers are capable of throwing upon the common problem.

## MORE ON SUPERIOR PRINCIPALS

IN THE MARCH number, *THE AMERICAN TEACHER* published a list of questions dealing with the matter of "superiority" in principals. It was imagined that these questions could be answered by teachers in some future ideal system of schools, and would provide a natural and an organized method by which teachers could estimate the work of their principals.

*THE AMERICAN TEACHER* stands for the right of teachers to analyze and to discuss seriously any part of the machinery of organization that directs the work teachers are doing for the children and for society. With the hope of enlisting the interest of principals in the question of determining what might reasonably be expected of principals, the editors directed inquiries first to the principals of the high schools and the teachers' training schools of New York City.

The following letter was sent to them:

*Editor, THE AMERICAN TEACHER:*

There should prevail the most democratic conditions found to be feasible in so complex an organization as a public school of a great city. Were teachers passing on their principals to be relied on for the exercise of balanced judgment, great good might arise from the operation of some such plan as the one suggested in *THE AMERICAN TEACHER*. That sound judgment might be formed it would first be necessary for the principal to show his staff in detail the various duties laid upon him by his superior officers, and the ideals he (she) had conceived for furthering the interests of the school. The remodeling and strengthening of these ideals in terms of general faculty sentiment would depend largely on the cheerful willingness of teachers to spend many hours in committee and faculty meetings and to accept with equal cheerfulness the decision made by the majority of their fellows.

As hints to principals the questions are a valuable jog.

THEODORE C. MITCHILL.  
Jamaica High School, Jamaica.

Dear Sir:

*THE AMERICAN TEACHER*, an educational periodical published by New York city teachers, will appreciate an opinion from you on one of its recent articles, entitled "Superior Principals." This article appears in the March number on page 32.

These are times in which a great many new ideas in education are coming to the front. Does it seem to you that the future may bring about, or should bring about, anything like the official and personal relations pictured or implied in the article?

We are sending this inquiry to many principals of the city. Replies of 100 to 200 words, or more if you desire, sent in by March 30 would be very much to our liking. Besides, it would be evidence, if any more is needed, that teachers and principals are working together with a common purpose—that of making the schools more efficient and more effective.

Below are given the replies that have been received, in the order of their arrival:

*Editor, THE AMERICAN TEACHER:*

Those teachers who always perform their duties conscientiously and intelligently and who comprehend the fact that they are a part of the whole in their schools, will report their principals as of superior merit. A teacher who does not wish to take his place as a part of the school unit but wishes to be the whole unit himself to the detriment of the harmony of the school, and those teachers who, because of laziness or lack of energy fail to properly perform their duties, will be very likely to lay the blame for the deficiency upon the principal.

Therefore, teachers who report their principals of superior merit will, as a rule, be the teachers who are themselves of superior merit, and those who take the opposite view of the principal will largely compose the class who themselves lack the qualities of energy, harmony and teaching ability.

P. E. DEMAREST.  
Bryant High School, Long Island City.

Editor, THE AMERICAN TEACHER:

I have read with considerable interest your proposition in THE AMERICAN TEACHER for the rating of principals as superior or otherwise. I must say that in its items there is material for sober thought on the part of the principals. The inevitable tendency of a system organized as autocratically as our schools are at present, is to tempt the man in authority to be overbearing. On the other hand, there are many assumptions in the questionnaire which presuppose very radical changes in administration. First as regards Question 8; it may be that pure democracy would demand such a state of things but it is at least open to question whether an institution like a great public school can ever be managed on such a basis. On the whole I regard your scheme, proposed of course half in jest, as containing many valuable suggestions for those of us who are unfortunate enough to be principals. As a *reductio ad absurdum* why not ask, "Does the principal show capacity to follow the instructions given him by the majority vote of the pupils?" Why not that as well as that of the teachers, if you are going to have real democracy?

WM. FAIRLEY,  
Commercial High School.

Editor, THE AMERICAN TEACHER:

It happened that I read the list of questions designed to give basis for judgment of superiority in principals published in THE AMERICAN TEACHER be-

fore reading your note; perhaps I may therefore be excused for having supposed that they were meant to be facetious.

Your request for comments, however, shows me that I was mistaken and that you wish to be taken seriously. That being the case I am compelled to be frank and say that so far as I know no sillier proposition was ever printed, even in relation to school matters, and that is saying a good deal.

I believe that school principals are far from being perfect and that they should be held rigidly to a wise, just and conscientious performance of their whole duty, and some of your questions would not be bad were they to be answered by well-trained impartial inspectors of schools, but the idea that principals should be elected by their assistant teachers (Question 1, b), that any assistant teacher should affirm what his principal's point of view of the function of the school may be if that teacher had not heard it personally expressed (Question 2, b), and the idea that principals should necessarily follow instructions given them by a majority vote of their assistant teachers (Question 8), all seem to me to indicate that in reality it is the aim of THE AMERICAN TEACHER to secure, even at the complete sacrifice of school efficiency, retributive redress for offended or dissatisfied cliques and individuals rather than to seek for better and more efficient leadership in school administration.

JOHN H. DENBIGH,  
Morris High School.

STATE TEACHERS' councils could undoubtedly do much for the cause of education in America. In each state there are many questions pertaining to uniformity of text-books, courses of study, certification of teachers, and the like, in which the teachers, through their representatives, should have an authoritative voice. At present questions of this nature are decided too much by laymen alone. In a democracy, some lay con-

trol of education should no doubt always be maintained; the schools belong to all the people, and the people's interest in the schools should not be sacrificed; but it should be remembered that teachers are also citizens. They certainly have no less interest in the welfare of the schools than others, and their expert knowledge fits them in an unusual way for the general control of the schools.—Prof. W. C. Ruediger, in "Education" for March.

## THE EARLY YEARS

CHARLES A. HAMILTON.

IN BUILDING a house the greatest attention is paid to getting a good foundation. If the foundation is insecure, all the expensive work put upon it is wasted. So in our educational system a solid foundation must be laid in the grade-work.

If pupils have been properly trained in the fundamentals of each subject, they are competent to advance by themselves. This training can be done only by the ablest and most experienced teachers. At present there seems to be a widespread opinion that there is something disagree-

able about grade-work. No one wishes to remain a teacher of the lowest grades as long as there goes with work of that scale the implication of inferiority. No stigma should rest upon the work of the lower grades. It is really the most important work of all, and demands the highest talent and the ripest culture.

If public opinion and the salary scale force all our best grade teachers upward into the high school, our system will be like an inverted cone. It will be balanced on its apex, instead of standing firmly on its base.

## TEACHERS' COUNCILS

READERS OF THE AMERICAN TEACHER may appreciate being informed that the idea of Democracy in Education is not altogether new. Even in America it has been, and is, in practice. In *Education* for March, Professor W. C. Ruediger of George Washington University, in an article entitled "Teachers' Councils," calls attention to the fact that in Dallas, Texas, Boston, Mass., and Tacoma, Wash., there has been extended to teachers the privilege of participating in the administration of the schools.

The privilege is an act of grace, however, and it appears to rest solely on the sanction of the superintendent. This is indicated by what happened to the Teachers' Council of Tacoma.

"This council was started by former Superintendent A. H. Yoder, and existed during the latter part of his administration. But it was never established as a part of the school system by the Board of Education, and therefore ceased to exist after the resignation of Superintendent Yoder in 1910."

In New Britain, Conn., however, the teachers have a council with guaranteed stability. The purposes of this council are:

1. To secure a more active and effective participation of the teachers in

the professional direction of the schools.

2. To afford the largest possible opportunity for initiative on the part of the teacher.
3. To encourage professional improvement thru study and discussion of important problems of education and school management.
4. To develop the sense of solidarity of the teaching body, and an increasing appreciation of community of interest and responsibility among all teachers of all grades.
5. To furnish the teaching body a ready and effective means for the expression of its sentiments or opinions with reference to questions of school policy.

The by-laws provide for the following membership:

1. All principals, *ex officio*.
2. All supervisory officers and special teachers, *ex officio*.
3. One representative from each elementary grade, including kindergarten, to be elected by ballot by the teachers of the grade.
4. Representatives from the high school to be elected by the teachers of the high school.

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*It is the aim of this paper to better the working conditions of the teacher, through sober criticisms of present educational administration, and through discussions tending toward a general realization of the democratic ideal in all matters affecting the schools.*

## SUPERVISION AND SUPERVISORS

SINCE THE DAYS of the inspiration for Myra Kelly's "Gum Shoe" story, much refinement of method has developed in systems of supervising the work of teachers. The careless plan of trying to obtain data by listening from the fire-escape would not be tolerated nowadays, since there are many candidates for official approval who teach in rooms quite remote from fire-escapes. But with all the improvement in method, results are not yet satisfactory to anyone.

There is probably nothing, not even meager salaries, that frets and worries teachers more than supervision does. This seems to be due to the fact that the examination of the work has resolved itself to a great extent into a habit of finding fault. An unequipped supervising

officer can easily point out shortcomings. He can also nag, bully or hound another human being who happens to be in his official power. Besides, he can "jolly" those teachers with whose work he is not prompted to find fault. A shrewd supervisor is thus consciously or unconsciously able to conceal a possible inability to understand how to criticize honestly, accurately and helpfully.

The long-continued existence of the all-too-common type of supervising officer has so reacted on the minds of teachers that it has come to be a high compliment to a principal, for example, to have it said of him, "Well, anyway, Mr. A does let us alone in the classroom." If Mr. A's point of view is that he does not care to be bothered with supervision, he is in reality being doubly repaid for not attending to his probable duty. Thus is the possessor of a negative virtue highly rewarded.

At the same time, with other ideals and under other conditions, any teacher would doubtless be glad to receive helpful criticism, even tho it might not always be favorable. In fact, teachers frequently make remarks to that effect in all sincerity.

The preference of teachers who are anxious to improve coincides with the well-nigh universal desire of people to perfect themselves in various ways. Our human experience convinces us that the social benefit of widespread individual improvement is enormous. Is it not strange then that in education, a field offering exceedingly great opportunities for social betterment, we should systematically neglect to solve scientifically and humanely this problem of how to do our work better, and how to get others to do theirs better. Wise, suggestive supervision being useful, it may lead to immediate progress if we learn from the teachers themselves exactly what specific kinds of criticism help them. We know too much already of the kinds that bruise, discourage and make rebellious a potentially willing body of helpful citizens.

**HOW MANY** of our public school officials and teachers do not send their children to the public school?

## TEACHERS' MEETINGS

THE MODERN SCHOOL, with its fifty or sixty classrooms, holding within its walls two thousand pupils of various ages and nationalities, is such a complex machine, that in the interests of organization it is a wise plan to hold teachers' conferences at stated intervals. Unity of purpose, agreement in method, school tone and general efficiency are some of the ideals that may be aimed for and in part realized by teachers' meetings. Why then, if this be the case, is attendance at conferences looked upon as a weary task, which many seek, thru skilful manipulation of excuses, to escape? Why do those who attend sit thru the hour with no apparent interest, and leave at the close with visible signs of indifference or relief written upon their faces?

The answer is to be found in the method used in conducting these conferences. Too often conferences are mere monologues, with the principal as the artist. Armed with his superior wisdom and experience, he reads notices, formulates rules, gives advice, explains systems, criticizes methods, quotes statistics and talks pedagogy until the brain-fagged teachers yawn and stretch. With remarkable temerity, he attacks all subjects, proving himself more or less of an expert in the twenty branches of our present school curriculum. Finally, with a word of apology for having detained the teachers so long, the meeting comes to an end. Aptly has one teacher characterized all this as a *deference* rather than a *conference*.

Were it not better to choose some one topic as the subject for consideration at each conference, and request one or two of the teachers to lead the discussion, and call upon all others to express themselves freely? Would not real unity of purpose be thereby gained? Would not the feeling of democracy be nurtured? Would not true initiative be encouraged? And would not a real and lasting benefit result to the teachers and pupils from such conferences?

This plan has actually been in operation in many schools, for many years.

Wherever the teachers approached the matter with enthusiasm the meetings thus conducted have been helpful to the school and helpful to the individual teacher. There must be other schemes for making the teachers' meeting worth while. We should like to hear from our readers on this subject.

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## IDEALS, GREAT AND SMALL

PEOPLE FIND no particular difficulty in agreeing upon the proposition that "A pint is a pound the world around." This results from our being trained to know and to appreciate the value of standards.

Standards are accepted as necessary bases of reference, and few ever think of trying to get along without standards of some kind. Judgment may differ regarding the same set of facts, but harmony can often be restored by mutual agreement to adopt the plan of reducing complex factors to a common basis.

It goes without saying, however, that the most important judgments made in life are not easily related to definite standards. We may have standards or ideals in life and education. A number of these ideals could be stated and scattered broadcast by the press, or other agency, and everybody that noticed them would say, "Oh, yes, certainly; they are splendid!" But let any person or organization begin working toward the realization of those ideals by taking definite steps on solid ground, indifference, doubt or opposition would immediately manifest themselves. Whether it was indifference or open opposition would depend not so much on the temperament of individuals as it would upon real conviction in the matter of standards or ideals. The nature and extent of the indifference or opposition would also vary with the vagueness or the positiveness of all the little standards or ideals that might be operating at cross purposes with the major ideals, so complex is the nature of human thought and feeling.

The progress of new and sound movements in education is not hindered so much by opposition as it is by indiffer-

ence. A person who openly opposes a movement for democracy in education may do so because he is used to the system of aristocracy in education, and believes the new system wouldn't work. If his opposition is strong, he would *know* it wouldn't work, in spite of the fact that democracy is working outside the field of education. He might oppose it on the ground that teachers lack judgment, and could not be trusted with the power of electors, although we do trust them to train the children of the race for citizenship. Again, he might oppose it because he believes the upholders of the democratic ideal are dishonest or insincere. Whatever this is, it is not argument.

Opposition is a good thing for a fundamentally strong movement, not only because it serves to bring the cause before the people, but also because opponents have standards and ideals of some sort. The work of social education may bring about the extension or the remodeling of these ideals, adjusting them and making them applicable to the welfare of the whole people. Then the upholders of the democratic ideal may welcome their former opponents as brothers.

There is no doubt that most teachers are indifferent to the idea of democracy in education, a fact which seriously hinders the rapid progress of the cause. "They never thought of it." This is to be expected in a profession the members of which are commonly inspired with the sole injunction, "Teach!" This in general they do faithfully, except when they are busy with the clerical work of the school.

The teachers' transformation to the peerage of citizenship will be slow, but it must come. Their standards or ideals must be developed, vitalized and connected definitely and positively with something beyond the trivialities of the school room and the school office. They must get into touch with the great movements in civic, industrial and educational life. They must read, travel and see. They must meet and know the leaders of thought; they will find them at work in the library, in the street and at the

mechanic's bench. But most of all, they must *think out* their places in life.

The littleness and the narrowness of the teaching profession will not disappear until the minds in it begin to measure and to estimate all the little standards and ideals of their lives in terms of the great ideals toward which all mankind is consciously and unconsciously striving. How trifling and insignificant we have been; how magnificent and powerful we may become!

## THE VALUE OF INSURGENCY

THE WOMAN'S JOURNAL of Boston in an editorial in its issue of March 30 congratulates the teachers of Boston upon the resignation of Stratton D. Brooks, Superintendent of Schools. The editorial heading, which is given above, would be enough to indicate that the national organ of the Woman Suffrage Party approves of teachers organizing campaigns to obtain their rights or a redress of grievances.

It is of interest to learn that "Mr. Brooks is a very able man, with excellent theoretical ideas about education; but he is so tactless, tyrannical and unscrupulous that he has been a real incubus to the schools. This is the plain truth of the matter."

In connection with the information and the point of view contained in Dr. Gruenberg's article on "Pedagogs in Politics" in THE AMERICAN TEACHER for March, it is timely information we get when we read that "The fright that the School Board [of Boston] got from the teachers' effort to elect Mrs. FitzGerald [to membership in the Board], and her large vote led to their high-handed order forbidding the teachers to take part in politics, or to try to influence any legislation in their own interest except thru the School Board. This ill-judged and autocratic action made the legislators indignant, and has been a powerful factor in causing every request of the School Board to the present Legislature to be rejected. Legislators who have listened with pleasure and profit to

the first-hand information about the schools given them by teachers at legislative hearings in the past, are reported as saying that they will vote against every measure for which the Boston School Board asks, until it removes the gag rule from the teachers. Mr. Brooks is shrewd. He saw that he would not have as smooth sailing in the future as he has had in the past, and the School Board saw that he was becoming a dangerously heavy load for them to carry. Hence the happy outcome over which we are all rejoicing. The whole affair shows the value that there may be in a vigorous insurgent movement, even tho it does not elect its candidate."

## CONTRACTS AND SCHOOLS

THE CONTRACT is a very ingenious instrument for organizing human relations and expediting many kinds of work. It was probably never invented *de novo*, but just grewed like Topsy, or evolved like Dodd. It has many excellent properties, or it could not have endured so long; but it has also some defects. The defects appear when the instrument is applied to relations that are not, or should not be, commercial.

The public, as represented by governments, has occasion to enter into contracts for a variety of purposes. In most cases it is dealing with a commercial corporation or individual, for the execution of a commercial service. There is need for supplies; supplies have to be bought; in making important purchases it is wise to have a contract. There is need for building roads or bridges; the government has not the facilities for undertaking the work—it would need to train up experts and specialists, it would need to establish a special plant—it is more economical to hire someone in the business to do the whole job at a fixed price; again the contract is a useful thing to have around.

When the public contracts to purchase materials or to purchase services on a contract basis, it seeks the best prices to

be had in the market—that is, the lowest prices; and it specifies what it is to get for its money. When the public employs men and women to do its routine work—such as legislating, conducting trials, patrolling streets or vetoing bills—it fixes a price that it is willing to pay and then selects the best (or what it believes to be the best) talent available for each position. That is the difference between the status of a public official, like a street-cleaner or a teacher, and a public contractor; the public official is the best man or woman that can be had for a given sum of money to do specified work, whereas the contractor is the cheapest man to be had for doing the job.

If the public is interested in getting the best possible workers for the public service, it should follow the direct employment system; if the public is more interested in getting the cheapest service, the contract system is the one to follow. In many towns the school commissioners still select the cheapest candidate for the position of keeping school. In the more advanced communities this is not considered dignified: imagine the president of a City Board of Education saying to you, "I like your face, and I like your credentials, but there is a man over in the next state who will take the job of City Superintendent for \$7,436; if you are ready to shave that figure, the job is yours." That is the contract system in essence.

The question of contract versus direct employment does not concern teachers very much, however. In our public school it is still retained for the administration of buildings. The Janitor or the Superintendent of the school building is in most cases a contractor who undertakes for a specified sum to keep the building up to a certain—or uncertain—standard of cleanliness and repair. Comparisons made between the cost per square yard of floor space, or cost per pupil, of janitorial service under the two systems showed a much larger cost for the direct employment system. Experts on city administration and experts on finance at once concluded that the contract system had justified itself, and there began this

winter an attack upon the direct employment system as wasteful of the public's money.

There is, however, another side to the problem. When a contractor takes over the work of cleaning a building he does not plan to do all the work himself; he plans to hire a number of helpers at the lowest wages possible. He plans to economize on soap and scrubbing brushes, with a view to leaving as large a margin to himself as possible. These are among the first principles of the contract system. Now what has the public done in giving this job to the contractor? It has allowed human beings to be put at health-destroying work on life-destroying wages, and has then turned its face the other way. For the men and women—and they are mostly women—who wipe the dust in our children's schools take with them enough of the dust to insure for a large proportion of them pulmonary tuberculosis. What the proportion is, we have no statistics to tell us; but what they look like you can see for yourself if you stay in the building until five o'clock, or come very early in the morning.

It is true that thru the contract system the work is done more cheaply—that is, at a cost of fewer dollars and cents; but the thought of the cost in terms of human life is appalling. It is said that the direct employment system is unsatisfactory because under it "discipline" is destroyed. That is to say, under the contract system the janitor's authority is supported by his freedom to discharge his helpers summarily. But that is only another way of saying that we have not yet learned to organize the work of free men efficiently.

Apart from the matter of "discipline," which is a matter of organization, we must come to realize that it is not true economy for the public to grind savings out of the blood of its own members.

**BEFORE DEMOCRACY** can become a fact, there must be education for democracy. Enlightenment and self-government go hand in hand. When teachers are thoroughly impregnated with the democratic ideal, the throwing off of their shackles will only be a matter of time.

## LOYALTY AND HIGHER SALARIES

TEACHERS WHO are overburdened with work and harassed by fault-finding officials that often have little sympathetic and constructive criticism to offer, are still expected to yield to them the tribute of loyalty. Although there exists this positive sentiment of obligation to superior officers, teachers like other subordinates may quit, without prejudice, and offer their services to another master, if the pay is better. This fact is a sign of our body freedom.

It might be that a little loyalty with a lower salary than some other board gives would not be a bad thing even for teachers themselves, but we cannot expect it under the many unfavorable circumstances. And so, "Friends of better public education in Chicago are now hopeful that a way has been provided for getting and keeping the very best teachers in the United States." This statement is made in an editorial in *School Science and Mathematics* (Chicago) for April.

The Board of Education of Chicago has announced a new maximum of \$2,600.00 for high school teachers. The editorial states further that "This figure ranks with the best schedules effective in the United States, only New York exceeding it by \$50.00 and Boston by \$18.00 for recent appointees; the difference in cost of living in these two, however, far more than offsets the difference in schedule."

The maximum salary for high school teachers in New York City is nominally \$3,150.00, but only first assistant teachers may receive that much, or any amount above \$2,650.00. The appointment to the grade of first assistant teacher in New York is dependent upon four contingencies; first, upon the Board of Examiners' setting an official examination for that grade, second, upon the candidate's passing the examination, a feat not to be accomplished without proof of the possession of scholarship and teaching ability and some other qualifications beside, third, upon whether there is a chairmanship of a department

vacant in any high school, and fourth, upon whether a high school principal desires to have additional chairmen of departments, or can have them, which in turn would depend on certain restrictions relating to the number of teachers in a department that entitle a principal to a first-assistant chairman. There has been no examination for first assistants in New York high schools in certain subjects for five or six years. Therefore, the Chicago Board of Education is essentially correct in stating that their new maximum of \$2,600.00 for high school teachers is but \$50.00 less than the maximum in New York City.

The Chicago schedule is "being advertised appropriately in the best educational journals of the country." Eventually the Department of Education of New York city will be obliged to meet the effect of action of the Chicago department by taking down the arbitrary bars to deserved promotion.

### THE LARGER NURTURE

THERE ARE METHODS of education being used consciously today to lead the young, as they mature, not to exploit nor to enjoy but to serve this present world. The schools have ever exalted, in their teaching of biography and history, the nobler types of manhood. They have glorified the poets and have refused to immortalize the money makers, and of late they have suppressed their earlier emphasis upon the soldiers and are bringing to the front the servants of the common good. The schools are being made centers of information upon some philanthropies, like the tuberculosis war, and are sometimes used as collecting agencies for community benevolences.—WM. B. FORBUSH, in *The Coming Generation*.

"SUPERIOR MERIT" to some may mean such negative virtues as never having violated the rules, never having been "up on charges," never having been late, etc. It should rather mean the presence of such positive qualities as initiative, progressiveness, love for and sympathy with the growing boys and girls.

## BOOK REVIEWS

**ALL THE CHILDREN OF ALL THE PEOPLE**, a study of the attempt to educate everybody. By WILLIAM HAWLEY SMITH, 12mo, pp. ix+346, 1912. New York: the Macmillan Co. \$1.50 net.

"We live in a world of progress and not of finalities." But progress in human affairs depends upon the preservation of past experiences; and since it is the function of the teacher to transmit to the next generation the sum of past experiences, the teacher tends to become static. Every criticism of school methods and school results is resented by most teachers just in proportion as we have become static, as we have fallen into the rut. Here comes Mr. Smith to help jog us out; and his help should be welcome to all of us.

Beginning with two short chapters on something that every teacher knows (and that every teacher ignores in practice, more or less), namely, that every child has his strong points and his weak points, the author goes on to show that the attempt to give all the children the same educational treatment is stupid in theory and pernicious in practice. We have developed a system of public education that proceeds upon the assumption that all children are practically alike to begin with, and that certain subjects and methods are equally desirable and valuable for all children. In the first flush of democratic enthusiasm the emphasis was placed on *equality*; and individuality—which is made up of *differences*—has had to suffer. It is time to question our methods in the light of our results, as well as in the light of the results of science and experience outside of the educational field.

It has been pointed out many times, and will bear repeating for many years to come, that our "democratic" education is a failure because it has been supported very largely as a scheme for escaping from work. The mass of people have been and still are overworked, despite the wonderful advances in technology and in "labor-saving" devices. The mass of people look up to those who do not work so hard, and find that these are for the most part the "educated." They naturally desire for their children not

only the material advantages displayed by the educated, but relief from the grind and toil that they know so well. They naturally look to "education" as the great solvent. Teachers have been only too willing to nurture the great delusion. The result is not a population that has learned to be prosperous with a minimum of work; it is a population that has learned to hate work without being able to live without it, and without knowing how to get the most from it.

Hand in hand with the standardized schooling there has grown up a set of formulas that tend to perpetuate all the blunders as well as all the valuable features in our pedagogical theory. For a hundred years scientific study of psychology has been undermining the doctrine of formal discipline. The young teacher passes her examination in psychology and at once begins to apply formal discipline. We know that every child has his limitations as to capacity for arithmetic or drawing or grammar; but we insist that all do the same work and pass the same tests—because the effort alone is an education! This is a part of the theological doctrine that obedience cultivates virtue—and from a practical and common-sense point of view, to say nothing of psychology and biology, this is a grievous error.

To those who have been content to go on with their routine year after year, hoping perhaps for increased efficiency and clearer insight to come with time, but knowing not where to look for a clearing up of the confusion, this book will come as a great relief. For Mr. Smith has abandoned the cant and the jargon of the educator, and deals with problems that concern all the people in terms of the daily life of all the people. To many it will be a revelation that pedagogy and philosophy of education are more concerned with clerks and engineers and mechanics and farmers than they are with memory and discipline and apperception. To those who have given thought to the concrete problems of education in relation to living human beings, as distinguished from education in relation to examinations and syllabuses and promotions, there is a wealth of illustrative material and stimulating suggestions. We cannot agree with all the views expressed, but we can heartily commend the book to every parent and to every teacher.

There is a good index, and the mechanical features of the book are excellent.

## THE TEACHER AND THE JOB

OURS IS AN age of gigantic achievement along material lines, but it is not yet an age of any great independence of thought. It is an age of stock opinion and concealed opinion, of ill-disguised servility. The majority of our people are hired; the rest give hire. Between them stands this wall, a very real wall, keeping them from meeting like true men and women in all frankness and sincerity. One hears it asked—Shall a man quarrel with his bread-and-butter? But it is not explained how it came about that a man's bread-and-butter should be in the keeping of another. And I venture to affirm, after regarding at some length the free lance and the salaried man, that the effect of taking wage upon the majority of people is simply disastrous, spiritually disastrous. Life is altogether too precious a thing to sell it to another at any price whatever, and I count it a national misfortune and a national weakness that in the great democracy which we tried to set up and failed there should be so few men who are masters of themselves, and worthy to uphold so great a political idea.

—CHARLES HANFORD HENDERSON, in *Education and the Larger Life*.

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BUT AT PRESENT our school system falls far short of providing for professional growth in a vital way. On the side of general educational policy, it is little more than a system for carrying out orders. Teachers carry out the orders of the principals, principals carry out the orders of the supervisors, and supervisors carry out the orders of the superintendent. Each stage usually adds a little to the orders that it transmits, but none, except the highest, has any official voice in determining the policies that it carries out itself.—Prof. W. C. Ruediger, in "Education" for March.

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SOME TEACHERS ought to be trusted implicitly to initiate and experiment. The vast majority of teachers ought to be trusted and let alone. Some ought to be watched and supervised. If the majority of teachers may not be trusted, get other teachers.

## AUTHORITY

THERE HAS BEEN NO MORE frequent sin, thru all the ages, than for selfish men and women to set up their own authority and label it the will of God or virtually that. Nor has this sinning been confined to the church—any church—more than to other forms of centralized power. True, most churches have been guilty of the practice, to a greater or less extent, at some period in their history; but equally, or more guilty, have been kings, emperors, presidents, governors, parliaments, congresses, legislatures, parents, school-teachers and the whole line of those who are "in authority."—WM. HAWLEY SMITH, in *All the Children of All the People*.

LET US SUPPOSE, for example, that the teachers in the elementary school were given the responsibility, perhaps one should say the opportunity, to improve the course of study and the general methods of instruction. To be more specific, let us suppose that it rested with them to improve their course in geography. All the teachers would know that this subject would be discussed in open meeting and that pedagogical change would undoubtedly be suggested and perhaps adopted. Would not each teacher then want to be ready both to suggest and defend modifications and to oppose whatever seemed to him a retrogressive step? Would he not then have a motive for consulting courses of study and for reading the literature on the teaching of geography? And would he not then read with profit?—Prof. W. C. Ruediger, in "Education" for March.

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