

Arithmetic, Civil Government, Physiology, Political Economy, English History, Trigonometry, etc. If any pupil does not wish to take Latin, he is not *compelled* to do so. He is permitted electives enough to feel that he has freedom of choice at the same time his work is really grouped under one of the three courses offered.

Elective Courses.

This question was also asked of the graduating class of 1901: "If all the studies offered in the high school curriculum had been thrown open to your free choice, would it have made any difference in your course?" Back came the *almost unanimous* answer that it would not have made any difference.

Suppose we had an open elective or *laissez faire* policy, does the boy know what is best for him? The very study he is behind in or despises is often the study he really needs. The pupil who questions the use of studying Latin is the pupil needing it the most. The boy who cannot get along in Algebra is the one who most needs the training. A guiding hand is especially needed in a high school education. I once read an editorial in a large daily: "The average high school boy has hardly got beyond the period when he is puzzled to decide whether he will be a general, an admiral or a circus clown. To throw open a course of study to the election of such immature minds would be as edifying a spectacle as to allow an infant to experiment with different colored candles for the similitude could be extended to the ultimate effect on brain and bowels."

OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

[By Prof. C. W. French, Hyde Park High School, Chicago, Ill.]

The trouble with the schools is both external and internal. In very brief it may be said that there is too much politics outside and too little inside.

The supremacy of the "political pull" in the management of the schools will not only seriously retard them in their work, but will effectually prevent them from accomplishing their true mission. It is a deplorable fact that the political spoilsman has already laid his hands upon them, and in many sections of the country is making the most strenuous efforts to establish his sway over them. These insidious attacks should be resisted to the uttermost, for if they succeed, a fatal blow will be struck at the very foundations of democratic government. Position and preferment in the public schools must always find their conditions in real merit. This is axiomatic.

The fundamental purpose of the public schools is to fit the rising generations for righteous and intelligent citizenship. Yet it is too often true that scholasticism and the ability to pass examinations are regarded as the final test of their ef-

ficiency. This standard must be abandoned and a broader and higher one adopted, which shall inspire persistent and wisely directed efforts towards a real and systematic training for American citizenship. If political standards are deteriorating, and society falling to any extent from its former high estate the public schools must bear their share of the blame, and they, above all American institutions, possess the power to remedy the evil.

Chicago, Ill., Nov. 20, 1901.

"Liberty without education produces anarchy; education without liberty, revolution."—[Dr. Virchow in a political speech.]

PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND PROMINENT EDUCATORS.

[By Thomas S. Wallin.]

In some letters from your office I am told you propose to stir up the public school questions, and begin by asking prominent educators to write about it. I objected to the opinions of "prominent educators." They have been guiding that movement too long and have got our schools way off the track, according to the ideas of many people.

Then you say: "We are going to other people too—to lawyers, judges, editors." Now, this is very little better. These are all scholars, book-men—people of purely intellectual pursuits, and that is the foundation of the whole trouble.

They are not ten per cent of the world's workers, but it is thought they know best what the other ninety needs, and are the only ones whose opinions are worth printing, excepting, perhaps, the preachers and politicians, and an occasional interview with some merchant or mechanic who has achieved a remarkable success.

Is it not plain that none of these know best what the mass of the people need?

The Best Judges.

Every class believes in its supreme importance, and advises the course—in which they have walked. What, then should be done? Evidently consult those who can speak by experience for the majority of the people. Ask the farmer, the mechanic, the merchant, the railroad man, (those who have been moderately successful,) how shall the youth be trained to have a fair chance of success in your respective pursuits?

Their own experience is the valuable thing. They may have imbibed exaggerated opinions of the importance of "schoolin'" they did not get. Now comes in the good work of the wise editor, who weighs the experience and opinions and decides upon their relative value as a guide to the rising generations.

Elgin, Ill., Nov. 20, 1901.

FREE HIDES.

BY HON. WILLIAM B. RICE.

In this country no man raises cattle for their hides. A tariff tax will not increase or diminish the domestic production by one hide. We import South American hides because we need them. Twenty-five per cent. of the leather manufactured in this country is made from foreign hides and skins. The tariff upon them is simply and purely a tax, burdening the people and crippling our manufacturers in foreign markets.

By the act of July 24, 1897, the Dingley tariff, a duty of 15 per cent. ad valorem was placed upon hides, which had been free for twenty-five years previously. The imposition of this duty has entailed a tax upon the country amounting to not less than \$2,000,000 annually, has added from 5 to 8 per cent. to the cost of every American-made pair of boots or shoes, and has made it just that much harder to compete in foreign markets. By the same act a rebate of 99 per cent. of the duty is given on exports of leather made of imported hides, the effect of which has been to discriminate against American and in favor of foreign manufacturers.

But ten years ago the possibilities of an export trade in shoes were not thought worth consideration. A man's Americanism was likely to be questioned, if he expressed a desire for it. The most honored and most prominent man connected with our industry, publicly stated that there was no foreign trade worth having, and, if there were, it would be impossible to compete with the poorly-paid workmen of other nations for the trade of the world. As late as 1897, a distinguished congressman from a shoe-manufacturing district in New Hampshire wrote in a public letter, "We are not, never have been, and I hope never shall be, to any considerable extent, exporters of boots and shoes."

Today no intelligent person, who studies the situation, doubts our ability to successfully compete for a share of the trade of the world, if we can have equal opportunities with our foreign competitor in the purchase of materials. We pay more for our labor and it is worth more. We have learned that it is not the lowest-paid labor that makes the lowest-cost product. In our shoe-manufacturing towns, generation after generation has studied and practiced the industry, until the great body of our workmen are not merely shoe makers, but educated, intelligent artisans.

This marvellous advance in capacity for production of quality and quantity has outstripped the power of our own country to consume. We can manufacture in nine months as many shoes