Graduating Thesis

Subject: Testing Progress of the Public Schools

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Contents

Introduction
Interest and Importance of the Subject
Evolution of Schools—From Private to Public
Present Standing—Increase in Numbers

Systematic Grading of Schools
Uniformity of Text-books Aids in this

Enforced Methods of Instruction
Teachers Study the Child
Trains him to Think and Read

School Government
Ruled by Love and Well Done
Cordial Punishment Nzarked

Improvement brought about by
the present-age Teachers
Woman as a Teacher for Children
She comes in as an equal partner

Method of Licensing Teachers Shows Progress
Disadvantages of Low Salaries for Teachers
Difficulty met by Civil Service

Conclusion
Object of Schools of Today Is
To educate both Intellect and Body
Teaches Pupil to Read and so

Extend links Education on forever
The question of public schools is one that interests the people of our land more than any other subject. The schooling of 85% of our population never goes beyond that gained in the public school. No other organization has a greater influence on civilization. Its progress has been rapid and its influence has been lasting.

It is easy for a reformer or an advocate of improvements in school methods to convince himself and perhaps others that the old education is so inferior to the new that it may be considered as almost a failure, but with due study we are led more and more to respect the old education without even doubting the superiority of the new. The old educational was good in a manifold number of ways, but the new is better.
in as many more. Good scholars were doubtless made in the little country schools of seventy-five years ago, where one teacher taught everything from the A-B's to logarithms. And later, but those scholars were made in spite of, and not on account of their surroundings. When each improvement of the school of today education is made more perfect and may be obtained with greater ease.

It is interesting to notice the evolution of the Public Schools. Its growth has made very much the same progress as many other factors of civilization. Originally the more intelligent and well-to-do families employed a teacher for the children of the household. An example of this may yet be found in the home of our National Executive. Soon, by general consent several families employed such a person to instruct their
Children in common. This latter form also exists even to the present time. We find the private schools dwell in our own city. The public school soon grew out of this, with the new principle providing for the education of children whose parents could not or would not furnish them educational advantages. In many parts of the country, public schools are yet in their infancy; but for the most part, they are in thorough working order under the supervision of the city, the district, the county, or the state. They are governed by school laws of the state and nation and are supported by a permanent school fund, which consists of a general school tax, embracing state, county, township, and district taxes increased by miscellaneous sources such as field licenses, gifts, etc.
Under such circumstances they have flourished exceedingly, until today there is a total enrollment of labor 16 million pupils in the whole school order. It has been estimated that sixty-one out of every one hundred of the population between the age of five and eighteen years are enrolled. At this rate of attendance the entire population receives schooling on an average of a little less than five years of two hundred days each. In some states this average falls as low as two years while in others it rises as high as seven years.

Considering the public school process which we find constitute 88 percent of the whole school order the total enrollment has indeed from less than seven million in 1870 to nearly fourteen million at the present time. Such is the progress in numbers of our Grand School system.

Statistics from the United States Commissioner of Education.
The cost has increased with no less marked rapidity from sixty-three million to one hundred and sixty-five million per annum. This increase, of course, is due to several causes. Chiefly: the cost of building and apparatus; higher wages for teachers and the great general spread of the public school system. The growth of villages and cities gives us the graded school in its extended form, which necessitates more and larger buildings, supplied with the later educational appliances: such as maps, globes, charts, libraries, etc.; by using nothing but extensive laboratory setup which are slowly making their way into our schools. The special rooms such as the Kindergarten and the primary must be supplied.

One of the latest and most popular movements yet accepted is the County
uniformity and district ownership of the textbook. The larger school
cell for an increase in the length
of the school year, and deemed
a professional teacher for each
grade. The rural schools in
sparsely settled districts still
continue the practice of hold-
ing winter schools of short
terms, taught by inferior teachers.
In such places, the inducement
for learning are always very
limited. For the proper progress,
this constant growing expense
cannot be avoided.

As any successful organ-
ization develops in its concreteness
and more systematized in its work,
then we find an element of pro-
gress in the grading of schools.
The professional teacher will
no longer permit more than
one day's progress between
are children in the room.
Uniformity of textbook aids greatly
in grading any school.
supposing there is a class ready to take up the fourth reader, and there are as many different text books among these as there are members in the class, it is practically impossible to establish any satisfactory grade line unless some certain authority's book has been taken as a basis of such grading.

The best work in this line depends somewhat upon the good judgment and genius of the teacher. The proper classification and promotion from one grade to another, is a difficult idea yet it will never leave our school system.

The modern school is characterized by improved methods of instruction. The purpose is as broad as the nature of the child and is determined by it. The successful teacher must go far beyond the simple knowledge as shown by his certificate.
He must study each child under his instruction and understand the psychological development of the human mind.

Instead of seeing in the boy or girl just entering the junior school only one more to be watched while traveling the weary way through a half-dozen teachers' couragages and mathematic to a cultured being. One book of geography or history, and then to be turned out as one who is educated—he see the children the process of becoming a citizen subject to the demands of the future, in the various complicated relations of life. He sees the child as body, mind, and soul, each a sum of undeveloped capacities and powers for which he is responsible.

To set a task in geography or arithmetic and see that it is learned and recited is one thing, but to use these studies to train the child to observe, to
imagine to feel to reason and to will is quite another and different thing. Education is something more than book learning. The child has such faculties as perception, conception, judgment and reason, to be educated he must be able to use these faculties.

As regards the government of children the spirit of the school has changed even since it was that of the home. Only a few years ago corporal punishment was not only common but was regarded as beneficial even in large schools for the proper education of children. Today severity or severity in reproof and past becoming intolerable to the modern mind.

It is well understood that the instructor of greatest ability never strikes a blow upon the tenderling body of a helpless child. Any teacher who does will mentally if not orally after an apology.
as a confession of his weakness

The "fifth" and the feminine

as long as conspicuous schoolroom

ornaments, flowers and pictures

have taken their place

School "master" and "flogging"

have given way to gentle inteli-

ligent teachers who rule by love

and companionship. The pupils

are treated more as equals and

not as subordinates. Public

opinion heartily endorses the

present methods. The press

aided by lecturers and scientific and

literary associations continually

denounce any system that is

so far from the Law of love

as some of our past school

governments have been. Past

Experience teaches that very

little true education can come

from the use of threat.

The old regime will never

be restored. Once gone, it is

gone for ever. Such progress
knows no retrogression.

By what means have these inspired methods been accomplished? The child from the age of five to fifteen years is very much the same as the child of that age fifty years ago. He shows good taste. For education the same as children always have done; but he gains much more than former schools had within their power to give him. It is to the teacher that we look for still greater improvement. As the teacher, so the School. Other things have their influence, but are governed, to a very great extent, by the teacher himself. A broadened and more practical education is essential. The time is now for distinct action. All teachers of our public must be graduates of our higher institutions of learning.
As women's culture rises and her work becomes more efficient, it is shown more conclusively how unjust have been the discriminations against her in this field of work where her services are even more valuable than many.

Our American public schools today owe their high standard in no small measure to the noble character, enthusiasm and devotion of women, who make teaching not only a means of remuneration, but in addition make it a mission service of love for the work and for children. It must be conceded that the mother is the most potent factor in the development of the child. Women work, especially the care of the home and of children, they have their place in education. They make others
Workers in our colleges. It is easily proven that they predominated in the professor chairs in all the higher institutions of learning. Our own grand institution has been four lady teachers in a faculty of twenty-three members. This perhaps is no exception to the rule. In schools of this kind however the little ones are not taught. Students are now in the deeper world of study. They are realizing that they are working for themselves and no longer in need of kinder influences.

School progress has welcomed women into the ranks, and our lower seats of learning will never be found without them. She has had little place in the schools of the past. She now holds equal place with man! In 1893-94 there were employed 122.05% male teachers, and 260.95% female.

(Histories of Commissioners of Education, 1893)
There has been a constant decrease in numbers of male teachers since 1880, while the number of female teachers has increased 75% during that period. In the future, she will be found as the most prominent of all instructors for children.

The question of training teachers is an important step to be noted in the progress of schools. We are working towards a uniform system. At the present time we have simply reported progress in that line. Our method is far from being perfect. Some states have been uniformly even within the county; simply leaving the whole matter in the hands of the various boards of supervisors. The system used in this state is perhaps one of the best, beginning with the County Certificate issued for one year, it extends to a state life certificate. This
show progress indeed compared with the oral examination given by a district in rural schools 60 years ago.

One of the principal disadavantages under which the schools are laboring is the difficulty of securing and maintaining good professional teachers. The account of the comparatively small salaries paid and the tendency of civil service reform promises to come over both these difficulties. As so, this school of the future will have one great obstacle removed from their pathway.

Our whole progressive the best schools of today is toward the true education in which the intellect and the body are trained together. The trained being the elements of education which in the first steps are the same for every child. The latter the training in gymnastics - which
may as well be the use of the
tooth of a trade as any other—per-
haps better. If it were absolutely
certain that a child of the kind
whose was never to have an
opportunity to rise above the station
in which he is born, it might
not be advisable for the State
to expend time and money
in giving him other than
the manual training aided
incidentally by teaching him
the “three Rs.” But who has power
even so infinitesimal as to look into our
public schools and say with
any degree of certainty, this boy
will never become a Franklin or
a Lincoln.

Similarly if it were certain
that a child would never use a
tool; that his hands might never
never show the marks of tool
any manual training might well
be dispensed with. But “Rising
fall”—the child of any American
citizen is very sure sometime in his life to find an opportunity for practicing the art which he may have learned while yet in the public school. Every child should be so instructed that he may find no lack in his primary training that will serve as an obstruction to such upward progress as his talent, his ambition and his enterprise enable him to take. The amount of schooling given every American citizen teaches him how to read. The great libraries and current literature furnish him a wealth of reading. In order to digest all this the student gained his the public school is of vital importance. It is the starting point of an education which will end only with life.
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