

Citizen Building by Civic Training in the Schools

Prof. Wilson Gill proposes to prepare our native and foreign born children for the duties of self-government so that we may have a nation honestly and efficiently and justly conducted



THE presence of large numbers of foreign workers in many parts of the United States—persons who do not understand our laws, our language, our forms of government in city, state and nation—is full of danger for the country. The lack of interest in civic affairs by a large proportion of our own educated American population is another big danger, taken especially in relation to the presence here of the outsiders.

Many of the industrial towns and cities in New England and in other parts of the country have populations almost half foreign. There is frequent rioting with attendant loss of lives and destruction of property. The spirit of mob lawlessness of this sort seems to be spreading in many communities.

On the other hand, we find dishonest government—plain graft, lax administration of law, representative officials who do not represent the mass of taxpayers—in practically every city and state in America. Many agencies have sought the cause of this state of affairs and are hunting a remedy.

The chief cause of the foreign unrest and lawlessness appears to be ignorance. Only a very small percentage of the rough labor which has come to us from Europe can speak or understand the language of the country. Practically none has any idea whatever of our laws, our standard of living, our governmental methods.

And the great cause of dishonesty in government in our towns, cities and states appears to be the indifference of the great mass of intelligent, prosperous American citizens to what goes on right under their noses. They don't take the trouble to vote. They don't take the trouble to participate in primaries and conventions and see to it that good men are nominated for office. They leave it all to the politicians, who are in the governing business—so called—not because of their fitness to administer laws, spend public money, deal out justice, etc., for the good of the community, but strictly and purely for what they can get out of it. Just graft for themselves and their friends.

Civic Training in Schools.

In a recent article in the Philadelphia Public Ledger, Prof. Wilson L. Gill, who was put in charge of the school system of Cuba during the American occupation of that island after the Spanish-American war, offers a single remedy for both these dangers to the peace and happiness and well-being of the United States.

"Educate," he says. "Build citizens by giving them civic training in the schools. Beginning with the tots in the primary grades, teach the boys and girls how their school, their town, their county, their state, their nation is conducted. Teach them to vote and decide the little problems of their daily lives in the schoolroom by methods employed in government.

"Make each schoolroom, for instance, a little town. Let the pupils under the teacher's supervision elect a mayor from among their number and have all the others compose a board of councilmen. Put up to them problems of school, town, county, state, national management, to be decided on the principles of justice and the safety and well-being of the majority.

"A proper appeal must be made to the pupils," Professor Gill says, "and they must be enlisted heartily.

"This is easily done, for we have good material to work with. Nearly all boys and girls are essentially good. This is true, even if, by reason of an unfortunate environment, a child has developed some very bad habits, even those of dishonesty. If the appeal is properly made to them, they can be counted on definitely to stand for that which is honest, 'fair and square,' clean, generous and right.

Teacher's Part of the Plan.

"Personal and printed assistance must be given to them for carrying on their government in the spirit of American institutions and in accord with correct civic forms, to maintain order and develop co-operation and efficiency for every good purpose. They must be shown how to solve the problems of their daily intercourse, and, as their teachers help them to become independent in solving the problems in arithmetic, so their teachers must help them to become independent in solving their daily problems of social and civic relations. The teacher's part in the use of this laboratory method of moral and civic training is the same as in mathematics. The teacher's authority and responsibility in both cases are to encourage and help the pupils to keep up enthusiasm, to become independent and judicial in thought and to arrive at clear-cut decisions. At that point the old educational process, as in mathematics, ends, but in this new laboratory work, dealing with the actual practical problems of daily moral and civic life, there is another most important step, which is immediately to put these decisions into execution and to co-operate for the good of all.

"What is needed for introducing democracy in schools?

"First—The right method—there is one, the laboratory method, and there cannot be another.

"Second—Practical plans—there can be but one right general plan, but of this there may be innumerable variations.

"Third—A person skilled in introducing the method and supervising the use of it.

"Fourth—Authority for such introduction and supervising.



WILSON L. GILL, LL. D.



"Fifth—Missionary work to arouse a popular demand for citizenship training in schools and to induce school authorities, state legislatures and the United States congress to do their part in this cause.

The Right Method.

"Since citizenship and government are matters of action, as well as of knowledge, the method of teaching them must be the laboratory method, by which the pupil learns how to do a thing by doing it. In this respect citizenship is like swimming; which must be learned by practice in swimming; or carpentry, which must be learned by working under the direction of a carpenter. Citizenship must be learned by performing the right actions of citizenship and by maintaining the right spirit of citizenship, as well as by learning academically the facts of the subject.

"The first essential of a correct plan for teaching American citizenship is that it shall be in accord with the spirit of American institutions, which is expressed by the Golden Rule, in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States. For instance, it must assure equal rights and justice to all, and, of course, must not give special privileges or establish class distinctions, as in ancient Rome and Greece, strong traces of which still remain in our own country.

"The second essential is that so far as the school government is developed, it shall be reasonably parallel with some correct form of American government among adults, and give no wrong ideas to pupils, with the thought that they can be easily corrected later. It ought to follow, as nearly as practicable, the plan of keeping reasonably separate the legislative, executive and judicial elements of government. What the form of government is, if it is true to American civics, may not be a serious question. The most simple form is that in which there are three officers, one at the head of the legislative department, another of the executive, and the third of the judicial. To these three offices may be added those of clerks, librarians, health, peace and other officers.

Schoolroom the Unit.

"It is a good practice to consider the schoolroom, under the instruction of a teacher, as the unit of organization, rather than several rooms under the principal of the school. The former plan tends toward a permanent and thorough use of the method, the latter to the dropping of the method in case the principal falls ill or leaves the school. The schoolroom government may follow the plan of the locality in which it is situated. If it is in a city, it may be well to follow the general plan of the city, with a mayor, judge and president of the council, all the pupils being the council, or legislative body, though it would be undesirable and impossible to reproduce all the details of a large city government. If the school is in a town, the schoolroom government should in form be that of a town; but as towns turn into cities, and people go from towns to live in cities, it is good practice, where town government is used part of the year, to use the city form the other part of the year. It is desirable to have elections as frequently as four times in the school year, that as many as practicable may enjoy the moral and educational benefit of being elected and of carrying the responsibility of the offices.

In many cases it is desirable to have elections much more frequently.

"Several schoolroom governments may be joined in a school state and several states in a school national government, to look after matters which pertain to the whole school. It is possible and practicable to go still further, and join these school national governments in a federation. As has been said previously, let us reiterate: The teacher helps the pupils to become independent in solving their social and civic problems as he does the problems of mathematics. Each pupil is continually exercised in independent thinking, judicial conclusion and immediate action. To take the initiative soon becomes habitual. Co-operation for every good purpose is developed and team work becomes the ordinary practice. The teacher's authority is not weakened but strengthened by the co-operation of the pupils in their democratic republic.

Teachers Should Co-operate.

"If we were to look upon this matter as if it were a mill, the mill would serve no purpose unless it should have grist to grind, and in this case the grist is the government of the children's conduct to suggest useful and constructive activities for the good of each child and the community of pupils and of the entire community of which the children are a part. The pupils' time, minds and energies being fully occupied doing right constructive things, the amount of wrongdoing drops to an almost negligible quantity. What there is of this is dealt with by the children in their own courts much more effectually than is possible by any other means in the reach of the teachers, even if corporal punishment is permitted, which is prohibited by law in some places.

"It is not to be supposed that the children can handle these social and civic problems without the same kind of interest and assistance by the teachers that is necessary for success in any other school work; nor that the teachers can make the best use of this laboratory method of moral and civic training without the co-operation of the children's parents, and until the teachers have become well accustomed to the new method, they need the suggestions of one who has had large experience in its use.

Co-ordinates With Other Studies.

"Does this not add another burden to the teacher's already too heavy load? No. It engages the co-operation of the pupils to help the teachers bear their burdens. Does it take the time of a recitation each day or once a week? No, but it co-ordinates with other studies such as English, civics and history, and is that good spirit which proves to be a lubricant for all recitations, for all the machinery of the school, and releases the teachers from police duty, enabling them to give their whole time, strength and nervous force to teaching, uninterrupted by misconduct and inattention. Relieved of the ordinary pull on the nerves and drain of one's vital strength, helping the children to develop their own character and to use the tools and processes of education for their own salvation, the teacher's work becomes exhilarating and a joy."

Colds Coughs Catarrh

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Educated Rooster.

"Spizzierinkum" is an odd name even for a rooster, but this rooster is no ordinary fowl. The bird comes from a strain of Barred Plymouth Rocks, was hatched last May and weighs six pounds. He is owned by E. E. Bennett of Hartford City, who refuses to part with his prize-winner at any price. Judges at various fairs where he has been shown, have told the owner that he is a most promising bird, and this is borne out by the fact that \$100 has been offered for him.

"Spizzierinkum" is also an educated fowl. One of his chief delights is riding the seat of a specially constructed wagon and holding the reins over eight boys who act as steeds for him. He drove this team in the centennial parade at Hartford City.—Indianapolis News.

Formalities Discouraged.

"Politeness is always desirable." "It used to be. But now when you say 'please' you are simply wasting the telephone operator's time."

Incorrigible Flirt.

A newly married couple have just moved into a bungalow in what the real estate people call "a new development" near New York. The benevolent land company runs an electric car from the property to the railway station. This car, which (like the Toonerville trolley) meets all trains, is manned, as usual, by a conductor and a motor-man, both of whom are naturally on very friendly terms with the patrons. The other day the bride's mother came to visit her. She noticed that her daughter often waved a greeting toward the electric car as it passed the house. "Why, Gladys," said the old lady, "do you know all the conductors on this line already?"—Exchange.

Even Up.

"Did the doctor pay a visit?" "Yes, and the visit paid the doctor."—Exchange.

A gasoline engine driven machine has been invented to bale hay or straw in cylindrical bales.

To Live Long!

NEWS OF OMAHA

Omaha, Nebr.—"Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery built me up and strengthened me very much, the 'Favorite Prescription' relieved me of nervousness, and the 'Pleasant Pellets' have always acted satisfactorily. I consider Dr. Pierce's medicines to be the very best. I have recommended them to others and they have all been very much pleased with the results."—MRS. F. W. PELSTER, 1923 South 19th St. These herbal tonics are made up without alcohol, in liquid or tablet form, and can be obtained in any drug store.



Send Dr. Pierce, Invalids' Hotel, Buffalo, N. Y., 10 cents for trial package of Favorite Prescription or Golden Medical Discovery Tablets.—Adv.

A recipe given by a famous physician for long life was: "Keep the kidneys in good order! Try to eliminate through the skin and intestines the poisons that otherwise clog the kidneys. Avoid eating meat as much as possible; avoid too much salt, alcohol, tea. Drink plenty of water."

For those past middle life, for those easily recognized symptoms of inflammation, as backache, scalding "water," or if uric acid in the blood has caused rheumatism, "rusty" joints, stiffness, get Amuric at the drug store. This is a wonderful eliminator of uric acid and was discovered by Dr. Pierce of Invalids' Hotel, Buffalo, N. Y. If your druggist does not keep it send 10 cents to Dr. Pierce for trial package and you will know that it is many times more potent than lithia and that it dissolves uric acid as hot water does sugar.

Vanishing Trick.

Two local friends of a noted magician were his guests at dinner.

"You do some wonderful things on the stage," one of the friends observed, "but I am inclined to think you are handicapped when you are away from your apparatus."

"To an extent, yes," the magician admitted, "but there are many things I can do anywhere on a moment's notice."

"Let us see you do something now."

"All right, take for instance this steak, the Brussels sprouts and the salad."

"Yes—"

"In a very few minutes we will cause all of them to entirely disappear."

A Lover of Truth.

"George Washington never told a lie."

"I doubt that. But he was too truthful a man ever to give his personal indorsement to that story."

One burlesque show will keep the average man awake longer than a dozen sermons.

Confirmed Suspicion.

Uncle Mose was one of those omniscient persons who always refuse to acknowledge either astonishment or ignorance. When the circus and the sideshow came to town and the prestidigitator called for someone to go up on the stage, Mose was pushed forward. Presently the magician was taking various wonderful articles out of Mose's garments. Lastly, he extracted a pair of white rabbits from Mose's bushy wool.

"Weren't you surprised at the rabbits, Mose?" asked his master, afterward.

"No, sah," Mose answered. "Fact is, sah, I'd been suspectin' dey's some rabbits up there fo' some time."

Difficult Problem.

"There are some sinister influences behind the boom in this aviation stock."

"That may be, but how do you propose to get after the man higher up?"

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