The Lincoln School

THERE is a great deal more talk about modern education in these days than there is explanation of it. Educational journals are so pedagogic and educational enthusiasts so windy and abstract, that victims of a system which is not modern do not find themselves much enlightened. Though all so-called progressive schools herald their methods as the new education, these methods differ most radically from one another, and increase the confusion of a puzzled public which is inclined to class them all as freak anyway. Yet in spite of their contradictions, the progressive schools have one point in common—they have all abandoned the old system. They have all abandoned it in the same practical, humanitarian spirit, and turned away from the system to the child. By different methods they are trying to fit themselves to his need, instead of cramming him into their conventional mould, to cut out by sympathy and reason the educational waste of tradition. What must finally be the best means toward this end it will be hard to tell for a number of years, if indeed it ever becomes necessary for education to be perfectly uniform. In the meantime the only way to understand specifically what the new education means is to study the progressive schools, one by one.

The Lincoln School of Teachers College is the most propitious to begin with, I think, because it was founded with an idea of discovering rather than practising a method. It was endowed by the General Education Board to give progressive teachers the time and freedom they need to build the new education on scientific ground. It is an experiment of which the materials are a secure endowment, a carefully equipped building and four hundred boys and girls, whom scholarships and race and class quotas prevent from being a highly selected group. With these materials are working fifty men and women of high ideals and Missouri minds.

The Lincoln School is thus a scientific school. Education may be only a science-by-courtesy, but in no branch of pure chemistry is the scientific spirit, the reasonable, experimental attitude more essential. The purpose of the experiment is useful education. This means education which fits the child for life, which opens wide his capacities for usefulness and joy. The procedure of the experiment is to find out what the child needs to know for this purpose, and when and how to teach it to him. The aim, as well as the method, have a utilitarian, uncultured sound, for "use" is little associated with what is learned at school, and science, which is reason, with the stronghold of dogmatism. They imply something like vocational training, or the exclusive use of Binet tests. But a day in the Lincoln School is enough to dispel such unpalatable preconceptions.

The first characteristic event I ever witnessed at the school was a meeting of the elementary school council. As I entered, the sixth grade pupil chairman, with grave expedition, was disposing of the old business, which concerned a polite but urgent letter to the office requesting umbrella racks, and a report that "much to the regret of the council, the behavior on the bus has not been good. We hope to hear better news next week." New business followed.

"Has the first grade anything to report?" A yellow dutch-cut rose tentatively above the horizon of chair back. The first grade wished, in a husky little voice, to report many class activities. They were: making butter, finding out how plants scatter their seeds, learning to read and write, taking care of a rabbit.

Other class activities were discussed, committees made their reports, the meeting was adjourned. It was all done with frank attention and no embarrassment. None of the members was over eleven years old. I wondered.

A visitor to the Lincoln School stood once in confusion of sawing, sewing, pounding, painting infants.

"How ever can you do so much?" she asked of the nearest child, who sat painting spots on a cow whose barn was in thunderous construction nearby.

"You see," came the grave reply, "we do only one thing at a time."

The shortest cut to the Lincoln School idea is, I believe, through the library. In the large bright room there is a day-long rustle, the audible sign of young minds beginning to work. Third graders come with a sense of importance to take out Celtic Fairy Tales or Zodiac Town or The Little Lame Prince. Seventh grade geographers dig among manuals and year books for topical information on trade routes or city locations. Girls from the ninth grade art class pore over prints of Renaissance costume, while nonchalant students of the senior high school prepare their chemistry bibliographies or hunt down their history topics with unconscious speed.

This, then, is what science and use mean in a school. In the council, the classroom, the library, they mean vivid life and competent unlagging activity. Strict order there is not, but the confusion is purposeful, not wanton; it is a better sign of willing attention than any amount of rigid discipline. Yet at first it is hard to see the guiding method behind this cheerful diligence, the rules by which the experiment is being carried out. The philosophy of the school is very comprehensive, yet out of it can be drawn four cardinal points, four attitudes or assumptions which are, I think, its guiding prin-

ciples. The first is this:—Nothing has educational value which is not immediately important to the child—that is, unless he learns a thing because it is intrinsically interesting to him, or serves what seems to him an important end, it does not merge into his permanent usable experience. The second:—since there is no compartmenting in life, the school that trains for life must make as few artificial barriers between subjects as possible. Nothing learned in one connection should be forgotten in another because it appears out of its first setting. The interrelations of things must be strengthened, not cut. That is why children at the Lincoln School do only one thing at a time. The third is in a way like the second:—education through all the senses is richer and more permanent than education by eye and ear alone. By *doing* children learn more quickly and more usefully than by merely being told. And lastly, actual freedom and responsibility, actual group-life and coöperation, are the only sound training for making self-controlled, responsible, public-spirited citizens of a democratic country.

Bacon said, "Studies themselves do give forth directions too much at large, except they be bounded by experience." The four golden principles of Lincoln curricular reform are aimed at "directions too much at large." They cut down the waste of dessicated, abstract studies, which hang in the child's mind on the end of a mnemonic string until after his examinations; they give vitality and purpose to every aspect of the school, so that no effort is unfruitful in the child's experience. Their application is simply a form of economy.

The result of this economy is something more than quicker and more accurate learning. Take, for example, the elementary grades. In ordinary schools the end of all endeavor for the first six grades is a certain amount of skill in reading, writing, spelling and arithmetic. These minimum requirements are concentrated upon with single-minded energy. There is drill and more drill, and busy manipulation of abstract symbols. Besides the skills a certain number of dates are connected with incidents from history, and pushed, with the capitals and products of the world, into unwilling memories. This is waste. The Lincoln School cuts down the waste, not by more energetic concentration on the essential skills, but by looking beyond them to a broader purpose. The minimum requirements become not an end but a means. What the elementary grades give besides the skills is an attitude, an idea that the world is full of a number of things worth finding out about, a background of vivid sensation and sound social discipline. Mastery of the mechanical skills is carried in this broader aim, complementing and exploiting it. One of the first three grades, which are concerned chiefly with the world close about, may build a toy city, for instance, with docks and stores and fire engines, or a farm with fauna all complete. It does not matter which. What does matter is that working together they make something they feel is eminently worth while, something that they can see and hear and feel—and even taste and smell if possible. Then if they read or write about this thing their chances of putting willing effort into the task are very good. And willing effort is the secret of quick learning and long retention. If they add columns of figures which represent their lunch expenditures for the week, or make change with real money for deposit in the school bank, they learn to add more quickly than if they drilled only on dessicated examples out of a book. If they write a letter to a lady to thank her for giving them a torpedo fish to keep, they pay more attention to their orthography than if they simply copied "the fox jumps over the lazy dog" twelve times for their teacher. By engaging in activities rather than drill, they learn to draw on the whole uncompartmented resource of their experience. The creative music pupils decorate their drums with designs worked out in fine arts. A play written to illustrate an incident in history must be in good English, accurately spelled and punctuated, clearly spoken, the costumes neatly sewn and harmoniously colored, the program correctly set up and printed. A class studying food must work coöperatively, touching on geography, history, economics, bacteriology, civics, arithmetic, household arts. It must use maps and charts, read rapidly and selectively in reference books, conduct experiments, make excursions, give oral and written reports. At the end of the sixth grade the Lincoln School children not only know reading and writing and arithmetic, they know how to use and enjoy them.

Besides this kind of economy, based on the characteristic principles of the school, there is another which is aimed at the mechanical processes of learning which cannot be avoided. For of course interest can never entirely supplant drill. There must always be a certain amount of exercise and repetition, especially in learning the skills. But instead of prescribing an arbitrary amount, or overdrilling backward pupils, the Lincoln School tries to determine how much is useful, how much ineffectual. Special investigations of the way children learn have entirely changed the way of teaching reading, for instance. Instead of memorizing their alphabets first, the children begin with whole words, which they learn to recognize before they break them up into their component letters. By diagnosing backwardness in reading and spelling, another special investigator has cured children whom no amount of ordinary drill could help. Research of this sort, by clarifying the laws of learning in special fields, makes it more and more possible for teachers to know what they are doing, less bearable for them to wear away their patience and their pupil's interest by unintelligent drill.

School windows too often open on a forbidding prospect of college walls, with no view of the busy street and the open country. Consequently all the attention of the high school is fixed upon requirements for examination,—on what the children "will be expected to know." Preparation for life is overlooked in the busy preparation for college. The Lincoln School reverses this. The same *inclusion* of essentials in a broader aim is true of the high school as of the elementary grades, and it is, in the same way, a matter of economy. By teaching what is useful in a vital way, the school expects to attain greater accuracy and more intelligence in examinations than the conventional prep-school. For this end the junior high school is made a sort of shelter against inclement college requirements, a place where girls and boys of twelve to fifteen find out what living on the planet earth in the twentieth century involves, and what in the variety of human occupations they are most fitted for. They study English, mathematics, general science, social science, and a modern language, because all these things are indispensable to a modern man or woman. Latin and Greek, always the heritage of the few, are pushed out of a curriculum which is to enrich living for the many. They also have training in art, music and physical education, and in household or industrial arts. With this broad background they enter the senior high school, ready to attack advanced and specialized courses with the capability of mature students. They are fitted to study subjects, not merely to rehearse for examinations.

To take a subject like English or mathematics, and break it up, examine it, and make it over to fit exactly the needs and interests of most children is on a small scale as much of a task as reorganizing the whole school. The revision of every course in the curriculum is thus in itself an adventurous experiment. I do not mean that it is incautious,—for the Lincoln School treads carefully, if fearlessly, on strange ground,—I mean that the courses which emerge from the experiment are new and marvellously interesting. Out of the experimental combination of geography, history and civics, for instance, has been evolved a social science course which gives the essentials of all three in one reasonable articulated study. After a careful survey of all the possible materials for this course, and long deliberation over their arrangement, the first curriculum was drawn up and taught from mimeographed texts, which were revised each year for three years. Then in 1922-1923 the texts were published in pamphlet form and sent out to more than a hundred coöperating teachers, who used them and reported their criticisms. On the basis of these criticisms they were revised again, and sent out for a second trial this year. By continued research and ex-groups studying the old system, the Lincoln experimentors are making still further efforts to perfect their arrangement. When the work is finished, they will have the experience of other practised teachers besides their own to prove the success of the Lincoln method of teaching the most important body of information which young citizens can learn.

The content of the course is not linear but three dimensional. It does not artificially disentangle history, geography, and civics, but deals with topics into which enter all three at once. The first seventh grade pamphlet is called Town and City Life, beginning, that is, with the immediate environment of the child, with the plan of his town, the housing, public health, food and water supply, the schools, recreation, press, population, etc. The study is carried on as a survey, for which the class organizes into a group with chairman and officers. Then, as it is necessary to have a civic laboratory, they draw up bibliographies on towns and cities, write to civic organizations for bulletins and literature, start scrap-books of newspaper clippings, and keep bulletin boards and current magazines in the classroom. By the end of the course, they have prepared enough material in maps and plans and graphs to give a community exhibit of conditions in their city. The next pamphlet deals with key industries in a modern nation, the next with the interdependence of communities and nations, the last (for the seventh grade) with a discussion of the American people, the races and nationalities which make it up, and how they settled the American continent. The newspaper will never be a bore or an effort for children who study thus the problems of their world. They will not have to grope for the unrelated facts they learned in school, for they are taught their facts in the way they need to know them, and in a way that lets them understand their interest and importance. Here is a course without any "directions too much at large."

This is only one of many similar experiments. The method is in every case as careful and as broadly conceived. In science and mathematics, where more definition is possible, it is very exact indeed. But the Lincoln School does not limit its economy to the revamping of courses. Education is too many-sided for that. It may be true that interest is the most profitable factor in learning, but it does not follow that compulsion is not sometimes necessary, and the Lincoln School does not carry the interest doctrine so far that its pupils learn nothing they do not want to. It may be true that there is an unpredictable element in every human being which makes individual attention necessary, but it does not follow that there are not some broad laws of general development which it is valuable to know. In one room of the Lincoln School, therefore, like a court astrologer in his tower, sits the school psychologist surrounded by her mystic data,—tested records of the mentality and achievement of each of the four hundred pupils, files of parents'

and teachers' estimates of their initiative, leadership, industry and other personal characteristics. These records not only shed light for the most enlightened teacher, they establish consistent data for the science of applied psychology. Since "there is no education but life" the extra curriculum activities of the Lincoln School are not really extra curriculum at all. Councils, committees, assemblies, game-clubs, social dances, scouts, publications,—all these things have their purpose in the broad apprenticeship which the children serve, all are understood in this relation by the staff. Even the school building with its carefully planned equipment might be said to have a place in the curriculum. Of course, parents cannot be left out of education. One Monday morning I attended a parents' study class where fifty mothers discussed with heat theories of hereditary and environmental limitation. These classes extend the usefulness of the school, by training parents to classify and to interpret what they observe in their children. Other meetings are held under the Teachers'-Parents' Association for open discussion of such topics as "the purpose of homework and methods of doing it," "psychological tests," etc.; and the school receives a double benefit of confidence and criticism. Even visitors are not neglected as a source of suggestion. Recognition of complexity, systematic open-minded attention to every element in the complex—that is reasonable education. It is rich and well-rounded because it is economical.

Though the Lincoln School is not the only progressive school in the country it is the only one which looks beyond itself to the whole field of education. Its experiments are submitted to the educational world just as findings of any scientific laboratory belong to science. It is, in fact, just such a laboratory. And though its work is only beginning, it has already paved a solid path toward the ideal that "There is no education but life," the ideal, we must believe, of the new education.

ELIZABETH VINCENT.

Armenians and the Lausanne Treaty

IT is difficult to write with patience or tolerance of the attempt being made to prevent ratification of the treaty negotiated with Turkey at Lausanne and to stir up anti-Turkish feeling generally. I am referring to the campaign inaugurated by the committee headed by Mr. James W. Gerard, a committee of distinguished men of whom the most charitable that can be said is that they do not understand what they are doing. More is at stake than the ratification of a treaty, much more; and to one who has been recently in the Near East and learned how inflammable is the situation there it is appalling to see the irresponsibility with which men who should know better fling sulphurous words about.

The main objections advanced against the treaty are that it abandons the right of extra-territoriality for Americans living in Turkey and that it fails to secure independence for the Armenians. As for extra-territoriality, that has been yielded by every other country in the world, including those which have more at stake than America. They have yielded it because the alternative was to impose it by force. They tried that and failed. They accepted the inevitable then and made peace without extra-territoriality. The same alternatives are open to America: fight or renew relations without extra-territoriality. Mere repudiation of the treaty will not get it for us.

More important, however, is the Armenian question. It is on this point the opponents of ratification are making their most perfervid attacks. I am not concerned here with the deserts of the Armenians, with their sufferings or the validity of their claim to independence. That is not at issue. What alone is pertinent now is that the Turks have won. The Treaty of Sèvres did provide a "home" for the Armenians, but the Turks by force of arms have torn up that treaty. Now the situation in short is that the Turks are four or five million and the Armenians less than one-eighth as many, including the refugees and those still in Turkey. The Turks are well armed, the Armenians altogether without arms. The Turks will not give the Armenians independence and it is a physical impossibility for the Armenians to win it by their own efforts.

If we want an independent Armenia, if we conceive our so-called pledges as binding us to bring it about, we cannot do so by any action we take on the treaty. That will not affect the position of the Armenians by a jot. It will leave them just as they are. If we want an independent Armenia we can get it in only one way. We can send 500,000 American troops to wipe out the Turkish army and then keep as many more there for years to police Asia Minor. Nothing else in the world will give the Armenians independence. On that one question the Turks will fight to extermination. Whether right or wrong, such is the fact. Anybody who has been in Turkey and talked to Turks of every degree from the hamal on the docks to the most liberal professor will agree that this is true, regardless of his own feelings about the Armenians. We can either fight or forget Armenian independence. Whether we like it or not, that is the choice. To refuse to ratify the Lausanne Treaty because