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OBSERVATIONS.

A Training School.

The two year's course in pedagogy at the state university, the course at the state normal school and at other schools in the state have, so far, been unrecognized by the public school system in Lincoln. Dr. Gordon, the city superintendent of schools has a plan by which, without a revolution, the system can be brought into relation with the university and all other scientific instruction in pedagogy.

Superintendent Gordon's plan is to supply the places of those teachers who resign, with experts who will be assisted by graduates from the state university department of pedagogy or from Normal school courses. These assistants will serve for two years in the training school without pay for the sake of the training.

The training school in fitting teachers for the profession will add to the professional dignity of the teaching corps. It will unify the methods and the results can be studied as satisfactorily as laboratory experiments. There is no reason why teachers should not be as professionally jealous of the standing of their profession as members of the bar.

The changes proposed by Superintendent Gordon contemplate no abrupt innovation but a gradual unifying of the system and an intelligent application of the results of the psychological study of the child.

Stolid Convention.

A mob of people inspired by hate or loathing for a crime just committed longs to express itself and frequently hangs somebody. Occasionally the

real perpetrator of a crime is punished by society. Not by the four hundred—the mysterious select in every place who move in and out among us or above us conscious that they are not as other men though none can tell why—but by our neighbors and by infuriated men of all professions and trades whom the victim never saw before but who represent to him outraged and militant Society. And in spite of Ward McAllister's new phrase, which has found a permanent place in English, the man about to be punished by a mob has a truer idea of what society is, its real coherence and organic relationship to life than the famous Brummel of this century.

A crowd of men with their coats off and with eyes gleaming in ferocious hatred of the man who has assassinated society, or connived against it is individually unselfconscious, (see Victor Hugo, Charles Kingsley, Charles Dickens, and historians of the "No Popery," "Bread," French revolution and anti-slavery riots). A mob is one gigantic being, crude and with primitive emotions which it will satisfy.

An audience of men and women listening to an opera or to an author lecturing on the art of writing, an audience which rustles and gleams and glistens and exhales the faint, clean odors of the well-bred and devoutly washed, is self-conscious. Every member of such an assembly acts like all the rest. Eccentric conduct or costume is unusual and when an accident occurs the dread of being conspicuous paralyzes the wills of those who might accomplish a harmonious readjustment.

This timidity of a well dressed and cultured audience was apparent the other evening when Mr. William Dean Howells the most famous and most popular American novelist lectured here. After he had been speaking for ten minutes he looked appealingly at the open door on the left of the stage through which he had entered. The curtains at the top of the stage were billowed by a breeze, or rather, a draught which is the name of an indoor wind. Mr. Howell's voice faltered and as his silent appeal met no response he shut the door himself. As the breeze still nearly blew the distinguished visitor off the stage, he appealed to anyone in the house, who might be connected with the management, to shut the window or the door that admitted so much air. Still no body shut the window and Mr. Howell's voice grew hoarser and hoarser and every woman in the house with a husband or a brother or a father susceptible to draughts was wretched because the gentle novelist who has set down naught in malice and whose books have encouraged pilgrims to march on, and cheered the stranger and the desolate, was taking cold. Any man or woman there could have found the manager or his deputy in the box office or behind the scenes, but everyone was afraid of being

thought officious. Consequently Mr. Howell took cold, ran the risk of pneumonia and will remember Lincoln as a place of draughts inhabited by a stolid unsympathetic people who only move their feet a trifle restlessly when a stranger appeals to them to end his sufferings. A primitive people or a people, perhaps not more highly cultivated, but more sophisticated, more used to the ways of the world would have responded to the appeal of a man taking his death o'cold, but we are in that half cured state of mowed grass before it becomes hay. We are not certain of ourselves and more than all that, we are in terror that some traveler will discover our "country" conduct.

A New School House.

A new building must be erected next year and Superintendent Gordon believes that the crowding in the eighth grade can be most happily relieved by building a school house for that grade on the high school grounds. By this plan two objects will be accomplished. The first one has already been mentioned, namely, to relieve the crowded ward schools all over the city. The second object of the change is to smooth the transition to the high school from the eighth grade. Under present conditions the first year students in the high school adjust themselves with no little friction to the larger liberty and greater personal responsibility of the high school regime. Accustomed to definitely assigned lessons, to the study of textbooks and of little else, to hours of study prescribed by the teacher and to coming to the sessions of the school as school children and not as older students coming from and going to lectures and recitations, the sudden liberty and greater personal responsibility, the change in the position and function of the high school teacher who is a lecturer rather than a disciplinarian and taskmaster, is apt to unsettle the habits of the first year high school youngsters. The responsibility and self government is beneficial. The young generation cannot too soon discover that their destinies are self-wrought and not allotted to them by fathers, mothers, and teachers. But the transition is too abrupt. With all the eighth grade pupils on the high school grounds high school methods and rules of conduct would lose their novelty and the graduate from the eighth grade would scarcely be aware of the gradual change of the teacher's attitude to him and of his own relation to the body of knowledge.

Development.

To "let well enough alone" is apt to stay progress. If the farmer who sent his boy to mill with a bag of corn over the horse's back balanced by a stone had not accepted the advice of a stranger to push the corn into the two extremities of the bag and throw the stone away, an unnecessary bur-

den would have galled the back of the horse for a much longer time.

Two quite different departments of the city are being administered by new men. Chief Clement of the fire department is making a study of firemen and fire engines and the water supply hoping to increase the efficiency of the men and their instruments in putting out fire. The superintendent of the city schools desires to increase the efficiency of the teaching force. Both of these men are students the one of fire and fire apparatus and the other of children and teachers and the best methods by which the latter can induce the former to exert their best endeavor. We have invited these men to administer these two departments. As a city will it not be sensible to listen to them when they propose to change the system, heretofore in use for the purpose of bringing about more satisfactory results.

The Workers.

Everyone recognizes the fascination of watching a clever blacksmith shoe a horse or a joiner fitting the interior parts of a house together or a sculptor modeling in clay. Gifted workmen whose tools are brushes and whose medium is canvas and colors, or clay and a modeling tool are seriously hindered by the crowds that gather in front of the windows and whose bodies intercept the light. The merchants who have taken advantage of the universal penchant for seeing other people work have placed rug-makers, glass-blowers and even shoemakers in their store windows and their industry is continually observed. Even the asphalt workers who laid a block on N and a block on Twelfth street a few weeks ago were flanked by an audience which followed the slow extension of the pavement until it was complete.

Mr. Howell's story of novels and how they are written, and his opinion as to those which are worthy and will live and of those which are tainted with the incurable malady of untruth and will not live, was of great interest. Perhaps the business or the recreation of the majority of his listeners was writing and literature. Not that their work can be at all compared to his, but as a carpenter might be interested in the talk of an architect as to the real meaning of a house, Mr. Howell's audience listened to his lecture on the different kinds of novels, the one kind he thought worth while and his own method in writing them.

Mr. Howell's eminence, his years of experience and experiment and the acceptance of the soundness of his theories by many if not by most novelists discourage criticism by a carpenter of words, but it is undoubtedly true that readers of his earlier and later books turn with increasing appetite to Their Wedding Journey, The Lady of the Arrostook and The Undiscovered Country—books with a plot and incidents as well as examples of psychological investigation.