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# THE HIGH SCHOOL AS A SOCIAL CENTRE

BY  
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## PART IV

### ADDITIONAL SOCIALIZING FUNCTIONS OF THE MODERN HIGH SCHOOL

#### CHAPTER XXI

##### THE HIGH SCHOOL AS A SOCIAL CENTRE

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**A Study in Educational Evolution.**—The subject before us is one of educational evolution. The high school is in the process of expanding its social function; it is developing a new and more immediate relationship with its constituency. The present stage of this development, the impulses within the system, and the conditions in its environment which are producing the new power and its future relation to the school's prime function—these are the general aspects of the theme to be considered in the present chapter.

**Extension of Public Education General.**—In the beginning the State universities instructed only the students in residence on the campus; to-day their extension departments<sup>1</sup> are reaching out to the utmost confines of

<sup>1</sup> See "A University that Runs a State," by Frank Parker Stockbridge, in *World's Work* for April, 1913.

the commonwealth and are endeavoring to benefit adults as well as adolescents. Through its kindergarten the primary school has recently taken in a younger set and through its evening classes it is bringing in the grown-ups, while the secondary school has not only got hold of the men and women but it, too, is making overtures to a group lower down in the age scale than the one it has traditionally served.

These three institutions are not only extending their benefits to new classes of persons but they are also rendering new kinds of service. The university extension divisions are sending out material for debating clubs and social surveys as well as the lecturers and demonstrators with which they began. To the elementary-school building the outside public is increasingly resorting for its games, its athletics, its entertainment, and its social life; at the high school it is finding not only these same enjoyments but the illustrated lectures, theatrical representations, and art exhibitions which its more spacious quarters make possible. In these novel and more direct relations with society the secondary school is simply following the trend of a general educational movement.

**Present Stage of the New Development.**—In the case of the university the evolution has reached a more advanced stage than it has in the lower institutions. Its extension work is deliberately planned and supported from within. But in the public-school systems the newer enterprises are only beginning to emerge from the category of "outside activities." The authorities still permit them more often than they promote them. Evening classes and public lectures, it is true, have a recognized status in school systems, but the position of club work, quiet games, and social dancing is not so

fixed. High school principals have a well-defined policy regarding the social and recreational activities of their own students, but their attitude toward public forums, citizens' organizations, and outside basket-ball teams is still in the process of formation. In most instances where public schools are now used for popular recreational and civic activities these are administered either by a voluntary organization<sup>1</sup> or by a separate staff directly under the city superintendent, and, excepting the greater esteem shown for the superior accommodations in the average high school building, little discrimination is made between it and the elementary school in the selection of edifices for the "wider use."

**High School Centre Not Yet Differentiated.**—That the high school's function as a social centre is not yet consciously distinguished from that of the elementary school is due to the fact that the heads of these schools have not generally been made responsible for the various activities which constitute the new relationship. Whether the local playground association maintains its club work for young people in a large building or a small one, its characteristics will not be perceptibly affected, but a high school staff could not manage such an undertaking long before it would display different features from those of a similar one in the hands of an elementary-school organization. When the extension activities begin to emanate from the two institutions themselves their respective spheres in this respect will become more clearly defined. And if the transfer of the initiative to the

<sup>1</sup> In Boston where several high school buildings are used as "Evening Centres" the first one (1911-12) was supported by the Women's Municipal League. During the season of 1912-13 four such centres were maintained by the school committee, their administration devolving upon the "assistant director of evening and continuation schools."

principals can be made without losing the enthusiasm possessed by the voluntary organizations or the particular abilities developed by the special board of education staffs the social-centre function will have a better opportunity to show vigorous growth and individuality than the present arrangement permits, because it will then be freed of the friction which must always exist when two bodies with differing aims attempt to work in the same quarters.

**Basis of Future Growth.**—Differentiation, however, only marks growth; it does not produce it. What grounds are there for believing that differentiation will take place? Why may we expect to see the new social function of the high school become definitely a part of the responsibilities of the principal, to be consciously developed and expanded by him, to be correlated with the work of his faculty and his students, and, finally, to be so thoroughly integrated in the life of the municipality as to give his institution a power and influence now hardly conceivable? A prediction of so sweeping a character can find a rational basis only in the existence of permanent forces or tendencies which, working together, will produce such a result. How soon it may be realized no one can confidently say; that the outcome will be precisely as prophesied no one can guarantee; but that the course of evolution is already in that direction is a fact which needs no demonstration.

**The Dominant Forces.**—The fundamental motive factors in this development are those which are bringing and will increasingly continue to bring the outside public into the high school building to enjoy its facilities or its offerings. These are of two kinds: the disposition of the high school organization to set up attractions which tend



to pull the public in and the social conditions on the outside which tend to drive it in.

**Principal's New Attitude toward Community.**—The first of these is due to changes in the principal's consciousness of his relation to his community. The tendency of high school administration is to place more and more initiative in his hands. The affairs under his control have become, in many instances, so vast and so complex that it is a practical impossibility for the city superintendent to give them intelligent detailed supervision. More and more it is the principal, rather than the authorities over him, who selects the instructors, lays out new courses, plans extensions to his building, and who, in the final analysis, determines the amount of the appropriation to be asked for to maintain his school.

It is his increasing control over the school budget that is causing the principal to think more and more about the taxpayer. Once he would have repelled the suggestion to issue a printed report upon the work of the school as in the nature of tooting his own horn. In those days the board which passed upon his work included some of the best minds in the community. Their occasional inspections enabled them to decide whether or not he did it well, and their favorable opinion was all he needed to strive for. With the advent of trustees, who judged the success of their schools largely by the public's reaction to them, he was obliged to take a different attitude, and it became necessary to see that the public was adequately informed about them. Gradually there developed the policy which is now generally followed and which involves systematically laying before the high school's constituents, through attractive reports and the columns of the press, such evidences of successful en-

deavor as may be found in student productions, college-entrance examinations, athletics, debating contests, and the careers of graduates.

**Encouraging Direct Enjoyment by All.**—But such accounting of stewardship touches mainly the alumni, the parents of the students, and the leading citizens—a comparatively small part of the community. In these democratic days the expenditure of public funds must be justified to *all* the people. And so the modern principal, with his increased financial control and a correspondingly increased sense of responsibility, is being compelled to go even further in his efforts to create a favorable public sentiment toward his undertakings. He is discovering that the most effective way to convince the man in the street of his wisdom in erecting a magnificent auditorium is to bring him in to enjoy it. If he needs new equipment for the gymnasium he brings the taxpayers into such contact with the situation that they, too, experience the need for the new apparatus. Student exhibitions and entertainments have, indeed, long been provided, but, although open to the public, they have reached mainly the pupils' parents and friends. Now, in a growing number of places, principals are encouraging a more general use of their auditoriums by arranging for popular concerts and lecture courses, and facilitating their utilization as rehearsal halls for choral societies and the place of mass-meetings for the presentation and discussion of current civic problems. They are beginning to give their gymnasiums for the evening physical training of outside young people and their classrooms for the club activities of public-spirited men and women—in short, there is an increasing tendency to make all the facilities of their costly plants directly beneficial to the individuals outside of school as well as those within.

**Most Noticeable in Rural High School.**—The correlation of this tendency with the principal's sensitiveness to the financial implications of his undertakings is well illustrated in the case of the new type of rural high school. Coming to life in regions little accustomed to such luxuries, confronted by traditions opposed to liberal expenditure for public service of any sort, and in the face of a general scepticism as to the value of higher education, its administrators have naturally felt an urgent necessity to "make good" with its supporters, not years hence when its graduates could show their mettle, but immediately. Accordingly, we find the modern country high school not only opening its doors for all sorts of neighborhood meetings, entertainments, illustrated talks, exhibitions, and educational institutes, but also sending out its instructors to advise with farmers, judge stock, or plan crop rotations; putting its students to work testing neighborhood cows or selecting fertile seed for patrons, and in various other ways directly serving its constituency.<sup>1</sup> Here where the sense of responsibility to the community is keenest the secondary school has gone furthest in its conscious development as a social centre.

**Force of Social Conditions.**—The other force which is more and more bringing the public into the high school has come into play through a radical change in method on the part of many reformatory and uplift agencies. Besides attempting through moral suasion to strengthen the human will against evil choices, they are now trying to improve its action by surrounding it with more means for wholesome expression. Vicious conduct, they say, is resulting from bad environments, hence they are endeavoring to substitute good environments. Investiga-

<sup>1</sup> For instance, see the Eleventh Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction for Idaho.

tors find that the inmates of the brothel are often recruited in the indecorous dance-hall, and there ensues an agitation for social dancing in public-school buildings under proper auspices. The corrupting effects upon young men of the saloon, pool-room, and other gambling resorts is responsible for a movement to afford organized games, athletic sports, and allied forms of recreation in school gymnasiums and basements, and the same opportunities are demanded in the interests of national health and vigor because of the lack of physical exercise on the part of office workers and others leading sedentary city lives—a need which is only partly met by the Y. M. C. A. and similar institutions. The extraordinary growth of the motion-picture theatres, with their sometimes questionable entertainments and unsanitary and immoral environment, has produced another problem the solution of which is sought in the use of school auditoriums for like purposes. The city's demand for wholesome opportunities for recreation and social life is based principally upon the need of substitution; in the country it is the scarcity of such opportunities that is responsible for the movement which is demanding a more extended use of school property.

In the political world the continually repeated spectacle of corrupt boss control is causing wide-spread appreciation of the need of meeting-places which will invite a loftier and more general discussion of platforms and a dignified transaction of electoral affairs. When primaries and political rallies are held over saloons or in halls of equal unsavoriness it is difficult to secure the attendance of the more respectable citizens. The result is that the more unselfish elements of the community are not represented in the deliberations and choices which

determine the efficiency of governmental machinery, and the men who make politics their business are able to have things all their own way. The necessity for renting halls also adds to the excuse for raising campaign funds, with the inevitable feeling of indebtedness on the part of the successful candidates to the individuals or special interests which contributed to their financial support. The experience already had in the use of school buildings for political meetings and balloting purposes tends to substantiate the arguments advanced in its favor. In the case of the meetings the more elevated tone was partly due to the increased proportion of women in the audiences, and the improved atmosphere at the school voting places was helped by the same cause where woman suffrage obtains, the probable granting of which in other States will itself give emphasis to the demand for the use of schools for these purposes. The general existence of commodious auditoriums in high schools gives both appropriateness and insistence to the movement for their more universal dedication to the clarification of civic questions.

Another requisition upon school halls, plainly marked by the spirit of the age, is expressed in the agitation for free lectures, concerts, municipally subsidized theatrical undertakings, and other forms of State-supported cultural opportunities.

Reinforcing this demand, as well as all the others, is the economical temper which animates the movement to conserve the nation's natural resources and is manifested in the various schemes for "scientific management." The sight of costly, magnificent buildings lying idle during periods when they could be beneficially used is repugnant to the business sense of the community, and

as a consequence every legitimate appeal for their more extensive utilization meets with a quick response from public sentiment.

Doubt as to the reality of the school's increasing rôle in public recreation may be aroused in some minds by such instances as Chicago's park and playground system with its luxurious field houses, the several cities which have erected auditorium buildings, and the rapid growth of municipal baths, parks, and museums. These are to be interpreted, however, only as evidences of the general advance of the recreation movement. In its course it is affecting schools, parks, piers, squares—every institution, in fact, that is susceptible of application to recreational needs. What makes it certain that school property will be universally appropriated is its unusual capacity for this broader community use. Auditoriums, gymnasiums, baths, museums, libraries, play fields—these things schools need for their own purposes, and the people are providing them with an increasing liberality. Is it likely that they will be overlooked in the popular requisitioning of facilities for enjoyment, especially in view of the fact that these are usually idle at the very time when the people are free to use them? In no community is there yet an adequate provision for recreation and social life, and even if all the future parks have field houses and all the squares be converted into playgrounds, considerations of fitness and economy will still require the school to meet a large part of this need. Chicago, despite its magnificent system of parks and recreation buildings, is progressively equipping its public schools as social centres.

**More Power to Principal.**—At the present time there is no tendency either in secondary school administration

or in current social development that will bring about a permanent diminution of the forces which are increasing the public's immediate enjoyment of high school facilities. The growth of commercial amusement resorts seems only to render more necessary the competition of those under safer auspices, while friction with the regular school work produces at most only a temporary let-up in the outside activities. The pressure behind the latter is continuous, and an attempt to shut them off would create an intolerable situation. An examination of the causes of irritation, the misuse of equipment by volunteers or the board-of-education staff, the public criticism of badly managed meetings, or the annoyance of having constantly to decide between conflicting requests for various facilities—these, when analyzed, would show that they were all due either to a division of responsibility, inadequate help, or some other defect in the administrative machinery. The activities themselves not being intrinsically illegal or socially undesirable, but, on the other hand, highly important, the remedy would obviously be found to consist in providing the organization necessary for their smooth and proper direction.

Accordingly, as these situations arise, and their increasing inevitability seems guaranteed by all the tendencies of the times, principals will point out that with more assistance they can themselves handle these matters with less friction and more efficiency, and eventually they will be granted the requisite additions to their staffs. Even in the cases where the extension activities are now carried on by a special department of the board of education or of the municipal government the frequent collisions between them and the principal's own public programmes and the need—which will increase with the

development of efficiency standards—of adapting the former to the peculiarities of the school's constituency will ultimately bring about the combination of both sets of activities under the local head. Thus through the very growth in the volume of the high school's incidental activities will come the structural change required for the adequate discharge of the new social function.

**Development of New Function by Principal.**—The placing of social-centre assistants under the principal will inevitably stimulate his enterprise in this field. The natural desire to retain the new power and even aggrandize it will make him strive to justify his possession of it. Through its employment he will be better able to impress the public with the usefulness of his institution and their wisdom in giving it liberal support. When, however, he devotes himself thoroughly to the task of working out better administrative methods—an unavoidable necessity because the social-centre technic is still in the making—there will be opened up to him a new source of interest. For he will discover in the extension activities themselves unsuspected assistance for the solution of the new and perplexing problems which society is more and more adding to his main function.

**Changing Content of Public Education.**—The agitation for the school inspection of children's teeth has not yet accomplished its purpose in some places, while in others it is not only established but some of the wisdom which it carries in solution has been precipitated in the form of a tooth-brush drill administered by the teacher. Herein we see a new phase of personal conduct becoming, under the influence of social expediency, a subject of school training. Not many years ago a girl's experience in helping her mother with the housework was considered



a sufficient preparation for the responsibilities of house-keeping. But industrial and urban conditions have so changed many homes that that experience is no longer generally considered adequate, and the school has been called upon to supply this part of the future housewife's training. Cooking and sewing were the first parts of housekeeping to be added to the curriculum, but now in many systems it includes laundry work, serving meals, and room decoration. The extraordinary extent to which formal education is being called into the traditional realm of family life is indicated by the agitation for vocational guidance and sex education and by the instruction concerning personal expenditures and avocations already being given in some schools. An example here is to be found in Mrs. Farnsworth's course in practical arts for girls, which is outlined in "High School Education" (page 428). These instances point to a progressive extension of the secondary school curriculum until it shall comprehend the preparation of pupils for the successful meeting of all of the important situations encountered in human living. Practically only one phase of life, the religious one, is now omitted from its scope, and even that, so far as its applications to conduct meet with general approval, is represented in the schemes for moral education at present projected or in operation.

The pupil's ultimate success is dependent not only upon the possession of trained powers but upon his ability to co-ordinate them, upon his skill in arraying them for attack upon the resistant situations of life. He may graduate with honors in electricity, but if he is unable to make an effective presentation of his case to employers, has not been trained in team-work, or has not formed the habit of achieving obvious and available re-

sults he will be a failure and bring reproach upon the institution which hopefully turned him out. The increasing esteem in which vocational courses, especially home economics in its highly elaborated form, are held by both educators and society in general is undoubtedly largely due to the fact that they do effect practical syntheses of abilities. Similarly, the tendency in these courses to require work under the actual industrial and domestic conditions shows a growing appreciation of the necessity of training the pupil in the art of applying his powers. Even more significant is the increasing seriousness with which managing glee and athletic clubs, society presidencies, and participation in other "student activities" are regarded by school authorities. The conspicuous after-success frequently achieved by the graduate who had led in these non-academic affairs has caused an examination of their preparative value, and it is being discovered that they afford most useful practice in the art of forming social relationships. They derive their efficacy from the fact that they are exact facsimiles, slightly reduced, of adult social functionings. Skill in "making" the miniature organizations was bound to enhance the ability to "make" the bigger groups through which the affairs of mature life are practically all transacted.

The success, then, for which society demands that the high school shall give an adequate training is certitude in the ability of the outgoing individuals to make vital connections with the groups<sup>1</sup> of which society itself is composed. Development of all the pupil's faculties is

<sup>1</sup> See further amplifications of this point in the sections which follow upon the high school as a vocational, social, civic, recreation, and cultural centre.

not enough: he must be adapted for group life, not that he may lose his individuality but that it may come to that fuller realization which is made possible only by working with others and dividing tasks.

**Pedagogical Value of Social-Centre Function.**—The fact that social-centre work is essentially a group-forming process makes it immediately apparent why the high school principal is going to find it of value in connection with his newer, social duties to his regular pupils. Hitherto he has not been accustomed to think about the basis upon which people divide into sets, cliques, and societies, but in supervising club activities, basket-ball teams, and dancing parties his thoughts will immediately be engaged by that problem. He will find new generalizations and little recorded knowledge by which to guide his steps, but as he tries one plan after another in the new work he cannot fail to accumulate helpful experience. The social-centre annex will be a laboratory in which he can experiment without endangering his main work with the consequences of costly mistakes, a place where he can acquire skill for the moulding of the social destinies of his regular pupils. It will enable his instructors to gain practical experience in the fields of their teaching and bring their students into actual contact with the concrete realities underlying the abstractions of the classroom.

Further explanation of the social centre's applicability to the high school's latest problem is to be seen in the fact that its main aspects—not yet all equally emerged, however—correspond fairly closely to the lines along which the natural groupings of human beings occur. These are the vocational, social, civic; recreational, and cultural lines, and it is significant that they mark the

principal categories into which the achievements and failures of men and women fall.

**High School as a Vocational Centre.**—Only he who supplies all his wants with the products of his own hands has a vocational problem that is devoid of social aspects. Every one else has to find persons with whom to exchange the things he makes for those he wants. The task of connecting laborers with the consumers of labor, or with bodies standing in an intermediate relation to them, has not yet been undertaken to any extent by systems of public education. Some private institutions systematically endeavor to “place” their graduates, and universities are giving the matter increasing attention, but, with the exception of a few instances, high schools have not yet assumed this responsibility. Furthermore, neither the instructor who prepares nor the principal who attempts to “place” a student has become sufficiently conscious of the fact that in these days it is a firm, a corporation, a staff, a force, a corps, a bureau, a gang, a field party, a union, or some other kind of a *group* with which their charge will have to make connection, and that while his initial admission may depend upon his satisfying an individual, his permanence therein will, in the long run, be determined by his acceptability to the whole body of which he forms an intimate part. Consciousness of precisely this sort is what will result from any attempt by the high school social-centre staff to fit persons into positions in modern professional, commercial, or industrial life.

Employment bureaus as a part of the school's social function have been advocated by Professor Commons and others, and in connection with several social-centre undertakings an effort has been made to furnish in-

formation about both vacant positions and jobless workers. Nourishment for the seed thus planted is bound to be afforded by the attempts to render a vocational guidance to high school graduates, as it will be found that valuable advice can be given only upon a much larger basis of information than is at present possessed. It is the exceptional youth who at so early an age sees clearly what his calling will be or whose peculiar abilities are so distinct as to enable others to decide for him. For the great majority the final determination will be made only after much experimentation, and many mistakes will be avoided and much time saved if there can be some official to whom after each trial he can freely go for advice as to the next step. Manifestly, the person most suitable for this office is one to whom the applicant's class records would be accessible. The data in time gathered by such an officer would not only make his counsel of priceless value to the graduate but would also have great significance for the faculty in its task of fitting young people for advantageous economic connections with society. While such a service would be justified if its benefits were given only to alumni of the school, its effectiveness, even in serving them, might be enhanced if it were open to the public at large.<sup>1</sup> It would thus receive a wider knowledge of the various occupational conditions, have more experience for comparative purposes, and be able to command more generous support from the State. And who knows but that out of its operations there might finally be distilled an essence that

<sup>1</sup> See "The Wisconsin Free Employment Offices," a bulletin (vol. II, no. 9) of the Industrial Commission of Wisconsin, for an account of their workings and the need of separate provisions (p. 218) for clerical and skilled workers.

would tend to quiet the troubled waters in which labor and capital are now immersed!

**A Centre of Social Life.**—Adjustment to groups for purposes of companionship is an affair in which the average young person seldom attains to the height of his opportunity. And yet success in this respect is quite as important as success in any other phase of life. For evidence, one needs only to recall the acquaintance whose career has been changed permanently for the better by joining a certain club, or that other whose reputation has been irretrievably damaged through association with a fast set, or, still more convincing, those numerous friends whose futures have been made or unmade by their marriages. At the first glance it might seem that here was a department of life in which no rules could be applied. A little reflection reveals, however, that any province of action in which one course is followed with evil results and another with good is amenable to generalization because there must be reasons for the different effects, and where reasons exist there, sooner or later, will be found material for the teacher. Young people who are reared in homes having well-defined social traditions customarily step out into the world of relationships with assurance; but the example, the precept, and the atmosphere which have moulded them are not by any means universal, even in the habitations of the rich, and, as a consequence, the school is being called upon to supply the deficiency. The private school has already begun to give a definite social training (see the syllabus of the Horace Mann School, Section IV, Social Relations and Conduct, vol. I, p. 439) and the public secondary school is about to follow in its steps.

Preparation for social life is still largely a matter of

ample practice under wise oversight. Before generalizations suitable for impartation to students to be applied by themselves can be worked out much observation and experimentation will be required. For both the practice and the study the social centre offers exceptional opportunities. In the undertakings of this sort now being carried on conclusions of general application are already being reached, but so far they are mainly retrievals of the mistakes which are always made in the beginning of novel enterprises. For example, it was felt that extensions of social opportunities under public auspices must necessarily be gratuitous, open to all, because the public pays for their support. It is now seen that making them free to all tends, in effect, to limit them to a part of the public—to those persons, namely, who are not in the enjoyment of the usual social relationships and advantages. People associate with one another because they enjoy one another's company, not from a sense of duty or any other form of compulsion. Since differences of tastes, manners, creeds, languages, and innumerable other variations prevent everybody from liking everybody else, pleasurable fellowship can only take place on the basis of *groups* in which there is some sort of community of feeling. And so the wise social-centre director is now dealing with coteries and cliques, and mainly those which are self-formed, because the business of dividing a crowd into groups which will stick together has not yet been reduced to a science. Another principle which appears to be emerging indicates that groups must be allowed to have, as they do in the outside world, different scales of expenditure, since in this way they find greater opportunity for distinctive expression, but the range and limitations of this principle have not been clearly defined.

One of the most vital of the many problems still unsolved in the field of social relations concerns dancing. The obvious inability of the home either to afford it proper opportunity or to prohibit its occurrence elsewhere, the disastrous results of the *laissez-faire* policy, and, lastly, its probable relevancy to that most important of all social processes, mating, make it imperative that the school, and because of its adolescent relation, especially the high school, endeavor to find its wise solution.

The addition of the social centre will not only facilitate the giving of systematic supervision to the social activities of present students, which is their immediate need, but promote their deliberate development into forms less disfigured by an undesirable class consciousness. It will be able to do this because of the wider circle which it will include and because of the study and experimentation that will be made necessary by the exigencies of the larger and more difficult undertaking of improving social life generally.

**As a Centre of Civic Activity.**—The tremendous importance to our civic welfare of the basis upon which electors form party ties needs no amplification. And yet the method of determining what party to join or when to leave it is a subject comparatively untouched in institutions which the State is supporting ostensibly for the preservation of the democratic form of government. It is another striking evidence of the lack of a social view-point in our systems of public education. A complete treatment of the manner in which converting the high school into a civic centre<sup>1</sup> will remedy this defect

<sup>1</sup> The civic aspects of the social centre are fully discussed in "The Social Center," by Edward J. Ward. D. Appleton and Co., New York.



is not possible in the compass of this chapter, but a few of the main points may be set down.

In the first place, by opening the building to party rallies, non-partisan discussions, primaries, and the ballot-box, the tone of political activity will be raised and it will be brought under the eyes of the students where its lessons can be effectively deduced by the faculty. Again, by promoting and organizing full and fair discussions of civic questions the distinction can be sharply drawn between groups for forming opinion and groups for securing action. The institution of a political forum<sup>1</sup> in a public school is, it is true, a perilous proceeding and one which can be successfully carried through only by those possessed of the greatest tact and ability. But if success can be attained there is no more effective way of impressing upon the minds of future voters the need of clear thinking before and separate from action, and thus restoring some badly needed idealism to American political life. A basis for deciding when to compromise with personal convictions in order to secure results and when to hold out at all hazards can be developed by means of a systematic observation and analysis of the activities of civic clubs, adult or otherwise, miniature congresses, and local improvement associations which are organized in the social-centre department.

The instructional value of holding in the auditorium meetings for the consideration of amendments proposed for the State constitution, or welcoming ceremonies for newly naturalized citizens when certificates are presented to immigrants and addresses are delivered by the mayor

<sup>1</sup> See "Lessons Learned in Rochester," by Professor George M. Forbes, a bulletin issued by the University Extension Division of the University of Wisconsin.

and leading citizens—this needs no further comment. How they will vivify the images received in the history and civil government classes is obvious to every one.

**As a Recreation Centre.**—The social nature of the really successful forms of recreation is already widely recognized. The predominance of team games and competitions over calisthenics and solitary training is everywhere evident. The high school graduate of to-day needs no admonition to join a club, a team, or some other group when he wishes to build up tired muscles or remove the cobwebs from his brain. It is true, also, that the regular athletic activities of the average high school give its facilities fairly constant utilization; but there are also pedagogical advantages to be gained from an extension of their use, so far as possible, to individuals outside the student body. Through the opportunity of observing further the development of old students, the school's regular physical-training staff will be able to draw useful conclusions as to the after-effects of the several kinds of athletic competitions and the different regimens prescribed to secure proficiency. Proclivities whose viciousness was hardly distinguishable in adolescent students will be seen in adulthood in their true character. The instructors will also compare with interest the physiques, sporting standards, and moral habits of graduates and those of persons without a secondary education.

The fixing of amateur ideals among the students will be facilitated through the mere increasing of the volume of non-professional sports in the city, and in the same way the cause of clean athletics will be advanced. Those of the faculty interested in moral training will be able to observe the working of various rules with groups of different stages of culture and in general to watch habits of fair play being woven into the warp of char-

acter, while for mankind as a whole there should come greater progress in the solution of the problem of individual recreation.

The prediction that the extension activities will bear fruit of value to the regular curriculum of physical education is verified in New York City by the fact that some of the group exercises developed by the Public Schools Athletic League, an organization to promote after-class sports among pupils, have been incorporated in the official course of study.

Among the passive agencies of recreation are to be included motion pictures, theatricals, concerts, illustrated lectures, and other forms of mental entertainment, but since these are so intimately related to cultural activities in general their treatment will be reserved for the following section.

**As a Cultural Centre.**—That canon of art instruction which exalts even crude versification, so it be animated with genuine feeling, over the slavish imitation of classic models, will receive much reinforcement in the minds of the regular students from the efforts to socialize the cultural activities of the community. The democratization of art proceeds not alone by popular entertainment but by popular participation as well. The great masters do indeed inspire, but if no outlet is given to the feelings thus stimulated the transmission of the art movement is stopped. Accordingly, in this department of the social centre there will be continual endeavors to arrange literary, musical, and artistic programmes in which amateurs generally, rather than professionals exclusively, will take the active part. Local dramatic clubs, for example, will be encouraged to present significant plays, using those of local origin whenever these attain to a feasible standard. Incipient instrumentalists will be or-

ganized into orchestras, and popular choruses will be formed to give a musical background to the numerous lectures and general entertainments at the centre.

A very effective means of objectifying current life and giving it a common meaning is to be found in the pageant, especially in its modern form, wherein all the social forces, which have made the community's past and are now making its future, are realistically or symbolically presented in a moving, spectacular, out-of-doors drama. In the case of a high school favored with a stadium, like the one at Tacoma, such an event might fittingly take place upon its grounds; but, wherever it were held, its organization, conduct, and leading parts might very properly be undertaken by a social-centre staff. Other occasions calling for broad activities of a similar order are afforded by the national and local holidays. The effort to make the observance of the Fourth of July not only harmlessly enjoyable but also significant has of necessity made it a community affair. To celebrate properly the nation's natal day, May Day, and Labor Day, it is the growing practice to arrange a parade, a festival, a carnival, or some other city-wide occasion in which all the elements of the community are joyfully fused by some magnificent spectacle resplendent with color, jubilant with sound, and redolent of patriotic meaning. The organization or at least stimulation of and participation in such events as these come within the proper function of the social centre, and they, like many of its own affairs, would also afford excellent outlets for the athletic, literary, oratorical, musical, and artistic activities of the regular high school students.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter XXII for an account of a high school which has become the art centre of a community.

The debating clubs and singing societies of the ward school centres might be organized into leagues and federations for the purpose of holding contests or tournaments, the final events of which—or possibly all of them—could appropriately be held in the high school auditorium under the auspices of its social-centre staff. The emulation thus stimulated would quicken and refine intellectual and emotional life in all parts of the community. The informative and entertaining power of motion pictures could be increased and purified if exhibitions of films of the best educational and literary types were regularly held in the auditorium. The charging of a small admission fee would not only help to distribute the expense more equitably but tend to hold the management up to a higher level of efficiency, while the extension of the market for films of a high character would give a much-needed stimulus to their production by the manufacturers.

In the selection of subjects for lectures, picture exhibitions, in the planning of all the incidental activities, the special needs of the community, whether uttered or still unconscious, should be borne in mind, as the degree in which these were met would determine the amount of patronage and support the offerings would receive. Similarly, in the public-library service,<sup>1</sup> which would form a part of the social-centre equipment, the books and lists displayed could all be related to the current topics of the times. The policy of thus making the social-centre facilities quickly responsive to the wants of the community could not fail of a fertilizing influence upon all its expressional activities. Upon the minds of both instructor and

<sup>1</sup> In this connection see also Chapter XVIII, "The Socializing Function of the High School Library."

pupil would be continually impressed the fact, too little appreciated in existing systems of education, that art is a product of the interaction between society and the individual.

**Differentiation of the Social Centre in High and Ward Schools.**—If the educational and social tendencies which have been outlined herein are real and, through their reciprocal action, cause a development along the lines which have been indicated, the high school social centre will in time show characteristics plainly distinguishing it from that of the elementary school. Its clientèle will probably come from the city as a whole or at least a large district thereof, and it will, therefore, serve naturally as the centre at large. In athletics it will tend to be the place where the matches between teams representing social centres in different sections of the city are held rather than the place for the regular practice of neighborhood groups. The city-wide basket-ball tournament among department-store fives, for instance, may begin in the ward centres, but it will probably culminate in the more spacious gymnasium at the high school.

In social activities there will be a natural selection of the participants on the basis not of locality but of similarity of tastes or purposes. A reception to a person of more than local prominence will naturally take place here, while affairs of a more neighborhood character will occur in the ward school. The municipal choruses, the membership of which comes from all parts of the city, will have their home in the high school, and here the great oratorios and more pretentious amateur theatricals will be presented. As a civic forum the high school platform will be the place where questions of the municipality will be thrashed out, while in the ward school the local im-

provements will be the more pertinent subjects for discussion. Lectures and other occasions of a cultural nature which appeal to highly developed tastes and abilities will find their home in the high school auditorium, as well as those of a more general import. The facilities and need for study and experimentation possessed by the faculty of the secondary school will tend to make it a social and civic laboratory, while the activity of the ward school staff will be mainly that of administration.

**Steps Immediately Practical.**—In advance of the granting to the high school organization of the administrative machinery which would be required for the comprehensive plan that has been sketched, there are certain feasible steps by which a beginning can be made. The first of these is the adoption of a definite policy in favor of the social-centre activities. One of the ways in which such an attitude would first manifest itself would be in arrangements whereby some of the regular staff could assist with the extension work.<sup>1</sup> For example, the physical-training director would probably be willing, for a slight additional compensation, to give some time to the development of athletics among the youths who attend the evening high school. The woman in charge of the girls' physical education could probably find time for some instruction in folk dancing for the young women from stores and factories.

As soon as possible, of course, an assistant should be appointed who could give time and thought to the development and management of all the social-centre activities. Such an official would be able to obtain much assistance from voluntary organizations interested in

<sup>1</sup> In the Los Angeles High School the night school and the social centre have been placed under one head.

social welfare, or if there happened to be none available, he might himself well undertake the promotion of one among some of the more prominent citizens. With the sympathy and aid of the school authorities behind him, he might find among the faculty some volunteers for club work, chaperonage, and other supervisory duties. The policy of organizing self-supporting activities would, in time, enable an extension of the social-centre force. Motion-picture shows, social dancing, club memberships, and entertainments, if properly managed, can all be made to give an income which could be applied to the maintenance of these and similar activities.

In the inauguration of new and unusual uses of the schoolhouse, the wise director will give considerable thought to the inculcation in the minds of the incoming public of the right ways of using the school building. When the political meetings were first held in the Jersey City High School careful directions about the proper exits and ingresses were published in the papers and disseminated by means of handbills. Sometimes, on such occasions, admission is only by ticket, a method which has the advantage of limiting the crowd and assuring the selection of the right people. A clear statement of the various privileges and prohibitions at the outset will prevent much friction later. It is always difficult to enforce rules which have not been well promulgated.

**Conclusion.**—The preparation for life's struggles which boys and girls received at home in the period before the industries had departed from it is still extolled by students of education. In those rural days the boy worked beside his father, observed and imitated him in the performance of an infinitely varied round of tasks. Every lesson learned was inseparably associated with some



difficulty of vital importance which the lad himself had experienced. No sooner had one responsibility found a secure place upon his shoulders than another and bigger one slipped into position ready for their squaring. Education was a growing rather than a forcing process because it took place in the midst of a real life and was a natural part of it.

Is it beyond the realm of possibility that the high school will some day be the scene of so much of the city's social and civic life that the youth reared therein, intimately associated with the leaders and helping to bear their burdens, will receive a training for citizenship to which future historians will be able to award an equal meed of praise?

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