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Riverside Educational Monographs

EDITED BY HENRY SUZZALLO
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# DEMOCRACY'S HIGH SCHOOL

BY

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PHILADELPHIA

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# FOREWORD

In February, 1913, I chanced to read three articles on the American high school which at once impressed me with their social insight. I asked their author, Principal William D. Lewis, of the William Penn High School, Philadelphia, to call on me. His enthusiastic vision of the immense possibilities for real democratic service to be performed by the public high schools of the country led me to say in *The Outlook:* "Every man and woman interested in boys and girls — and what man or woman is not? — ought to read what Principal Lewis himself says; for no brief sketch of mine will do even the remotest justice to the way in which he grips and expounds the vital need of our high school and college education — the need that it shall relate to life, and shall offer to each divergent soul the chance that soul needs to train itself, along its own lines, for useful citizenship, domestic and public, in this great seething, straining democracy of ours."

I am glad that in the present volume Mr. Lewis has amplified the articles that I first read, and that

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he has added others so as to express his pedagogical and social creed more fully. The vital thing about this book is that it shows just where the high schools which the American people are supporting can render a far larger service than the mere inculcation of knowledge. It presents the problem of the school from the point of view of the boy and girl rather than from that of the subject, and shows how completely this change in viewpoint transforms our traditional thought of the school.

The fact that this book appears in a series devoted to pedagogy ought not to limit its readers to the teaching profession. It is of most interest to the average plain citizen who thinks of the future, and who is anxious that the activities through which the collective and coöperative forces of society find expression shall give their largest possible service.

Our progress in educational efficiency must come from two sources: from the great natural leader who happens to be an educator, and from the ordinary citizen who to common sense adds some power of vision, and who realizes the relation of the school to society. In pedagogy as in every other walk of life great natural leaders are scarce. Therefore the ordinary citizen of vision and common sense must concern himself with the changing problem of the school, and must insist that pedantic tradition does not keep our schools from performing their full public service. Neither pedagogue nor citizen can fail to gain from Mr. Lewis's discussion a clearer vision of the place the school must fill in solving our great democratic problems if these are to be solved aright.

Theodore Roosevelt.

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# EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

For more than a century we have been trying to make our school system more democratic, which is merely to say that we have been striving to equalize educational opportunity in America.

At first the chief problem lay in cheapening the cost of education to the individual child. In the fulfillment of this program, schools were everywhere established so as to be ready of access. Rate bills for instruction were abolished. Employers of children and exploiting parents were restrained, by compulsory school attendance acts, from depriving youth of its educational opportunity. Institutions for higher training were also established by the state,— high schools, colleges, and universities. Thus schools of every grade were made available to the poor as to the rich. If one had the requisite ambition he could find everywhere open public schools. Mental ability and economic pressure seemed to be limiting conditions only beyond the elementary school.

But it was soon discovered that the privilege of education was more apparent than real. It is one thing to find free entrance into a public school and it is another to profit by attendance therein. The fact was that the schools offered so little to some children that they were not even brought to school. As traditionally organized, ordinary school teaching could not do much for the blind, the deaf-mutes, and the feeble-minded. They were in effect left out of the scheme of public education, though the boast had been made that there was a school open for every child in America. The struggle has been to make the boast real. Soon, through special administration and special methods of instruction, these unfortunates really received an education in special schools. Next the schoolmaster passed to another though less unfortunate group who were the incomplete failures of the public schools — to the backward, the anæmic, the delinquent, the crippled, and the foreign. These, too, needed some particular care that education might do for them what had been promised. Special classes were organized for them alongside of the regular grades. And last, the educator's scrutiny came to that vast group which we had long called "average children." Here the statistics of school attendance revealed the tragedies of school elimination and school retardation. This great mass of undefective children proved not to be homogeneous; they presented a wide variation in degree and type of mind which had not been adequately taken into account. These, too, had to have some special consideration. It was given. Every expansion of the courses of study and the methods of teaching in the regular grade classrooms is an attempt to reach some previously neglected ability or interest. The organization of the junior high school for those who are at complete ease in the traditional school, and the establishment of pre-vocational intermediate schools for those who usually leave school at the fifth or sixth school year, are simply the last special efforts of the administrator to fit the lower reaches of the school system to the varying needs of human beings.

The cheapening and the popularizing of elementary education have had one effect bearing large consequences for higher education. They have deposited at the doors of the high school a mass of boys and girls, larger in number and more divergent in ability than any group it has ever handled before. Following a long-sanctified custom, the high school immediately proceeded to pick and choose those who would fit its traditional standards, rejecting all those whose dominant needs it scorned to serve. But the pile of human beings scrapped by the high school became so large as to attract attention. The right of high schools to be so highly and so narrowly selective was questioned. In the face of protest and even revolt, the high school had to change. Like the elementary school of two decades ago, it began to modify the spirit of its administration, to expand its curriculum, and to change its methods of instruction, so that every kind of mind and every degree of ability might find its chance for extended intellectual growth in the new opportunities and encouragements of a modern and democratic school.

The nature of the present-day movement to democratize our high schools may be best understood by a consideration of the typical cases of personal and social failure with which these schools must be charged and by a statement of those newer policies which are designed to substitute a broad teaching efficiency for a narrow academic tradition. These are here presented by the thoroughly socialized master of a great municipal secondary school, whose experiences and experiments afford concrete evidence of the soundness of his conception of a modern democratic high school.

# DEMOCRACY'S HIGH SCHOOL

## I

## A SOCIAL VIEW OF THE HIGH SCHOOL

The irrepressible conflict between progress and tradition has at last reached the American high school. For years there has been a steadily increasing dissatisfaction with the results of a course of study of almost exclusively academic content that sent from the school as failures many of the pupils, particularly boys, who either could not or would not apply themselves to a curriculum consisting mainly of memorizing textbooks. This curriculum has failed to enlist the interest of motor-minded pupils because its relation to their lives was at best uncertain and remote. The unrest of the boys and girls, once attributed to youthful perversity, has at last found a response in public sentiment.

The awakened civic consciousness of the nation has tended to emphasize popular discontent with the high school. In a half-articulate way the public has known that the fundamental reason for the annual expenditure of approximately a half-billion of dollars for schools is the production of a better citizenship than could be had without that expense. Along with the scrutiny of our other institutions has come the insistent question, "Are our high schools producing this improved citizenship?"

Then, too, there has come a half-conscious recognition of the individualistic aim of the purely academic school, and of its pedagogical shortcomings, as well as of its non-social ideals as measured by the new conception of public service. The boy who remained in the school only a short time often carried into the practical affairs of life no superiority in efficiency over the grammar school graduate. Indeed, his year or two of perfunctory compliance in an order of life that never really gripped him had frequently developed a habitual lassitude that had to be overcome by a series of convulsive jolts that the world of affairs knows only too well how to give. The boy who entered practical life after completing the high school course found that his four years had given him little that was useful, — not even a mastery of direct, forceful English, — although it had given him a beclouded haze of Latin endings, *ad-ante-con's,* and a jumble of physically impossible German genders. This haze rapidly evaporated into thin air and became a part of the culture which consists of the things we have forgotten. About all the graduate really had was a residuum of "mental discipline" which at its best functioned in a habitual persistence. On the other hand, habits detrimental to both culture and discipline were often formed, if we are to believe Professor Paul Hanus, who says: "During the school period aversion and evasion are more frequently cultivated than power and skill through the forced pursuit of permanently uninteresting subjects — subjects for which the learner has no capacity. When that does not happen, the pernicious habit of being satisfied with inadequate or partial achievement is very likely to be the result. In neither case does the individual develop his real capacity, nor does he acquire right habits." [1]

The boy who went to college from the high school was practically always lost to the home community. He swelled the already plethoric ranks of the "learned professions" or moved to the large cities. He seemed to be the only one the course of study really fitted, yet it was a question whether either he or the community had profited by the expensive gift bestowed upon him.

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[1] *Educational Aims and Educational Values*, p. 11.

If the service of the school to the boys was vague and uncertain, its practical value to the great mass of girls approached absolute zero. It has long been evident that the girl who is graduated from the traditional high school is neither better fitted thereby for the duties of a wife, home-maker, and mother, nor efficiently trained to meet the practical problem of self-support. Society, therefore, is beginning to see that her education is very often a mistake both for itself and for the girl.

The recognition of the shortcomings of our individualistic social philosophy has made many people look at our schools from an entirely new point of view. Within the last few years our national life has become excessively complicated. The cost of living has perhaps nearly doubled. Enormous aggregations of capital have practically assumed the functions of government through their alliance with political systems. Justice against "malefactors of great wealth" has become increasingly difficult to secure because of their command of the best legal talent, the emphasis of our jurisprudence upon property rights, and the extreme technicality of American legal procedure. Class lines have become more and more closely drawn, with property rather than birth as the mark of distinction. For these and many other similar reasons the American people — rarely the American pedagogues — have begun to see that the task of the one completely socialized agency for human betterment is not to give the brilliant John and Henry advantages over the phlegmatic James and Tom, but to give to each the type of training most likely to enable him to become the most intelligent, conscientious, and efficient citizen possible with his mental and physical endowments and limitations. The community — big and little — has become wisely selfish in recognizing in its schools not a philanthropy but a coöperative agency for social service.

It is a platitude that young people get their adjustment to the social order during the period of adolescence, which coincides roughly with the high school years. During this time they awaken to new interests and assume new responsibilities, change again and again their point of view, form their life purposes, formulate their standards for judging people and institutions, establish their ideals, and determine their various personalities by the thoughts that man thinketh in his heart.

During these years, then, will be decided their attitude toward society. If they emerge from the high school with an indifferent, selfish, *laissez-faire* philosophy, they will become either the unthinking victims or the plunderers of our devil-take-the-hindmost social order.

Evidently there are two ways in which the boys and girls in the high schools can be trained in citizenship and in right social thinking — first, through the curriculum, and second, through participation in the organization and management of the school as a social unit.

The school can contribute to the intelligence of its rising citizenship by drawing directly upon that large fund of present-day social, political, and economic knowledge that has made the low-priced magazine the tremendous power it has become in our national life within the last fifteen years. Underlying the lurid exaggerations of the muckraker there has been a foundation of fact without which his attacks would have been of interest mainly to the courts that railroaded him to prison.

That it may contribute to real civic intelligence the school, away down in the elementary grades, should begin to teach the nature of the coöperative functions of society. For example, the pupils should learn in a simple way the functions of the policeman, the fireman, the street-cleaner. They should understand that the streets belong to the people and that they are loaned in part to transit companies, and to telegraph, telephone, lighting, and water companies. They should see the public nature of these corporations; should know that in many communities these functions are exercised directly by the people as represented by their government. As they come into the advanced grades of the grammar school, they should learn about the abuses against which the people must defend their own interests. The alliance between corrupt public officials and public-service corporations should be shown up as a conspiracy against public welfare that affects directly the comfort and prosperity of every citizen.

All study of civics, history, and other forms of social science should clarify the pupils' understanding of the social forces and problems of his immediate environment. For example, civics, instead of studying governmental organization beginning with the Constitution of the United States, should begin with community functions in District Number Ten or the Nineteenth Ward. The constitution is complicated, abstract, remote, uninteresting. The community functions of the neighborhood, village, ward, and city are concrete, simple, immediate, and personal. They explain a thousand experiences that have been unintelligible and furnish the pupil a point of contact with the conversation of his elders, the comments of the newspapers, and the discussions in the magazines. Moreover, this approach to the study of civics leads immediately and inevitably to the larger social problems with which the citizen must be familiar if he is to be a helpful and useful community asset.

From this type of instruction it is a simple step to an understanding of the great national questions that are claiming the serious thought of every patriot. The trusts, the bosses, — big and little, — the control of legislation through caucus rule, and the influence upon the big leaders by the "interests," capital and labor, social legislation, lobbies, — legitimate and otherwise, — all of these and hundreds of other questions are vital to the civilization we are building. Our young people must understand this, because under a despotism the government may be better than the sum total of the citizenship, while under a democracy the government may be worse but can never be better. This is the fundamental reason for our expensive public school system.

All around us are concrete problems whose study cannot fail to promote the right attitude of mind on the part of the pupils. To cite a few examples, our boys and girls in the high schools could with great interest and profit study the housing conditions in the poorer parts of the city, the effects of child labor, family budgets for various incomes. They could in a more or less anonymous way analyze their own family expenses and the cost and profit elements of commodity prices, and their periodic advances, such as the recent twenty-five cents a ton on coal and last week's two cents a pound on meat. They could learn to use the tables of the reports of the Census Bureau and of the various departments of the Government. They could vitalize their physiology and hygiene by the examination of bakeshops, markets, restaurants, and hotels. They could profitably as young citizens acquaint themselves with the actual problems of local government. The peering eyes of a few thousand high-school-boy investigators from all classes of the community might often discover the snake-trails of public dishonesty. But the prevention of graft would be only a by-product. The social thinking and the standards of community righteousness would be tremendously improved, not only in the future voters in school, but also in their parents and older associates.

Nor would the aroused public spirit of youth fail in its interest in national affairs. Their debating clubs would echo a real interest in the problems of control or ownership of natural monopolies. Problems like the tariff, "pork-barrel" appropriations, pension frauds, conservation, irrigation, woman suffrage, initiative, referendum, and recall will be the more readily understood by those who have become accustomed to think in terms of community welfare as applied to their immediate environment; and the spirit of patriotic devotion to the public service that is being evidenced by the present aggressive fight for righteous government will awaken enthusiastic response from them because of their knowledge of conditions.

No less valuable for training in citizenship than this study of present-day civic, social, and economic life is the study of history from the modern social point of view. Here again, however, there must come a revolution in our traditional method. Go into a history class in almost any high school and what do you find? Ancient history — fact after fact painfully recited from a book; hear pupils parrot off details about cuneiform writing, Egyptian hieroglyphics, the wars of the Assyrians, Chaldeans, Persians, the struggles between Athens, Sparta, and Thebes, the organization of the Roman State, — the *comitia curiata*, the *comitia centuriata;* see their diagrams of a Roman camp, and listen to their minute description of the Greek phalanx and the Roman legion; follow the details of the Punic wars; listen to the facts about Rome's far-flung dominion, the fact of its internecine strife, the fact of its change to an empire, the fact of its fall before the Goths and Vandals. In all this you will listen in vain for a single word of application of these multitudinous facts to conditions of to-day; you will hear none of the obvious parallelism between the causes that overthrew the Roman State and those that threaten the integrity of our own institutions. Here are a few examples of the applications that could be made.

In the last two centuries of the Roman Empire the population gathered rapidly into cities, huge accumulations of wealth promoted class distinctions and hatred between rich and poor, marriages became relatively fewer and the birth-rate rapidly declined, the land came into the hands of large proprietors, and the former landowners either became serfs or moved to the cities; in the cities independent business was largely monopolized by the very wealthy, who hired the former small merchants. Divorce became easy, religion lost its compelling power, morals were corrupted. Does this sound like a summary from a muck-raking magazine? At least we may congratulate the Romans who fell before the rude invaders of the German forests that they did not have the abuses of stock-gambling, the coal trust, the food trust, or the tariff, juggled back and forth by partisan politics and local interests.

Suppose, now, we come at our Roman history from the modern viewpoint. Shall we not see in the Gracchi the sturdy fighters for the people's rights in our public life to-day? Shall we not recognize in Julius Cæsar the most consummate, even if the most patriotic of bosses? Shall we not discover in the agrarian troubles the twentieth-century fight for public control of natural monopolies? May we not hope to see our servile wars fought and won with the ballot, and a government for and by the people emerge instead of the rule of a Nero of high finance or a riot of demagogic confiscation and proscription?

Shall we study history for history's sake or for our own sake — for the sake of our social and economic welfare? History is no museum of antiquities. It is a storehouse of political wisdom for him who will take the trouble to understand. Every boy and girl in our schools can be made to interpret the past in terms of the present and the present in terms of the past and to take an intense delight in the process as soon as our schools really discover why they should teach history. The aim of our whole history-and-politics group of studies should be to put an enacting clause into our present complacent assumption that the American voter knows something about the vital issues that he is called upon to determine with his ballot.

The high school can hasten the process of social thinking in other ways, however. Its institutional democracy can become a habit of life in the youths who are just forming their life habits. To this end it must first abolish every kind of snobbish society and fraternity. Here is a case that is typical of their working.

Mazie was the daughter of a mill foreman who had the American faith in an education. This faith, we ought to observe, was pretty much all based on a blind belief that somehow an education would enable his girl to have an easier time than had fallen to the lot of her father and mother. He loved Mazie and was glad to sacrifice for her. The girl entered the high school, and at first was dazed and then charmed by the fine equipment, the systematic organization, the new studies, and the crowds of strangers all intent upon a variety of interests novel to her. After a month or two, however, Mazie began to be aware that she was not "in it." Friends of the grammar-school days dropped her. New acquaintances suddenly became absorbed in other friends. She heard rumors of secret societies and fraternities and saw former companions wearing the mystic badges. When she made advances to these girls she was repelled with those sly, covert, cattish jabs by which the daughters of Eve time out of mind have vented their disapproval. Mazie did not tell even her mother why she left school; but her soul was scarred and hardened, and she was not helped along the road toward culture. Were the members of the societies and fraternities?

Mazie's experience illustrates the social training of the wrong kind that is going on in thousands of American high schools. The school fraternity and many of the exclusive literary societies are efficient schools of snobbery. Often they are worse. A certain fraternity in one high school was an example only a little worse in degree than hundreds of chapters all over the country. By confession of its members gambling, drunkenness, and even worse evils were incidental to the free access to private rooms by a group of boys too young to exercise proper self-control. When a boy began to show an indifferent attitude toward his work and an insolent arrogance toward authority, the teachers of that school always knew that he was being "rushed" by this fraternity.

The worst feature of the high school "frat" is the rooms. At best they become loafing-places and schools of cards and smoking. At worst they become schools of vice as dangerous as Fagin's. Here the ex-member who has time to loaf has an opportunity to teach to younger boys the evils that his leisure has learned. Freed as these rooms are from all effectual supervision, even if parents or teachers are invited to come, they foster snobbishness, loafing, and insubordination, if not gambling, drunkenness, and licentiousness.

Then the high school in its organization and discipline can teach the necessity of social thinking by means of the common interests of the school. Athletics, school publications, the lunchroom, and, in skillful hands, a large share of the school discipline can be made daily object-lessons in social coöperation. Formal plans, such as the school city, have often failed in high schools because they were substituted *ex cathedra* for the benevolent despotisms almost universal in school management. The history of such experiments often bears a close analogy to that of the Central American republics. But the valuable part of any such plan is the spirit of democracy and social coöperation at its basis; and this can be secured gradually, either with or without any formal organization.

Even the *ex-cathedra* type of social coöperation will work if the principal and the faculty of the school enjoy the confidence of the student body. Recently the school board of an Eastern city decreed, without consulting the principal, that the study rooms of the high school should be placed on a self-governing basis, and that all teachers should be withdrawn the following Monday. For a few days chaos reigned. Then the principal placed the problem fairly before the pupils. "There are to be no teachers in the study halls," said he. "Some of you want to do your work: you will have to see that disturbances cease." They ceased, and the pupils incidentally learned a valuable lesson in social coöperation.

In a certain high school the athletics and the school paper had fallen into the hands of a gang of grafters who were following Tammany methods of political bossism for individual profit. The principal got the facts and showed up the whole practice to the school. A new organization was effected, and money that had formerly gone for graft was put into decorations for the building. In a couple of years over twelve hundred dollars were thus spent.

In another school a reception was given to the wife of the Governor of the State. Numerous pageants, pantomimes, and allegories were given, every one of them originated, costumed, and executed by the pupils, with only advisory aid from the faculty. In another a May fête, consisting of songs, drills, dances, pageants, and scenes from plays, was carried on almost wholly by student initiative and administration. In this school there are twenty clubs, including current-events, social-service, dramatic, camera, student-welfare, lend-a-hand, besides those devoted to the various subjects of study. All these various activities, from the quelling of the disorder in the study rooms in the first school to the democratic clubs last mentioned, have been carried on by the pupils — often in response to faculty suggestion, to be sure, but always with a rich result in practical community coöperation. Illustrations might be indefinitely multiplied from the best schools in the country. It is notable that wherever these activities are strong the problem of discipline practically disappears. The pity is that such activities are not generally recognized for their direct value for training in citizenship, and encouraged as an essential part of the school life. If the schools exist for the purpose of producing a better citizenship, why should they not become laboratories of citizenship where the problems of the school community are solved? At the basis of these problems lie the same principles as are fundamental in the problems of the Town, City, State, and Nation.

At the high school age the pupils are coming into full realization of their social instincts. It is strange that we have been managing our high schools as if our pupils were to be citizens of a despotism where the highest virtue is unthinking obedience. This habit of rendering unthinking obedience to a government, no matter how beneficent, is exactly the habit most favorable to the party boss. The habit of loyalty to a fraternity or a society, even if its interests are contrary to those of the school, is a good foundation for loyalty to a political party, even if it becomes the tool of special interests working for public demoralization. Is it not clear, then, that one of the first duties of the public school is to make its charges intelligent concerning these questions that most vitally concern our community welfare? And is it not also clear that they should learn to apply the knowledge of coöperative social betterment imperatively demanded for their daily lives?

If our high schools are to teach these political, social, and economic truths, there must be a revolution in the program of studies and in the point of view from which every subject is approached. The tradition that every pupil entering the high school shall study algebra and a foreign language must give way to the larger public concern that every pupil must become intelligent concerning the facts of present-day life. Instead of insisting upon the deepening of our academic ruts, the school must stimulate the public intelligence, inculcate aggressive public righteousness, and exalt conscientious public service. Then it must offer a sufficient diversity of opportunity to permit intelligent choice in the lines of general preparation for the numerous vocations toward which widely differing individuals are drawn, including, of course, the professions for which alone our present course offers adequate preparation.

This diversity of opportunity will serve the public welfare because it will lead to the various types of trained service the public needs. The manager of a department store could not use advantageously a force of which seventy-five per cent were window-trimmers. In simple fairness a truly democratic school must open its doors of opportunity as wide to the future artisan, artist, merchant, and farmer as it does to the future doctor, lawyer, preacher, and teacher. But from the point of view of the public the chief reason for this extended opportunity is the imperative need of the community for trained men in every line of activity. At present thousands of men whom the Lord intended to follow plows and drive nails are gouging each other and mulcting the public in the shabby-genteel crush after patients, clients, and congregations. Pills and red tape are dispensed everywhere, but you must "bespeak a fortnight before" the man who can plant the garden or repair the storm windows. This is because our educational train has been through-scheduled for the professions, and the thousands who found that they did not care to reach this destination have been bowled off like mail sacks wherever it happened, instead of being comfortably landed where they ought to have gone.

It would be easy to suggest lines of school activity in the interest of this larger return to the community by enumerating a dozen kinds of trained service urgently needed. Specifically, however, a better answer can be had by a study of some phases of our decennial stock-taking in the Thirteenth Census. Such studies will reach widely different conclusions for different communities and will indicate a wholesome local variation in the educational program. The following facts furnish conclusive proof, for example, that one line of educated service is greatly needed, and point the way to a revision of the high-school curriculum in many localities that could not fail to be salutary.

The report of the Census of 1910 says: "It is a significant fact that between 1900 and 1910 the urban population increased 34.8 per cent and the rural population only 11.2 per cent." The total farm acreage, on the other hand, increased only 4.8 per cent. The report for all of the cereal products of the farm shows an increase in acreage of 3.5 per cent, in quantity produced 1.7 per cent, and in value 79.8 per cent. Less than 2 per cent increase in quantity brought nearly 80 per cent increase in cost.

Who paid this 80 per cent?

We all did. Why did not some part of this 80 per cent find its way into our individual pockets — yours and mine? Possibly because we were a part of the 34.8 per cent that had moved into the city. There are many causes for the increased cost of living. This is one of them.

How could the high schools improve this condition? They could teach the knowledge gained by the Department of Agriculture, which has shown in hundreds of cases all over the country an increase of from 25 to 100 per cent in crops raised under the scientific direction of its experts. There is ample room for this improvement, as witness the comparison of average crops to an acre in three staples raised by the United States and Germany: —

| | Wheat Bushels | Oats Bushels | Potatoes Bushels |
|---|---|---|---|
| United States | 14 | 29.4 | 92.7 |
| Germany | 29.8 | 51.5 | 200.8 |

Germany is producing about twice as much to the acre as America — not because she has better land but because she employs better methods. Our scientific agriculturists know these methods and we — the people — own the schools where these methods can be taught to our boys, who are the pupils.

Are we teaching the things our boys and girls need to know to become intelligent producers from the land? Here is an extract from the analysis of the subjects studied in 8097 high schools, as published in the report of the United States Commissioner of Education: —

| | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Latin, French and German | 82.64 |
| Algebra and geometry | 87.72 |
| Agriculture | 4.66 |
| Domestic economy | 3.78 |

If the Department of Agriculture can secure a gain of from 25 to 100 per cent in crops managed under its direction; if we have too few people in the country and too many in the city; if we are all suffering from high prices at least partly because of insufficient production from the land; and if the instruction in agriculture in our own high schools will tend to keep our boys and girls on the farms where we know the majority will be infinitely better off, and at the same time furnish us more food because they have learned improved methods of agriculture, — is it not pretty clear that we need a revolution in our high school curriculum?

The fact that the high schools are so exclusively bookish and academic, that they are practically college preparatory schools, keeps thousands of pupils every year from crossing their thresholds; but let us look at the results to those who actually enter. Statistics of the United States Bureau of Education show that 40.94 per cent of the pupils in 11,277 high schools are in the first year; 26.94 per cent in the second; 18.63 per cent in the third; and that 13.49 per cent are in the fourth. To be sure, the schools are not altogether responsible for this loss; but let us see if their procedure throws any light on these appalling vital statistics. The high schools of the State of New York are under the most complete supervision and the most thorough organization of any in the United States. Some notorious defects found elsewhere would be impossible there. The course is fairly representative of conditions in the States of the North and East. The standard of passing is low — only 60 per cent. For the most part, however, the purely academic nature of the curriculum still persists to such an extent that of all pupils taking the regents' examinations in January and June, 1913, only 71.2 per cent succeeded in passing. Evidently, a pupil whose interest cannot be engaged in the phonographic reproduction of a textbook would be wise to commit some crime that would take him to an institution for delinquents where he could secure the education and training he needs.

Is it not possible that, from the point of view of every boy and girl, our present courses have assumed purely intellectual interests that often do not exist? Can we not, by offering broader opportunities, meet the life needs of very many of the 87 per cent who now fail of graduation? Can we not build a broader foundation for community service and for the personal happiness of the many pupils who are now lost to us by the end of the first year?

Why does practically every first-year pupil take algebra and a foreign language? Why do any in the early part of the course take ancient history, a subject for which they have absolutely no apperceptive basis and which at best can be only a parrot recital of unintelligible facts? Why does their English course cover literature that is mostly away beyond their comprehension, and employ methods that produce a positive dislike for the great things in literature? Why is their science almost entirely dissociated from their everyday life? Because the course of study, the methods of teaching, and the syllabi are dictated by the colleges. Let me emphasize it again. Practically all of the boys and girls in the school are forced to take subjects taught on these exclusively college preparatory lines because every subject in the majority of high schools is taught that way! Yet over 90 per cent of the pupils will never go to college!

The American people have committed themselves to a scheme of universal democratic education. They have undertaken this task, not as a philanthropy, but as a means of preserving and perfecting their democratic institutions. They have no concern for academic traditions evolved from a scheme of education aimed to serve an aristocratic or leisure class. They care about the social thinking of the rising generation, about their standards of civic righteousness, about their efficiency in government — in doing together the things that all the people must do together. As communities they care that the schools turn out a product that can render the economic service that the community needs; and as individuals they care a great deal about their boys and girls. All the boys and girls should be educated. Those who need the classics and the higher mathematics should have these subjects; but the doors of the schools supported by all the people should not be slammed in the faces of those of the people's children who care nothing about the classics and the higher mathematics. What is most important of all is that the present criticism and unrest in education, as in all other lines of social activity, shall not subside until reasonable public demands are adequately met.

# II

## THE HIGH SCHOOL AND THE BOY

The school loafer is a deplorably ubiquitous fact in practically every high school of the purely academic type. He is proof against all pedagogical pleas and threats and cajolings, he is the despair of his parents, and the shining example of failure featured in every argument against the American high school. The only lesson he is learning thoroughly is how to evade all useful work. He speedily comes to accept himself as a failure, and toward him the habitual attitude of mind of the traditional schoolmaster is that he should be shoved out of the school as quickly as possible.

Undoubtedly this is the wisest course if the school cannot fasten his interests and enlist his efforts. The trouble is, however, that the school is quite as much to blame as the boy, and that it is in effect denying all educational opportunity to many boys of the best possibilities simply because it is exalting certain schoolmasterish notions of absolute values above the recognition of its real social problem which would surely be revealed by a scientific study of the function and duty of the public high school.

There is no real antagonism between the various forms of education urged by the most progressive advocates of a broader course of study and the content of our present curriculum except the exclusiveness of the latter. Even the most radical of the progressives will join in honoring the classics and the scheme of education for which they stand. He will honor the "dead" languages, crystallized into everlasting life by the immortal bards and philosophers at whose feet all succeeding ages have been enlightened. From these languages our seers have learned their own; from them they have absorbed the world-stories that all modern literatures have repeated in endless variation. The race has needed and still needs this type of education; but the revolutionized social and industrial conditions of to-day are forcing upon us a new type of education equally necessary. Hence the arraignment of our high schools by such eminent men as Mr. James J. Hill and the constant attacks from the pulpit, the platform, and the press.

The problems of the two types of education might be summarized as follows: —

| THE OLD SCHOOL SERVED — | THE NEW SCHOOL SERVES — |
|---|---|
| A few boys destined for the professions. | All sorts of boys destined for every occupation. |
| Boys made resourceful and industrious by farm work. | City boys, who have never been responsible for a single task. |
| Socially and mentally homogeneous sons of American parents. | Sons of every nation under heaven, as heterogeneous as an election-day crowd. |
| A few thousand boys zealous for learning in preparation for a definite life purpose. | A great many thousand boys, mostly unambitious and purposeless. |
| A simple social order, with few occupations and few problems. | A highly complex social order, with innumerable activities and interdependent problems. |

In spite of this contrast the academic high school of to-day is largely the old school. It is time for it to wake up to its new problem. The boy whose ambition brought him to the old school needed its vigorous book training. The difficulties of Latin and Greek set him a mental task commensurate with the physical trials he had overcome from tender years. If he proved able to cope with only physical difficulties he went back to the farm; so Latin and Greek performed excellent service as a fine-meshed sieve. If he found joy in mental achievement, as he had in the rough bodily struggle of the countryside, he went on to intellectual mastery, growing stronger with every victory. It was the problem of the old-time learning to make him a leader!

The immature boy, emerging from the eighth grade in the grammar school to-day, goes to the high school generally because his friends go there and because he has nothing better to do. He has no definite purpose, little ambition, no sense of personal responsibility, no resourcefulness. His life has been one long response to a thousand appeals to his desire for novelty and amusement. It is the problem of the new school still to train leaders, but its first problem is to make the best possible citizens of all.

Our first question in making useful citizens out of these youngsters is not how to teach them certain traditional studies. In no school subject is there a sacramental virtue that makes it an indispensable means of intellectual salvation. Let us remember, too, that we have boys of every kind of temperament, from every kind of home, with every kind of ability — and no two alike. The high school has a chance to help them for a period extending from a few months to four years. Their value to the community which is paying for the high school depends on their integrity, their economic efficiency, and their militant civic righteousness. Is it not a fair proposition that the school should study its raw material and the kind of product the market needs, and that it should turn out as nearly one hundred per cent of marketable goods as the conditions will permit?

The feelings of a typical youngster about to enter the high school and the motives that determine his choice of a course may be represented by some such diary as the following: —

"*January 31.* I am to enter high school tomorrow — one day more. They have an elevator down there, and an orchestra, and a school paper; and you have six teachers instead of one; and there are societies and fraternities — I wonder if they will rush me! And you have to take a foreign language and algebra; and they sometimes stand 'freshies' on their heads and put snow down their backs. And the goblin — I mean the principal — will get you if you don't watch out.

"*February 1.* I got up at five o'clock and went over to 'Red' Smith's. I kept thinking what the boys would do when they saw me in long pants; and every little while I had a queer feeling just at the top of my belt when I thought of going to high school. Well, the boss guy — they call him 'Blinker' — gave us a game of talk and told us where to go — and we went, or tried to; but I did n't always get there. I wonder what he'll say when he finds I did n't show up in two of my classes. There were five hundred of us freshies. I took Latin instead of German or French because 'Red' did — and his uncle is a preacher."

These immature boys have reached a convulsive change in their school lives, and now as never before need wise and alert individual guidance. If the high school is to give this it must first bridge the gulf between the grammar school and itself, and profit by all that the lower school has learned about every boy. The grammar school and the high school are coördinate parts of a big public agency working for the improvement of society. It would be about as reasonable for the buyers of a mercantile house to ignore the salesmen as it is for the high school to assume an air of independence — not to say of collegiate arrogance — toward the grammar school. As a rule, however, each of the schools goes its own way, with little notice of the other beyond an occasional complaint. About all that ever happens by way of real coöperation is a report from the grammar school as to how many pupils are going to the high school and sometimes how many have elected each language or course. If there were coöordination, the comments carried back to the grammar school by the boys about conditions, methods, and teachers in the high school would be a most illuminating and valuable opportunity for the latter institution to see itself as others see it.

Suppose we follow the fortunes of a typical group of a hundred high school freshmen. The grammar school principal was not infrequently a sort of combined father — or mother — confessor, social worker, and home missionary to the community. He has dealt with the children as individuals for eight or nine years, and knows the personal peculiarities of John and Frank. He has strengthened the feeble wills and confirmed the growing virtues by requiring a pretty faithful accounting every day for the daily task.

When they reach the high school these pupils are thrown at once on their own resources. They have been accustomed to prepare their lessons mostly in school under the teacher's eye, and they have had to "stay and make up" if the day's work was neglected. Each pupil was accountable to only one teacher, who saw that a proper balance was preserved between the various subjects and that the weak places were strengthened. Now they have four or five absolutely new subjects. They take their books home, sit down with them in the family circle, and, while trying to study, listen with one ear to the evening's gossip. Next day, if they fail to recite, they "get a zero" — an excellent preparation for another zero to-morrow, particularly when their zeros have plenty of good company. These zeros do their deadly work at report time and spell failure at the end of the term; but, like other kinds of future punishment, are more efficacious for vengeance than for reform. Each boy recites or fails to recite to five or six teachers, no one of whom knows how much study other teachers are requiring nor what kind of work the pupil is doing in other subjects. Every one of these teachers is a specialist in her branch of learning. She casts an eye of pity on the masses who are rotting in ignorance of her particular mystery; so her duty is "as plain as way to parish church." These teachers, moreover, are generally the raw recruits to the profession. Those whose experience has proved their success are given charge of the smaller classes of advanced pupils who are preparing for college. By these graduates the school is to be judged; therefore, if the teacher's ability is doubtful she is given freshmen, where her lack of skill will not show.

Another important fact about the freshman's teachers is that probably four fifths of them are women. Far be it from the writer to disparage the quality of instruction given by women teachers; it is probably fully up to the average of that imparted by men. We need women in boys' high schools to give the young barbarians some contact with the refining influences of femininity; but, as Rosalind ironically implied, you can have too much of a good thing. The male teacher, moreover, as a rule, has been a boy himself, and the boy needs his influence. Hence it seems most unfortunate that high schools should be so largely "manned by women." If the faculties could be composed of about equal numbers of men and women, of equally good personality, the service of the schools in really shaping future society would be infinitely enlarged.

Our boys are entering a new stage of life. They leave the home community and go downtown to school. Thus are opened up to them the thousand distractions of the center of the city — the streetcar ride, department stores, fakirs, moving-picture shows, vaudeville, poolrooms — and worse. In the school there are athletics, societies, the big study hall, the crowded corridors, the lunchroom, the gymnasium, and the school organization which often seems necessarily inexorable. To it they are not individuals, but a mass, too often subjected to the law of the survival of the fittest. This is unfortunate, because it often happens that the fittest do not survive, and that those capable of the largest growth are stunted because the school has a single treatment for all cases. Witness Edison, Darwin, Beecher, Emerson, Wagner, Seward, and many others whom the schools discarded as dunces.

Of our hundred boys, many are hopelessly lost, so far as the first term's work goes, at the end of the first six weeks. Then they begin to drop out.

According to the statistics of the United States Commissioner of Education, 41 boys will not return the second year; 62 of the original 100 will not return the third, and 76 will not return the fourth year. Of the 24 left, somewhere from 5 to 10 will go to college. Here, then, are the American Beauty roses, for which we have pinched off 90 to 95 buds. And after all our trouble the college tells us that of these only one is really a rose and that the rest are sunflowers.

The disaster to many who stay in the school is greater than to those who are shoved out. "I must keep my eye on that gang!" remarked the principal of a high school. The gang comprised about a dozen boys; and the sudden hush as the principal and his companion passed did not indicate a lack of interesting material for conversation. That afternoon the water was turned on at the emergency hose in the hall near the office, and the floor was drenched with six or eight barrels of water before it could be turned off. That gang had four interests in high school in about the following order: first, the "frats"; second, athletics; third, deviltry; and fourth, girls, — all very human; none particularly fraught with educational or cultural possibilities. Worse than this, that gang, composed of school loafers, is typical of nearly every high school in the country.

The loafer is very frequently a chronic truant. Here is a case that you, Mr. Principal, will recognize. Reginald Buehler sent word that he had gone to work and you took his name off the roll. Two weeks later — or was it six? — you found out, quite by accident, that his parents supposed he had been in school every day. He had left home at the usual time and in all respects had been a model of punctuality. His mother had found a queer piece of cubical chalk in his pocket and had wondered at the change in school supplies since she was a girl! Once or twice she mistrusted that she smelled — but her boy certainly was above such suspicion!

Did you find out what was really the trouble with that culprit? Did he ever tell you that he hated school, that he hated his teachers, that he hated his lessons, that he hated you? Did you talk to him about culture and mental discipline and about preparing for life? Did you force him back into the classes he hated because the first article of your pedagogical religion was that without the shedding of Latin there is no remission of ignorance?

The loafer is not intellectual. You may sugar-coat your mental pill an inch thick — it is still as bitter as quinine. He wants to do something! Then, why not give him something to do? In nine cases out of ten, if you take the loafer out of the Latin class and make him roll up his sleeves and sweat while he is fitting two boards together, he will be captivated. He will even study a book if he can see how it connects up with his own life — *now.* He probably will make a bungling job memorizing the provisions of Magna Charta; but he can easily be induced to study the activities of the ward boss, and he can be made to see how this functionary's machinations blast the efficiency of the fire and police departments. He probably will not get frightened over the direful prospect of humanity threatened in the theory of Malthus; but he can be made to see that he is paying freight when he buys an orange.

Another queer thing about the loafer is that he very often makes good. This he does in spite of the school which has done its best to spoil him by a most thorough course in not doing the thing he is supposed to do. When he strikes his gait, however, he often develops an earning capacity that gives a sickly grin to his professor's chronic state of dignified impecuniosity.

Is it not a fair proposition that the school should provide something for the loafer to do? Experiments have been made with various lines of manual activity in the school and with a combination of schoolwork and outside shopwork that have proved the possibility of enlisting the interest of the loafer. Moreover, when these interests are discovered they are always found to demand some form of academic work; so that the boy as he is, and not the boy as he might be if he were cast in the ideal mold used for us schoolmasters, is put to school to learn something of value to him.

What have we done for the boy who, because of economic stress, can come only a year or so? We have tried to teach him to swim by giving him a chemical analysis of $H_2O$. We have offered him a curriculum of admittedly little practical value, however well it may be devised as a basis for something further on, where he can never hope to go. It is as if a salesman out of employment should ask for a letter of introduction to the owner of a big department store and be given a passport to Russia.

The beginning of every term brings to the principal's office several parents, representative of many more in like circumstances, with an appeal like this: "My boy can stay in school one year or possibly two. What can you give him that will help him to earn a living at the end of that time?" This insistent question is often backed by home details that must arouse admiration for the parents whose self-denial makes possible even a meager opportunity for their children's secondary education. Here is another that is typical of a familiar tragedy that you, Mr. Principal, will recognize: —

"Please, Professor Virgil, may I drop Latin and algebra? When I entered I expected to go through school and go on to college; but my father died last summer. My mother says that if I will sell papers this winter she will try to keep me in school until June. Then I must get a job and help support my younger brothers and sisters. I would like to take something that will help me next June."

Then you gave the boy a nice fatherly talk, wherein you painted a picture of the beauty of culture and the mysteries of mental discipline on a canvas already filled with computations of rent, potatoes, and coal. You ended your dissertation with a casual remark that you could not think of letting him drop these subjects, anyway, because your first official duty is to *uphold the standard of the school*. Maybe, under your breath, you were cursing the whole culture, mental-discipline, and upholding-the-standard fetish, and wishing you could give the boy what he needed to help him meet his problem; but if you were diplomatic you held your peace — and your job — and showed to the next newspaper reporter that called a complimentary letter you had received from the registrar of Yale on the excellent record of Reginald Smythe, 19—.

The high school is failing to solve its social problem for two reasons: first, because its course is too narrow; second, because the method and scope of its teaching are cramped into the Chinese shoe of tradition. The broader course that will meet the needs of all classes of boys — from the "footballer" to the bookworm — must place on an equality its foreign languages, mathematics, history, civics, economics, sociology, agriculture, business training, and manual arts. Moreover, the content of the courses in each of these lines, and the aims and the methods of instruction, must be determined by the capacity of the students as they are and by social and economic needs, rather than by the foundations required for advanced courses or by professorial theories as to the complete and logical organization of subjects.

Perhaps no single fault of our modern pedagogy has caused greater waste than the substitution of the logical for the pedagogical method. The foundation for a forty-story sky-scraper must be laid deep in the underlying rock, but if we were compelled to build our dwellings on such a basis, the most of us would live in tents. Similarly, plans for the treatment of various subjects, from the point of view of post-graduate research, would call for so much time delving for foundations that the builders would never reach the surface where flourish the flora and fauna of everyday life.

The exaltation of certain subjects, such as foreign languages and the higher mathematics, into an aristocracy so narrows the course that it meets the needs only of those who may be classified as book-minded in contrast with the motor-minded type of children. Professor Dewey reminds us that distinctively intellectual tastes are by no means universal either as indigenous or cultivated products. Probably this is fortunate, because in spite of all our labor-saving machinery there still remains an overwhelming quantity of physical work that must be performed in the interest of the progress of the race.

The absolute prescription of the aristocracy of the curriculum rests either upon the theory of the old "faculty psychology" — that the mind is an aggregation of water-tight compartments and each of these subjects a pumping-station for one of them — or upon the theory of general discipline — that power generated, in the study of Latin, for example, can be switched on to the problem of making two blades of grass grow where one grew before. Both of these theories have of late been seriously questioned by many of the best psychologists, and in their place the formation of correct habits as the fundamental basis of education has been emphasized. Even granting the formal-discipline theory, there would be ample justification for a broader curriculum. Ex-President Eliot, in his admirable little book, *Education for Efficiency*, says: "We have lately become convinced that accurate work with carpenters' tools, or lathe, or hammer and anvil, or violin, or piano, or pencil, or crayon, or camel's-hair brush, trains well the same nerves and ganglia with which we do what is ordinarily called thinking."

In this process the languages and higher mathematics must stand on their merits alongside the hammer, the violin, and the pencil; and many educators are becoming convinced that for a considerable proportion of our pupils the traditional studies are rather a means of forcing them to leave the school in disgust than of furnishing a discipline that is certain to be valuable.

The high school must give every boy some experience in handling material things. Nowhere else in the course is there so great an opportunity to fasten the interest of the motor-minded boy who refuses to sit down and study a book. An actual experiment with fifty boys of the school-loafer type recently completely upset one principal's classical pedagogy. These boys had proved absolute failures in the traditional course. There was hardly one who had not repeated Latin, algebra, or ancient history — or all of those branches — from once to half a dozen times. They were selected because of their proficiency in failure, and were placed in charge of a good, red-blooded man in a thoroughly equipped woodworking shop. They made working drawings of pieces of furniture that they wanted to build, then went at the job with good quartered oak. Every surface and every joint was inspected by the teacher; and that meant that it must be good enough to pass muster in any first-class shop. The course was no "snap," but the shop was busy before and after as well as in school — and it "delivered the goods." It was a lotion to the soul of the principal — who had been a Nemesis on the track of these boys and their like for many years — just to watch them work. He would have classified perspiration from one of those foreheads with the proverbial pot of gold at the end of the rainbow, but — *mirabile dictu!* — he really saw them sweat.

Bill Davis had been in school four years without passing all of the first-term subjects — he had cost the district more in the time of principal and teachers than he ever seemed likely to earn; but Bill put together a table-top so well that it was hard to find where the boards were joined. He decided to abandon his father's plan to make him a Latin professor and become a piano-maker. It is a safe prediction that his pianos will ring truer than his Latin quantities.

Of those fifty boys the shop failed to reach just one. Their academic work, too, improved — particularly in one subject, of which more hereafter. The old-line course of study had no point of contact with these boys. The school was teaching them only idleness. Ought they, therefore, to be dumped on the street or ought the school to provide for them as well as for the boys whose tastes conform more nearly to our schoolmasterish ideal ?

The school should provide business training based on actual commercial processes. It should give the boy who must go to work next June — because he has lost his father — a preparation that will make him worth more money to his employer. To do this it will make sure that he can write a bill legibly, add it up correctly and know that it is right. It will hammer at his English until he can give an accurate report and read and follow intelligible instructions. It will give him some idea of the social, political, and economic questions of to-day — in short, it will do all that a school can do to fit the boy to "carry the message to Garcia"; and then neither school nor society will worry if he does not know the occasion of the Third Punic War, the use of the subjunctive in indirect discourse, or the formula for $x + y$ to the $n$th.

There is one more task for the school more important than any of those already enumerated — that is, training in citizenship. To be sure, we now have courses in history and civics; but as yet practically nothing has been done in training for the everyday duties whose fulfillment makes for righteous community life.

The fifty boys who went to making furniture were also taught a new type of civics. They attacked the city government first. They investigated the city charter, interviewed the heads of the city departments, found out a lot about policemen, firemen, school-teachers, ward bosses, the dominant party organization, and the commission form of government. One of their first discoveries was the power of the boss whose scepter must be held out to every successful applicant for a position in the police and fire departments. They also found that every ordinance in a city which thought itself to be exercising the functions of popular government must receive the approval of the same uncrowned despot before it could become a law.

So far as the records of the school revealed, not a boy of the fifty had ever absorbed a schoolbook unless through the physical integument; but for once they began to study. Was it worth while for those boys to work in the shop—to investigate the government in which they were to have a voice? At that time there was not a college east of Chicago that would give them a minute's entrance credit on fair terms for any of this work.

In closing this chapter, let me repeat: All honor to the classics and to the type of education for which they stand. They have helped to give the nation its literature, its institutions, its laws. We still need them and there is not the slightest danger that they will not persist; but we need something more. We need trained men for all our varied activities. We need every citizen to think in terms of community and social life. The boys in our schools cannot all be doctors, lawyers, preachers, and teachers. They are crying out for equal opportunities — a thing very different from identical opportunities. If it is true, then, that the public needs a new kind of service from the boys in the high school, and that the boys need the training that will enable them to give that service, it is the problem of the high school to broaden its course and modernize its methods.

Is it not true that —

(1) The public is paying for the high schools?
(2) The public is therefore entitled to the largest possible service to all the people?

(3) The high school's largest service is the best possible training for economic efficiency, good citizenship, and full and complete living for all its pupils?

# III

## THE HIGH SCHOOL AND THE GIRL

It is a notorious fact that the American people are shrewd in their business affairs. Individually they scrutinize every business proposition with cold-blooded suspicion. Strangely enough these sharp bargainers are the largest patrons of community gold-bricks in the world.

When the free and independent American citizen collectively bought advanced educational opportunities for his daughter he was given in return for his money an article that had been made for his son. Occasionally it was what the boy needed; once in a while it fitted the girl. If it fitted neither of them the youngsters were to blame, and were educationally good for nothing but to be cast into the outer darkness of ignorance. Yet the citizen aforesaid continued to pay his honest dollars in school taxes, and to blame his children when they refused to feed on the ashes of a burned-out civilization.

What does the girl need from the high school? What does society want the public high school to do for its half-million girls?

When the girl comes to the high school, she is a tall, lank, awkward, rompish, bashful, self-conscious, freakish, lovable youngster, the idol of her father's heart. When she leaves the high school after four years, she is a neat, trim, graceful, self-possessed, responsive, sweet girl-graduate, soon to be the idol of somebody else's heart. This transfiguration, however, was not the work of the high school; it must be credited to Nature.

While Nature is working this transformation, the school can do much for both the parties to the contract — the girl and society. The first thing that society wants of our girl is good health. This is the first essential for her efficient service and personal happiness in shop, office, store, school, or home. The future of the race, so far as she represents it, depends upon her health. What is the high school doing to improve the girl's health? In the overwhelming majority of cases absolutely nothing. On the other hand, it is subjecting her to a regimen planned for boys, without the slightest consideration of the physical and functional differences between the sexes.

It pays no attention to the curvature of the spine developed by the exclusively sit-at-a-desk-and-study-a-book type of education bequeathed to the girlhood of the nation by the mediæval monastery; it ignores the chorea developed by over-study and under-exercise; it disregards the malnutrition of hasty breakfasts, and lunches of pickles, fudge, cream-puffs, and other kickshaws, not to mention the catch-penny trash too often provided by the janitor or concessionnaire of the school luncheon, who is not doing business for his health or for anybody else's; it neglects eye-strain, unhygienic dress, uncleanly habits, anæmia, periodic headaches, nervousness, adenoids, and wrong habits of posture and movement.

"That is the duty of the home." Unquestionably it is, and unquestionably the home is completely failing to perform this duty. The omission of all such considerations from the school program will not make the home any more efficient in tasks for which the overwhelming majority of homes have not the necessary intelligence. It is easy to forget that the number of students in the American high school has quadrupled in twenty years, and that in the same period the preponderance of our population has shifted from country to city. Our institutions are being strained to meet the changing conditions of this period in which our whole social, industrial, economic, and political life is in a state of almost revolutionary transition; but meet it they must if our civilization is to fulfill the promise of its possibilities. The schools are organized to serve the progress of civilization by fitting our youth for their part in the new order. If a duty that under an ideal condition should belong to the home can at present be performed only by this socialized agency for human betterment; and particularly if its performance for the future home-makers by this agency promises to fit them to take this duty into the home where it belongs, it seems clear that the argument that this is the duty of the home is of doubtful application. The use of this argument against educational progress is an excellent shibboleth to separate the two educational camps. If you believe that the school exists only to increase the total knowledge of Latin and algebra in the world, the cry "Leave something to the home" is perfectly logical, and the assumption by the school of such responsibilities as those enumerated above is an impertinence. If, on the other hand, you believe that the school is a social institution with a mission of public service, regardless of the relation of that service to Latin or algebra, then you must agree that it should look after what every one recognizes as the foremost need of the adolescent girl.

In many schools a reception is given every term to the parents of the entering pupils. Suppose we stand with the reception committee and see what sorts of homes are represented. There is no gathering like it. Here comes a man of wealth and social position, who believes in true democracy and realizes the social service of the school; behind him is a teamster, whose son or daughter may be to-morrow's leader; next, a shabbily dressed widow, made timid or defiant by the hard knocks of the workaday world; then a clergyman; then a carpenter, justly proud of the daughter who stands at the head of her class; then a newly-rich in ostentatious finery. Each is led up and introduced by the son or daughter, and when you have met them all, you will say that you have seen a microcosm of American democracy. If you are patriotic, you will give thanks and send your own child right along to the public school to meet real life conditions and, perchance, to eradicate any traces of snobbery and pharisaism that she may have.

If that evening's experience does not convince you that it is the business of the school to do for its girls what literally tens of thousands of the homes cannot do for them, go with the kind-hearted teacher to visit a sick girl. Meet the parent who cannot speak a word of English, note the meager house, measure the influence of the locality, count the saloons and "movies," hear the ragtime hurdy-gurdy, be thankful that society has provided a hope for better things for children from such surroundings, but do not come back and descant about the school supplanting the sacred office of the home.

One fact that every educator in both camps knows is that the home is not attending to the health of the adolescent girl. This problem is pressing upon us now largely because of the revolution in living conditions that has come within the last quarter of a century. The immense growth of our cities, the fierce struggle for existence, the increased cost of living, and, most important of all, the tremendous number of children of foreign parentage, make it imperative that the public high school shall conserve the health as well as all the other social possibilities of its girls. Organized society is paying for the school and is ready to sanction a work for God and for humanity that the church has long and vainly sought to do, and that settlements and private institutions have attempted in a few isolated localities. The school can do this work better than any of these because it can reach everybody, it is not charity, it can be thoroughly democratic, it has the confidence of all races and sects, and it is the natural agency for fitting the children of all the people for the larger living, for opening to them the riches of literature, for training their taste and appreciation, and for fitting every girl for the highest efficiency of which she is capable.

Loyalty to the old-time learning, enthusiasm for scholarship and for exalted academic standards, have kept many of our best educators from giving their support to the broader activities of the school. But the school of the future will relinquish none of these ideals of scholarly achievement. It will, however, add to these ideals the ideal of social service; it will recognize the recent economic and industrial revolution, and will extend its mission to the sheep that are not of the strictly academic fold.

It is important to the interests of health that the school individualize its course of study. An amount of work easily performed by one girl will make another girl a nervous wreck. It is necessary, therefore, that the course of study and the machinery of administration facilitate the adaptation of the burden to the strength and endurance of the bearer.

"My daughter is missing her girlhood," writes a distressed mother. "She goes straight to her studies on her return from school and keeps at them until eleven or twelve o'clock at night. Saturday she must catch up odds and ends and do a couple of hours of drawing. Even Sunday is encroached upon for prescribed supplementary reading. She is nervous and irritable, the bloom of her beauty is fading, and I feel that something must be done."

It is possible for the school to figure out by the book of arithmetic the absurdity of this claim, and for a considerable percentage of the girls the computation will be right. Yet any one whose eyes are open to real conditions will have to admit that the complaint in this mother's letter applies more or less directly to many high-school girls. It is, therefore, perfectly obvious that it should be made easy for a girl to take a heavier or a lighter course according to her physical and mental strength; and more than that, that the school should very often insist upon curbing a girl's ambition to take the maximum amount of work.

Would it not be a sensible program for the high school to announce as the first article of its creed the development of its girls through the critical period of adolescence into the best possible physical health and vigor? If it is to do this it will begin with a thorough physical examination, which will note defects such as those mentioned above for careful individual treatment. It will notify the home where medical care is needed, and will itself undertake many tasks for physical improvement that it can perform much better than any other agency. It will give a thorough course in personal and community hygiene, with physiology enough to make it intelligible. It will require every girl in the school to take this course the first year so as to reach those who drop out early, even if one of the subjects now required of everybody for the propagation of purely academic culture has to be eliminated or deferred. Closely related to the hygiene, it will give a scientific interpretation of the girl's environment. The biology laboratory will afford a fitting introduction to certain vital physical facts that the home ought to teach and does not, and will also give an understanding of the elements of bacteriology as applied to food and household hygiene.

The gymnasium in every school will drill the girls in correct sitting, standing, walking, running, and in addition will give orthopædic treatment to correct individual ills. Baths will be available for all and will be enforced where necessary, and there need be no doubt about finding numerous cases for this salutary type of pedagogics. Demonstrations of correct clothing will be given, with particular attention to corsets and shoes. In this connection it is interesting to note that during three years in a school of two thousand girls, in every single one of the twenty-five cases where a girl has fallen downstairs she has been wearing high-heeled shoes. Indeed, while it may sound like paternalism, there is strong ground for maintaining that the school should prohibit the more flagrant violations of good sense and modesty in the form of low-necked dresses, transparencies, high-heeled shoes, tight-lacing, and complexions of the white that never was on land or sea.

The school luncheon, run on a coöperative plan, will provide good, nutritious food at a moderate price, and will refuse to furnish anything deleterious to the health of the growing girl. Thus it will tend to establish correct habits of diet and serve as an example of the possibility of securing good food at a moderate price. But the school will go much further than the luncheon: it will, as a second essential of its course, give to every girl a thorough and systematic training to fit her for efficiency in the home. Did you ever know of a case like this?

John Doe, aged twenty-two, and Mary Roe, aged twenty, fell in love. Following the natural order of the universe, that was just about what John and Mary ought to do. John was a clerk earning eighteen dollars a week and spending it all. Mary was the daughter of a department-store buyer who earned twenty-five hundred dollars a year. As the courtship became serious John began to save money. After the usual hesitation and misgivings on the part of Mary's parents, the couple were married and lived — thereby hangs a tale the novelist did not tell, because there was not a ready market for such a story.

Mary had developed no very extravagant notions on her father's twenty-five hundred a year, and so exhibited the usual incompetent, bridish ecstasy in starting life in a twenty-dollar-a-month flat, furnished with the three hundred dollars John had saved in the year and a half of their engagement. The young couple did not figure out expenses much in detail, but of course they knew that if Mary did the housework they could live on what John had been paying for his board. What a comforting delusion that is of

Cupid's, that two can live as cheaply as one! How mightily does it swell ministerial perquisites and the birth-rate!

Mary's housekeeping was a good illustration of academic helplessness. The gastronomic monstrosities she evolved with the aid of a cookbook ruined John's digestion and his temper. In spite of her best efforts the bills rose faster than his salary. And with all her mathematics she never could balance her accounts. When she did not have mamma to ask where things were, the poor girl was hopelessly bewildered. She did everything the hardest way, and worked in vain to keep the little home from a state of chaos. John gradually drifted away to the poolrooms and saloons, which were more attractive than the home he was paying to support.

Mary found herself shabbily dressed after her trousseau was worn out, and yet she had to admit that the now twenty-two dollars a week could not stand the neat tailor-made gown at twenty-seven dollars and a half, marked down from thirty-five, forty, or fifty dollars, according to the popular capacity for absorbing show-window fiction.

It makes little difference on just which of the matrimonial rocks the happy little bark was wrecked. Possibly they tided over a temporary stringency at the loan shark's; possibly John missed his favorite brand of bachelor cigars and other necessities, and deserted; possibly he found other metal more attractive; maybe some of the fathers- and mothers-in-law lent friendly advice, not concealing a frank recognition of the shortcomings of the other father- and mother-in-law's child. However it happened, that home was not a bulwark to the nation, though Mary had spent four years in the public high school, and at public expense had passed first-year Latin, Cæsar, Cicero, and Virgil, three years of German, three years of algebra and geometry, two years of ancient and English history, and four years of English. This had kept her so busy that she had been relieved of all home duties. Every one knows that it is important for a girl to get "an education."

Just here it should be emphasized that everything in Mary's high school course was good. There was not a subject that did not belong in the school as a possibility for the girl who surely needed it. But it seems equally evident that the exclusive combination was not all that Mary needed. When she undertook to keep John's house her high school course did not function.

Yet it had cost the community between three and four hundred dollars in taxes. It had cost her father at least eight hundred dollars. The community had a wrecked home to show for its outlay, and Mary's father and mother had an infinite heartache. John himself was undoubtedly to blame, but the potential wreck in his life had at least not been averted by his wife's resourcefulness. It would be presumptuous to cast up accounts for the recording angel, but it would be altogether proper in a discussion of moral education in the schools to suggest that the public high school should require every girl to have some training for efficiency in the home.

The statement by the United States Commissioner of Education, partially quoted in a previous chapter, again becomes interesting. The percentage of pupils studying some of the more important subjects in 8097 public high schools of the United States in the year 1909–10 was as follows: —

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|---|---|
| Latin, French and German | 82.64 |
| Algebra and geometry | 87.72 |
| English literature | 57.09 |
| Rhetoric | 57.10 |
| History | 55.03 |
| Domestic economy | 3.78 |

The latest census reports show that of American women twenty-five years old and over, 86.7 per cent are married. If, in the light of this fact, we agree that the public is putting its money into the high schools that its children may there receive the best possible training for the lives they are to live, does not our present practice in the education of girls look like going from New York to Chicago by way of Cape Horn?

It seems like a platitude to point out how the high school can make the girls more efficient in the home. Obviously, it can teach them to cook, to prepare, not merely a few puddings and meringues and other culinary fripperies, but good solid fare, based on a study of food values, the necessary elements in a meal and in a complete dietary. Every girl should be taught how to distinguish between fresh and storage eggs, how to use oleomargarine when butter soars to fifty cents a pound, how to cook the cheaper cuts of meat, how to utilize the nutritious left-overs that the hired girl dumps into the garbage. In the chemistry classes the girl should learn to detect preservatives, adulterants, and colorings; to distinguish between honest preserves and rotten fruit pulp, flavored and colored with coal tar; to discard fruits bleached with sulphurous acid; to determine whether a given fabric is cotton, silk, linen, or wool; to remove spots and stains from various fabrics, and a thousand other useful scientific applications.

It does seem strange that physics and chemistry have so long been taught on a purely academic basis generally remote from all possible use. The laws of heat and light are not the less science because they are illustrated by the methods of heating and lighting a house, their most universal application; the chemical experiment by which gelatine is detected in milk as a substitute for the cream that has been removed is quite as educational as the reaction of $HCl$ and $Mn_2O_3$. And the beauty of this approach to science is that it works a marvelous transformation in the pupil's interest in the study and in the interest of the community in the school.

The girl should learn in the school enough about dressmaking and general sewing so that later she will be resourceful in making and remodeling her own and her children's clothes, hats, and so forth. In the sewing and drawing classes taste should be trained in matters of both color and form. The work in these two departments should be very closely correlated, the dressmaking and millinery classes furnishing a motive and a practical application of the instruction in drawing. Kinds of textiles, durability, washableness, adaptation to various uses should all be taught, not only in theory, but by practical application. Skill in household decoration, good taste in the selection and arrangement of furniture, discrimination between clamorous roses and pianissimo geometrics in rugs and wall-paper, and between inexpensive reproductions of the world's greatest pictures and the polychromatic, gilt-framed atrocities of the department stores, all these are as valuable to the girl and the community as the "discipline and culture" of paradigms, prosody, and parallelopipeds.

It is highly desirable that household problems should be studied completely in a simply furnished model house, which can be cared for by the girls as part of their regular school work. The household budget for families of various sizes and incomes should be carefully analyzed, and problems of buying should be studied at first hand in the stores and markets. If it is true, as has been estimated, that the woman in charge of the house spends eighty per cent of the family income, it seems as if such training as is here outlined would have a direct value in raising the economic and moral status of the home.

Nor are these the only domestic problems that the community has a right to demand shall be studied by the future home-makers it is educating. The most fundamental of all functions of woman is that of motherhood. But the instincts that make her play house, tend dolls, and sacrifice for her children need to be educated and trained before she can do her best in the bearing and rearing of the race. Excellent examples of the salutary results of even a little instruction by visiting nurses and public demonstrations of baby-saving have occurred in cities recently. For example, in Philadelphia the decrease in mortality of children under one year, after a general campaign for baby-saving was inaugurated, was 11.8 per cent. In four of the most congested wards where there was a more intensive campaign, the decrease was 27.6 per cent. The total decrease in the number of deaths during the year under an efficient and honest administration was 1887, of which 1114, or 59 per cent, were children under five years of age.

Trained intelligence on the part of the mother would do infinitely more than this, and the only means society has of insuring this intelligence is through its organized agency for the spread of intelligence — the public school. In the public school, therefore, the future mothers should learn, for example, the rudiments of infant feeding — that the majority of "patent" foods are inferior, and that "modified milk" prepared under the physician's direction is the best substitute for natural feeding; that the various digestive functions develop at different ages, and that, therefore, the substitution of lentils for lacteals should be postponed. They should learn how to dress the baby, — that the dress should be simple, and that most babies are overdressed in summer-time. They should be taught to recognize the early symptoms of ailments common to babies and young children, and to detect the early signs of the infectious diseases of childhood. Thousands of infant lives could be saved if people understood the value of quarantine and worked with the public health officials rather than against them.

Moreover, the school should give some instruction in child psychology that will check the growing anarchy in the home, or perhaps better the despotism too often exercised over the home by its youngest member. This training will leave no excuse for any of its pupils who in later years set before their children the pernicious example of lying, in frightening them into momentary submission by fictional "bogey men" or imaginary punishments. It will teach something of the characteristics of the various stages of physical, mental, and spiritual development. For example, the school will teach the true nature of those imaginative ebullitions known to the psychologists as "child lies," which our Puritan fathers excoriated as evidence of original sin. It will teach the danger of "showing off" the child until his vanity demands that he always be the center of observation. It will make clear the scientific cause for the incessant movements by which the child gives vent to his superfluous nervous force, and thus will warn against the constant repression that results in squirming, giggling, ill-temper, and St. Vitus's dance. Better still, it will give instruction how to direct this nervous energy into joyous play or happy, constructive, self-educative activity. In a word, the school will concern itself with those discoveries of modern pedagogical science that are of vital importance to the welfare of the race in adapting itself to its present artificial environment.

It must be remembered, however, that few girls go directly from the high school into their own homes. Even a superficial acquaintance with conditions will show a third duty of the school. An overwhelming number of our girls must have a training that will enable them to earn a living wage. They must get this training during the years usually devoted to the high school, because financial stress in their parents' homes makes it imperative that they speedily become producers. Some can stay only a year, some two, some three, some four. Many who at their entrance might expect to stay only a short time would find ways to remain longer if they felt the school's vital connection with life. Obviously every girl should receive as much of the larger enlightenment that comes from academic work as she can. It is equally clear that she should receive some directly marketable training, for we must remember that her moral and spiritual life often depends upon her economic independence.

With the exception of the commercial course offered in a few cities, this intensely human problem has hardly been touched by the high school. A few trade schools for girls in various parts of the country are doing excellent work, but the problem of economic preparation is so universal that it should be boldly attacked wherever the people are supporting a secondary school. It is time for the high school to begin to study the economic opportunities in its community, to find out the individual possibilities of its girls, to plan courses for them, to investigate methods such as that of alternating a week in the store or factory with a week in the school, as is now being successfully done with boys; in a word, to come down from its academic Olympus and listen to the cry of the children.

Here is something that happens every day. A teacher — one of those who are real shepherds of mankind — comes to the principal with a story like this: "Mary Smith, one of my best pupils, must leave school. Her father is a tailor, and business has been poor for the last year. He has to support four children younger than Mary, so that he cannot afford to clothe her and give her money for car-fare and lunches." Mary leaves school and goes to work for two dollars and a half a week, at a blind-alley job that leads to a maximum of five or six dollars a week and puts a premium on her downfall. The numerous experiments with continuation schools alternating school and shop, and the various forms of part-time work promise better opportunities for such cases as this. It is extremely important, however, that all school authorities see their own part in the solution of this problem. Is it not possible that some manufacturer or department store manager could be induced to give Mary and another girl a chance to work on the alternating plan? On a given week Mary would go to the shop and her companion to the school. The next week they would change places. Are there not also thousands of good women in our cities who would take such girls into their homes to work on the same plan? From what we hear we judge that the servant problem could not thereby be made any worse than it is. The school could then give these girls in the alternate weeks a direct training to make them more efficient in their various occupations, conserve their health, train them for the homes just ahead, and at the same time open to them the inspiration of literature, art, history, science, language, or mathematics, according to their individual tastes and abilities. More valuable, perhaps, than any of these would be the social democracy and the moral and intellectual stimulus that would permeate the spirit of the school as a result of such a practice. Honest labor would be ennobled in the eyes of pupils more fortunately circumstanced, social distinctions would be diminished, and the interests and sympathies of all would be broadened.

It should be understood that the above suggestion is not offered as a patent-medicine millennium for our educational and social ills. It is a suggestion. The school should study the problem and find what plan of procedure will in its particular community best meet the needs of this very considerable proportion of girls.

Can any one find a better definition of education than this one by William James: "Education is the organization of acquired habits of action such as will fit the individual to his physical and social environment"? Is not the public paying its good money to bring to every boy and girl the best possible preparation for the largest life he or she can live? Is there any class of society in greater need of opportunities for the improvement of its condition than the daughters of the poorer families? Is it rank socialism to believe that every girl should be kept in school until she is at least sixteen years old, and if she must earn her own living should receive technical training that will enable her to earn a living wage?

The introduction of this type of instruction into the high schools would necessitate great care that the brief course aimed directly at wage-earning does not short-circuit the courses giving more complete and more broadly educational advantages. The present four years' course is within the means of many thousands of people, particularly in the large cities, who might not understand its immensely greater relative value. The high school can in four years give a pretty thorough training in vocational lines along with the English, history, science, and mathematics necessary for a higher type of business service and an intelligent understanding of the world.

The complete course, a unit in itself, planned for those who expect to finish their formal education and their technical training in the high school, is the normal center round which the high school should revolve. It is entirely possible that important modifications of the four-year plan may be made within the next few years. However this may be, it is generally agreed that the girl's high school days should bring her pretty well through the age of adolescence and should discover to herself her particular aptitudes and possibilities. The course should be broad enough to meet a wide variety of individual needs. It should be adapted to its particular community, which it should furnish with workers trained to habits of promptness, accuracy, and perseverance, as applied not only to learning lessons from books, but also to doing tasks with the hand.

If the high school is to do its full duty it must not be satisfied only to conserve health, train for efficiency in the home, and furnish a means of attaining economic independence. It must serve those larger interests of full and complete living which broaden the intellectual horizon, enlarge human sympathies, and bring to its fruition the spiritual awakening that comes in the high-school age. The social and intellectual environment at this critical age should be favorable to a sloughing off of the old selfish and unsympathetic motivation and the assumption of the racial and altruistic interests so characteristic of the best type of womanhood. To this end the suggestions offered in a previous chapter for making the school a working laboratory of social thought would contribute directly.

In this connection also it would be interesting to ask a few pertinent questions. What is the spirit of your girls' high school? First, is it pedagogically honest and sane? Do pupils study from interest or compulsion? Are hard tasks conquered or played with and evaded? Do teachers teach or just hear recitations — or do they lecture? Fine word, that, — gives one a sense of affinity with Emerson and the other transcendentalists. Is the education by platoon or by person? Is the course of study or the pupil the first consideration? Second, is the school socially democratic? What determines popularity, worth or wealth? Would the fine student in gingham be patronized as a Latin "pony" or entertained as a companion? Do the girls dress like stage pictures or like just girls? Is their hair their own or "the dowry of a second head"? Is there a democracy of all the girls of the school?

The course of study, as frequently suggested above, must be so administered as to be easily adaptable to individual needs. It should provide Latin, Greek, German, French, mathematics, science, history, literature, and so forth, for the girl of scholarly ability and ambition, and plenty of handwork and practical training for the large majority who have no distinctively intellectual interests. It should require both mental and manual work of every girl throughout her course, even if this innovation makes it necessary to add an hour or two to the school day. It should give every girl the fullest instruction she can assimilate in oral and written English and in the masterpieces of our literature. It should require of all some acquaintance with scientific principles as applied to daily life, some familiarity with business practice and elementary accounting, and an introduction to the economic and governmental activities of organized society. Whether or not we favor woman suffrage, we must recognize the probability of its rapid extension. Woman's bewilderment in political matters is due to inexperience, and it is a problem for the public high school to give her the intelligent comprehension of civic matters that will make her a most salutary influence in our political life. Woman needs intellectual culture, but she also needs abounding health; she needs an introduction to the riches of science, mathematics, history, language, and literature, but she also needs to know the science, art, and economics of the home. She often needs to go to college, but she more often needs to earn a living wage that shall deliver her from the ever-present temptation to sell her soul for temporary bodily comfort; and pervading all of her school training she needs a social democracy and a sympathetic intelligence that shall make easier her task as the moral and spiritual conservator of the progress of the race.

Is it not true that —

(1) The public is paying for the high school?

(2) The public is, therefore, entitled to the largest service the school can render to all the people?

(3) The high school's largest possible service, so far as the girls are concerned, is to conserve their health, train them for household efficiency and economic independence, and bring them into touch with the larger social and intellectual interests of humanity?

# IV

## THE HIGH SCHOOL AND THE COLLEGE

The last few years have witnessed a somewhat acrimonious controversy between the high school and the college. This discussion arose as the high school began to be conscious of itself and to recognize its democratic obligations to the community that was supporting it as contrasted with its obligations to the traditions that had determined the content and method of its course. There can be only one result in such a dispute between a small, essentially aristocratic body and a democratic institution, rooted for its very sustenance in the great mass of the people. Progress toward a mutually satisfactory adjustment of the difficulty has naturally been more rapid in the democratic West, where its State universities, because of their essential democracy, and the great Chicago University, with its far-visioned sense of realities, have opened the way for a solution that will leave the high school free to perform its largest service to all the people and at the same time to give adequate preparation to the relatively insignificant number of pupils headed collegeward.

In contrast the strife has been most bitter in New England and the Middle States of the East. Harvard and Columbia Universities have, indeed, done much to prepare the way for a solution of the difficulty, and nearly every coeducational college and nearly every college for men has made important concessions in each successive announcement of requirements. The Bastile of educational Bourbonism has been the woman's college, which, largely because of the fact that such facilities throughout the country are so inadequate that every year many more pupils apply for admission than can possibly be accommodated, has been able to insist upon a program extremely narrow in its pedantic adherence to tradition, and minute in its picayunish exactions. The few high schools which have specialized in preparation for these institutions have, therefore, been driven far away from the line of their largest democratic service.

Generally speaking, however, it is safe to say that all over the East the high school, large or small, is still failing in its broadest service because of the incubus of college domination. This is true, first, because its course of study is limited almost exclusively to the narrow range of subjects accepted for college entrance; second, because the methods and the scope of its instruction, even within this cramped curriculum, are determined by college entrance examinations made by specialists whose point of view is not the welfare of the student, but the requirements for advanced study of their various subjects.

The course of study is limited to subjects accepted for college entrance because in the vast majority of moderate-sized towns only one course is possible without too great expense, and the college preparatory course is given because it is demanded by the most influential portion of the community. Public pride in the single boy who enters college from the local school is oblivious of the twenty who have been driven out in disappointment by a course that failed to grip them with a vital interest. Economical school boards veto expensive innovations with the argument that the school now prepares for college, and the one narrow course for all is continued in the belief that Latin and mathematics will develop a mental storage battery that will turn the wheels of modern industry.

In communities where several courses of study are offered, the results are often much the same.

At their entrance to the high school pupils are very uncertain of their aims in life. Adolescent imitation favors the "college preparatory" course, and boyish snobbery is proud to study Latin. In half-unconscious acceptance of the tradition that the college preparatory course is best, teachers turn thereto all who have not decided on some definite pursuit. This, at least, will guard against unpreparedness if, two or three years later, they wish to enter a higher institution. Moreover, in turning every one collegeward, the high-school principal is safeguarding his own interests, for if one of his graduates has not had the particular subjects demanded for college entrance the principal must face certain criticism and possible loss of position.

Perhaps most important of all in limiting the secondary course to college preparatory subjects is the power of tradition. High school teachers are, and ought to be, college graduates. The richness of their own intellectual lives, however, often blinds them to the needs of the masses. They make a fetish of the subjects they love, and see in foreign languages, algebra, and geometry the only way of intellectual salvation. They fear the ascendancy of practical over cultural aims, and feel that in encouraging college ideals they are uplifting their pupils. The conservative public reverences the gospel of the traditional subjects and the authority of the college elders. Ideals of high scholarship, of unquestioned value for the few, are set as the standard for the many, and the inexorable law of the survival of the fittest denies the opportunities of public education to those who cannot learn the language of the monastery.

How closely the schools are limited to the traditional college entrance subjects may be seen by a glance at the report of the Regents' examinations of New York State, which are taken by practically all students in all subjects. It would seem that if ninety-five per cent of our young people are to complete their education in the public high school, there should be ample recognition of the fundamentals of civil government and of the principles of economics. These subjects, however, are practically eliminated from a great number of schools because they are not generally accepted as units for college entrance.

The report of the New York State Education Department shows that in the history and social-science group the number of papers written in January and June, 1913, was as follows: —

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|---|---|
| Ancient history | 16,958 |
| All other history, except American | 15,639 |
| American history and civics | 13,995 |
| Civics | 555 |
| Economics | 1,275 |

While the third group named above is called American history and civics, it is to all intents merely a history course. The civics is a poor relation inheriting only the accidental attention that can most easily be spared.

The mentors of education in college chairs possibly can give reasons why such subjects as civics, sociology, and economics should not be accepted as entrance units. One of them, the dean of a great college, recently revealed the reason why every college has so many kinks in its requirements that only the most careful study of extremely complicated English will disclose their true inwardness. He said that his college demanded many things of which neither he nor the faculty as a whole approved. "But," said he, "you know every professor has a pet scheme of his own. The professor of ——ology knows that if he opposes the crotchet of the professor of ——ism, his own schedule will be reciprocally smashed."

Any attempt to extend the number of subjects or to change the scope of existing requirements for college entrance is met with suspicious scrutiny on the part of many of the colleges. Even the authority of the New York State Education Department is powerless to add or subtract one jot or tittle in the matter of college entrance units. By its dispensation of public money this department can dictate courses of study, the qualifications of teachers, and the methods and scope of instruction to the high schools; but the necessity of having its credentials accepted for entrance has generally forced it meekly to follow college suggestion. Hence the Regents' examinations, by which the high-school pupils of the State are measured, are really college entrance examinations in another form.

The single exception to the State department's usual subservience to college domination has produced a row over the first-year high school course in biology. No action of the department has met with more general approval on the part of public-school men than the introduction of this course. The high Olympian arrogance of the majority of the colleges is shown by the actual experience of a high school principal, who, in his ignorance, proposed that some of his pupils offer this course as an entrance unit. In substance the following conversation ensued between the principal and the head of the college department of biology: —

*College Professor.* "We cannot accept that course as one of the six additional units required for the science course."

*Principal.* "Why not, Professor?"

*Professor.* "It is little more than an advanced nature-study course. It has not the dignity that a subject should have for college entrance. Besides, the pupils are so young when they take it that they cannot possibly get the training required as a basis for our courses in biology."

*Principal.* "Don't you think, Professor, that the first-year pupil in high school ought to be given an insight into scientific methods?"

*Professor.* "Unquestionably he should."

*Principal.* "What would you suggest in place of biology?"

*Professor.* "Oh, the biology is all right so far as that is concerned. Indeed, I think it is the best, perhaps the only, thing you can give him."

*Principal.* "Yes, it teaches him to do things with his own hands, see things with his own eyes, and tell the truth in his own language about what he has done and seen."

*Professor.* "I agree with you that it is a most valuable course, but I never will agree to accept it. We can't count on the pupil's knowing anything as a basis for our college courses."

*Principal.* "Which do you want, on the part of your freshmen, Professor, a certain knowledge content on which you can base advanced courses, or the best training that the individual boys and girls can have?"

*Professor.* "By all means, we want the training."

*Principal.* "You say, then, you want your freshman to have had the best training possible at each stage of his development. You admit emphatically that nothing is so valuable at his entrance to high school as the course in biology, yet you refuse to accept that element of his training as a unit for college entrance."

*Professor.* "Yes, if you choose to put it that way."

Having demolished the professorial argument, the principal was obliged to submit to the professorial despotism, make a separate class for seven pupils, and give them a course in zoölogy magnanimously outlined by this same professor, because those few boys had to have an additional subject that the college would accept. Then the pupils found after entrance that they were put by this same professor into classes in zoölogy with pupils to whom the subject was absolutely new.

Our present college-dictated high school course, then, is ill adapted to the real needs of the people, in that it places the emphasis on the wrong subjects, and practically eliminates many that would be of the greatest practical value in the lives of the vast majority of pupils whose only opportunity for higher education is in the public high school. No less destructive of the welfare of the masses is the limitation in method of treatment of the subjects taught.

Lack of space will not permit a detailed analysis of the evils caused by absolute prescription of the quality and quantity of work to be done in each subject. Both are measured by examinations too often set by pedantic specialists, who doubtless know enough about the subjects but who know boys and girls not at all. It makes no difference whether these examinations come from a State department, a college entrance board, or direct from an individual college. In any case the evil is the same. The teacher must strain every nerve to cover the ground measured by the examination. Excursions into fields not traversed by the examination road are absolutely prohibited; applications to the real interests of live boys and girls must not interfere with reaching the goal in the prescribed time; observation along the route is valueless if it does not contribute to the quantity of examinable material tied into packages and labeled so as to be easily reached when demanded under the stress of a three hours' test. Teachers very well know that their success is measured, not by their inspirational power nor by the unconscious tuition which their personality may impart, but by the percentage of their pupils who make a creditable showing. Thus they become skillful in taking tithes of mint and anise and cumin, and learn to neglect the laws of spiritual growth and broad human sympathy.

In physics and chemistry it is impossible to go into the industries of a city and see the practical application of the principles studied. Much more than the allotted time is needed to make accurate quantitative measurements in performing the prescribed thirty-five experiments and in preparing notebooks that will pass the college teacher's inspection. So all the pupils in high school science laboriously potter with the laws of falling bodies, moments of force, ions, electrolysis, molecular weights, qualitative analysis, conjugation in algæ, xylem and phloëm, spore formation and fungi, and similar theoretical matters; hardly one of which will give any practical insight into the scientific meaning of the everyday affairs in which their lives will be spent. Of the great mass of pupils who are being forced through this meaningless grind about five per cent will go to college, and of those who go perhaps one half will take the advanced science courses for which college-dictated science in the high school is "a foundation."

Here and there a school, through some peculiar good fortune, has been able to experiment with a type of science aimed solely to develop scientific habits of thought and to furnish a scientific interpretation of the pupil's environment. Immediately such courses have become centers of absorbing interest. Instead of dread and aversion the pupils have attacked them with enthusiasm and delight. Instead of failures that approached fifty per cent, success has followed these courses, although they have been in no way less exacting than the deadly measurements and theories dictated by professional obtuseness to all considerations outside of those measurements and theories.

In this modernized science emphasis is laid, not upon man as man, forces as forces, and agencies as agencies, but upon the reciprocal relations of man and his natural and artificial environment, upon their actions and reactions, upon the adaptations of natural laws to man, and his response to these laws. Thus science becomes the tool with which the pupil attacks the day's work, rather than an abstraction possessed of some mysterious value known only to the initiated. Thus there is added to the pupils' growing interest the ever-widening appeal of insight into the mysteries of his environment, whether it be the farm with its absolute dependence upon the laws and forces of nature, or the city with its complicated and artificial mastery of mechanics and its more or less successful control of social and hygienic conditions, all so inevitably registered in the sickness and death-rate.

Obviously the new science can be no mausoleum of thirty-five sacred experiments of practically unvarying content. If it must interpret environment, it must take its problem from environment rather than from any theory of a complete and logical synthesis of the subject. It must discuss with due relation to their local applicability such concrete and practical matters as the prevention of epidemics, the spread of disease by flies and mosquitoes, sewage, the care of trees and plants, fertilizers, the nutritive values of foods, the dangers and the detection of food adulteration, the analysis of water, the removal of stains, labor-saving devices, particularly those most useful to the community, such as the gas engine, the steam engine, electricity in its immediate and prospective relation to daily life, the chemistry and physics of the local industries, and as many other matters of daily observations as the time at its disposal will permit.

High-school mathematics is limited by college entrance requirements almost entirely to abstract theory and manipulative gymnastics. The time of the pupils is wasted in intricate complex fractions, expert factoring, indeterminate equations, complex numbers, quadratic puzzles, and the binomial theorem. This is supposed to contribute to mental discipline, whereas for the most part it contributes to facility in guessing, and to technical skill of little worth. The commercial teacher is driven to despair because of inaccurate addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division; while the mathematics teacher, who is tediously belaboring his flock over the *pons asinorum* or the *mons professorum*, accepts with slight discount any result that is correct in theory.

The real mathematics of practical life, on the other hand, is a first essential to every boy and girl for two reasons; first, because it is the best possible medium for teaching habits of accuracy; and second, because the subject itself is an inevitable means to the ends of daily life.

The habit of accuracy, of truthfulness, of meeting issues squarely, demands the elimination of guesswork in both theory and practice. And if the pupil is working at the mathematical basis of everyday life he soon comes to understand the inevitableness of fundamental laws, and the necessity of conforming to them. As he gains facility in adapting the mathematical laws in the same way that he applies scientific principles to his daily problems, he comes to delight in his mastery of the material world through his knowledge of truth.

If he is to profit thus, he must begin with his immediate environment. The shop, the store, the farm, household accounts, the family budget, — all furnish almost universal applications of mathematics. Ratio, direct and inverse, as applied in optics, electricity, and gravitation; water and gas pressure, strength of materials, and dozens of other applications will be found in correlating the mathematics with the rejuvenated science of the world in which the common man lives. The representation of statistics such as the expenses and profits of a business through successive months by means of cross-section paper is a real and valuable problem. Similar treatment of other subjects of dispute would settle many questions that are only obscured by dogmatic contradictions.

The use of a representative letter for an unwieldy decimal and the universal truth expressed in a formula are really the short cuts of abridged calculations. When they appeal to a pupil as a method of solving real problems, instead of as abstractions to become valuable in a vague condition of bliss beyond the registrar, he will be glad to employ them. The construction of a right angle at a given point will be a problem of interest when by it the boy must fit a board, or the girl a piece of cloth. The magic of a slide rule, of a logarithmic table, of a computing-machine will be welcome when it quickly reaches the result with machine-like precision. It must be admitted that this is all practical, that it does not include pure mathematics. At least, however, there is reasonable hope that it can be accomplished by the rank and file of high school pupils; while the overwhelming failures in our present college-dictated course, on a standard so low as to be a condemnation of any mathematical work, are ample evidence that the present course is a failure.[1]

Whatever else the school does, it can make sure that its pupils can perform the four fundamental operations in all useful forms of numbers with rapidity and accuracy, both by use of the pencil and by the old mental arithmetic methods. No amount of theory is excuse for failure here. The school should feel it a disgrace for its graduates to fail on everyday problems, such as the amount of radiating surface required to heat a room, of paper to cover its walls, the graphic representation of statistics, and the computation of interest on a fluctuating bank account by means of an interest table. Its graduates will not

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[1] The report of the New York State Education Department shows the following percentage of pupils passing in mathematical subjects for January and June, 1913. Sixty per cent is the passing mark: —

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| Advanced arithmetic | 36.2 |
| Elementary algebra | 71.5 |
| Intermediate algebra | 64.5 |
| Advanced algebra | 74.4 |
| Plane geometry | 59.8 |
| Solid geometry | 76.2 |
| Plane trigonometry | 64.9 |
| Spheric trigonometry | 64 6 |
| Total | 67.1 |

thus fail when it leaves pure mathematics to the college, where it belongs, and devotes itself to its own task, the development of habitual accuracy in the mathematical concerns of daily life.

In French and German there is little opportunity to acquire a workable power over these languages that would be of real use in Paris or Berlin or in their miniatures in our American cities. These living languages of our greatest contemporaries must be taught as if they had been the speech of peoples buried under the lava of twenty centuries. The methods pursued in the ancient classics for entirely different purposes have limited our study of German and French to the translation of a set number of pages of literary masterpieces, the acquisition of a literary vocabulary, and the accurate mastery for examination of all the intricacies of grammar. Yet it is possible, without using more time than is at present allotted to these languages, to develop a facility in their use that will have a direct, practical value.

In Latin and Greek there is little opportunity to come into sympathetic touch with the great civilizations of antiquity, to appreciate the marvelous beauty of Greek pantheism through mythology, or to comprehend the world-conquering spirit of the Roman language, institutions, and laws. The splendid opportunities for training the powers of observation and discrimination, and for developing originality and accuracy of statement in English, are thrown away under the goad of an overloaded course and an enormous technical requirement. The time must be occupied almost solely in preparation for a formal test on such minutiæ as the principal parts of Ὁράω, the mastery of grammatical exceptions, the writing of bad Latin and worse Greek, and the crucifixion of the mother tongue in the literal translation of foreign idioms.

In history mere questions of fact occupy most of the time. The pupil is seldom taught the relationship between the social conflict in Rome and the American trust problem of to-day. He is not led to see that the real origin of the American revolt against George III is to be found in the English revolt against Charles I. The boy must enumerate the causes of the Punic Wars and of the American Rebellion, but need not see the clash of two civilizations nor the interrelation between economic and political forces in our great civil strife.

Nowhere else, however, has the stiff formality of an examinable requirement been so fatal as in that most important of subjects, the mother tongue. College teachers have written the courses, trained the teachers, set the examinations, and execrated the results. Instead of inspiring in the pupils a discriminating appreciation of our glorious literature that would be a continuous means of education and an unfailing resource against ennui, our teaching has produced the conviction that Burke is a bore, Addison a prude, and Milton a pedant. Instead of training pupils to express the experiences and emotions of daily life or to write an intelligent application for a job, we have killed off any interest in *Ivanhoe* that might have survived the minute class memorizing and analysis by compelling them to write five hundred words about the tournament at Ashby. We have given them literary texts in which every allusion was explained, and have forced them to memorize the notes before they were permitted to enjoy the story. We have made simple pieces of literature that they could have enjoyed alone the subjects of such close scrutiny, chasing each fugitive word back to the Tower of Babel, that they have welcomed the examination as a release. And when their red-inked essays, reproducing the "Ring Story," from the *Merchant of Venice*, and the

"Story of Elaine," have been handed back for rewriting, our boys and girls have charged the abomination to Shakespeare and Tennyson and have sworn a solemn, "Never again," against every author buried in the graveyard of college entrance English.

For all this the college and the college alone is responsible. About 1890 it began to be seriously argued that something more was needed in the study of English than the canons of rhetoric and the lives of authors. The obvious thing to do was to study masterpieces. How? Why, just as the masterpieces of Latin and Greek were studied, of course. At first the colleges prescribed with great exactness the texts to be covered and refused to accept any substitutes. Gradually the list was extended and the privilege of choice within definite limits was grudgingly granted. Still the college examination has continued to be the criterion of success, and methods that achieved vicious ends in spite of their good intentions have become so ingrained in the pedagogical subconsciousness that it will take years to arrive at a sane procedure. The college examination has asked minute questions covering every allusion, so that the teachers have been compelled to destroy all literary enjoyment in preparation for an examination. It has based its composition on the blackened skeleton of the literature it has murdered, and then has complained that the writing of students lacked style, force, and accuracy.

Even if we had the greatest freedom to work out our English courses we must admit that the problem would be a difficult one. Possibly there would be a somewhat general agreement that our aim should be, first, to secure power in both oral and written expression; second, to develop a discriminating taste for literature; third, to secure some appreciative acquaintance with the best literature.

Toward the attainment of these ends some progress has been made recently in spite of the fact that the innovations have been accepted for college entrance only as improved results have shown the value of methods employed by heretic teachers at their peril. Within the last half-dozen years it has dawned upon teachers of English that man is a talking animal. Along with other practical considerations we have come to realize that the demand for reasonably accurate oral speech is much larger than for written expression. Available oral language resources are heavy assets against the emergency liabilities of everyday life. Slowly we have grasped the relation between this outstanding truth and the duty of the school. At last we are giving pupils a chance to talk in school as they must, by some shift, learn to talk after leaving school. With a definite problem, namely, to convey to the listeners something that they must get straight in order to make their own next move, the young student feels the compelling power of the spoken word or gets the reaction from its blundering use. Into this oral attainment must enter the elements of good articulation, distinct enunciation, correct emphasis, inflection, pitch, tone, etc., in giving expression to literature and to daily speech.

This everyday habit must affect written expression as well. We have been working at this longer, and probably our results are generally better — at least, we have discovered a good many things not to do. Under college direction we have been industriously rehashing the cadavers of the books on the prescribed list and as surely establishing in the minds of our pupils a list of proscribed books and authors. We have inscribed red-ink trespass signs upon square rods of wastebasket scenery and indelible crow's-feet and acidulous droops upon our own faces. We have distended monosyllabic ideas into galleys of *osity* and *ation* by our demands for four hundred words on "What I See in George Eliot's Face." The best teachers have now learned that in both oral and written composition the surest sources of interest and the greatest possibilities of growth lie in the pupil's saying or writing, as he will all his life, something that he really wants to say or write. Our problem, then, is to discover individual interests; to correlate with these interests all of the other subjects of the school; through this correlation to enlist the assistance of other members of the faculty; and to develop in our pupils the best possible habits of oral and written expression.

If we are to meet the test of improving the habitual use of English in speech and writing, it will be necessary to do more than hand back laboriously marked themes. We must work with the pupil in conference. He must attack problems of expression in the same spirit with which he attacks problems in mathematics. We do not ask him to find the coefficient of *a* to the *n*th without assistance and then red-ink his results. We work out the formula with him. In the science laboratory, also, we direct his effort, and school boards and principals have conceded that additional help is necessary for this laboratory work. Is the number of vibrations of the C pitch-pipe or the laws of falling bodies more important than the habitual use of good English? Probably the most important practical consideration for securing better conditions for teaching English is to prove to superintendents, principals, and school boards that English composition is a laboratory subject, and that it requires additional help as much as does science.

As soon as the problem nature of composition is recognized by a pupil his point of view is changed. He discovers that composition is not guesswork, but telling the truth; he learns the use of the principles of his textbooks and of the suggestions of the teacher. He and his teacher gain a personal touch and fellowship that are mutually valuable. He begins to realize two things: first, that revision of written work is possible and interesting; second, that it is imperative. Young people, and sometimes older ones, have an impression that writing comes by the grace of God — a man writes well by gift, just as he has blue eyes or six feet of length. You may tell about the laborious studies of Stevenson or the endless blotting of Tennyson's lines, and the boy pays the tribute of a passing wonder — no more. If, on the other hand, he sits with his teacher and together they struggle over a contrary sentence that must be made to say the thing he set out to make it say, he gets an illumination. Under this method the careless pupil realizes the keen satisfaction that comes from a conquered difficulty. A something that may be called the workman's conscience stirs within him and stands a fair chance of growth. Such a boy or girl will be far more likely to meet the demands of the business man's test than the student who has passively lamented the inadequacy of his returned paper on Milton's minor poems. Incidentally, a pupil is in the way to develop some appreciation of that elusive and indefinable essence that we call style, for now he sees the value of word and phrase in the simple exercise which reflects his own thought.

A frank recognition of our fundamental aim in teaching literature will revolutionize our methods. In the first place, our choice of books will be determined, not on the basis of a complete survey of the field of literature, but by the tastes and abilities of the boys and girls at the given stage of their progress. With this aim always in view, it will be recognized that it is of no particular value for pupils to know the stories of Shylock, Macbeth, Cæsar, King Arthur, and Ivanhoe.

Neither have the classifications of lyric and ballad, iambus and trochee, romance and realism, nor knowledge of Shakespeare's dark lady, nor Milton's marital misfortunes, nor Scott's lame leg, nor Pope's crooked spine any saving qualities. Has the literature of the school become a savor of life unto life, a nourisher of the spirit, an inspirer of nobler ideas and emotions? Unless we can reach the essential life at a deeper level than a mere show-window display of literary tinsel, we had better spend our time with the new social science and the new social interpretation of history and of physical science that are destined to play so large a part in the education of the next decade. By recognizing our aim in our daily practice, we shall conform to the doctrine that education is the process of developing the child from what he is to what he ought to be, rather than to our present college-dictated custom of leading him from where he is not to where he does not want to go.

On this new principle our choice of literature will be much broader than might be supposed, because our method will be so changed that much that has seemed impossible will be found most interesting. For example, the pupils of the future will read Scott much as we, who were *not* *taught* the English classics, read him. The teacher will hasten over the first thirty to sixty pages, get the class fairly absorbed in the story, and then—*get out of the way*. She will not assign "the next chapter"; she certainly will not take the time of twenty-five recitations to drag under her pedantic arc light every rainbow tint of the story by the "what next?" method; she will not exact themes on Rebecca's lacerated affections or Friar Tuck's bibulous homilies. She will give Scott a chance, and incidentally her pupils will read about five times as much and like it more than five times as well. By thus directing the tastes the right way, the reading mania, which seems to be a pretty general phenomenon of adolescence, may be made to contribute to the literary culture and to the intellectual resourcefulness of later years.

When the attitude of the class toward the school literature is thus revolutionized, the teacher can approach more difficult books with assurance. Literature of varied types can be discovered to the class. More and more of the technical difficulties will be solved because of the intelligent curiosity of the pupils. Thus a four years' course will eventuate not only in a greater knowledge, but also in a discriminating taste that will be rich in its promise of literary culture.

The college, then, is doing the high school great injury by insisting upon only certain traditional subjects for entrance. The great injustice is done to the vast majority who do not go to college, but whose opportunities for preparation for larger living are limited in a subtle way by the dominance of college traditions in the high school. The college injures the high school, also, by prescribing through its examinations the method and scope of treatment of the various studies. Almost any subject can contribute to real culture if studied in the right way, but the prescriptions of college professors, far removed in experience and sympathy from the mass of Americans, cause a stultification of both teachers and pupils.

When the college grants to the high school the right to make its own course of study, when it recognizes for entrance any subject well taught, when it admits that the welfare of the boys and girls is more important than special preparation for its advanced courses, when it places the needs of the ninety-five whom it never reaches above the crotchets of the professor who wants to make specialists of the five, then it will enable the high school to fulfill its mission of equal opportunity to all.

# V

# THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE COURSE OF STUDY

PERHAPS the most important element in the real service that any educational institution renders to its patrons is the spirit of its administration. This spirit will be determined by the fundamental principles of those in authority, colored, of course, by the personal equation that has so large an influence upon all human affairs. The school administrator will decide the numerous questions that arise in the day's work very largely according to his idea — perhaps mostly subconscious — as to the nature and ends of education. If he believes that the aim of the schools is to increase the sum total of knowledge of certain traditional subjects, he will guide his students along lines in harmony with that belief. By so doing he will avoid the inconvenience of being classed as a disturber of the educational peace — or slumber — and will share all the emoluments that accrue, in education as in politics, to those who are religiously "regular."

One of the most important questions in the formulation of a program of studies is, What studies shall be required of all pupils? The answer given in the course of study of the American high school up to to-day is based on the aforementioned principle that it is the aim of the school to increase the sum total of knowledge of certain traditional subjects. Therefore, practically every pupil, on entering an American high school, is compelled to take algebra and a foreign language. In a considerable percentage of the schools entering pupils are compelled to add to these two subjects, ancient history. Every principal knows that the high percentage of failures comes in these subjects, just as he knows that the overwhelming majority of first-year pupils have absolutely no appreciative basis for any of them. He knows that discouragement with these subjects is largely responsible for the tremendous losses that account for the presence of forty-one per cent of the high school pupils of the country in the first year, but if he believes that these subjects are the essentials of intellectual salvation, of course he is justified in requiring them.

Even a superficial consideration of the reason why the American people all over the country are erecting high schools that are almost palatial, and spending millions of dollars every year for their maintenance, will discover as a justification for this expense a fundamental aim vastly different from the increase of the net total of algebra, Latin, *et al.*

Of course it is perfectly trite and obvious that the real justification for the public expense upon the high schools is the production of an improved citizenship. A corollary to this statement is that those subjects that will contribute to citizenship should be the ones required in the course. If we are to serve the cause of citizenship, the first-year high school pupil should be required to study concrete problems of citizenship. When the grammar school course shall have been revised to harmonize with the same principle, the high school freshman will have an adequate basis for more advanced work, but, for the present, some such book as Beard's *American Citizenship*, or Guitteau's *Training for Citizenship*, with ample illustration and laboratory practice in the immediate community, could serve as a basis.

The study of the social, economic, and political problems of to-day, illustrated and illumined by the new type of history study as suggested in a previous chapter, should be one of the major requirements for the entire course in every high school. To this civic study should be added two other inevitable units. Practically everybody agrees that the study of the mother tongue should be one of the required constants of the course of study, and nearly everybody agrees that the aim of this course should be practical efficiency in the use of English in written and spoken form, together with an appreciative acquaintance with as much of the best literature as can be covered. The increasing understanding of the importance of a good physical basis for a life of happiness and of efficient service will probably insist upon a larger and larger place for the right kind of physical instruction for all of the pupils. These three constants, civics and the other social sciences, English, and physical training, would occupy from a third to a half of the available time throughout the high school course.

To this should be added as a requirement for every girl systematic instruction in those home arts, efficiency in which will largely determine her happiness and service. Woman's knowledge of such matters as these is of vital public concern, and the public has the same right to conserve its own interests by requiring this instruction in the schools it is supporting as the private business man has to profit in the advancement of his business. With the addition of this unit, somewhat over half of the time of the girl would be taken up with required work, only one element of which — English — is at present accepted by the majority of the colleges. There can be no doubt, however, that the men's colleges and the coeducational colleges will coördinate with the public schools; and unless there is a readjustment to modern problems and conditions on the part of the majority of the women's colleges, inability to send pupils from the high schools to some of these institutions will be a real benefit to the schools and the communities.

Some form of manual training should be required from every boy for at least one year of the course. All civilization rests upon an economic basis, and the world's work must continue to demand an overwhelming preponderance of manual over purely intellectual work. The need of our day is intelligent, conscientious artisans, men whose coördinated mental and physical powers fit them to render services that ingenuity has not relegated to the machine. The decadence of our agriculture and the inefficiency of our artisanship are striking evidences, at once of the need of a manual requirement in our high schools and of the shortcomings of their present book-parroting course of study.

It is, of course, evident that the smaller school cannot offer as wide a range of electives as might be desired. Public welfare indicates the necessity of the fundamentals of civic and social science, physical training, the mother tongue, home training for the girls, and manual training for the boys. Desirable as it is that the widest possible opportunity may be offered in the form of electives above this required content, it is even more important that the subjects offered should be well taught, in units sufficiently large to be of real value. The temptation to introduce many subjects in units of one, two, or three periods a week, rather than to give thorough courses of four or five periods extending throughout the year, has enabled many schools to present a formidable array of subjects in their course of study. Pupils from these schools often show a startling facility in generalizing on facts and principles "that aren't so." The courses of study and the recommendations of the best pedagogical authority, such as the national committees and the Carnegie Foundation, show a decided tendency to limit the course either to four units of five periods per week each, or to five units of four periods each. In addition to this prescription, pupils frequently take drawing, physical training, and music, each for one or two periods per week.

If the school can offer only one group of studies, it should, of course, make such selection as seems most likely to meet the needs of the largest possible number of pupils. Here will come the pressure for a college preparatory course for a very small number of pupils, with the consequent refusal to meet the needs of the much larger group whose education must end in the high school. Here an awakened public sentiment must assert itself, and to this end the present widespread interest in all sorts of community problems and the tendency to question practices supported only by tradition are most promising. Where the alternative of catering to the larger or to the smaller group can be clearly presented, the rights of the majority are pretty likely to prevail in an American community. Where there are insistent demands for two or more types of training, the probable result will be the desirable compromise of increased facilities at public expense.

To these elements of social science, English, physical education, and manual arts, there should, of course, be added some introduction to the various other fields of human knowledge. It should always be remembered that it is the aim of the high school to open to youth the various fields of knowledge, to arouse dormant interests, to assist in the trying-out process by which the individual finds his way to his particular vocation and to his avocations. This is an individual process. The adolescent years are characterized by unusual emphasis upon individual tendencies, by shifting from one interest to another, a tendency evidently calculated to help the individual to find his place in the world and his social relation to his kind.

Study of the various subjects along the lines of their human interest, rather than along the familiar lines of logical acquisition of subject-matter, will revolutionize the attitude of tens of thousands of pupils toward the studies and the school. This revolutionizing process has already made much progress in many schools. Whatever is done, no pupil should be driven out of school because of inability to accomplish any one line of work. The ideal of the course should be, thorough work along various lines selected with a view to the tastes and abilities of individual students.

It is the business of the school to study the pupils, to insist that choice of subjects shall not depend upon momentary caprice, to prevent a discursiveness that would be fatal to habits of concentration, to develop a keen interest in the work of the school, and to enforce a fair, honest effort. In his book, *The American Secondary School and Some of its Problems*, Professor Julius Sachs says: "We are all agreed that the entire range of studies embraced in the secondary school curriculum cannot be compassed in their respective maximum of offerings by one and the same pupil; choice must be made, but it must be choice under wise and firm direction, dictated by professional knowledge and experience, not by parental whim or by the dictates of chaotic popular sentiment, least of all by the moods of the immature pupil."

Just what the program of studies shall be in addition to the above-mentioned constants for all pupils ought to depend largely upon the locality, and the types of students and upon the families they represent. So long as no subjects are made fetishes, and no subjects, useful and valuable to a considerable proportion of the pupils, are excluded, a wholesome variety in various schools will contribute to healthful progress through experimentation.

The method of promotion is another problem of the utmost importance in high school administration. Fortunately this problem is much nearer settlement than that of the curriculum. Only a few cities still adhere to the inflexible and antiquated method of promotion by grades. Any consideration of the rights and needs of varying individuals of course indicates promotion by subjects as the only sane method. The few schools that have not adopted this method of promotion have been deterred from doing so usually by adherence to the classic tradition that what was good enough for our fathers is good enough for us, or by needless fear of the complications of an untried system of organization.

There are overwhelming objections to promotion by grades. Perhaps the most obvious is that pupils are compelled to repeat subjects they have passed for the sake of other subjects in which they have failed. For example, a pupil taking the usual first-term course, consisting of English, science, history, algebra, and a foreign language, fails in the foreign language and algebra. The term is entirely lost so far as progress in the school is concerned, because all the work must be repeated so as to cover the two subjects failed in. Sometimes the rules permit a pupil failing in only one subject to go ahead with his class and carry the failed subject as a condition. This is nearly as disastrous as the other dilemma, for a continuous subject inevitably requires mastery of the fundamental principles as a foundation for the more advanced work. This expedient results only in the pupil's dragging an ever-lengthening chain of failure which ultimately requires the extra term or perhaps more frequently sends him disheartened from the school.

Many curious complications arise under this system that would be amusing if they were not so tragic. A grammar school boy had passed in every subject for admission to high school save "reading." For "reading" he received a mark of 45 per cent. The boy stuttered under excitement. He stuttered at the unnatural test of reading a paragraph before strangers in a strange school. As 50 per cent was essential in "reading," the 45 per cent kept the boy out of the high school. He was too much discouraged to spend another year doing geography, history, spelling, grammar, music, physiology, mensuration, percentage, and denominate numbers, all of which he had at his fingers' ends. Besides, he was not sure at all that a repetition of these studies would cure his occasional tendency to stutter.

A—— B—— was a student in a school that perhaps more than any other in the country prides itself on its traditions. A teacher of English was amazed by the perfection of the boy's knowledge of every detail of his work. His compositions were so good that the teacher envied his skill. He had never failed in English, but evidently was going on the principle, — if at first you do succeed, try, try again. Investigation showed that in his first trial he had failed seven hours' work, the second time over his freshman course he had passed the work failed at first, but, because of the tediousness of marking time over ground once traversed, had failed seven hours that he had passed the first time. So, because he had failed to make all his hits at one inning, he was compelled to spend a third year in the freshman class. At seventeen he was classified with boys of thirteen and fourteen. Of course, he was tired of the "same old stuff," as he expressed it, so he found a job. The records of many schools would show hundreds of disgusting parallels to these cases. They are striking examples of the letter of the law that killeth.

Another evil of this system, quite as great though not so apparent, is the inevitable rigidity of the course. The school may offer, for example, four courses of study. Pupils are grouped in sections by grades in each term of the course. It becomes nearly impossible to permit any combinations from the various courses or to make the load lighter or heavier to meet individual needs and capacities. The thirty-five pupils of a section must lock-step together from the first day of the term to the end thereof, and the pedagogic beadle must chastise any obstreperous youngster who cries for more or less or different.

Promotion by subject, of course, requires a more complicated organization. It occasionally — though seldom — makes it impossible to give a pupil at a certain time just the subjects that seem most desirable. It sets a difficult problem in permutations to be worked out by the principal and teachers, but the very task of working out this problem is sure to bring them into intimate and vital contact with the boys and girls and their real needs. Moreover, it can be done, as is proved by thousands of schools all over the country; and any principal who really wants to serve his community will have little difficulty in readjusting his administration on the more democratic basis.

Problems of adjusting the course of study will arise in very great variety in any high school.

The importance of a liberal spirit in their administration may be emphasized by a few illustrations from actual experience.

Mary X—— was a bright pupil in the majority of her subjects, but like many other bright girls she found geometry an insurmountable barrier. She studied honestly and diligently, her teachers patiently go-carted her from "two right lines" to Q.E.D., but Mary was more dense than the old German who tried to understand the use of clearing-house certificates in time of a panic. After repeated explanations and vain repetitions, a light dawned upon his broad face and he exclaimed, "It is like dis, ven mine baby vakes up in der night und gries for milk, I shust gif him a milk dicket."

Problem 1: Shall this girl be tortured with geometry as long as she remains in school (which under these conditions probably will not be long), or shall she be permitted to drop geometry and make up her counts for graduation by taking subjects she can master with profit?

John Y—— failed in first-term Latin for five successive terms. In this time the habit of failure came to include nearly all of his studies and became chronic, along with the cigarette habit, the hands-in-the-pockets habit, the stand-on-the-corner habit, and several other highly undesirable habits. Every one knew that John had plenty of ability to conquer Latin or any other subject that he really wanted to conquer.

Problem 2: Did the school do right in keeping John at subjects that he refused to study, or should it have sought his interests, and at least have tried to develop the habit of success? See Johann Friedrich Herbart.

Nellie Z—— possessed some talent and much love for music. It was accepted as a matter of fact in her home that she should have a thorough musical education. She took two lessons a week and practiced three hours a day.

Problem 3: Should the public high school permit her to take less than the full course and so be graduated in five or six instead of in four years?

Problem 4: Should the public high school excuse Nellie an hour before the close of school on Thursday to attend a class in the theory of music, which she could attend only at that time?

Harry W—— was the son of a prominent physician who had determined that the boy should follow his father's practice. Harry was obedient and dutiful, prepared his lessons in the college preparatory course passably well, and spent every spare moment working with machinery. His skill and ingenuity in all kinds of mechanical processes amounted almost to genius. His hatred for languages and for textbook theory was overcome only by the coercion of a strong father who had managed to keep in touch with the boy.

Problem 5: (*a*) Should the school have tried to convince the father that Harry's greatest usefulness lay along mechanical lines? (*b*) If successful, should the school have changed Harry's course so as to emphasize mechanics, manual training, and mathematics?

Problem 6: If William A—— and Mary B—— will not or cannot do any certain kind of school work, shall they be held to the traditional course, or shall their needs be studied, and the course adapted to meet those needs?

Problem 7: Shall the high school put all freshmen through a perscribed course, or shall it so coördinate with the grammar school as to profit by the latter's knowledge of the individual, and shape the pupil's course in accord with this knowledge from the time he enters the high school?

Problems like the above with a thousand individual variations will arise from day to day in the administration of a high school. The manner of their solution will depend upon the conscious or subconscious belief of the high-school principal and teachers as to the nature and ends of education and their conception of the obligations of the school to the community that is paying the bills.

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