

TOPICS OF THE DAY

TRADITIONAL METHODS: AN OLD-TIME FETICH: LEARNING NOT TO READ: WORDS ALL-IMPORTANT: WHAT IS INDICATED.

IS any topic of the day of greater moment than popular education? Yet it is usually relegated to such as can but faintly grasp even the meaning of the term, or to those whose ideas concerning it are of a Medo-Persian variety. Canadian colleges and universities have held constantly aloof from it, as though it were something quite beneath their notice, and as if upon its proper discussion and practical decision did not depend the mental character and capacity of most of their students. The representatives of confident ignorance and hereditary prejudice are being left with the field largely to themselves. It would be difficult to imagine a more incompetent and unsafe parliament for law-giving in such a matter.

Imitation and tradition hold almost undisputed sway in all departments of modern education. And the worst of it is that neither the imitation nor the tradition extends back into the realms of earlier educational light. The first schools of learning, which developed into colleges and universities in only comparatively modern times, were radically different from their descendants. In them one man presided and taught. He was usually a man who had observed, studied and thought until he had not merely mastered his chosen subject, but had realized its potentialities for good. He drew to him a band of disciples or pupils; imparted his knowledge and his ideas to them; inspired them with his ardour, and sent them forth to disseminate his doctrine far and wide, adding to it their own mental acquisitions.

Colleges and universities arose naturally on this foundation in the course of time. Knowledge became too extensive to be embraced by any single master. Masters of special subjects, of different kinds, were drawn together in various centres for mutual enlightenment and for the convenience of students. Moveable universities thus sprang into existence, and were gradually consolidated into fixed institutions. The masters long continued to lecture out of the fullness of their own minds and hearts. The pupils made notes of their lectures, and retired to consider and discuss among themselves what they had heard. A "lecture", be it remembered, originally meant, as the word still means in French,

a "reading" and not a speech; but it was a reading of the lecturer's own mind and not a repetition of the ideas of others, collected from various books or epitomized from one, on a given subject.

The book, not *on* but *from* which the ordinary university professor "lectures" to-day, is a very different thing from the overflowing mind that served the old-time master for his readings to a class of eager listeners to and storers of knowledge not to be gained by them elsewhere. Yet most of our college professors continue their so-called "lectures" to students who have free access to the same stores of knowledge as they, instead of sending those students to the common sources of supply, and assembling them thereafter, from day to day, to discuss and correct, or more deeply impress on their minds, the ideas which they have got from their own readings. Thus is the tradition of a tradition being perpetuated.

The ancient world needed knowledge, and acquired it direct from those who had gathered it for themselves. The modern world has its knowledge compressed in books. What the present-day student needs is guidance in selecting and assimilating the knowledge which he desires. There are no adequate reasons, apart from vested interests and time-worn traditions, for the maintenance of the present rigid university customs and regulations. In all but the practical sciences and arts, courses of reading might and should be prescribed on which students unable to attend college classes could proceed to certain degrees with the same facility and on an equal footing with college attendants. Examinations could as easily and accurately test the acquirements of the one class of students as of the other.

If the non-attendants at "lectures" lost the advantages, sometimes perhaps overvalued, of university associations, it is more than doubtful if their mental development would suffer proportionately, if at all. And, after all, mental development should be the main aim and highest ambition of education. The country would unquestionably gain greatly from having many students constantly at work among books, with such tutoring as is now available to them in most neighbourhoods, instead of idling their time in frivolous, desultory reading or in mere search of amusement. If, after examination, they were not found worthy to stand among the elect "listeners in" at regular college "lectures", they might be granted a degree bearing witness to their shortcomings. But there ought at least to be academic means for the due recognition of genuine scholarship, no matter how attained. By such means not a few, otherwise to be mute inglorious Miltons or buried Hampdens, might be exhumed and made available for public service.

FROM the university to the free common school or high-school is but a step, in these days. The latter have been converted as nearly as possible into replicas of the former. The distinguishing difference between them is that in the free schools, common and high, prescribed text books are officially thrust upon pupils and teachers, with rigid requirements that they must be committed largely to memory, under pain of perishing for ever "educationally." Facts must be stuffed in at any risk or cost of mental indigestion. Pupils are allowed neither time nor opportunity for either thought or independent enquiry. The idea of their learning *to do* anything for or by themselves, or of their being encouraged and induced to *think* for themselves, is strictly taboo.

In the universities departures have been made from tradition in all but the so-called arts departments. In the free schools the pupils are still relentlessly ground between the upper and nether millstones of mixed pedagogic conservatism and "progressivism", and of parental "die-hardism". Teachers are usually of the opinion that something can always be added to curricula if nothing is to be taken from them. Parents are unchangeably convinced that nothing should be omitted from or altered in the system of teaching to which they were subjected during their own school days. No allowance is made by them for varying times and conditions. There are probably parents still living who are sincerely mourning the "good old times" of twelve-hour school days with only Saturday half-holidays, and who regard all variation in methods or appliances as unholy innovation.

It is safe to conclude that parents are much more potent than teachers in withstanding desirable alteration and real progression. It is surely their influence which causes so much stress still to be laid on the teaching of arithmetic in the common-school grades. Of all the worse-than-useless, not to say pernicious, burdens laid on the immature shoulders of young school children at present, arithmetic as taught is indisputably the most senseless and grievous. Arithmetic in olden times, for all but advanced pupils, was regarded as simply a means of computation in the common-place affairs of daily life. Children were taught mechanically to add, subtract, multiply and divide. Whether they understood the "theory" of any one or other of those numerical processes or not, was never asked so long as they were able to do the required processes quickly and accurately.

At present, teachers have it demanded of them that they shall instruct little ones of grade two or three, with utterly undeveloped minds and rudimentary imaginations, in the "theory"

of each of the fundamental rules. So much time is usually wasted on this senseless task that the pupils never learn to perform any one of the processes with reasonable or practical quickness and correctness. Let intelligent people, who very seldom visit the free schools, try to imagine if they can and properly grasp the monstrosity of a whole roomful of "tots" being drilled and lectured, day after day during a whole term, as to *why*, say in subtraction, they sometimes "borrow one" and in consequence "carry one."

Probably extremely few, if any, of the infants thus harrassed ever do or can really grasp what they are being taught, parrot-like, to "explain", for the sole and exclusive benefit of future "examiners." It is never in after life of any practical service to them. A few years later, say in the eighth or ninth grade, when their imaginative and mathematical faculties have begun to mature, they would need only to have their attention drawn to the matter once to comprehend it fully, if they had not already perceived it themselves. Yet, when they reach the higher grades, very few pupils can perform the fundamental operations with either quickness or accuracy because, instead of having been given constant and continuous practice in those operations, their time and their teachers' time has been worse than wasted on reiterated explanations which explain nothing to most pupils.

Fractions, vulgar and decimal, should, of course, be taught in the common-schools. So should measurements, the computation of values and simple interest. These should be taught because they may be found useful in after life, but most of them only very occasionally by the ordinary person. Anything but the simplest of simple fractions are rarely met in actual affairs beyond professional and actuarial circles. Yet boys and girls of from nine to ten are to be found in our schools wrestling for hours daily in their classes, and in their homes at night, not only with compound but compound-complex fractions which they will never afterwards encounter and with which few, if any, adults in the communities to which they belong could begin to deal successfully.

This is sheer, wanton, senseless and destructive cruelty. It is an uncalled for tribute paid to the old-time Fetich, "Rithmetic", fondly believed by primitive ignorance to be the distinctively *practical* god of the "educational" Pantheon. There is little of a valuable, mind-developing character in arithmetic for the masses. And if there were, it should not be so enforced in the common-schools, for the mathematical faculty does not, as a rule, develop until an age beyond that of the common-school grades. More advanced arithmetic should be reserved for the small percentage

of pupils who proceed to the high-school grades. The common-school course should begin and end with the single practical aim of equipping the pupils, as well as possible, for daily after-life. Nothing beyond this should be attempted. Nothing which interferes with it should be tolerated.

Modern pedagogic and parental fetichism with regard to arithmetic can only be regarded as a survival of ancestor worship. In no other way can one account for the persistent setting of deliberately complicated numerical and fractional problems to children, the like of which they will never encounter beyond the walls of a school-room.

READING, or the alleged teaching of reading in the common-schools, is also a legacy from post-mediaevalism. Its effect, in practice, is to induce perpetual non-reading, in or out of school. At the root of the evil, for it is a monstrous evil, lie our School Readers, inherited from only a few generations ago, but as much venerated pedagogically and parentally as if they had descended from all eternity. In fact, most schools are graded in accordance with the sacred number of the Reading Books which the different pupils are using.

When reading first began to be taught to the children of the comparatively poor, not many generations ago, no such swift and sure means of discouragement and disgust as a modern school reader had been conceived. Books, then, were almost exclusively for the rich. There was only one exception—the Bible. That was by God's especial grace, for the Bible is not merely a book but a collection of books—a whole library of super-excellent literature. It was available in almost every home and in every school. From it the children learned to read. In it they had ever before them a supreme model of English usage. By it the loftiest ideas and the purest ideals were impressed on their minds. Through it they were given glimpses of the ancient world, its poetry, its romance, its social struggles, its history, its legislation. Such reading, so practised, was an education in itself, not only effective but sufficient for most of the minds to be impressed and influenced by it.

But with the progress of "progress" in "education" the Bible was perceived to be old-fashioned—not at all "up to date." The printers, however, were by no means backward in the business of making and setting forth their wares. Compilers of "books to

sell" were with us even then. The consequence was the first of a long succession of special School Readers to take the place of the Bible, *superseded*. And they were not bad books, to give them due credit. They contained little but selections from the very best writers, and were mostly fairly well adapted to youthful tastes. At least, if they had of necessity to be read *ad nauseam*, many of the selections were well worth being thus read until learned by rote.

The getting up and selling of school books to the public, almost by compulsion, is a profitable business. So the compiling and working off of different series of school readers has continued from that day to this, with unabated enthusiasm on the part of publishers and compilers. It cannot be added, with unabated merit in their publications. The cause which first gave birth to them has long ceased to exist. That cause was the scarcity and dearness of reading matter, other than the Bible, suitable for school reading. At present good reading matter, better by far at least than most of that contained in some of our Canadian school readers, is within easy reach of even the very poor, and abundantly available for the teacher's desk. Infinite variety and rich stores of printed matter containing valuable information is constantly at hand. There are the daily and weekly newspapers, for example, with their varied contents, with their suggestions in geography, history, politics, legislation, political economy and so forth, besides the copious examples of "English" for correction by the pupils, which not a few of them afford.

If an adult would realize what must be the dulling and even stultifying influence of prescribed "readers" on pupils, let him try to fancy how his own enthusiasm for learning in general and reading in particular would evaporate if he were confined to one disjointed and dull book a year, for each of the eight long years of the common-school course. Is it to be wondered at that the children grow utterly sick of such reading, and that many of them acquire an enduring distaste for all reading? Is it surprising that many of them never master even the mechanical art of reading anything but the set of words embodied in their readers? Some of them may not acquire even that. An experienced school inspector narrates that he found in the school-room of a leading Canadian town a little, fourth grade girl, the "exhibition" reader of her class, who, up to the time of his visit, had actually failed to learn to read at all. She was, it appears, an unusually bright child, with a quick memory. Four grades were taught in one room. She had proceeded from the first to the fourth grade under the same teacher.

She had heard the older pupils in their different classes read their lessons day after day, and had learned by heart the pieces which they read. When asked by her teacher to read, as she invariably was when visitors came, she simply stood up, book in hand, and went through the gestures and intonations of reading aloud matter which she was reciting from memory. She was unable to read the simplest sentences from a child's paper which the inspector placed in her hands. This is perhaps an extreme case, but it illustrates the sort of freshness and interest with which bright pupils must ordinarily "grade" from one reading book to another.

Is this the way to teach language, which should be the chief educational aim of every school? Is this the way to arouse an interest in books, the main source of instruction and information, if not of education properly so called? It is not the present purpose to particularize. Space is lacking. But surely a hint should suffice to indicate how blind tradition has misled and is still misleading in this matter. All intelligent teachers must recognize the truth of what has been suggested. They are not chiefly to blame. It is the traditionalists to whom they are subject and whose notions are law.

It may be argued that there is not time in the ordinary school-room for the sort of reading hinted at. If time were not otherwise so scandalously wasted, there would be abundance of it for right teaching of every sort. If the school-room were recognized and used as a place intended for the development of intellectual ability instead of as the natural limbo of surfeited memories and dwarfed intelligences, time for the former purpose could easily be got by discarding the machinery now devoted to the latter.

APPARENTLY it has not occurred to those responsible for elementary schooling that language is the principal means of education for children as well as for adults. Each child born into the world spends the early years of its life in self-instruction. No teacher ever does as well for it afterwards. In the first half dozen of its years the ordinary child acquires most of the words which it is likely afterwards to use. And a "word", as the grammarians used to define it, "is the sign of an idea." Each new word acquired carries with it a new idea or thought to the mind. Abstract thought is obviously impossible without words. It is admittedly doubtful if what is usually called thought, except in terms of mere

memory or experience, is possible without words. It is language which radically distinguishes man from the lower animals. The more words one knows and comprehends, the wider is the distinction between him and the lower animals, and the greater the difference between him and his less fortunate human fellows.

Readers of the English Bible, with a little help or direction from intelligent teachers, acquired by that means a working vocabulary not otherwise to be got except by great expenditure of energy. Those restricted to School Readers may pick up some useful words—they can, of course, acquire none which are not more or less valuable. But they do not by this means obtain mastery of the language of everyday life. School Readers are, *or were*, couched in literary language which is quite different from the vernacular. Yet very little effort is used or even permitted to modern teachers to bring the words of that language home to the minds of their pupils. Their time is too much taken up with such, pedagogically, vastly more important subjects as arithmetic, reading by rote, grammar, geography, history, etc. The meanings of words, when considered at all, are usually accepted from glossaries contained in the Readers. These are mostly, it would appear, compiled by persons with only rudimentary ideas of the usage of the synonyms which they employ as “definitions.” As a single illustration typical of innumerable others, the word “pursuers” is defined as “followers.” This may be unusually gross, but at best the “meaning” of a word is almost invariably given with regard to the particular connection in which it is used, whereas it may have many other significations. Few teachers feel themselves called on to attempt to correct or amplify the text-book definitions or, which is of more importance, to illustrate the various possible or ordinary uses of a word.

Having decided for themselves and the schools under their care that there is little or no natural or advisable connection between learning to read and the acquisition of language for the development and expression of mental activity, educational authorities have fixed upon grammar as the proper language-teaching medium. Now grammar, as the old text-books on the subject used to begin by informing us, “is both an art and a science”—the art of correct speech, and the science or knowledge of the forms of such speech. On its “art” side, speech is ignored, in every sense of the word, in most of our elementary schools. If a child is accustomed to correct speech at home, he usually loses use of the “art” before he has got half-way through the elementary grades. His teacher teaches him to forget in many cases quite as effectively as do his fellow pupils. The experience of a school inspector illustrates. He was giving

a language lesson and asking the class for nouns. There was silence. By way of suggestion he turned to one of the pupils and enquired, "What are the names of the things on your desk?" Still there was silence until the teacher came to the rescue with the pointed explanation to the pupil—"He means them there things." Another school inspector narrates that at a certain school, taught by a First-Class teacher with a Normal College diploma, after listening to other performances he asked the teacher to give a "language lesson." The teacher proceeded down one row of benches and up another, making enquiries by the way, until he had traversed the whole room. Then he returned to announce "I am sorry, sir, but I cannot give a language lesson to-day—*there is not a grammar in school.*" The inspector mildly suggested that it might be possible to give a language lesson without a text-book. Whereupon the teacher, recalling his grammar to memory, solemnly asked, "What is a word"—the opening "definition" of the prescribed book. The reply came promptly and in unison from the class: "A word is a significant combination of articulate sounds capable of being represented by written characters." Not one in the class knew what the "meaning" meant, or had any idea of the meaning of the principal individual words composing it. And neither they nor their teacher nor the author of the so-called "grammar" had any idea that a noun is just a noun or name, and as such, is not definable. Of such is the Kingdom of Grammar in the common schools!

As a "science", grammar is for the assistance of those who have more or less mastered the "art" of speech. As a prescribed subject of "study" in elementary schools, it furnishes evidence of infectious imbecility on the part of those responsible for its prescription. All the time that elementary schools have at their disposal should be devoted to the acquisition of clearly understood words and their combination into correct and understandable sentences, spoken or written. To that achievement too much time cannot be given, if a text-book on any other subject is never opened. Only a very small percentage of common-school pupils ever proceed even to the eighth grade. More than half of them do not reach the fifth grade. What possible excuse, in view of these facts, can be offered for beginning and continuing the common-school course as if all pupils were not only to complete it but to continue through the high-school course and ultimately reach the university?

It appears to be reasonably certain that a large number of the pupils who so early drop out in the common-school course do so because of home conditions and the impossibility of cramming without special assistance the subjects thrust upon them for subse-

quent examination. Probably a majority of the pupils who enter the common schools are mentally incapable of completing, under examination tests, any course suitable for the small minority who can, and do ordinarily, complete such a course and come through it with acquirements suited to their later practical needs in life, if they are unable to proceed to high-school. Even this minority is seriously hampered by the unpractical work which they are compelled to do, as well as by the dead and dragging weight of the mentally dull majority. What of the still more capable few who have their mental vitality sapped, their brightest years of acquisition darkened and their best time wasted in loafing through a course of eight years which, with right teaching, they could easily complete in less than a third of that time?

What is urgently needed is a complete reconstruction of the common-school course on a rational base, directly facing the facts. It should be strictly practical, and complete in itself in view of the ascertained certainty that but a small percentage of pupils will ever go beyond it. It should ensure that all who finish it are adequately prepared in mental development for entering the high-school, if they desire or are able to do so, or for facing the world and taking their place and part in it, if that is their will or their necessity. It should frankly recognize and provide for special mentalities, either above or below the average. It should provide definitively that neither the one nor the other of these shall be wronged by having too little or too much expected or required of them. In a word, the common schools should be adapted to the children, not the children to the schools, by deforming pedagogic devices.

And it should be clearly recognized and constantly kept in view that language is the first and greatest agency of useful education. Whether this can be accomplished or not, depends on the public—the educated and thinking but hitherto inert public. So far, the colleges and universities, and men of standing and influence in them, have as already stated mostly stood aloof from free-school education. Unless they can be moved to lend a hand in influencing the public and directing the authorities, there would appear to be little of encouragement in the outlook. If there is a case in which self-elevation by means of the proverbial boot-strap promises to be more ineffective than another, it is that of the undirected or wrongly-directed public with regard to free-school education.

FAD after fad and fancy after fancy have been imposed on the free-schools from time to time of late years by well-meaning folk of limited knowledge and less understanding. The number of subjects prescribed has been steadily increased. The traditional subjects have been neglected, complicated or distorted. It is high time now to get back to basic common-sense and practicality. There was no thought of making miniature universities of them when the free-schools were established. They were to be for the enlightenment of democracy, and for the greater happiness and fuller opportunities of the individual. The public were to be enabled to read understandingly for the benefit of the State. They were to be taught to compute accurately for their own purposes. They were to be enabled to write as a means of personal use and pleasure.

The accomplishment of these undertakings was to be the aim and end of free education. It was contemplated, of course, that in carrying on this work the schools would accomplish much more. They would promote good manners and inculcate public morality. They would incidentally impart much useful information and put pupils in the way of acquiring information, by cultivating among them a taste for intelligent reading and enquiry. It was never for a moment contemplated that children should be stuffed with irrelevant facts from prescribed text-books, and hounded by examinations until all learning became obnoxious to many if not most of them. It was never imagined that the system would swamp the idea on which it was based—the gradual elevation of the people by practical and approved means. Education, as then and still properly understood, has now come to mean, in the schools and to the public, memorized information.

Learning originally meant the acquisition of knowledge; and knowledge meant that which tended to wisdom, both mental and practical. The "system" has substituted for such learning the mere stuffing of isolated or inconsequential facts into immature minds—minds usually quite incapable of understanding or of profiting by them in any way. Geography, for example, is one of the most venerated of modern school subjects. It is usually "learned by heart" from a text-book which is a compromise between an encyclopaedia and a government blue-book. All the "geography" that the pupils can or do ordinarily carry away from school is a knowledge of the location of important countries and places, and some very general information concerning them. The endless statistics that one generation of pupils is memorizing are superseded for the next by a new decennial census. These the ordinary pupil forgets as

soon as he has passed his examinations. He seldom, if ever, has use for them in after life, and if he had they would be of no service to him nor would he venture to use any of them in case of need without reference to some authoritative book. All that the ordinary business or professional man knows of geography would not enable him to pass from a fifth to a sixth common school grade; yet his children must have their time absorbed and their memories weakened by cramming facts that he forgot and they will forget in much less time than it usually takes to learn them.

History is akin to geography in the schools; only, in general, it is much more useless. To speak of "teaching history", of "learning history" in the schools is self-condemnatory. It was demonstrated philosophically by Professor Stanley of McGill University, in the last number of this *Review*, that it is impossible even to define "history". It may be described as, usually, the more or less prejudiced guesses of subsequent writers concerning past persons and events. History-writers are ordinarily little more than pamphleteers bent on promoting their own notions by imaginary or distorted illustrations or inferences. History, surely, is something not to be "learned" but read as critically as possible in mature and somewhat enlightened life, always with a personal, internal *caveat*. To "teach history" in the common schools is to twist the minds and betray the judgment of children.

There are certain interesting or instructive stories of the past in each province of Canada, to be read to or by intelligent pupils of the province concerned. Such stories collected into a small volume might well take, in part, the place of a prescribed Reader. But to compel pupils to memorize "facts" which may not be facts and opinions which are as likely as not to be misleading, is to inflict upon them a gross wrong. Outlines of history, that is, unquestioned and significant facts of national development and progress, undoubtedly have their use as wholesome reading and for enlightening discussion in the more advanced high-school classes. For memorization and examination purposes, they should not be tolerated in the free-schools. It is never to be overlooked how easily they can be, and how often they have been, used for purposes of individual or party propaganda. Let us beware of history in our free-schools, or at least be prudently suspicious of it. The notorious use made of it in Germany should never be forgotten. Canadian children naturally loathe Canadian "history." This feeling has an obvious cause, which is not to be removed by giving them more Canadian history, to "learn", for purposes of examination.

THE conclusion of the educational matter in Canada would seem to be that the free-schools, which are *of* the people and *from* the people, should be *for* the people because they are paid for out of the pockets of the very poorest as well as of the richest. They should teach not what ignorance may want, or fancy dictate, but what enlightened opinion, founded on experience, believes to be best for the pupils, and therefore for the future good of the country.

The common-schools should no longer be regarded as necessarily leading up to and grading into the high-schools. They have an end of their own—the end which was contemplated at their beginning. The high-schools were an after-thought mainly, at first, for the suitable education of free-school teachers. They were, for that purpose, a legitimate thought. They have been put largely to an improper use—the furnishing of education mainly for aspirants to the learned professions. So used, they are largely responsible for the diverting of the brightest and most energetic of our young people from industry to social parasitism or to emigration. The time has come for restoring the common-schools to their intended public service, and for correcting, as far as possible, the undesirable tendencies developed by the high-schools. To this end a common-school course should be devised intended primarily for the overwhelming majority of pupils who will not proceed beyond the common-schools, and which, while adapted to the average intelligence of such pupils, will make special provision for those above or below that average.

This course should be directed specifically to the awakening and developing of intelligence in the pupils, and to enabling them to do practical things as well as to think for themselves within their limitations. Young folk should be taught, first of all, to read, not mere prescribed "lessons" and pieces, but any printed matter which may be suitable and available. They should learn to write by constant practice, after a rudimentary, mechanical facility with the pen or pencil has been acquired. Their memories should be thoroughly exercised in spelling. They should be made expert in the fundamental rules of arithmetic, and in practical arithmetical computations likely to be of service to them afterwards. These should be the basic requirements of the course.

Incidentally, the speech of pupils should be corrected as often as they or any of them express themselves by voice or pen. Simple rules of expression and for the avoidance of error should be repeatedly impressed upon their minds by the teacher without reference to formal text-books. They should be induced to express themselves,

individually, as frequently as possible, and compelled to think for that purpose, by question and the assignment of graduated subjects for their remarks. They should have free access at all times in the school-room to maps, dictionaries and encyclopaedias, and should not only be taught their use but have it impressed upon each of them by constant practice. They should have historical stories, of an instructive and uncoloured character, available for their reading and discussion with the teacher in class or among themselves, but never for formal lessons or for memorization. All reading of every sort should be directed at all times to language-learning, to the understanding and acquisition of words, their various meanings and uses. It should never be lost sight of for a moment that language is, has been and must always continue to be the chief means of education properly so-called.

A common-school course so arranged and duly carried out could not but be improving for all and sufficient for the after use of most. It would afford each child a chance of developing mentally to the limit of his natural ability. It should enable those specially endowed to go forward rapidly instead of loitering with the dullest. It should encourage the dullest to do his best. It should amply prepare all whose fortune or intention it is to proceed to a high-school course, to begin that course with adequate mental development and equipment. Any well-considered high-school course could easily be adjustable to it. At least, in view of results so far obtained from public expenditure on free-schools and the extent of illiteracy still abroad, it seems but reasonable to admit that a reconsideration of our system of free-school education is imperatively demanded, that something better adapted to our practical needs in a progressive country is urgently required, and that our young people are deserving of a more effective education than most of them have heretofore been receiving.

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