

## EDUCATIONAL EVENTS.

A MOST significant sign of the times is the remarkable change that is taking place in the attitude of the thoughtful portion of the American people toward the schools. Public education has long been considered a civic charity, an opportunity, as it were, which society is holding out as a gift to the young to enable them to equip themselves for the battle of life. This crude conception is being gradually superseded by the somewhat more adequate view that social security and economic prosperity must depend more and more largely upon the education of the people, and that the schools, accordingly, are requisite to the preservation and extension of the nation's most important interests.

There are not wanting striking evidences of the growth of this newer spirit. The most noteworthy illustration is supplied by the Southern Educational Conference which was held this year at Athens, Ga., under the presidency of Mr. Robert C. Ogden, of New York. Here educators and public-spirited citizens of the Southern States, including the Governors of North Carolina and Virginia, deliberated with prominent visitors from the North concerning the best ways and means for the dissemination and encouragement of universal education among the white and black alike, in the most efficient schools that philanthropy and intelligent effort can supply in the South. The problem of increasing the efficiency of teachers was justly given an important place on the programme. The need of industrial training also received due appreciation. But, best of all, the spirit which prevailed revealed that those who participated in the conference knew something of the economic meaning of public education as well as of the humane aspects of the problem. The wonderful natural resources, it was felt, are as nothing when compared with the resources that lie dormant in the neglected children of the South. The promotion of the education of the young by good schooling, accordingly, must be regarded as neither more nor less than an investment, promising rich returns in the increase of the industrial, commercial, and intellectual wealth of the nation.

A less direct, but nevertheless unmistakable, demonstration of the

growing belief in education as an economic investment, enriching through the recipient the country at large, is contributed by the recent election of Prof. Woodrow Wilson to the presidency of Princeton University and by the character of the installation of Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler as president of Columbia. Of course, some allowance must be made for the personalities of the two men. But their elevation to the highest university honors has a larger meaning. Neither of the two men is a clergyman; neither of the two is a scholar of the traditional humanistic type. The installation of President Butler was a national event, bringing together what may be considered the largest company of distinguished people ever collected in America for any event. The keynote of the occasion was sounded in President Butler's definition of the duty of a present-day university, which, he said, "keeps step with the march of progress, widens its sympathies with growing knowledge, and among a democratic people seeks only to instruct, to uplift, and to serve, in order that the cause of religion and learning, and of human freedom and opportunity, may be continually advanced, from century to century, and from age to age." And the election of the great political economist to the presidency of Princeton adds even stronger proof that the current of thought is in the direction of looking to the schools for the solution of the problems of civilization.

While all these evidences are encouraging to the friends of education, there is still much to try severely their faith in humanity. The new interest in the schools is by no means general as yet, and where it exists, it does not always show itself in the most desirable form.

#### POLITICAL PARTISANSHIP IN SCHOOL AFFAIRS.

It looks very much as if the politician had taken new courage from the evident lack of an intelligent and virile public interest in the higher welfare of the common schools. For a time the unusual attention given to the schools in public prints and the organization of public education societies kept him in his lair; but in many places he has taken a new lease of activity. The most recent evidence of the injection of party politics into school matters<sup>1</sup> is the dismissal of Mr. L. E. Wolfe from the school superintendency by the Republican school board of Kansas City, Kansas, for no other reason than that he is known as a "Missouri Democrat." The Kansas City schools have made splendid progress under

<sup>1</sup> Since these words were written, Mr. Leviston has been removed from the school superintendency of St. Paul, Minn., by political trickery. The man chosen for the place is Mr. A. J. Smith, whom Mr. Leviston succeeded two years ago.

Mr. Wolfe's administration. He has been for years a faithful student of all phases of improvement in school affairs, and is a level-headed, thoroughgoing, and progressive school man. But all this is of no consequence to the Kansas school-board politicians, who simply know that no Democrat must hold office as long as there are worthy Republicans to be had to take their places.

Another variety of political interference with school affairs is that shown in the retirement from office of Mr. Orville T. Bright, superintendent of the schools of Cook County, Illinois. His strict adherence to principles of integrity and justice in issuing teachers' licenses gave offence to a man of "influence" in party councils, and he was marked for "breaking." The man nominated in his place is Dr. Augustus F. Nightingale, a man to whom the secondary schools and colleges of the country are indebted for many good things. Dr. Nightingale has had absolutely nothing to do with the overthrow of Mr. Bright; in fact, he is a close friend of the latter, and his course has been in every way the most loyal and honorable.

Mr. Bright has been a thoroughly conscientious, courageous, and able superintendent. The teachers of his county have learned to respect and love him, and have always been in hearty sympathy with his endeavors to develop and uplift the common schools and to extend their benefits. Colonel Parker's great work at the Cook County Normal School had the whole strength of his support in the days when it was assailed by politicians and zealots among the opponents of the new education. And to think that his reward for the devotion of a life to the schools and the course of education should be sacrifice upon the altar of demagogic selfishness! It makes one's heart sick. Some parts of the country are, indeed, sadly in need of a revival that will stir the sluggish educational conscience of the people to vigorous action.

People moored in safe harbors have suggested that an educator's professional spirit ought to rise high enough to cause him to decline a place made vacant by party politics. This is nonsense. Shall the schools and the children suffer to satisfy outraged professional feelings? Not a word of criticism ought to be levelled at Dr. Nightingale for accepting the nomination for the Cook County superintendency. He has a perfect right to accept the office of the friend whom political malversation has turned out. If he should decline, some one else would be found willing to take it. For the good of the schools of Cook County — and that is all that concerns us — it is best that he should succeed rather than an inferior man whom the bosses might nominate.

There is no doubt that something ought to be done to prevent future attempts of pot-hunting and vindictive politicians from laying hands on faithful and successful educators or otherwise interfering in school affairs. There are in this country localities where the teachers do not dare to raise even a feeble protest against the high-handed outrages committed by the small-fry politicians. To the big political leaders school patronage appears too petty, and some of them have enough conscience to regard the infusion of selfish politics into the schools as wrong. In the West, in some of the Central States, and in certain sections of Pennsylvania, the subversion of school interests by personal and party expedients and the degradation of teachers to vassals of small-souled demagogues who happen to have "influence" are especially frequent. Deliverance from the burden of shame that unscrupulous politicians have imposed upon local school systems will never be effected until the plain people know enough about the purposes of the common school to resent attacks upon it as promptly as they now resent the slightest interference in their church affairs and personal habits. The time must come when the average citizen will be just as deeply interested in questions of public-school administration as he now shows himself to be in the question whether beer is to be sold on Sunday or not.

The removal of Mr. Jasper by the board of education of New York City from the office of associate city superintendent, after forty-five years of faithful service in the local school system, does not excite the odium which attaches to the displacement of Superintendents Wolfe and Bright; yet in spirit and method it is far from satisfying to the friends of education. Two things save the majority in the board from being classed with their political Kansas and Illinois confrères. One is that Mr. Jasper did "respectfully apply for retirement to take effect September 1, 1903"; the other is that under the law he is entitled to an annuity of \$2,000 on the date he retires. We are all of us only too readily inclined to leniency as regards principles in such matters if the retiring educator is assured a fair income. But the danger of the "wanton display of brutal strength" — as Commissioner Miles O'Brien characterized somewhat over-severely, no doubt, the action on the part of the New York board — is that it sets a bad precedent to school officers with less exalted views of the purposes of the common schools than President Burlingham and his associates profess to have.

During Mr. Jasper's long and honorable service, the school system of the old New York — Manhattan and the Bronx — has grown from 43,000 pupils to 266,000, and from 1,250 teachers to 6,240. He began

his career in December, 1857, as vice-principal of a small school in West Eighty-second Street; in 1860 he was promoted to the principalship of the school; in 1865 he was transferred to the principalship of grammar school No. 51; and in 1872 he was advanced to the position of assistant superintendent of schools. Upon the resignation of Mr. Henry Kiddle, in October, 1879, he was elected city superintendent, a place he held until February of the present year, when he became associate city superintendent of the greater city. He has filled also every position in the evening schools, from assistant teacher to that of principal of the evening high school.

So long and honorable a service ought to afford, it would seem, argument sufficient to any fair-minded school commissioner for making the retirement in the most generous spirit.

Whatever shortcomings Mr. Jasper may have revealed, he served the city to the best of his ability, fulfilling his duties, as he saw them, in the most conscientious manner, and in thousands of homes his name is held in high veneration as a friend of the children. If the members of the board of education had been as well informed concerning his good points as they seem to have been regarding his deficiencies, they could not possibly have acted as ungenerously as they did.

A more pleasing picture of the termination of an educator's career in public-school superintendency is furnished by Toronto. Mr. James L. Hughes has just resigned his position as school inspector of Toronto, after twenty-eight years of service, in which he has given the schools of his city an enviable reputation. He is universally respected, and is one of the most eminent school superintendents in all America. The good people in Toronto do not want him to go, and the board of education is making every effort to get him to reconsider his resignation; but, much as he must appreciate the many evidences of the esteem in which he is held by the community, he has firmly decided to devote himself to writing and lecturing.

Mr. Hughes combines in an unusual way the various qualities one would look for in an ideal city school superintendent. His professional equipment is of a high character. His writings reveal a firm grasp of the manifold phases of the practice of education. He has done valiant pioneer work for the dissemination of kindergarten ideas. His influence has been felt in the extension of manual and physical training. He is a lover of children, and the children have always loved him. He has had the absolute sympathy and confidence of his teachers, and has been to them an inspiration and uplifting force. As a lecturer and

writer he also enjoys a considerable reputation. He has kept up the vigor of youth to so rare a degree that he has for more than a quarter of a century held the reputation of being one of the youngest superintendents in the public-school service.

The spontaneity and unanimity of the many tokens of respect the citizens of Toronto have shown for the head of their school system afford a timely and wholesome lesson to our cities. It would seem as if a school man were more respected in Canada than in the United States.

#### THE NATIONAL DEPARTMENT OF SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENCE.

There are annually held in the United States two great national conventions of teachers and school officers. The larger one is that of the National Educational Association, which meets in the summer, and by means of State organization and liberal advertising, especially of the sight-seeing features connected with it, attracts from eight to fifteen thousand teachers and tourists. The other is the winter meeting of the Department of Superintendence, representing the most influential section organized under the auspices of the National Educational Association.

Questions concerning the supervision of teachers and the administration of school systems are supposed to be the specific topics of the Department of Superintendence; but quite often the papers and addresses go considerably beyond its legitimate scope. Thus, at the most recent convention at Chicago, less than one-fourth of the time was given to the discussion of subjects bearing directly upon school supervision. A considerable portion of the members would like to confine the department to the specific objects its organizers had in mind; but in the absence of any constitution and of adequate limitation of membership, it will be very difficult to paddock the annual conventions within the limits of school supervision. Meanwhile, the more extreme specialists may in a measure gratify their wishes by arranging round-tables for the discussion of such topics as may commend themselves most directly to their tastes.

The working attendance at the winter convention is made up largely of educational leaders who shape and direct the organization and policy of public-school systems in the United States, but is by no means limited to superintendents. Institutions for the training of teachers are increasingly represented by their principals and instructors. Presidents of universities and colleges have of late also gathered in special session in connection with the department meetings. The attendants thus are, generally speaking, persons upon whom rest large educational responsi-



bilities. This is, of course, no guarantee that the programme provided is always equal to the demands of the occasion. The make-up of the programme has long been considered the sacred prerogative of the man honored with the presidency, and reflects quite often the individual taste as well as the limitations of the incumbent. Efforts have been made from time to time to shift the responsibility for the programme in a way to assure meetings characterized throughout by seriousness of purpose and by determination to reach practical conclusions. To be sure, a programme which looks attractive in print may prove a dismal failure. On the other hand, apparently poor programmes have occasionally furnished the bases for most profitable meetings, just as Sancho Panza looking for a place to sleep found a hundred gold ducats. However, it is quite generally felt that the selection of topics and speakers for the conventions ought not to be the task of a special committee of experts on programme. A committee of this kind was provided for two or three years ago and is in existence now; but thus far it has not given any visible signs of life. The next move will be to demand of the committee an annual report concerning its doings. The deliberations of the department ought to reveal, even more comprehensively than in the past, and certainly more clearly, the trend which educational efforts are taking in the schools of the country.

This year the Department of Superintendence met at Chicago, on February 25-27. The attendance was larger than usual. The programme was fairly good, though it did not by any means afford a comprehensive survey of the great problems which ought to engage the attention of the leaders in public education at the present time. However, the meeting was a profitable one in that it brought into prominence three or four questions concerning which the school people of the country will sooner or later be called upon to take a position.

To be sure, the date of the meeting lies something like five weeks back of the period to be reviewed here; but the significance of the discussions selected for notice supplies more than sufficient reason for the seeming disregard of the trimestrial limits. In fact, these discussions are striking revelations of the trend of some important movements in the school field, and are thus of most timely interest.

The most noteworthy paper bearing upon the improvement of the schools was that presented by Prof. Paul Hanus, of Harvard University, under the title of "Obstacles to Educational Progress." This paper was printed in *THE FORUM* for April, 1902. It suggested a practical plan for gathering and organizing current educational doctrine and ex-

perience, and making the results available to those who arrange school programmes or "courses of study." The plan is thoroughly in harmony with the one proposed by Dr. J. M. Rice some years since. Its inauguration on an extensive scale would do away with a considerable amount of waste of time and effort in educational practice. The reasonableness of it impressed the Department of Superintendence sufficiently to lead to the adoption of a resolution to the effect "that a committee of nine be appointed to formulate, upon a sound educational basis, contemporary educational doctrine; submit statements covering contemporary educational experience; and indicate the tendencies of contemporary educational methods." The committee subsequently appointed by the president of the department, School Commissioner G. R. Glenn, of Georgia, is composed of Hon. Frank A. Hill, secretary of the Massachusetts State Board of Education; Superintendent L. H. Jones, Cleveland, Ohio; Superintendent C. B. Gilbert, Rochester, N. Y.; Principal C. H. Keyes, Hartford, Conn.; Prof. George H. Locke, University of Chicago; Prof. D. L. Kiehle, University of Minnesota; Superintendent C. N. Kendall, Indianapolis; Superintendent J. H. Van Sickle, Baltimore; and Prof. Elmer E. Brown, University of California.

Superintendent E. G. Cooley, of Chicago, spoke on "The Value of Examinations as Determining the Fitness of a Teacher for Work." While admitting that examinations are inadequate, he was of the opinion that they are the least objectionable of all the tests proposed thus far. The examination, he said, is a machine, and as such may spoil much good material which happens to be out of the ordinary. It cannot adapt itself to exceptional material. Neither do examinations reveal a teacher's moral qualities, his sense of duty, or his interest in school work. And yet they afford the best available test for a long list of necessary intellectual qualities and powers. They are certainly infinitely better than the individual judgment of a person invested with the power of appointment. The objections that have been raised refer to the misuse of examinations rather than to the examinations themselves.

Superintendent F. Louis Soldan, of St. Louis, insisted that examinations should be conducted in an *encouraging* way. The object is to find out what a candidate knows, and not what he does not know. The chief difficulty which superintendents in the West have discovered is that examinations tend to localize appointments. The superintendent does not feel justified in inviting promising candidates to go to the expense of travelling some distance for the sake of undergoing a test whose outcome is doubtful at best. St. Louis has found one way out, in the



selection of principals, by temporarily appointing candidates who seem to possess the required qualifications, and examining them afterward.

Dr. Emerson E. White, of Columbus, Ohio, touched a vital point when he made the plea that teachers ought to be permitted to earn freedom from examination. There is no doubt that examining is overdone. Every time a teacher applies for promotion or changes places he is summoned before an inquisitor and subjected to all sorts of tests, most of them unnecessary and futile. Some worthy form of professional inquiry into a candidate's qualifications is undoubtedly necessary. But there is no sense in repeating the tests in vogue at present. If a teacher has once established his scholarship or other qualifications, he ought to be free from further examinations on these specific lines. By continuing the logic of this plan, the teacher ought to be enabled to reach at last a point where no further examination can be demanded of him.

In treating of "The High School as the People's College versus Fitting Schools," President G. Stanley Hall, of Clark University, set forth some fundamentals in his pedagogical creed. The schools, he said, follow three great roads — one turning to the past, another seeking to prepare for the present, and a third aiming at the world that is to be. The past ruled absolutely in Sturm's time. The Latin in the schools of to-day is a sanctified relic of that period. The veneration still existing for it has so impressed the negro of the post-slavery period that he considers the two greatest desiderata in life to be to hold political office and to study Latin. Any subject leaving no result in after-life is an evil, according to Dr. Hall. He holds also that the translationing English cultivated by Latin is responsible for the slovenly use of the mother-tongue by college students.

To the question, "What keeps classics alive?" Dr. Hall gave a number of answers, among them the following: First, their evident respectability; second, they are the easiest and cheapest of all studies to teach, no apparatus being required and teaching skill being a minor consideration; third, college requirements are an enormous bribe. Concerning the last point he said that electives in admission requirements were a skilfully devised fraud, making it easiest for those who had followed the old curriculum of the classics with a little mathematics.

What aims should the school place before itself? Dr. Hall said that the choice lay between three directions — either the ideal is that of the past, or the present is considered the perfection of humanity, or else the school trains for the future. In his opinion the school must be the nursery of the world that is to be, a world that is neither made in the im-

age of the past nor exists in the present. Usually children are trained merely to defend the fortresses of the present. Fitting for existing institutions is not a worthy aim, according to Dr. Hall.

Limiting the aim of the school still further, a decision will have to be reached as to whether the social organism or the needs of the individual are to be placed first. Dr. Hall regards the perfection of the individual as the one great desideratum in education.

The ideal high school, according to Dr. Hall, will not be governed by the admission requirements set up by the colleges. English will occupy an important place on the programme. The Bible will be read. The drama will receive more attention than at present. That abomination of correcting poor English will be treated with all the severity that it deserves. The reading of the young people in the high schools must appeal to the dominant interests. This is the time when chivalry must be glorified. Parsifal and Siegfried must capture the interest at this period. Action and devotion to ideals must be presented in literature.

#### FRANCIS WAYLAND PARKER.

Colonel Parker, the greatest American school reformer since the days of Horace Mann, passed away on March 2, at Pass Christian, Miss., where he had gone in search of rest and health.

What America has gained through the services rendered to the schools by this great leader a future generation of educators will recount with enthusiasm and with far more unanimity than the present-day school men, many of whom lack perspective and are afflicted with a tendency toward measuring what a man is not rather than what he is. History will relate what a revolution he inaugurated in the methods of teaching and governing little children. The significance and far-reaching effects of his fight against pedantry, cruelty, and thought-crushing rote work in the primary school will be better understood, and more generally appreciated, when those who claim the name of educator prefer to walk in the sunlight of educational history to groping their way through the darkness of inexperience with only the little candle of their own wisdom to aid them.

A slight conception of the great change wrought in primary teaching by Colonel Parker may be gathered from the fact that a bitter and prolonged attack was made upon the famous "Talks on Teaching," when the book first appeared. To-day this book is to the primary teacher what Blackstone is to the lawyer — an inexhaustible source of help and inspiration in the daily work of his profession. The methods it so viv-

idly describes are at work in manifold variations wherever in America a primary school is conducted in the best light.

No man in this country has rendered greater service to the children in the primary school years. His heroic fight for greater freedom and happiness worked a complete transformation in the methods of teaching. So radical was the change that it amounted almost to a revolution, and it had been fitly termed the *new* education. And a new education it was — new as is the spring that beams upon nature after the storms and darkness and sternness and dreariness of winter. The ideals which it represented were not new, and this fact afforded his critics a convenient point for attack. But old though they were, as a wild apple tree is changed to a new tree by grafting so they were filled with new life and rendered sweet and full of delight.

The new education brought happiness into the schoolroom. Under the old régime happiness was too often excluded, and a school was considered good in proportion to the rigidity with which the exclusion was carried out. The teachers of the present day strive to render going to school as joyous as is consistent with the aim of laying the foundation for still greater happiness in later life. It is this endeavor which most distinguishes them from their predecessors in the old school.

Parker found the teacher's life spent among the superficialities and machinery of traditional routine, with never a dream that beneath all the work done at school there was something divine that must be emancipated and brought to light and activity. By intensity rather than logical strength he effected a change which made the living child the centre of solicitude at school, or, more correctly speaking, which abandoned the teaching of the three R's for the teaching of children. School work was lifted from a logical basis up to a psychological and sociological plane.

Others had theorized and talked and written about the mission of the teacher. Colonel Parker acted. He saw the text-book standing between the teacher and the pupil like a wall, and he removed the partition. Some people called this fanaticism and what not. But the immediate effect was that, left without the support which the text-book afforded, the teacher was compelled to develop ingenuity and teaching skill. Gradually the true place of the text-book began to be somewhat understood; and, though its power in the schools is still disproportionately large, it is as nothing when compared with what it was in the old school. The substitution of teacher for text-book was an achievement of the reform endeavors of Colonel Parker. Without this step teaching would never have been raised to a plane commanding the respect of thoughtful

people. Thus teachers have to thank Colonel Parker a great deal for having rendered their office one worthy of the best work of the best men and women.

Naturally the improvement of the teacher could not be effected without making enemies. Incapable of insincerity and of cowardly half-and-half procedure — protective cloaks so popular with his detractors — he took a bold stand by insisting that the schools are for the children, and that the best interests of the children must be paramount. So important did he regard the training of teachers for their life of service for childhood, that he spent his whole strength as a teacher in exemplifying how it should be done. Under his principalship the Cook County normal school was the most stimulating institution for the training of teachers to be found anywhere in this country. There was an all-pervasive atmosphere of enthusiasm for everything that concerned increase of the happiness of children. There was developed desire, if not ability, to search for the laws of life in all its manifestations, and the graduates of the school regarded teaching as the greatest work upon which mortal man can enter. It took more than the ordinary amount of political chicanery and other school troubles to discourage them and rob them of their enthusiasm for teaching.

Parker's love of children was the source of all his demands upon the teacher and upon the school. He had no patience with the teacher who considered it his business merely to get children to read, write, and cipher, and to transmit the facts embalmed between the covers of text-books. Parker wanted the school to be the generating station of life, abundant life, hence the high ideal he set up for the teacher.

OSSIAN H. LANG.

## EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH.

THE purpose of the Department of Educational Research will be to aid in the development of definite ideas in regard to what the elementary schools can and should do, and the best means of doing what they set out to accomplish.

Although many of the problems concerned in elementary education have confronted the world for centuries, and many great thinkers and practical educators have endeavored to aid in their solution, the entire field is still involved in uncertainty and indefiniteness. We have opinions innumerable, but no facts are at hand in support of our opinions. Educators are divided into creeds; and while the members of the same creed are frequently in harmony with one another, and sometimes form a mutual admiration society, there is not a single point on which the different creeds themselves agree.

It may be said, therefore, without any exaggeration, that up to the present time the science of pedagogy has been in its entirety a structure based on no stronger foundation than one of opinions. In this regard pedagogy represents a remarkably anomalous condition; for, as the department that points the way to the development of the sciences, it has itself failed to adopt what it has long been recommending to other scientific pursuits, namely, the inductive method of study. Its works consist of opinions, of reviews of opinions, and of opinions based on opinions, and therefore of a mass of contradictory material; and no really sustained forward movement may be expected until the conflicting views are subjected to analysis in the light of clear and unmistakable facts. And the aim of this department of THE FORUM will be to get at such facts as may be obtained. It will endeavor to limit its duties to the publication of facts, the analysis of facts, suggestive opinions based on facts, and suggestions of new ways of getting at the facts.

In view of the circumstance that during its long period of existence pedagogy has established no facts, that side by side with it, in other fields, facts have multiplied and developed into sciences, it is perfectly legitimate to ask whether pedagogy will admit of purely scientific treat-