

He would have mathematics through spherical trigonometry, the physics and the chemistry which are taught in college, metallurgy, and English.

Public trade schools that stood for something real and turned out experts—not cheap help—would draw from the present high schools those whose taste does not incline them to a higher cultural life or whose means are such that each step must be a distinct preparation for a wage-earner, and the high schools could immediately cease to cater to incompetence or laziness and could strengthen their teaching. The purpose of education would be equally served, only in different ways, in both schools. In the trade school the child will necessarily see the reason for each step of his progress; he is adding completed room after completed room to his mental house as he needs it. In the high school he is digging a deep foundation for a structure he cannot see and may not have planned. What he does he must do on faith for a time. That is

why so many high school pupils at present lose interest and refuse to work. "They are from Missouri." They wish to be shown.

I imagine that both trade school and high school plus college would achieve the same result intellectually and culturally. Certainly the trade school would not suffer in comparison from the intellectual standpoint. They would deal with the same quality of minds, albeit of different types.

The restless period in educational ideals and purposes will pass just as it will pass in political life. Eventually the radical element will become conservative for a time. How long that time will be in school affairs will depend upon school executives rather than teachers. Teachers can be trusted as a rule to be strict and to be thorough. Executives can be trusted to listen to the applause of the gallery and to worship at the shrine of some new *ism*. That sounds brutal, but our present method of popular government and con-

stant change does not create strong backbones. It weakens them. And what shall it profit a school superintendent to have a strong backbone and no job, especially when he has given hostages to fortune in the shape of wife and children? So he yields to the Bolshevik pressure and waxes enthusiastic over each new fad, and, if he be astute, places the psychology of his community before the needs of his pupils. A long term for both superintendent and board of education would create independence and be the means of achieving results.

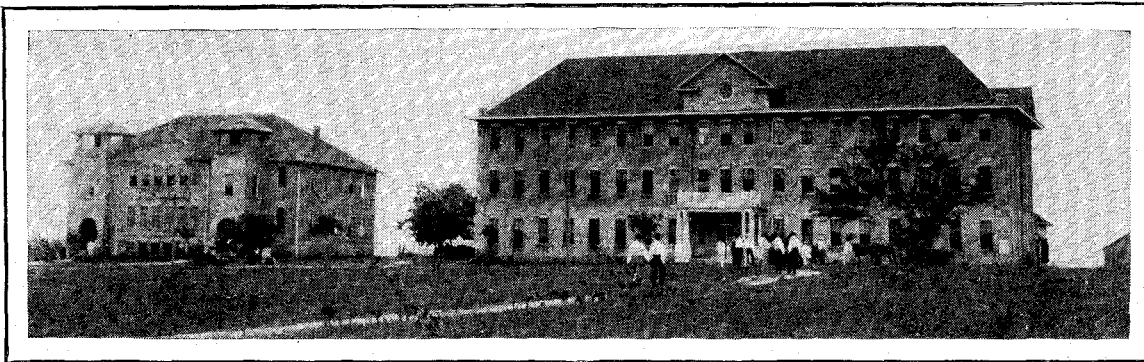
Just as we must modify some of our ideas in political life in order to have extended and well-thought-out plans of economical government and international relations, so we must modify some of our notions of elections in educational matters if we would look far in the future for results that will stand common-sense tests. We ourselves are Bolsheviks in spirit unless for our children as well as for our neighbors' children we insist upon thoroughness.

PEARL RIVER

AN EDUCATIONAL IDEA IN ACTION

BY WALLACE BUTTRICK

PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL EDUCATION BOARD



ONE OF THE HOMES OF THE PEARL RIVER IDEA

This is the Pearl River County Agricultural High School, at Poplarville, Mississippi. The boys' residence is at the right; the school building, at the left. The girls' residence is not shown in this picture

ONE of the living educational questions of the present day is how to provide good schools for people who live in the open country. Instead of discussing this in a theoretical way, let us tell the story of how one county did the job.

Pearl River County, Mississippi, is about forty miles from the Gulf of Mexico on the border of Louisiana. The population is made up almost exclusively of small farmers. The county is 38 miles long and 28 miles wide. Its population in 1910 was 10,593. The largest town, Poplarville, had 1,272 people. The New Orleans and Northeastern Railway crosses the county from southwest to northeast.

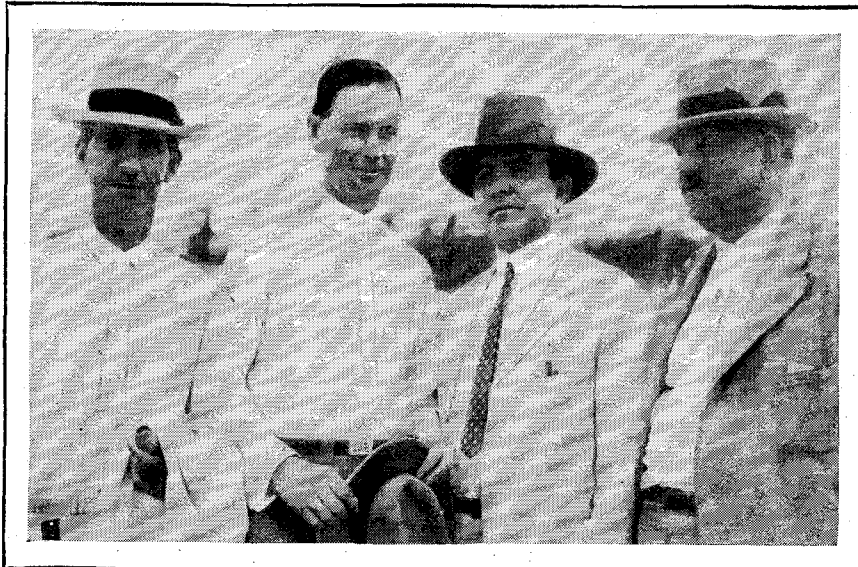
In 1911 there were 86 one-room school-houses in the county. At present there are 23 consolidated schools with fine buildings—15 frame, 6 brick, 2 concrete.

There are 9 homes for teachers and new ones in process; there are 10 special Home Science buildings, with new ones in process; there is a full supply of wagons for the transportation of pupils. At every school there are ample playgrounds with equipment for basket-ball, baseball, football, etc. On visiting the schools, I found the utmost enthusiasm on the part of the pupils, with a sort of joy that was not less than pathetic, as they told me of the contrast between the dullness of the old days and the joy of the new.

The county organization consists of a County Superintendent of Education, a County School Supervisor and Secretary, a County Health Officer, a County Farm Demonstrator, a County Home Science Superintendent and Secretary. A Summer Folk School is maintained which a large number of adult persons

attend, with special classes for teachers and for boys and girls.

There is a County Agricultural High School located at Poplarville. It has three substantial brick buildings, a residence for girls, a residence for boys, and a commodious, well-equipped school building. There is a farm of seventy-two acres with a barn, a cow stable, a piggery, a hennery, corn houses, etc. The farm is cultivated by the boys, all of whom must work a certain number of hours a week; all may work more hours and receive pay for the extra time. The domestic phases of the work are done by the girls, all of whom are required to do a certain amount of work and may do extra work for pay. The farm is cultivated at a profit. It furnishes the school with all its vegetables, milk, eggs, and meat. The girls put up large quantities of vegetables and fruits



LEADING ADMINISTRATORS OF THE PEARL RIVER IDEA

From left to right: Professor Jacobs, the Principal of the Agricultural High School; Leopold Locke, Superintendent of Schools; Dr. W. S. Leathers, Health Commissioner; H. L. Whitfield, President of the Columbus Normal School. These rural leaders of rural education are putting into action a declaration of independence of inappropriate city traditions

in cans, which serve the dining-room during the winter. Winter gardens are also maintained, so that the students have fresh vegetables the year around.

Pupils who graduate from the consolidated schools come to the County Agricultural High School. Some of the consolidated schools add one or two years of high school work, but the main high school work of the county is done by the County Agricultural High School, at Poplarville.

This school functions throughout the entire county because the special officers above enumerated make their headquarters at this school and their work radiates from it. Mr. Jacobs, the principal of the Agricultural High School, knows the whole county, as indeed do all of the teachers, for they visit the consolidated schools, co-operate in their work, and become acquainted with the people through community schools,

which are held from time to time and which are attended in large numbers by the parents.

I visited some of these schools one day and spent some hours at the County Agricultural High School. There I met a woman who was teacher of the domestic arts. She told me of the beginnings of her work. She came to her task after graduation from the excellent State College for Women at Columbus and after a year's work at Teachers College in New York. On arrival, she asked herself: "What good will it do the people of this county if I simply teach here at this school the things which I have learned at the two excellent institutions where I got my own training? I must first know Pearl River County." She then secured a leave of absence in order that she might live in the county, boarding around for some months. She thus became acquainted with the people and

learned the exact condition of domestic arts in the county. Among other things, she learned that there was great infant mortality, that people who were ill suffered more from the discomforts of the sick-room than from the disease, that wells were ill located, that food was limited in variety and not always cooked in such a way as to conduce to good health. By going about she gained the confidence of the people, the most difficult thing being that of convincing mothers that she could teach them anything about the care of babies. Finally, she found a mother ill of tuberculosis with a young babe in her arms. After caring for the mother, screening the windows, showing how to protect the family against infection, providing a better bed, and prescribing a diet, she said, "May I have the baby?" And the mother with great joy gave her babe into her care. She brought this child to school, where she taught her class of forty girls how to wash and dress the



EXERCISING THE PEARL RIVER EDUCATIONAL IDEA IN JUDGING POULTRY



A HOME SCIENCE BUILDING IN THE OPEN COUNTRY

This building, at Derby, Mississippi, is one of ten such special Home Science Buildings in Pearl River County

baby, how to prepare its food, how to care for its little ailments, and how to love it. The thing was spectacular and attracted attention all over the county, for the baby became strong and lusty. On Saturday afternoons mothers came from all over the county for counsel and advice. The teacher, knowing her own limitations, secured on certain Saturday afternoons the presence of a trained child doctor who conducted at Poplarville a clinic for mothers and babies. As a result of the success of this venture, the advice of this teacher and of other teachers regarding rural life was sought by people throughout the county, so that, as the State Superintendent says, "the school is more and more becoming a laboratory for solving all community problems."

A hospital bed was set up at the school and the girls were taught how to make a bed with the patient in it, how to assist in the offices of nature, how to prepare and serve food for invalids, and

in general how to make a sick person comfortable. As a result, many such beds have been set up in the county, so that when a person is ill a properly sterilized hospital bed can be brought to the house for the care and comfort of the patient.

The farm demonstration work with the work of the boys' and girls' clubs is all hooked up with these consolidated schools and the County Agricultural High School. The same is true of the work of the County Health Officer, who later came to promote good health in the county, and of the County Superintendent of Home Science, who still later was brought into the field.

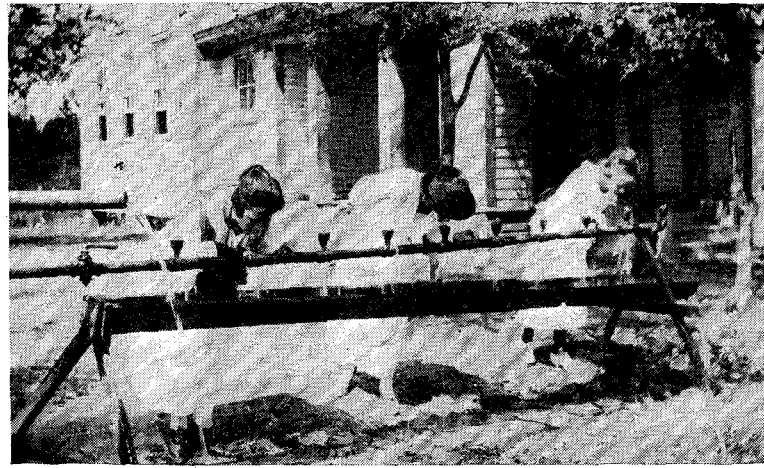
It should be noted that all of this has been done by the people themselves, with only very little initial monetary assistance from without. The State Superintendent, the State High School Agent, and the State Rural School Agent co-operated with the county offi-



This corn bears not only ears, but also the Pearl River Educational Idea besides. The boy is a member of the Corn Club and is proud of his "demonstration acre." Some fathers are opposed to the schools until their children bring them around in this way. And when the Pearl River Educational Idea sprouts it grows

cials and with the people in order to bring about this splendid condition of things.

Just how was this done? First of all, there was a survey of the county, so that consolidated schoolhouses might be located in such a way as to benefit the largest number. One of the faults in consolidation in many places is that a few favorable districts get together, leaving those that are left out in worse state than before. This was followed by an attempt to secure consolidation in one of these districts. There were five annual elections before the first was consolidated. After that had been accomplished and the success of the enterprise demonstrated, others rapidly fell in line



THE PEARL RIVER IDEA INCLUDES RURAL HYGIENE

A sanitary drinking fountain at the Buck Branch Consolidated School—one of the twenty-three Consolidated Schools of the county

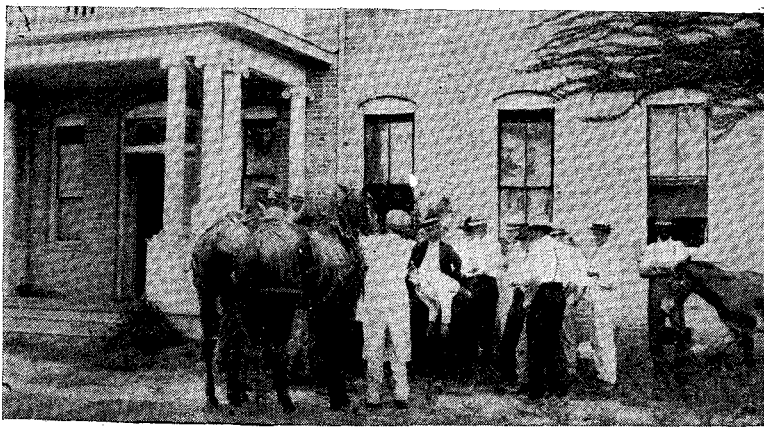
so than in four years more, instead of 86 one-room schoolhouses, there were 23 consolidated schools.

This demonstration has had a widespread influence throughout the State, so that forty other counties have accomplished substantially the same thing with consolidated schools, county agricultural high schools, etc. It will be noted that the beginning was small. The officers of the State did not attempt to cover the whole State in their first campaign. They selected one county, with the since justified expectation that a job well done there would rapidly influence the rest of the State to do the same.

Pearl River County has a lesson to teach which even the Great Empire State could afford to learn. In the New York "Times" of August 1, 1921, it is stated that there are 8,600 single-room schools in New York State, in 3,018 of which there are less than ten pupils each. The State Department of Education has long been interested in this matter, but it has been impossible so to change the laws of the State as to make consolidation possible. An act was once passed, but the next year it was repealed.

What is needed is a campaign of agitation on this question and a careful study and report on certain selected territorial units. It is idle to pass legislation which puts the power of consolidation in the hands of officials. People resent that. The people themselves must do this thing. An enabling act would seem to be the first step, to be followed by the selection of one territorial unit where the people themselves would decide upon consolidation. This would serve as a demonstration which, when successful, others would copy.

It seems a pity that New York State does not have the county unit in educational administration, with county superintendents, county supervising teachers, and county supervisors of special subjects, such as home-making, agriculture, public health and hygiene, play and games, etc. Nothing can be less interesting to child and teacher than a school of ten pupils, and one of twenty is but little less bad. The work of the special committee referred to in the "Times" editorial should attract widespread interest, for it is the first sign of hope for the children who live in the open country of New York State.



A VETERINARY CLINIC AT THE FOLK SUMMER SCHOOL, PEARL RIVER COUNTY

At this Folk School adults attend. There are special classes for teachers, and for boys and girls. This veterinary clinic is conducted by Dr. Ranek, of the Mississippi Agricultural and Mechanical College

THE BOOK TABLE

CREATIVE ART IN FICTION

WHEN we see a portrait by Sargent, we know that he is trying to do something more than to make a likeness or to prove that his technique is marvelous. When we see a landscape by Inness or Rousseau, we know that it is not merely a pretty picture. In both cases there is a conscious effort of art to make a definite impression—in the first case, of the character behind the face; in the second, of a mood of nature, placid or terrible. So in fiction, the best work is neither done altogether in the spirit of art for art's sake nor in the sole aim of pleasing, but with the intent of producing a clear and deep-lying impression of human nature. The old rules of the unities of the drama—time, place, and plot—have given way to the single unity of art purpose. The novelist may be discursive or he may be dramatic and compressed; he may revel in humor or be stern and saturnine; he may follow his bent as to sub-plot, incident, and minor characters; he may seek his material in life's refuse heaps or in the glories of the imagination. It is all one, if only he has truly created; if he has used fiction just as the painter and the dramatist of genius have done from time immemorial.

This is why some novels that are not remarkably entertaining or emotional or exciting stay in one's mind hauntingly—why "John Inglesant," say, or "Anna Karénina" or "Tess of the D'Urbervilles" or "Peter Ibbetson" recur in thought years after stories that at first reading seemed tremendously exciting are dim. There has been the right combination of art purpose and art production—the unity of creative design.

Three new books—American, English, and Norwegian, respectively—have just

this singleness of art purpose; not moral purpose, if you please, for the authors are not trying to teach, but to create. They are not monumentally great books, but they are acutely seen etchings. Their definitely conceived characters move under specially chosen environments and respond in just the inevitable way that fits the pressure of fate and environment.

With such a book it is folly to ask, What is the moral? The author would reply: The moral be hanged; I have not made angels as Milton did, nor monsters as Frankenstein did; I have made men and women, and they have acted as they had to act. I am satisfied; I am an artist of the pen, not a preacher; I am a realist, not a materialist. But he admits, or should admit, that there is reality of feeling and imagination as well as reality in sordidness.

In Mr. Booth Tarkington's "Alice Adams"¹ one must not jump from the title to a conclusion that Alice is the one person of interest. It is true that action and situation center about her, but there are at least three characters that come out more clearly—her mother, fanatically, remorselessly, and consciencelessly driven by the desire that Alice should have social opportunities; her father, weak and unambitious, a business failure, led into wrong and mean actions by his wife's insistence; and his employer, hard as nails when an attempt is made to get the best of him, but kindly and generous when he has smashed the father's foolish attempt to get rich unfairly. Alice herself is a bit too glib and facile in her attempts to pose as a society girl when every one knows that she is barely hanging on to the edge of things.

What Mr. Tarkington has done in this story with admirable skill is to offer a closely wrought study of one phase of small-town life, thus making a companion piece to his "The Magnificent Ambersons." Here the town and neighborhood have grown away from the Adams family. Other families have prospered; the boys and girls with whom Alice and her brother used to play have gone to college, belong to country clubs, give entertainments, meet cultured and attractive friends; the Adams family has the income it had years ago, its domestic atmosphere is old-fashioned, the parents are ignorant and crude, the children are barely tolerated or patronized. So the Adams boy becomes a "tough guy" and is proud of it, while Alice makes a bold struggle for a fine marriage only to meet humiliating failure and to join (cheerfully, one is glad to add) the ranks of the workers; and the mother opens a boarding-house.

There is something of the grim and tragic about the little family thus

dropped out of their town's prosperity. The book is by no means as amusing as many of the author's other stories. But it is decidedly a clear-cut depiction of a phase of American life; it creates a natural and moving situation, and its characters are all alive.

Mr. Swinnerton in his "Coquette"² has fulfilled the promise of his "Nocturne." In a remote way there is a resemblance between his Sally and Mr. Tarkington's Alice, for both are struggling against odds to get what they want. Sally is a little brat in London's East End. Her drunken father is killed, her mother is weak and foolish, but Sally fends for herself. She is totally selfish. She is out for money and what it will bring. Up to a certain point her cleverness carries her, but, audacious as she is, her power to succeed collapses when she tries to retain her passion for the typical London stolid brute whose mistress she has become and at the same time be the wife of a weakling son of the dress-maker who employs her. Violence, despair, and death end the impossible situation.

As is evident, "Coquette" is not a pleasant story; its realism is repellent and at times almost intolerable. What, then, makes it in the practically unanimous opinion of English and American reviewers an extraordinary novel? It is simply the vitality and actuality of Sally. As one reviewer says, Sally "is not studied with a cold, omniscient wisdom, as a bug under a glass, but as *the person* that she felt herself to be and as the person that the novelist thought her to be." In other words, she is a created thing, not a dummy or type. She is as much alive as Thackeray's Becky Sharp. Dickens never drew London characters more distinct than

² Coquette. By Frank Swinnerton. The George H. Doran Company, New York. \$1.90.



Courtesy of George H. Doran Company
FRANK SWINNERTON



(C) Marceau
BOOTH TARKINGTON

¹ Alice Adams. By Booth Tarkington. Doubleday, Page & Co., New York. \$1.75.