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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

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*The Relation of the University to  
Secondary Schools*

AN ADDRESS DELIVERED AT BERKELEY, BEFORE THE  
CALIFORNIA UNION, ON NOVEMBER 10, 1898

BY

FREDERICK SLATE

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[Reprinted from THE UNIVERSITY CHRONICLE, Vol. I, No. 6.]

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## THE RELATION OF THE UNIVERSITY TO SECONDARY SCHOOLS.\*

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By FREDERICK SLATE.

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Some subjects offer a peculiar form of temptation, through the bare possibility of treating them within the narrow boundaries of an hour. The attempt is made to do this, and the consequent hurry defeats its own end.

The present topic avoids danger from that source by the very magnitude of it. The two latest stages in the organized process of training for the work of maturity are important in themselves, and in their connection, to the highest degree. The questions involved have a place in the thought of every nation that is to any extent a leader in education. These questions have been under serious discussion almost continuously during the second half of this century, at least. Therefore, even a skeleton resumé of this activity is out of the question. We can turn attention toward the region occupied by it; we can point out some lines of entry into that region; and the attitude of the University of California on a few general types of policy can be defined. But a well-regulated ambition will attempt no more than this.

For our present purpose it is not necessary to dwell upon the manifest diversity of the institutions going by the common name—University; nor to select one among them

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\* An address delivered at Berkeley, before the California Union, on November 10, 1898.

as a term for comparison. For the ends here in view, the word will be used definitely enough if made to include examples so unlike as the universities of Berlin, Oxford, Harvard, and California. They have this in common: that they are the institutions of higher learning, each for its own constituency.

In like manner, the Friedrich-Wilhelm Gymnasium in Berlin, Rugby School, an English board-school, the Boston Latin School, and the Santa Ana High School may occupy a large range up and down in the scale of excellence, and may otherwise differ in many features; but they are alike in the one essential respect for us. They represent the stage next below the highest in the educational plan of which they form a part.

In general, then, we shall use the terms University and Secondary School emptied of more particular content than this; with the qualification or proviso, however, that the secondary school of technical purpose shall be excluded from present consideration. We choose to be here concerned with secondary schools as part of a "liberal education" only.

The possibilities of our title may be still further usefully narrowed. The relation between University and Secondary School, spoken of in the singular, of course includes many phases of a complex relation.

The relation is, in some respects, speculative, intellectual, logical. The scheme of education is to be laid out, the lines of demarcation are to be drawn, the parts coördinated and balanced one against the other.

All this, however, we accept as done. The elements are—what we find them to be; and such contribution as may here be made to a view of the relation in question, will be on what may be called the practical side. What is the *situation*, if you please? What interaction is there between schools and universities, as educational forces at work in society? And perhaps even more specifically since in our dynamics we are apt to regard one body as act

ing and the other as acted upon (for the time being), how does the university act upon, influence, control, guide, and build up the secondary school?

Where any measurable influence does practically go out from the university and affect the schools next in order below, it bears fruit in encouraging and retaining the best grade of teachers, and in cultivating the best possibilities of their teaching. This service is the most effectual benefit to the schools that is due to the relation in which they may stand to the higher institution. To set this in a clear light, and to indicate some types of procedure in establishing effectively the standards for good teachers and good teaching; this sums up in advance the scope of my intention.

There is no doubt that this sort of bond does exist between the university and the schools in every leading country. The bond may be more or less directly incorporated into the administrative machinery, or may be even formally absent. But through one channel, at least, the universities are continually pouring into the secondary schools the material upon which the nutrition and growth of the latter depend. I mean through the teachers. Every person who has attended a university in the course of the preparation for teaching, carries into the schools a certain group of ideas, and becomes a secondary focus of them.

This has been selected for first mention, partly because it is universally operative, and partly again because the presence of university students in the teaching-force of secondary schools gives the necessary leverage to other tendencies and efforts, and becomes in this way vital, too, as well as universal.

The ideas consequent upon university training will be most important, in so far as they are held in common and represent the distinctive ideals for which all the universities stand; in so far as they kindle a liberal and disinterested aspiration in the young and set a stamp upon character as well as attainment.

Governmental control of the schools (where it exists), no matter how minutely prescriptive, cannot check or banish this influence; which is subtle and pervasive enough to elude verbal formulas. In the form of the teacher's atmosphere, the free spirit of the university reaches the schools and stimulates them. The schools will be most excellent, other factors being at all nearly equal, where the largest portion of this free spirit is effective. In other words, where the largest proportion of the teachers in secondary schools have had individual experience at the university of its methods, and carry on other persons to emulate them.

In France as well as Germany, in the smaller countries of Europe which follow their lead in educational matters, and in England, the university student is omnipresent on the staff of the secondary schools. We are glad to see this tide rising in America, and (closer to us) in California, because of the desirable consequences that the fact carries with it. The percentage of university graduates among the high-school teachers in the State has been rapidly on the increase. It is with satisfaction that we note how high California stands among the States of the Union in this respect.

When the secondary school is thought of in its function of preparing for the university, the requirement is obvious that the teacher should himself be familiar with that for which he is preparing the student. The desirableness for the teacher of expert knowledge in his subjects, which can ordinarily be gained by university training only, is equally plain. And this second element affects every pupil of the school; not alone those who are preparing for the university. But we do not exhaust the advantages of this type of teacher, unless we take due account of the liberal temper and wider view which his own studies have afforded.

The Prussian Government organizes its Gymnasia for its own purposes of intelligent citizenship, and not solely with regard to the universities. It demands of its teachers the capacity to impart with thoroughness a certain stage of

liberal education; and requires them to qualify for that office by university study.

If we find in California (as we evidently do) a stimulus exercised locally by every university graduate, which shows in the form of increased attendance at universities, this is not because the high schools have been deflected into becoming preparatory schools for the University, to the detriment of their local function. Nor is it solely because the quality of the teaching is improved. This stimulus upon the pupils in its worthiest exhibition, is towards reaching a plane of liberal development by disinterested pursuits—and at the cost of sacrifice if necessary.

Where a central authority in educational matters exists, and an element is seen and admitted to promise unquestioned value for the schools of a given class, there is full warranty for a step which imposes the requirement that this element shall be introduced into those schools. It is not to be wondered at, then, that the countries of continental Europe, which are to the requisite degree centralized, demand the university training of all teachers in secondary schools under their administration.

There is no such authority in California. Nor have any of the needful preliminary steps been taken, to which the establishment of such a center would be the natural sequel. It is not even assured that a person or body clothed with such powers proves on the whole an unmixed benefit. I find the question still under discussion in England, and that solution hedged with many qualifications. There are voices raised against the drawback of officialism in the schools of Prussia, while the value of its intelligent and inflexible standards is freely recognized. But however that may be, if the process of infusing the university element into the high-schools of California has been encouraged and hastened, under the prevailing conditions (and this is the fact), credit is to be given the University for assuming a function not otherwise assigned, and for devising the means which could be used to the desired end.

The policy adopted has consisted in placing our own graduates in the field, with the best equipment for the work which the circumstances admitted, trusting to comparison and generous competition to effect the raising of the average towards the level thus marked.

The course of action followed coincides in its issue essentially with that attained by unfettered exercise of central power for the public good, as in Prussia or France. But if our institutions of higher learning could endorse with their united judgment a type of requirement for teachers in secondary schools, that judgment might come to have all the force of law, with more than a law's moral value. Whether by law or agreement, the requirement should, however, *de facto* exist, for the sake of results already recited.

In the light of such considerations, the movement on the part of our University towards improvement of the public standards for teachers in secondary schools in California, is explicable, even in its details. The present state of the requirement, as a basis for action in recommending University graduates for teachers' certificates, is found in the current REGISTER, on page 71. It may be taken as representing an approach towards the standards established by consensus of intelligent opinion in these departments, in the larger world.

The University is now represented upon the State Board of Education. That body exercises control over the extension of privileges to graduates of other universities, in the matter of acquiring the right to teach, without submitting to the local examinations. The State University is thus allowed to set the standard in these things; and, together with a certain amount of power, there is conferred by this arrangement a still more definite share of responsibility. Examination of details will show, as I think, that the responsibility has been squarely met; with enlightened interpretation of experience elsewhere. At this point, as at other vital points, the University has not allowed its policy



to be shaped by selfish view of the schools as feeders of its own classes.

It may be worth noticing, to conclude what is to be said under this heading, that the University standards for teachers in secondary schools are not exclusively enforced. The alternative procedure by local examination at the hands of County or City Boards is still open; and this does not involve the University tests—except the trying test of comparison.

So there is no question here of central authority. Only of a normal standard dictated by a consciousness of responsibility, and set up for imitation. Neither is there any dogmatic claim that the liberal point of view is conferred by university training alone. In one very true sense all education is self-education. Men may be self-educated as they are self-governed. But in the majority of cases the organized processes of education, as of government, will be the easier as well as the surer road.

If, in prosecuting its plans, the University has seemed to act with severity towards its own graduates, this course has been dictated by a far-sighted wisdom, which has held steadily in view its own credit; and their ultimate benefit by association with its own high reputation.

The standard here in recommending them for certificates has been gradually but consistently raised. Certificate used to follow diploma, unless the student had been disciplined or was evidently disqualified; the certificate was general, and did not specify subjects; there was no requirement that the student should have made any particular preparation for teaching.

There is progress to register on all these scores. The "Teacher's Certificate Committee" has now no sinecure. Applications are carefully sifted, and a considerable percentage are thrown out on the ground of defective scholarship, for example. A recommendation, when granted, bears upon its face the subjects, usually not more than three (and those closely related), in which the student's

preparation is pronounced adequate for teaching. And there is enforced a provision that the student should have occupied himself with thought for the methods and resources of his profession.

The University has further protected itself, and therefore finally the graduates of best quality, by systematizing the work of endorsing candidates for positions. Their own excellence of performance under trial is now made to enter as an important element. And no doubt there will be built up gradually a process of real promotion towards the places of greater responsibility in the larger schools or cities, for those among our graduates who distinguish themselves in the educational field.

Getting a larger proportion of efficient teachers into the schools provides material to work upon and work with, when other improvements are initiated, which affect the quality of the teaching and the arrangement of courses of study.

We may look with longing eyes again towards Prussia, coveting the advantages in this respect which are there without doubt manifest. Or we may console ourselves by observing that our way to change and reform is less obstructed than in England, by the entanglements of inherited tradition. Though we do either, or both, however, the defects of organization and method confront us, and must be eliminated. Our predecessors or companions in the work can be helpful only in suggesting models to work towards.

The prevailing and prominent vice of the high-school curriculum in this country, no longer than fifteen years ago, was its fragmentary, desultory, scattering character. Courses of this sort were frequently met in California when the University began to develop activity in counseling the schools. Marvels have been worked in clearing the ground of one-term courses on fifteen or twenty subjects, jumbled together under the caption, Curriculum. They have melted away before the influence of a saner view concerning the results to be expected from a high-school. The University

has reflected the light of the great movement towards concentration and thoroughness into the remotest high-schools of California, and made them early partakers in the benefits of a more modern conception of their task.

In accomplishing the necessary change of base, the precaution had to be observed of preserving connection with the schools meanwhile; and moving only so far in the lead as was consistent with maintaining the touch that guided effort. Inasmuch as an encouraging chance for their graduates to enter the University was the leverage for acting upon the schools, the matriculation-requirements could be only gradually modified. It will be instructive for a younger generation to recognize the deliberate, persistent effort behind the changes recorded in our REGISTER from year to year. A gradual lifting, without hurry or pause, of a small provincial institution into the small group that lead; this has been accomplished.

In curious parallel with the law which gave the University weight by its representatives upon the State Board of Education, is that other piece of legislation, which is still strongly operative to check the vagaries of local boards. I mean the law which says in effect: "Every high-school must adjust its work so as to include all the subjects required for entrance to at least one college at Berkeley."

It is gratifying to reflect that here, too, the University had a keener sense for the responsibility than for exploiting the power. The responsibility in the present instance is conceived as that of keeping the matriculation within the reasonable limits determined by the conditions of the good average school.

We may, indeed, say, without giving it the flavor of a public boast, that the spirit of reasonableness, view of both sides in every important question related to the schools, and unquestioned impartiality, dominate the University record thus far. And it is a fair inference that the concessions of the two laws above referred to bestowed no right upon the University that was not already in its con-

trol by exercising it for the public good. The laws were recognitions rather than concessions.

In these general ways, then, the University of California has worked towards the introduction of good teachers into the secondary schools, and the creation of conditions under which good results could be obtained, so far as the general scheme of study, which we call the curriculum, is concerned. I hope that it has been sufficiently emphasized that these efforts have been put forth for the advancement of the schools primarily, and of the University by reaction only. In other words, this is one return which the University has been able to make to the communities scattered up and down the State which have taxed themselves liberally for its support.

There has been a strong feeling among us, which has found vent in this field, that an obligation of this kind rests peculiarly upon a State University. A private institution is fully at liberty to select its own domain and cultivate it. There is freedom to discriminate, and develop one function rather than others, among several which fall to the share of the ideal university in its completeness. Clark University makes no pretense of caring for the undergraduate; at Baltimore, too, there has been a similar tendency, though less pronounced. But should the Johns Hopkins University become the State University of Maryland, it will, according to the view here presented, appropriately widen its field of operations by inclusion of what may be called pedagogic care for the schools around it.

There remains now to be referred to and briefly treated, the procedure of which we find examples in actual cases, by which the standards for secondary education are promulgated or enforced. Secondary schools are very commonly brought under public scrutiny through their results. Of course, there is, in the first place, a diffused public opinion, based on the general efficiency of school-graduates in the vocations of life. This is a legitimate basis for judgment, if used fairly; the avowed object of secondary schools being

what it is. No type of school could, in the long run, maintain its curriculum and its methods in the face of results proved defective on these general grounds, and the public outcry consequent thereupon. Almost every country has marks to show of popular pressure thus brought to bear, with issue in a Commission of Inquiry, or equivalent investigating and revising body. If we find ourselves free from these more violent symptoms, it is mainly because the schools have been, perhaps, even too ready to trim sails to popular breezes, and even fickle airs.

However, the scrutiny that is really before our thought involves a more direct and searching test, applied by persons of presumed competence for their office. Its peculiar and essential feature, in connection with our present inquiry, is that through it, directly or indirectly, a definite relation between school and university is established. We are locally familiar with one particular scheme of this sort, in our own system of accrediting. It will be a definite point gained if we become able to orient this plan with reference to others like it; especially if the reasons can be incidentally laid bare which determined the choice and rejection that have been exercised among the practical possibilities as realized elsewhere.

The situation that led to accrediting is reproduced, in all essential respects, in England and Germany, to mention no other instances. It is instructive to recognize that neither our problem nor our solution of it is unique. Lessons are spread broadcast by which we may profit. It will do us no harm to see that our procedure is not brand-new and novel, but a composite imitation of good models. We are not launched upon an unsounded sea, nor pioneering in *terra incognita*.

I understand it to be one mark of a progressive spirit, that it will, by comparative study of important questions, avoid mistaking the reëntrant circle of an eddy for the flow of the main stream. It is certainly with the intention at least of promoting this laudable spirit, and of discouraging

a provinciality which accepts its own standards uncritically, that this contribution to the discussion has been shaped throughout. It is proposed, then, to give the briefest account of the relation at present existing, of a nature parallel to accrediting, between university and secondary school, in England and in Prussia.

It is not to be inferred that the choice is restricted to these two instances. On the contrary, the list might easily be swelled to include half-a-dozen countries of Europe. But the two mentioned are representative, and of different type. It may be well to say that Prussia sets the key for Germany, and leads. With minor qualifications, what is true for Prussia, so far as our purpose extends, is true for the Empire also. In it we are dealing with rigorous governmental prescription and control; and a system whose main lines were laid down in the early period of the modern educational movement. To set over against this, we have in England a comparatively late development of secondary education to any adequate extent, with a period of adjustment and fruitful discussion extending well down to the present date. There is further contrast between England and Prussia. In the latter country the government interposes directly and solely, exercising a firm authority over both schools and universities, and bringing them *ab extra* into adjustment. In the former case, the two chief universities, Oxford and Cambridge, are active in a quasi-public character; the schools enter upon the relation voluntarily, and the government stands sponsor to the arrangement with its sanction.

In Prussia all schools of certain types are accredited to (rather than by) the universities. There is discrimination against one or more of these types, to the extent that students coming from them are excluded from matriculation in some of the faculties. It seems clear, from the accounts given, that the accrediting does not extend to all the class of a given year, but must be obtained by special excellence of record.

The government control exhibits the following salient features: The course of study must be submitted by the principal of the school for approval. He may evidently exercise discretion within certain (probably narrow) limits. Changes in the course of study are contemplated; for it must be resubmitted at intervals of three years. There are unannounced visits by inspectors, who quiz the classes and notice the work in detail. The recommending of students for accrediting involves passing a final examination. This is conducted in the main by the officers of the school; but the government inspector is present, and takes his share in the oral part of the examination, which is usually included.

Many strong elements of parallelism may be detected between this and our own accrediting. It can of course be urged with truth that we offer but the shadow of the Prussian substance, in respect of attainment for our high-school graduation, and the close minuteness of supervision which prevails under their inspectors. But we agree with them in entrusting to the school, through its officers, the execution of its announced plan for work; and we agree with Matthew Arnold and them, in laying the weight of our emphasis upon the continuous training of good instruction, rather than upon the results of spasmodic strain in examination.

The necessary inclusion of a government representative in the final examination, and the importance attached to this examination, which is a gateway opening into privilege for Prussian youth, might seem to contradict this position. I think closer scrutiny makes the apparent contradiction disappear.

First, entry upon the final examination is allowed to those students only whose record in detail justifies that permission. The close daily average it is, then, which is the *sine qua non*.

Secondly, I interpret the presence of the inspector, not as implying possible unfairness, but as part of the Prussian

striving after uniformity. He is there to correct the divergence of judgment in individuals, which exists though they are working under the same printed instructions. I discover that the teachers of the school make the lists of examination questions (from which the inspector selects) several weeks before the time of the examination. But, my authority goes on to say, though the boys could be coached on these predetermined lines, "A strict code of professional honor condemns and prevents any such unfair presentation. It is said that a teacher would rather commit suicide than thus cram up boys beforehand to pass on the questions set by himself." Where such a high-strung spirit as this prevails, the real ground for the arrangement in question must be sought elsewhere than in distrust of the teacher's impartiality or honesty.

I draw the conclusion, therefore, that we have a good Prussian model for our plan of coöperation of school with University in the recommendation of pupils. The University passes judgment upon the workings of the school, the principal enforces the standards as regards the pupils.

I rely upon this lesson as the excuse for an apparent digression. For there is no appearance of the university in the Prussian scheme. But there is instruction and suggestion here, nevertheless, if we consider the State University substituted, as is natural to do under the conditions here obtaining, for the government.

A few lines above I alluded to a dictum of Matthew Arnold, in which he speaks as an English school-inspector of long and varied experience. I should like to quote it. He says: "The end to have in view (in education) is that every one who presents himself . . . shall have received for a certain length of time the best preliminary instruction. This is not an absolute security, but it is the best security. It is a thousand times better than the mere examination test."

He speaks with sad knowledge of the English habit, which lays the heavy stress upon examination, usually of



the competitive type. I feel we can take little else than warning from the actual scheme of local examinations and joint-board examinations, by means of which the great English universities give and withhold reputation. The changes are rung upon examining whole schools, whole classes in schools, selected candidates in special subjects. It is a system of examination, as opposed to inspection. And its results are raising question in thoughtful minds.

Our English brethren, however, have the parliamentary habit of discussion and conference. And we may fortify ourselves in another aspect of our coöperative activity, by observing how they go to work to sift out the truth from the mass of their accumulated experience by giving representation in such matters to all who are qualified to speak. In the voluntary relation between school and University, brought about by natural features in the situation only, as well as in the delegation to the University of the function which is elsewhere reserved to the government, the English pattern has been followed.

When they were taken in hand by the University, the Californian high-schools were few in number, and sadly in need of counsel. It happened, very fortunately, as I think, that they were not confused by a multitude of voices giving counsel at once. The circumstances at Berkeley were such that one department after another gathered headway and strength here, and each in turn was able to occupy the field of work that the schools offered. Thus the pressure of reform was brought upon the different branches in the schools seriatim. The movement in English was begun vigorously by Professor Cook (now at Yale). Professor Stringham has been able to direct the work in mathematics continuously since he first took the matter in hand. We have cause to be very well satisfied with the effects of University supervision over these two departments in the schools. The results are of such excellence that our State has earned a reputation by them in circles where such efforts meet reward. Other departments have since then

made their own beginnings, with reasonable progress to report.

The inspection of schools by persons, each an expert in some of the subjects taught, is the salt of our plan of accrediting. If university supervision of schools by inspection is looked upon askance in other States, and viewed with suspicion as being ineffective, it is because of a looseness in the procedure, which does not enter where each judgment uttered is by a man who knows.

Many of the American universities have adopted what is practically the English system of local examinations. The reasons for avoiding such a plan are, to some of us at least, clear to demonstration, if the object be the welfare of the schools as such. I hope to have indicated the thoughts that lead to that conclusion.

No doubt the University examiners were in the beginning amateurish and inexperienced. But the good-will they showed carried them with success through the early period. At the present stage of development, we stand face to face with the need of meeting the problem of accrediting seriously. The University must lead. A capable official may be stiff and inflexible; but an incapable official is ridiculous or contemptible. In proportion as schools grow strong, and have years of tradition behind them, the principal becomes master in his own field; the University has less to teach him; and more to learn from him. Hence the insistence upon the English idea, that examiners who set questions, not to speak of inspectors, must be persons of experience in school-work, knowing the possibilities of school-children and school-subjects.

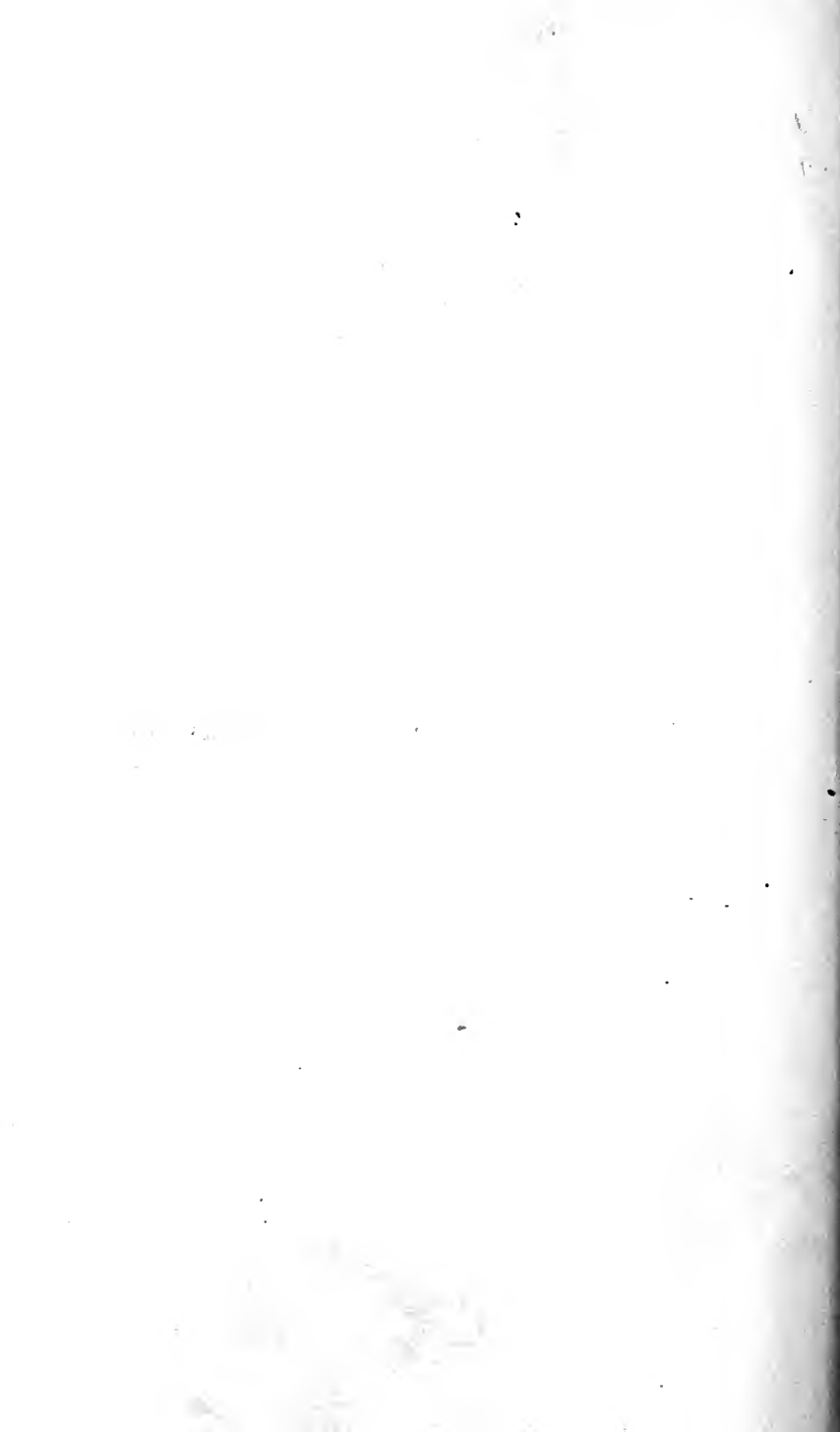
Again, there can be no permanent future for accrediting, unless it reserves the individuality of the teacher, and remains pliable enough to take account of diversity in method. It is sometimes made a reproach of Prussian school-inspection, that it shows the inherent weakness of "officialism" in discouraging experimental variations from the statutory scheme. It is alleged that it is in fact difficult

for a Prussian school to find out whether a proposed new idea is good; because the government discountenances and prohibits it until it is proved good. We have no place for a degenerate officialism in California. The play of life in the schools must be prized as the apple of our eye; and the personality of the teacher must be respected in every proper way.

Nor can we afford to give up our wise plan of conferences. It is part of the wisdom of our English cousins. And this form of coöperation, wisely laid as a foundation, will be more needed now even, in the period of strong, well-conducted secondary schools in California, than it was when they were so weak that any arm was strong enough to lean upon.







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