

an uncompromising opponent of all vulgarity and false scholasticism.

Constructive Criticism.

Leaving this destructive criticism behind, there is a certain line of constructive criticism, if the term may be used, which the schools must bear if they would be true to their most binding obligations.

Perhaps the most important change, which the times demand, is to be found in a reconstruction of educational ideals, so that they shall be less exclusively scholastic and more humanitarian in their character. In the past the schools have given too much attention to mere scholasticism. Lessons from books and recitations upon them have too often made up the sum total of school exercises. Intellectual power and information may thus be obtained, but the pupil cannot thereby be brought into full acquaintance or harmony with his social surroundings, or be put into complete possession of all his powers. This is one of the two serious criticisms which may be justly made against the public school of today, and it is worthy of most careful consideration.

Under the old regime the pupil went out into the world with a fairly good knowledge of arithmetic, geography, grammar, and kindred subjects. He sometimes increased his knowledge and mental power by pursuing an advanced course in the academy and college. The high school, which is today offering as broad and thorough instruction as did the colleges of twenty-five years ago, is a comparatively recent institution. But in spite of all the educational advantages at his command, he went out into the world without a specific kind of training, which American citizenship might reasonably expect him to have. His hands were not trained to give fitting expression to the conceptions of his brain. A common humanity demands that this be done. Of the constitution and political methods of his native land he had learned but little, and that little had been gleaned from books and not from an actual study of the life conditions by which he was surrounded. He had read of elections, courts, legislative bodies, etc., but as far as the school was concerned, they still remained unfamiliar abstractions, for he had never studied their actual workings. He might have read of strikes and labor agitations in the papers, but the schools had never taught him to investigate the delicate relations of capital and labor, and to arrive at a fair understanding of them. And this, in spite of the fact that he might sometime be called upon to play an important part in the final adjustment of this great economic question.

Education Upon Current Subjects.

Surely if the youth of the land were educated into a correct understanding

of the vital questions of the day, or were even inspired with a candid spirit of investigation, many of the demons of unrest, which so sorely afflict society, would find their occupation gone, and distrust and discontent would yield to confidence and peace. Not only is this true, but it is safe to say that the grave problems, which are pressing for solution, will never be finally and satisfactorily settled, until the public school recognizes its responsibility in this direction and rises to meet it.

Public Schools Independent of Colleges.

In order to render effective service here two things seem to be necessary. The first is that all public schools cease to regard themselves specifically as feeders for higher institutions. No public school has the right to make itself a college, preparatory school. Such a standard narrows its field of work, restricts its life, and destroys its independence. It becomes at once the creature of the college, dependent upon its regulations, and loses sight of its broader and nobler mission. The legitimate work which the peculiar mission of the public school sets before it, is precisely the work which should best fit its students for more advanced studies, and the colleges themselves will come out into a larger life when they recognize the essential unity of educational aims and processes, as they surely will if the public school asserts its independence.

Economic Training.

Having divorced themselves from the preparatory idea the schools must next remodel their programs so as to include an adequate training in the great political, social, and economic subjects, which make up so large a part of the interest and concern of the American citizen of today.

This is not a place to exploit methods and theories. It is therefore enough to say that these subjects cannot be taught entirely or mainly from text-books. The laboratory method which has been so successfully applied in modern science work, must also be used here. In these broad fields of research there is the most magnificent opportunity for the effective application of laboratory methods that is to be found in the whole range of scientific investigation. Such work will not only produce a larger and more practical knowledge than can be drawn from books, but it will bring children into living, energizing contact with the affairs of real life, which will awaken their interest and quicken their mental powers as no book study can possibly do. Any one who has attempted to describe the functions of a city council to a class, and then has taken them to sit through one of its sessions knows how vastly more effective the latter method proved to be. This is but an illustration of a great principle, which is familiar to

every educator, yet which, strangely enough, has been generally neglected in school work in the past.

Commercial and Manual Training.

In addition to the expansions already indicated, there must also be a fitting recognition of the necessity of manual training in its various phases and applications. In all such training the specific purpose must be kept constantly in view of cultivating and perfecting the manual powers so that they may become capable of giving expression to the conceptions of the mind and may work in complete harmony with it. It is doubtful if the public school ever has a right to give technical training with the avowed purpose of fitting young people to earn a living, that is—to assume the functions of trade and professional schools.

The present demand for commercial courses may be justified so far as it contemplates a general commercial education, which shall comprise the study of the great principles which inspire and underlie commercial activity, and the natural phenomena which make such activity possible. But when business men turn to the public schools for stenographers, skilled accountants, or men specifically trained for any branch of business life, it is well to stop and inquire whether we are not transcending the just and legitimate functions of the free school.

It may be asserted with authority that the charge which is echoing through the country today that the schools unfit boys for business life, is not well founded. In some specific instances it may be true, but the work of the school in general cannot unfit a boy for any place in life, unless it places before him unworthy ideals, and causes him to look upon honest labor with contempt. *This has not been done.* But it must also be said that the schools have never yet attempted to fit boys specifically for business life, and they probably never will.

This first general criticism of the public schools is being more and more widely studied, and strenuous efforts are being put forth to meet its demands. The next ten years will no doubt witness a revolution along these lines, which will bring the schools more perfectly into harmony with their life environment.

Moral Training.

The second general criticism is difficult to formulate, and more uncertain in its deductions, yet none the less fundamental in its nature. In the reaction against religious teaching in the public schools, the process of secularization has gone so far as practically to eliminate all systematic moral training, and no intellectual training, however complete and thorough, can take the place of moral training. Knowledge