

The American Teacher

Democracy in Education; Education for Democracy.

VOL. IV No. 7

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60 CENTS A YEAR

The Course of Study

Is the Course of Study a Sacred Document of the Ages?

If so, do we become slaves by following it?

Or insubordinates by questioning it?

Is the Course of Study a Proclamation of Superior Minds?

Or may it be the Best Expression of All Minds?

Is the Course of Study a Measuring Rod to gauge the fitness of Teachers?

Or is it a Procrustean Bed to which all Pupils shall be Adjusted?

Is the Course of Study ever a Vitalized Writ of the Throbbing Needs and Deeds of Man Today, and of his Ideals for Tomorrow?

If it is not, What stands in the Way?

TEACHERS AND POLITICS

BENJAMIN C GRUENBERG

UNDER PRESSURE from a group of bankers and corporation directors, the Governor of one of our "more or less sovereign States" called out the militia, to be used for purposes manifestly contrary to the spirit of the laws. Is that any of your business?

In another State, equally sovereign, the hoisting machinery of a mine was deliberately crippled, while the miners were down below. This happened on election day, so that the sovereign citizens were deprived of their votes. Is that any of your business?

In your own State—wherever you are—the legislature has again and again taken action that violated the interests of the public, under pressure from "lobbyists" representing private interests. Is that any of your business?

Well, what is your business?

Is it bossing a roomfull of children a few hours a day, to keep them out of mischief?

Or is it the drilling of three R's into the more or less receptive heads that are alined before you?

Or is it the transmission of some sort of "discipline" to the unruly ones?

Or is it to apply an opake layer of veneer or "culturine" to the prospective ladies and gentlemen of the land?

What is the teacher's business, anyhow?

In all lands and in all times the business of the teacher has been to preserve and transmit the traditional ideals and aspirations of the people. You may, if you can, better the learning. But you must not omit or yield one essential element of this spiritual inheritance of the generation under your tutelage. You may add drawing and music; and you may replace ancient history with visits-to-museums-and-industries. But you may not substitute anything for the American traditions.

But what are the American traditions? Years ago, before so many of these

foreigners came in, there was a vague notion abroad in the world that America was the land of freedom and opportunity. That may simply mean that the oppressed and impoverished of other lands that of heaven in terms of freedom and plenty. There is on record however, from the hand of a genuine American—one whose Americanism cannot be questioned, one who speaks authoritatively—a statement of what America may be supposed to mean.

The rights of conscience, the equality of all men before the law, the separation of church and state, religious toleration, freedom of speech and the press, popular education, are vital traditions of the American people. They are not brought in question; they form the stock of firm universal convictions on which our national life is based; they are ingrained into the character of our people and you can assume, in any controversy, that an American will admit their truth. But they form the sum of traditions which we obtain as our birthright. . . . We never hear them disputed, and it is only when we observe how difficult it is for some foreign nations to learn them that we perceive that they are not implanted by nature in the human mind. They are a part and the most valuable part of our national inheritance, and the obligation of love, labor and protection which we owe to the nation rests upon the benefits which we receive from it.*

It would seem that it is our business not only to preserve and to perpetuate these traditions—the rights of conscience, freedom of speech and of the press, equality of all before the law, religious toleration, popular education—but to protect them against invasion or aggression, and to impart them to the strangers within our gates. This business cannot be intrusted to foreigners—that is, to those who do not cherish these ideals—whether they are born in this country or

* W G Sumner, *The Challenge of Facts and Other Essays*, pp. 353-354.

abroad. Nor can it be intrusted to those whose tolerance is so broad that it will passively stand by in the presence of ruthless violations of these traditions.

From very early times in the history of this country the public school has been an integral part of the official institutions. And from these beginnings the teacher has been as truly a public official as the sheriff or the alderman. Yet we expect the alderman and the sheriff to take an "oath of office" to uphold the law—and then we permit both of them to subordinate their official conduct to private interests. And at the same time we insist that the teacher take off his hat in the presence of the flag, and tell him that it is none of his business that the sacred principles of our democracy are daily flouted by men of power.

What is our business?

Is it to intimidate the youngsters with awe-some phrases about the dignity of the law and the duty of obedience?

Is it to subordinate the rising generation to the official puppets of merciless exploiters?

Is it to teach submission before the aggressions of calculating ravishers of our natural resources, and of our manhood and womanhood?

Is it to perpetuate the superstition that the king can do no wrong?

Is it to help enthrone "business"—big or little—as the king and ruler of this land?

Is it to cultivate anew the bigotries and chauvinisms and "patriotisms" that have converted the peasants and workers of Europe into cannon-fodder?

The teacher in this country has the opportunity to take his place with the official and the unofficial leaders and molders. And with the opportunity and power goes the responsibility. This responsibility, however, is never formally demanded or acknowledged—for the simple reason that the responsibility is to the children and to the public, and *not* to the trustees or commissioners. Too often it happens that those who have the power to appoint and remove teachers are themselves either indifferent to the

sentimental bosh which we call democracy—or Americanism, if you will—or they are decidedly opposed to the cultivation of that spirit of freedom and justice which threatens the stability of those various enterprizes for extortion and exploitation commonly concealed behind the name "business." These men will appeal to the "loyalty" of the teacher, they will pretend to represent the public will and the public interest, and they will utilize your devotion and enthusiasm to carry out their atrocious purpose—the purpose, namely, of converting the American people into cringing and submissive vassals of a most degrading feudalism.

And all the time they will tell you to let politics alone, your place being in the class-room—just as they have been telling the women that their "place is in the home." They would like to have you teach the children to "mind their own business" and leave politics to their superiors. This too has been one of our traditions. And if to-day teachers shun politics, the reason is not hard to understand.

Politics is for the brewer, and the contractor, the franchise grabber, the patronage broker, the dealer in canned beef or armor plate, and for gentlemen of leisure. If you deliberately avoid political problems it is because at best you are ignorant, or at worst, a coward. But there is one reason for teachers avoiding politics, that is somewhat creditable to their sentiments. You feel perhaps that there is a certain anomaly in a servant of the public participating in activities that are to an extent anti-social. Partizanship is repugnant to people of poise and perspective. There is certainly a contradiction in terms in the very name "political party." *Political* is what concerns the whole, the body politic; and *party* has to do with but a part, a special fraction, a separated group of interests. We should like to be political, but we cannot get ourselves to be partizans.

Here we find what is for many sincere and courageous teachers the real ob-

stacle to active concern in public affairs. We have been unable to identify the conflicting claims of the partizans with the genuine interests of the public. Politics has too persistently meant partizanship. We have even been forced to suspect and to reject many of the so-called "non-partizan" movements—altho we are too easily beguiled by them—because it has been obvious that a "non-partizan" alliance has simply meant the cohesion of two parties in a joint conflict with a third.

Because questions of public policy are thus formulated and fought out in terms of special group interests, we have become content to ignore the questions altogether. Nay, many of us have gone farther and have declared explicitly that *these questions must be kept out of the schools*. Because the Assembly splits along partizan lines on the question of minimum wage, teachers are to have no views on this subject; or having them, must not express them, as do legislators and "public" men. Because the Republican and the Democratic aldermen do not agree on whether, or how, to relieve hungry children whose presence in our class-rooms makes of our work a farce, we, pretending to represent the public, must be silent.

But if the work of the teacher is something more than hearing lessons, surely it matters in our business that children are hungry, that children's teeth are bad, that their eyes need spectacles, that they sleep in ill ventilated rooms, that they are surrounded by physical and moral filth. Surely it is our business that children are sent to the mills, where all our teaching comes to naught; that they have no homes because their mothers are too long in the factories and shops; that their most earnest friends have no voice at the polls or before legislatures. But these matters, which are most decidedly our business, are of the very heart of politics. And we withhold our judgment and our voice in these matters because decisions in justice and in the public interest would necessarily work injury to those who now profit from existing in-

justice. Under the cover of "neutrality" we let the thieves fight unmolested—and we let our wards, the children, and our ultimate employers, the public, suffer the consequences.

The tradition of impartiality among teachers is an old and honorable one. It has become strengthened in more recent times thru the fact that teaching in public schools has become so largely carried on by women. With these teachers, until recently, there has never been a thot of professional public service. The conditions of pay and of work have been such as to develop the attitude on the part of the teachers that they are merely hired to carry out specified instructions. Nothing constructive was expected, and no initiative was allowed. At best, "training for citizenship" meant teaching the names of a few national heroes, and something about the machinery of government. Nothing more could be expected of young women trained and situated as were most of the teachers of the passing generation. And nothing more may be expected to-morrow unless women take a larger and more active share in the public life of the community. It is absurd to send our potential "citizens" to such teachers for their instruction—and it is suicidal for democracy to be content with such instruction as they may give.

It may be seriously questioned whether many of the obvious failures of our present day democracy are not in reality due to the failure of our schools to cherish the fundamental American ideals. And we may well ask ourselves whether we have not been used—unwittingly, of course—as pliant tools in the hands of those cunning forces that have done so much to crush the American ideals thru other agencies, in all parts of the country.

If the teacher in America is to be something more than a keeper of records and a master of recitations, it will be thru his contribution to the problem of democratic government—the political problem. It will devolve upon us to take an active part in working out a new ma-

chinery that will make possible the discussion of public problems, and the discovery of the community interest, without the intermediation of professional exploiters of greed or prejudice. The school must again become, as it was once supposed to be, the cradle of our liberties, and it must become the chief agency in preserving our liberties.

The courts, once looked up to as the "palladium," are thoroly discredited, because they have been the too easy—the too eager—tools of special interests. The newspapers are owned body and soul, and like other commercial properties, are used in the interests of their owners—which do not happen to be identical with the interests of the public. The legislatures and administrators of cities and states will need a revolutionary

overhauling before they can even pretend to be public agencies, in the sense that they are working for the public. Churches, too, have betrayed the masses, where they depend upon funds that can be furnished only by those who have special interests to promote. And the colleges, from being rich men's clubs, have become factories for intellectual blinds and blinders.

The teachers in the public schools, because they have been so quiet and complacent in the past, have been largely neglected as possible sources of light and leading. There is therefore still time for those who feel their obligations to the public to use their opportunities and their resources in the interests of the larger public which must become conscious and vocal, if democracy is to be saved.

THE MIND SET FREE

FRANKLIN J KELLER

De Witt Clinton High School, New York

NOT LONG SINCE, a boy in one of my classes delivered a three-minute talk on labor conditions. In attempting to portray the horror resulting from inequitable distribution of wealth, he said to a group of forty-five typical New York boys, "Your sisters are prostitutes." Surely a wild, inexcusable, untrue assertion. What should the boys have done under this terrible accusation? What should I have done? Should the boy not have been expelled from school instant?

Well, as a matter of fact the boys that very well of the speaker, I confined myself to a sympathetic and smiling analysis of his remarks, and our friend still remains an efficient and hard-working student in our school. However, a gentleman who happened to be present objected violently to the boy's remark, stated that it should not be allowed in school, and wanted to know whether I hadn't any "rules" with respect to what pupils might say. As a matter of fact

I had no rules—except one, perhaps, and that is an attitude rather than a rule: every boy must be ready for the most biting criticism and he himself must be ready to support his every statement with evidence. But you say, "The boys' sisters were *not* prostitutes." Of course not. The boy did not mean that, the class knew he did not mean it, I was positive he did not mean it, and nobody that he could mean it except our visitor, who was not familiar with the spirit of our discussions. What the speaker did mean was, of course, that even these boys' sisters, dear to them as they were, might become subjected to such telling economic pressure that they would be laid open to all those environmental conditions which make for prostitution. We pointed out that the language had been inaccurate and the generalization cruel, and since the boy is earnest, sincere, enthusiastic, we are sure that he learned a great and valuable lesson, and this without "rules" such as would hamper

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the boy's expression and curb his thinking. And it came well within the limits of free speech laid down in these pages by Professor Overstreet, for it was indeed both pro-social and pro-personal.

Lately we have heard much of Gary and the school that makes its curriculum vital by letting the pupil do actual carpentering, plumbing, gardening, estimating, and what not. Some have even asserted that the system goes too far and simply prepares the boy to fit himself into the steel works. Be that as it may, it remains certain that there is preparation for actual living conditions. Now, the most patent fact in our normal life is that we talk about things. Dr. Johnson dominated the culture of his age because he talked well and without reserve. Theodore Roosevelt was the dominant figure of the last decade because he talked forcibly and frankly. We are poor talkers and have little influence among our fellowmen either because we have no ideas or because we are afraid to express them. The school must present to the boy such vital questions as will make him think, and must make the conditions of expression such that he may never fear ridicule, condemnation, or rebuke, except he show insincerity or his motive be anti-social or anti-personal. If such conditions do not prevail the result is obvious: oratory for its own sake, the death of thinking, or—rebellion. The first is specious, the second tragic, the third wholesome, but—avoidable. Give expression scope and it works itself out in constructive effort. We are prone in these days to condemn the school that has no workshop or foundry or garden, but we forget that whereas a great many boys will *not* work with their hands, the social milieu of each will demand of him forceful, sincere, and sane expression.

It is an educational platitude that habit claims ninety-nine per cent of our lives, and this unfortunately holds true of habits of thinking as well as of habits of acting. Not until I began to do post-graduate work did I come into contact with teachers who laid emphasis upon the

inquiring, the "I-want-to-be-shown" type of mind. The result is that I (in common with thousands of others, I am sure) have only in recent years withdrawn my mind from the mold of academic conservatism I can still remember the educational and religious mutterings which in my youth disturbed my peace of soul, but which never swelled to the thunderings they ought to have been, because the teacher said this was so or the Bible said thus and thus. The school must foster the habit of breaking away from habit. The pupil must think of life as he finds it.

We remember how from our textbooks we learned of the great changes in history, the Renaissance, the French Revolution, the industrial awakening, and all that. We are told how Galileo was condemned by the Inquisition, how the Bourbons never learned and never forgot, and how the people resisted the coming of railroads. We were made to feel how foolish these conservatives were and how foolish all conservatives have been right up to yesterday, but *to-day*, lo and behold, it is the radical who must be feared. Our social organization is being made over before our eyes—unions, woman labor, city life—are new factors. Yet, for instance, Bowers, the Rockefeller subordinate in Colorado, sees in the union "a horde of abject wage-earners intimidated by greedy officials, many of whom are 'disreputable agitators, socialists, and anarchists.'" In politics, the people are most certainly supplanting the "boss," but Mr. Barnes sees fit to sue for libel because he is called a menace. In religion we see real humanitarianism and brotherhood supplanting theological controversy, yet modernists are excommunicated. It is only in art and science, where changes do not intimately and consciously touch our everyday lives, that radical changes may occur (the new staging of the drama, for instance) without stirring up our prejudices or drawing forth our oburgations. These changes have been brot about by live, thinking men and women, and how could they have been possible had not the spirit

of change, the ideal of progress, the habit of criticism been theirs? The curse of the lawyer, who studies only what has been done, is precedent. Every thing must be judged in the light of what has been, instead of the light of life as it is. So we must avoid in our teaching the doctrine of *stare decisis*, for nothing ever *does* stand decided. Rather must we look to field study, research, and conference—conference not of the teachers' type, but one in which there is real conferring, and frank expression.

The reply to all this is often, "Well, if the pupil may say anything he wishes, and the teacher is to subordinate his own views, why not have a pupil act as chairman of the recitation, and dispense with the teacher altogether?" Such a conception of the theory of free speech for pupils misses entirely the point of the whole argument, or else does not assume free speech for the teacher. It is just here that the wonderful opportunity of the teacher makes itself apparent. I believe that the boy should have a whole man for a teacher and not only that part of him that happens to contain a little mathematics, or English, or history, that he should partake of the teacher's politics, science, sociology, art, yes, even of his religion, *but* that by no means must the teacher impose these opinions upon the pupils, he must *not* use his official position to fix ideas. He must take his chances with the youngest pupil in the class; if he is no wiser than that pupil he will have no more influence than the latter (and ought to have no more); if he is a great and forceful personality, he will carry nearly everyone with him. The only answer to the argument that such a state of affairs would mean a loss of dignity and authority on the part of the teacher is first, that if a teacher can not make felt his dignity and authority in any other way, he had better impose them immediately before they disappear utterly; second, that you must ask yourself who it was in your scholastic or later career you respected and were influenced by. Wasn't it the man who "talked it over with you," "reasoned it

out," who "let you have your say?" Don't you remember rather vividly those "lectures" of his in which he rambled away from the subject and talked about life and perhaps told you of some of his personal experiences? Don't they stay right with you and haven't they influenced your life? If not, you have not been so fortunate as I—and thousands of others. Then don't you remember that other teacher who never saw any further than the lesson of the day, who never had an opinion on anything else, and who always told you you were right or wrong and suffered no argument? Did you like him? Did he influence your life for the better? If so, well, you must fit the mold so accurately that there is no hope for you in this life. I do not believe that a teacher should only dispense English, or mathematics, or history, but that he should give all his being to his pupils, that he should command respect and should be an authority not as the policeman is, but as Charles W. Eliot, or Thomas Edison, or John Haynes Holmes is an authority. The students of the Wharton School, of the University of Pennsylvania, rightfully hold that "We are attending Wharton School for the purpose of learning as many things as we can. In the world we expect to come into contact with men of every shade of thot. We can see no reason why we should not hear various viewpoints expressed in the Wharton School." And so if our high schools are to prepare for life, (forgive the phrase) the pupils should come into vital relation with as many personalities as possible.

Free speech (and what is this but the outward evidence of the freedom to think? and surely we all want that) releases us from the thralldom of habit, it secures to us the supreme joy of thinking, it is proof against moral stagnation, it gives voice to the fine indignation of the adolescent, it insures a sympathetic attitude between teacher and pupil, but more than all, it tends to break down the great obstacle to modern civilization, the closed mind.

SPEAKING OF RATINGS

Judging by the discussions that have been held at educational meetings the subject of "Rating of Teachers" is apparently a child of doubtful parentage. It obtrudes itself upon polite society everywhere without evoking much sympathy or compassion. Everybody disowns it. Loudest of all in their disclaimer have been the teachers. They have absolutely no use for it. They will not tolerate it. No, not even if it washes its face, dresses in Sunday attire, and promises to be good.

On the other hand are the superintendents, who do not seem to be over fond of this miscreant. Time and again they make desperate attempts to reform it; but so far success has not attended their patient labors. They admit the task is a difficult one. They don't deny that they bungled the job. But cast aside—Never!

What of the principals who are, as it were, between the upper and nether millstones—what is their attitude toward the rating of teachers? Many of us have a lurking suspicion that the principal rather likes to wield this unwieldy weapon over the drooping heads of his teachers. Aye, there is some unquestionable evidence to that effect. Is it true, then, that the principals as a class consistently and persistently fight for the retention of the power to browbeat their teachers by threats of low or lower ratings? What is the evidence? The evidence is meager, very meager. But what little of it there is, points the other way. Take these quotations in President Churchill's Report, dated September 1, 1914, pp. 49-50, from letters by principals in answer to his inquiry on this subject:

There is too much complexity in the rating system. The numerous forms could be reduced to one containing all the simple data really necessary for determination of fitness and merit, etc.

This marking system sets up wrong standards for teachers. It perpetuates childish motives for work. Teachers, principals, and superintendents hold it in contempt.

Good teachers' work gains no power from these ratings. Why require a principal to make invidious distinctions between B, B plus, and A? No news should be good news. No lash of a marking system effects an increase of devotion to the interests and welfare of the community.

I do not know what my rating is. No superintendent ever tells me. I regard the mark as a degrading piece of formalism contrary to the spirit of service.

The marking system never made a single poor teacher that I can remember. It only generated a sullen sort of complacency and a personal animosity toward the marker.

The administration of the marking system involves a large amount of dishonesty. The principal is apparently required to record facts, the decision being left to a higher authority. But in case after case the superior authority on appeal shifts the responsibility of his judgment upon the record made by the principal.

So many subjective and intangible considerations enter in that the whole scheme is a fraud. The strength lies in preventing teachers from knowing definitely what the standing of rating is. There is no standard. There is personal whim, hidden mysterious judgment, dimly outlined requirements.

In transferring service to a new principal or superintendent no teacher confidently expects any correspondence between the new ratings and the old.

For a device that takes so much time this marking system is a preposterous disappointment.

The attempt to apply "efficiency" methods to the appraisal of teachers is a failure, as is apparent from the confession that those responsible for the marking system are unable to define what efficient or inefficient teaching is.

The mark is a personal notion based as much on the condition of the rater as on that of the rated.

Etc. etc. etc.

Here we have it. Rating of Teachers—a miserable failure. The teachers fear it, the principals hate it, the superintendents don't like it. What is going to be done about it?

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This paper is striving to do its part in the creation of a real profession of teaching, the members of which shall be self-respecting and respected, thru stimulating clear thinking on the work and the social position of teachers, and thru intelligent criticism of systems of educational administration. No greater service than this could be rendered to the children of the state.

A NEW DEAL FOR THE CHILDREN

A HALF generation or more of discussion on the question of revising the course of study in the interest of better education has yielded pitifully meager results. Now and then there is a revival of interest in the general situation, followed by the appointment of committees, followed later by conferences, fol-

lowed still later by subsidence. And all the while millions of children in America alone follow the beaten path of the centuries in the subjects studied, in the emphasis given to them, and in the general indifference to other subject matter, or to other ways of being educated, that might be made available.

It is true there are fundamental questions that must be gone over and settled before the gigantic institution of the course of study can be remodeled to suit the needs of children with us here and now. Some of these fundamentals are involved in the comparatively diminutive experiments of the early Dewey School in Chicago in the work of Mrs Marietta Johnson, and in the more elaborate school system at Gary, Indiana. But even these ventures retain a substantial connection with the ancient institution of the college, in that they prepare students for it. Valuable as their example is as an object lesson in what we ought to be doing, their immediate influence is extremely small.

Certain of the fundamental questions have been formulated time and time again, until their phrasing is now recognized in numerous educational platitudes. They are, "True education is the preparation of children for life," "The best education is that which develops power," "The hand and brain must be trained in harmony," etc. At the same time we are putting forth prodigious efforts toward developing the efficiency of our systems of schools as they are, and to preparing the children for that part of life still under the domination of the colleges. The analysis of the situation has been worked out scores of times, and everybody agrees that "the children should be prepared for life." But we are not doing it. Why not?

In a situation so complex the emphasis is likely to be laid first on one factor and then another, according to the impression of the moment. Sometimes it would seem that the ancient honorable fraternity of place-holders in education are responsible for the educational stagnation, thru their natural interest in maintaining the conditions to which their own type of fitness is best

adapted. Fraternities in general are supposed to be proud of their antiquity. At other times, it is insisted that the book publishers, with such allegiance as they have among the aforesaid fraternity, are discouraging all efforts made in the direction of revolution. A successful textbook is supposed to keep up its sales for at least ten years. The longer it will sell, the less necessity there is for printing a new book with expensive plates.

A pertinent interpretation of the attitude of educators and of education (to be less personal) toward change was made several years ago in a series of lectures before Oxford University by Professor E Ray Lankester. In another column we quote a few paragraphs from one of the lectures. He says, in assailing the position Oxford still holds in dominating education and intellectual life in England that "It has come to be regarded as a mark of good breeding, and thus an end in itself, for a man to have some first-hand acquaintance with Latin and Greek authors, even when he knows no other literature. It is a fashion like the wearing of a court dress." Quite in line with this point is the attitude of well-to-do families in Boston toward the future of their sons. The social station of these families makes it necessary that all their boys be graduates of Harvard College. The degree is their court dress.

Undoubtedly there is great power in fashion in determining the course of education. And yet, the suggestion does not seem to reach quite as far as the situation demands, for fashions change, and the language of the ancients is the language of "scholars" today. Rather does it seem more appropriate to regard our pursuit of subject matter that has long since ceased to be useful in the light of a rudimentary organ, a structure once necessary but now unnecessary or often troublesome, a sort of *vermiform appendix* on the intellectual life of modern times.

However, there are many who are ready to assist in the severance of the

veriform appendix, but they do not know what under the canopy to do next.

THE AMERICAN TEACHER believes that a magnificent opportunity lies ready at hand for the teachers to take hold of. Certainly no class of individuals have had the occasion to think over the important question of a useful and suitable course of study that we have had. Let us break our chains, if any are holding us, and turn our experience to good account. Constructive articles and letters are wanted from any who are willing to put their best thots into shape. What are the rudimentary organs, and what readjustments shall we make when they are excised?

SCHOOL AND HEALTH

COUNTRY SCHOOLS in Washington State are specializing in warm lunches. The teachers are trained in household arts and the school lunch is used not only to better the physical condition of the pupils, but also to teach domestic science.

A new law in Illinois provides for physical training in all grades of the public schools.

One in Florida provides medical inspection of school children, under the supervision of the State board of health. This act does not apply to cities of over 5,000 inhabitants where such inspection has already been established by the city board of health and is continued in accordance with the rules prescribed by the State board of health.

An amendment to the school law in New York, relative to vaccination, makes vaccination compulsory for admission to schools only in cities of the first and second class. Whenever smallpox exists in any other school districts or in the vicinity, the State commissioner of health shall notify the school authorities and it shall be their duty to exclude from their schools every child not furnishing a vaccination certificate from a duly certified physician.

A CRITICAL SITUATION

From Chicago, the progressive metropolis of the great middle west, the United States Commission on Industrial Relations sends out its recommendations among which are:

1. Incorporation among the rights guaranteed by the constitution of the unlimited right of individuals to form associations, not for the sake of profit, but for the advancement of their individual and collective interests.

2. Enactment of statutes specifically protecting this right and prohibiting the discharge of any person because of his membership in a labor organization.

3. Enactment of a statute providing that action on the part of an association of individuals not organized for profit shall not be held to be unlawful, where such action would not be unlawful in the case of an individual.

* * *

From Chicago, the progressive metropolis of the great middle west, the timely warning of its leading educator, Professor Charles H. Judd, Director School of Education, University of Chicago, goes forth:

I advocate professional organization because I see unworthy, selfish agencies rendering ineffective the work of earnest school officers who labor against conservatism and political influence and personal prejudice.

Let us realize that if we do not organize more compactly for professional ends we shall never gain the advantages which come from united action. If we act as individuals, we are like the single fagots of the fable, easily broken by the naked hand. If we will bind ourselves together we shall be strong.

....No profession can be organized from without. It is characteristic of a profession that its highest attributes arise from within....It is an impeachment of American educators that they have not perfected the strongest professional organization in the world....how long will it be before we realize that a profession must be self made, and that the making of a profession means organized effort,

and that organized effort is needed every day for the protection of great professional interests.

Anticipating the fundamental recommendations of the Industrial Commission and the sound advice of Professor Judd, several hundred far-sighted teachers of Chicago formed a Federation which has for its object not only the amelioration of their immediate conditions, but also the improvement of school conditions and methods of teaching whereby sound social, political, and economic doctrine is to be inculcated in the hearts and minds of their children. BUT, again

* * *

From Chicago, the progressive metropolis of the great middle west, comes a press despatch to the effect that THE TEACHERS FEDERATION IS TO BE SUPPRESSED AND THE LEADERS OR OFFICERS OF SAID FEDERATION ARE TO BE DEPRIVED OF THEIR POSITIONS. Why? Because—

The big business interests fear the teachers, for they know that the teachers can inculcate the right principles and the proper knowledge of affairs into the minds of the children. They know that these right principles spell the downfall of their power. They know that the alliance of the teachers with organized labor means that these teachers will be awake to the problems of the day, will be able better to understand the questions at issue, and will so be able to teach the children what is right.—Margaret Haley, Business agent of the Federation, in *THE PUBLIC*, Sept. 8, 1915.

A teachers' organization that has the courage to fight the sinister influence of corrupt business and corrupt politics may be depended upon to offer a stiff fight in defense of its undisputed constitutional rights and privileges, guaranteed by municipality, state, and nation. The fight is an important one. Both sides are marshalling their forces for a decisive combat.

Fortunately, the teachers of Chicago have, as did the teachers of Cleveland, the moral and material backing of or-

ganized labor. The Chicago Federation of Labor adopted the following resolution:

RESOLVED, That organized labor hereby expresses its determination that the rights of labor and of citizenship shall not be abridged or annulled by the board of education, and that the Teachers' Federation, an organization of demonstrated effectiveness in the protection of the public from grievous mismanagement or corruption in present or future boards of education, shall not be destroyed.

This makes Chicago the stage upon which is to be enacted a life and death drama of national and international importance. The Chicago teachers are forced to assume the chief role. Some of us, no doubt, are hard at work preparing as understudies. The rest of us, interested spectators and ardent sympathizers, must adopt the policy of "watchful waiting."

* * *

It is fair to assume, in the absence of information to the contrary, that school commissioners are quite as devoted to the welfare of the children as are the teachers. On them devolves the duty of appointing teachers, and therefore they should have the power of removing in case of incompetence or other disqualification. But we cannot see that membership in a federation, a church, a fraternal order or even in a dancing club can be held, *a priori*, to constitute incompetence for the teaching business. Unless we get information to the contrary, we shall continue to assume that those Chicago commissioners are honest and intelligent public servants. But, unless we get information to the contrary, we shall also continue to assume that they are stupidly transferring to the conduct of public business the short-sighted and anti-social policies that they apply in their private affairs.

Above all let us seek the details of the case. If there are any lessons to learn, let us show the world that we are as good students as teachers. And if "preparedness" be the final lesson, let us make the best of it.

THE CHICAGO SCHOOL FIGHT

The Teachers' Federation of Chicago has long been a thorn in the side of privileged business. For nearly two decades it has checked or exposed many a well-laid plan of private interests to secure unearned profits at the expense of the school children. Beginning with a successful fight that secured for the school fund taxes withheld by public service corporations and State Street landowners, it has continued its good work to the present day. Of course, it is disliked. Tax-dodging monopolists consider its course offensive. So do the Chicago Tribune and the Daily News, since the Federation will not allow the public to forget how school land has been leased to them on terms that rob the school children. So do those lessees who are to be forced to fight in court for the favors mysteriously granted them by the official appraisers. So do the interests that are planning to make vocational training in the schools serve their selfish purposes. Moreover, plans are now being laid by private individuals to grab some of the city's school lands in outlying districts. It is certain that the first step toward carrying out these plans will be met with opposition from the Teachers' Federation. Hence the necessity of destroying the Federation, or at least compelling it to make a fight for existence, in order to keep it from interfering with the plans of privileged business. So the first move has been made in the Board of Education to precipitate such a fight. Citizens who are more interested in an efficient school system than in the plans of privileged business, will do well to come to the aid of the Federation.—THE PUBLIC, Sept. 3, 1915.

IDEALISM AND RESIGNATION

IT APPEARS from the press dispatches that the session of the National Education Association at Oakland, Cal., in the month of August, was enlivened by a political fight, possibly it was a scramble, for the office of President for the ensuing year. Little as we know of the facts at this time and distance, we do know what the crowd thinks when a professional political promoter quits the game

at which he has been beaten. Much as we feel chagrined at the spectacle of that great office of our strongest professional organization being regarded by anyone as a prize package to be won by the methods of the political prize ring, we do not begrudge the crowd the satisfaction of smiling.

The personnel of a teachers' professional organization cannot and should not be determined even by the organization itself. But at times of upheaval, or when critical issues arise in the natural course of work, members, and even a single member, should have the right to say, and should not hesitate to say, that certain *ideals*, and not certain *persons*, are of preëminent importance to the life and the work of the organization. It is not unusual for prominent individuals to interfere seriously with the development of idealism in a professional organization of any kind by the threat of resignation or schism. The only wise course for an organization to pursue under circumstances of that kind is to provide an easy way out for any that wish to go. If it so happens that idealism walks out with the seceders, very good. Idealism will live if somebody stands with it and for it; but it will perish if somebody's threat forces a feeble compromise.

It is not at all unpractical to regard the resignation of discontented members of an organization as a very useful event. If the discontented ones have shown that they are not interested in the professional purpose of the organization, then the professional purpose can better be attained without them. Numbers and their money mean little. And it is very useful if in a fat and lazy hive there are enough busy bees to get out and make a fresh start for the species somewhere else. Whichever way we look at the situation, we ought not to feel discouraged if the defeated candidate for the presidency of the N E A has resigned from the organization, and taken others with her.

THE DOMINATION OF ANTIQUITY IN ENGLAND

IT seems to be beyond dispute that the study, firstly of Latin, and much more recently of Greek, were followed in our Universities and in grammar schools, not as educational exercises in the use of language, but as keys to unlock the store-rooms—the books—in which the knowledge of the ancients was contained. So long as these keys were needed, it was reasonable enough that every well-educated man should spend such time as was necessary in providing himself with the keys. But now that the store-rooms are empty—now that their contents have been appropriated and scattered far and wide—in all languages of civilization, it seems to be merely an unreasoning continuation of superannuated custom to go on with the provision of these keys. Such, however, is the force of habit that it continues: new and ingenious reasons for the practise are put forward, whilst its original object is entirely forgotten.

In the first place, it has come to be regarded as a mark of good breeding, and thus an end in itself, for a man to have some first-hand acquaintance with Latin and Greek authors, even when he knows no other literature. It is a fashion, like the wearing of a court dress. This cannot be held to justify the employment of most of the time and energy of youth in its acquirement.

A second reason which is now put forward for the practise is that the effort and labour expended on the provision of these keys—even tho it is admitted that they are useless—are a wonderful and incomparably fine exercise of the mind, fitting it for all sorts of work. A theory of education has been enunciated which fits in with this defense of the continued attempt to compel young men to acquire a knowledge, however imperfect, of the Latin and Greek languages. It is held that what is called 'training the mind' is the chief, if not the only proper, aim of education; and it is declared that the continuation of the study of those once useful, but now useless, keys—Latin and Greek—is an all-sufficient training. If this theory were in accordance with the

facts, the conclusion in favour of giving a very high place to the study so recommended would be inevitable. But the facts do not support this theory. Clever youths are taken and pressed into the study of Greek and Latin, and we are asked to conclude that their cleverness is due to these studies.

On the other hand, we maintain that the study of grammar may be, when properly carried out, a valuable exercise, yet that it is easily converted into a worthless one, and can never in any case take the place of various other forms of mental training, such as the observation of natural objects, the following out of experimental demonstration of the qualities and relations of natural bodies, and the devising and execution of experiment as the test of hypothesis. Apart from 'training' there is the need for providing the mind with information as well as method. The knowledge of Nature is eagerly assimilated by young people, and no training in mental gymnastics can be a substitute for it or an excuse for depriving the young of what is of inestimable value and instinctively desired.—Professor E. RAY LANKESTER, in *The Kingdom of Man*.

SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY

• STEADY PROGRESS is being made in converting the school into a conscious instrument of community action.

The new law in Ohio permits the use of all school grounds and buildings, as well as all other buildings maintained by taxes or controlled by the state, for the education and entertainment of the people, young and old, as well as for the "discussion of all topics tending to the development of personal character and of civic welfare." Responsible organizations, or groups of seven or more citizens may obtain the use of such buildings or grounds, and boards of education are authorized to employ leaders for civic or social centers, and to give lectures and instruction.

COLUMBUS PROBABLY leads in making use of the new opportunities. Special

provision for a social center has been made in one of the parks, including an auditorium for political and social gatherings, a completely equipped gymnasium and a kitchen for picnickers. Similar provisions are being planned in three other parts of the city. There has also been established a children's theater maintained at public expense, as an educational and recreational agency.

In Oregon a new law provides for the free use of public schoolhouses as civic centers.

In Kansas, a new law authorizes cities in the first class to tax for public recreation and playgrounds.

In Illinois, a new law authorizes the use of school buildings for recreational, social and civic meetings.

An Act of the last Congress will permit the use of public school buildings and grounds in the District of Columbia for supplementary educational purposes, civic meetings for the discussion of public questions, social centers, centers of recreation, and of public school playgrounds during the school year and during vacation, under such regulations as may be prescribed by the board of education.

Milwaukee has installed 25 of the finest type of pool or billard tables in its public-school buildings.

A free moving picture show is given every night at the Public High School of Santa Rosa, Cal.

To discover and train leaders in community work, there will be opened in New York this season a Training School for Community Center Workers. In addition to supervised field work, there is offered direct instruction, a series of conferences and a seminar course "which will focalize on the community center problem the light from wider interests and from the theoretical sciences—from psychology, economic history and economics, and sociology." Among the topics to be discussed in the conferences will be "the school as an agency in social development," and "the local approach to government."

BOOK NOTES

Order your books thru The American Teacher

MENTALLY DEFECTIVE CHILDREN, *Alfred Binet and Thomas Simon M. D.* Translated by *W. B. Drummond* Pp. xi. 179. New York, Longmans, Green & Company, 1914. \$1.

THOSE WHO have discarded empiricism in favor of scientific determination in education will appreciate this authorized translation of the work of Messrs Binet and Simon. The critical literature on their Intelligence Tests is so extensive and often contradictory that English reading students have often been non-plussed. The availability of the original matter in English will help to clear away many misconceptions and lead to clearer thinking. In his excellent introduction Professor Darroch emphasizes the point often overlooked that the tests are only a "first means" by which backward children may be singled out. The final disposition of any case is to be made by the teacher, the psychologist, and the physician. The three main chapters of the book are devoted respectively to these three factors: 1. "Some features of the psychology of defectives," 2. "Pedagogical examination of defective school children," and 3. "The medical examination of defectives." The concluding chapter—The educational and social returns of schools and classes for defectives—is particularly enlightening. A strong plea is made for careful management and proper equipment of schools and classes for defectives. The optimistic conclusion is, "We shall grope, we shall make attempts, certainly we shall commit mistakes, which will not matter very much if only we have the mind to recognize them and the courage to make them right." For practical purposes the appendix is of great value. Here are given the tests of 1911 together with general and specific instruction for administering them.

TYPES OF TEACHING, *Lida B. Earhart Ph. D.* Pp. xv. 277. New York, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1915. \$1.25.

THE AUTHOR of *Types of Teaching* has rendered a distinct service to students of pedagogy by giving a very clear and well arranged

exposition of the recognized modes of teaching. The book is not the result of an extended research in one particular line of thought. Rather is it a summary—clear, concise, correct—of various modes of pedagogical procedure that have interested educators for a long time. There is nothing new. No claim for originality is made. Its strongest point is its pedagogical arrangement and presentation. To the student in training and to the busy teacher this book must prove of real value.

A notable feature is the appendix, which contains about ten model lesson plans. Last but not least is an admirable outline of the book—a distinct aid to intelligent study. The exercises and bibliography at the end of each chapter are excellent.

THE SCHOOL AND THE NEW CITIZEN

IN A FEW cities the boards of education are conducting citizenship classes with the co-operation of the courts of naturalization. Los Angeles has perfected this phase of "community civics" to a high degree. Several citizenship receptions are held under the auspices of various patriotic organizations during the year for the students who attend the naturalization classes of the public schools. On these occasions, which may be called commencement exercises, each successful naturalized applicant is made very proud when his name is called and he receives his "certificate of citizenship" as a diploma.

Naturalization courts and school authorities working hand in hand can make these men citizens not only by law but in fact as well.—Circular, *U. S. Bureau of Education*.

IF only we could make young persons acquainted in some way with their hidden mental and moral powers, what a race of men and women might we not have, without waiting for that uncertain day when the inheritance of the race will be improved!—Professor EDWIN G. CONKLIN, in *Heredity and Environment in the Development of Men*.

THE SUPERVISOR SOLILOQUIZES

Am I a gentleman?

Am I a sneak?

Do I stand behind doors and listen?

Do I greet a teacher politely on entering the room?

Or, do I, without knocking, suddenly open the door and make an "I'm here!" entrance?

Do I make my exit with a smile, a pleasant "good-day"—

Or, do I leave as if oblivious to the existence of teacher and children?

Am I a scholar?

Do I know my subject?

Do my visits bring anything helpful and uplifting to the earnest teacher?

Do I understand the work I am criticizing?

Or am I just a plain, every-day bluff?

Am I human?

Do I treat teachers as my equals, as fellow-workers in the same honorable profession?

Do I humiliate the teacher before her class—by yelling at her, by criticizing her audibly, by interrupting the recitation, by conducting myself boorishly?

Are my adverse criticisms limited to picayune fault-finding?

Do I base my estimate of the teacher's classroom work upon cold, barren, pedagogical principles of methodology?

Or, do I make due allowance for the pulsating personal influence of the teacher upon the children?

Do I withhold deserved credit and public approval of good work?

Am I a human wet-blanket?

Do my visits take the steam and enthusiasm out of the class-room, leaving the teacher spineless, speechless, nerveless, hopeless?

Are my visits looked forward to by the teachers with fear and trepidation?

Do I mark the teachers in the spirit of "Now I've got you?"

Am I courageous?

Do I truckle to my superiors?

Do I bulldoze my subordinates?

Am I honest?

Do I so treat the teachers that the resultant high-pressure work rebounds to my own profit and renown as a supervising officer?

Do I make the original class-room devices and ideas of the teachers enhance my reputation as a Leading Educator?

Do I mark "ex parte" and make my reports without first appraising the teachers of their contents?

Do I strive to make the schools of which I so proudly boast in public good enough for my own children to attend?

Some teachers still require rules, definitions, and poems to be committed before any attempt is made to understand them. Many of those who attempt to use the development method are failing because they are training their pupils to guess, and because they do not clinch a principle or rule after it has been developed. Many pupils are weak because certain fundamental facts that are necessary for further advancement have not been drilled into the system to such an extent as to be used automatically.

100%

IN EVERY one of the 54 grammar schools, of Portland, Ore., there is a Parent-Teachers Association. Men as well as women are members of these associations, and three have business men as presidents. School excursions form an important feature of the work. Brick yards, lumber yards, and chair factories are visited by the pupils. A committee of 16 men have special charge of this work, one of whom accompanies the children on every trip.