

# THE GARY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

By Randolph S. Bourne

## INTRODUCTORY NOTE BY WILLIAM WIRT

Director of the Gary Schools



PUBLIC-SCHOOL ideals have changed during the past ten years. This change has been sudden and, in a sense, surprising. Many educational leaders, who as radical progressives were instrumental in promoting the new view-point, are now considered conservatives because they are not able at once to realize completely these new ideals of the school. For a long time the doctrine has been preached that the school should train the heart and the hand as well as the head, that the school should develop industrial efficiency as well as scholarship, that the school should teach the art of right living as well as arithmetic, reading, and writing. But when the public has at last been converted and demands that the whole child be sent to school, and that the needs of all the children be met, the school is overwhelmed with its responsibility. The traditional school organization and equipment are found to be inadequate.

The first business of the school is to get the child into a condition to be taught what the school has to teach: the child must have good health, intelligence, reliability, and industry in order to succeed either in the school or out of the school. He must have real life experiences to supplement the book study, and must have a chance to use the knowledge gained from books not only to master the knowledge but also to understand why he should study the books. The traditional school, with children strapped to fixed school seats for nine hundred hours a year, and loafing in the streets three hours for one spent in school, is not prepared to develop good health, intelligence, industry, or reliability. The public and the teachers now see that the tremendous current of energy expended for the education of the city child is being short-circuited through the wasted life of the city street. The principal reason for the great change in the ideals of the school to-day is that our city thought is now being dominated by men and women who

were themselves city boys and girls and understand their needs and handicaps. They know that the average city home cannot provide a sufficient quantity of wholesome activity at work and play any more than it can provide adequate opportunities for study and academic instruction.

It was the industrial training of children in the home and small shop that made children of the past generation reliable, industrious, physically strong, and contributed much to their general intelligence. The school plus the home and the small shop educated the child. To-day the small shop has been eliminated and the home has lost many of its former opportunities. A much greater part of the education of the child must be assumed by the school of the present generation. It is true we have in the schools a little manual training and are now talking about prevocational and vocational training. But the school still considers the problem entirely from the standpoint of how to do a little of the industrial training with the least disturbance to the traditional programme. What we really need is a complete reorganization of the entire elementary-school system to meet changed social and industrial conditions. Patchwork will not do, and, besides, it is expensive. The school must do what the school, home, and small shop formerly did together.

I am in favor of an elementary-school system that really trains all of its children, and educates the whole child, while it keeps him in school until sixteen years of age. We desire a public institution that will be a study, work, and play school. We want the school to continue to develop culture and scholarship. We believe that when the wasted time of the street is used for wholesome work and play, supplementing the study hours, the school will be more successful in developing culture and scholarship and also able to fit boys and girls for life.

Not only must the wasted street time of the child be eliminated, but the time

and energy of the teacher must be conserved. It is the business of the administration of the school to develop and keep the teacher in the best condition to teach, the child in the best condition to learn, and both in the best possible environment for teaching and learning. A successful work, study, and play school provides the best environment for teaching and learning, and develops in the child the right attitude of mind toward the school. It has been demonstrated that such a school conserves the energy and time of the teacher. When the children want to know what the school has to teach, the teacher's work is comparatively light. In fact, no teacher can by any expenditure of energy educate the child. Each child must educate himself. All that the teacher can do is to provide the most favorable environment and stimuli for the child to educate himself. When children are busy educating themselves, and the teacher is only a wise director of their efforts, the nervous drain of the traditional school disappears.

Financing an ideal school is not a problem. Well-equipped workshops, supervised playgrounds, fine auditoriums, gymnasias, laboratories, and swimming-pools are not extravagant luxuries. These additions to the school plant actually reduce the total cost of the school to the tax-

payers. Schools with abundant provision for work and play activities as well as study are extravagant only in the opportunities offered the children. The great problem is to know what kind of a school will meet the children's needs and how to run such a school when you have secured it. You can afford any kind of a school desired if ordinary economic public-service principles are applied to public-school management. The first principle in turning waste into profit in school management is to use every facility all the time for all the people. The modern city is largely the result of the application of the principle of the common use of public facilities that we need for personal use only part of the time. Ample accommodations may be provided in all facilities in the schools, if they are in use constantly by alternating groups. And this may be done at less cost than regular classrooms provided on the basis of the exclusive private possession of a desk and one-fortieth of a classroom by each pupil.

The public now understands clearly that the successful rearing of children is as much of a social and economic problem as it is a pedagogical problem. No longer is the public going to permit the pedagogue to dictate school conditions regardless of social and economic needs.

WILLIAM WIRT.

#### THE GARY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

If the school system of the town of Gary, Ind., in its short life of nine years, has become an institution of national significance, it is because it has been built up by an educator, William Wirt, who had a great vision of what a public school might be and who had, moreover, the economic and practical genius to realize his vision. Orthodox school superintendents are amazed that teachers and investigators should flock to a small Indiana industrial town to learn how to organize a modern public school. New Yorkers are amazed that their Board of Education should call in the school-superintendent of a small city that most of them never heard of, and pay him a large salary to advise them in the solution of

the great problems arising from the overcrowding of the schools and the new demands for vocational training. Nine years ago there was no Gary school. To-day it is the most visited school in the country. Educators come in such numbers from all parts of the country, and even from abroad, that in self-defense the school authorities have had to set aside special times when the schools may be visited and the principles of their pedagogy and organization explained. Numerous reports from educational experts, journalists, superintendents, have appeared, practically all of them dwelling upon the new and enlarged opportunities which the Gary school offers to American public-school education. The United States Bureau of Education has investigated it, and has published a most favorable report

on the "unique and ingenious synthesis of educational influences" which these remarkable schools represent. Little by little the American public is coming to understand that this public school which Superintendent William Wirt has founded in Gary offers, in its practicality, in the wealth of educational opportunities it offers, and in the financial economies which it embodies, a model for widespread imitation by the cities and towns of this country, confronted as they are with the most perplexing problems of rapid growth and changing social and industrial conditions.

The connection of the United States Steel Corporation with the town of Gary has led to a wide but entirely erroneous impression that the schools of Gary are dependent upon the enlightened business philanthropy of the corporation. As a matter of fact, though the Steel Corporation did found the town upon the sand-dunes by Lake Michigan as an industrial centre for its great plants, its connection with the government and public affairs of the town ceased with the selling of the land. Gary, to-day a well-built city of nearly forty thousand people, with attractive business and residential districts, a public library, churches, electric cars and taxi-cabs, and all the conveniences of a modern city, owes all these things, as well as its schools, to its own energy and is in no way dependent upon the Steel Corporation or the other large industrial companies that have built their mills along the lake. Even though there is a large immigrant population, the town does not differ except in its newness from the other industrial suburbs of Chicago. Gary has had no peculiar advantages in the organization of its public schools. There is nothing peculiar about the organization and support of the public schools except the educational genius of Superintendent Wirt. As far as their financial foundation goes, they have been built up from the ordinary school appropriations of the city budget and the State funds. The city has not made any unusual sacrifices for its schools. There is nothing that is possible in Gary that is not possible anywhere else. The superiority of the Gary school lies entirely in the

skill with which the relatively poor resources have been utilized.

When Mr. Wirt came to Gary from Bluffton, Ind., where he had been able to work out some of his ideas on a small scale, he found a small village with one plain school-building, erected to accommodate about three hundred and fifty children. To-day there are nearly five thousand school-children in Gary, housed in five buildings, two of which, the recently completed Emerson and Froebel Schools, are perhaps the most beautiful and magnificently equipped common schools to be found anywhere in the United States. That Mr. Wirt has been able to work out, in so short a time and in a small city with relatively low tax values, a school system which in its wealth of material equipment as well as in its educational results surpasses the achievements of old and wealthy communities, seems almost a miracle. It would be extraordinary even as an experiment. But all who have seen the Gary schools agree that they are not an experiment, but a most successful working out of educational ideas which the most advanced and democratic educators have been long trying to get realized in the American public-school system. They see in the striking success of the Gary schools the proof that we have scarcely begun to scratch the surface of the opportunities for public education in this country.

The school that William Wirt has built up in Gary is not a mere attempt to tinker with the old public-school system. It is not a mere collection of fads, as some of the popular accounts of the Gary school would lead the reader to believe. It is really a new kind of a school, a school re-organized from the bottom up, to meet the demands of the changing social and industrial conditions of the day. It is based on a very definite philosophy, for which Mr. Wirt does not hesitate to give full credit to the great educator and philosopher, Professor John Dewey, under whom he studied at Chicago. The fundamental ideas of this philosophy are two—first, that the public school should be a sort of embryonic community life in which the child would gradually become familiar not only with the knowledge

that he will need in adult life but also with the occupations and the organization of the society into which he will enter; second, that learning comes only from doing, that it is idle to learn things that are not used, and that therefore whatever is learned in school must be used in school. School work must be real work, productive in some form that the child can appreciate and not a mere storing up of information and skill against some possible future time.

It is clear that the attempt to apply these ideas will result in a public school very different from the present one. The criticism of the school from business men and college instructors has been constantly increasing. The complaint is that children come from the public schools wretchedly prepared either for higher study or for business and industrial life. They are inaccurate, ill-informed, lacking even in the rudiments of education, without either intellectual orientation or the skill and knowledge to earn a living. Educators have struggled to meet these complaints, but beyond adding various kinds of manual training and commercial studies, both taught in an academic way, the ordinary public school has done little to remedy the situation. Educators have generally failed to recognize these fundamental truths, that knowledge must be used or it will not be learned. The public schools have left the children without the opportunity to apply what they have learned. The Gary school is the first to recognize this truth and provide on a comprehensive scale for the learning through practical work.

Mr. Wirt sees the public school as an extension of the home. On the farm or in the country community the children learned their life-vocation by participating, from an early age, in the work of the household, or the shop, or the farm. They learned how to do things by watching their elders. They got their "vocational" education almost before they knew it. What was possible in more primitive days is no longer possible in these days of urban life. The city child cannot learn in the home; the school must step in and supplement the activities of the household. And it must do much more than merely give the child a little

intellectual knowledge. It must really become a little household by itself, a sort of children's community, where the child gets the comprehensive training that will fit it for the hard work of professional or industrial life. The present public school, with its four or five hour session and its Saturday holiday, leaves the city child for many hours a day to the demoralizing and disintegrating influences of the street and alley and crowded home, where the work of the school is practically undone. The result is idleness, juvenile crime, truancy, and the tendency of children to leave school at the earliest possible age. The city, spending so much money on its schools, cannot afford to give the child so much of this "street-and-alley time," as Mr. Wirt puts it. It is not doing its duty to the child or to itself, and it pays a heavy price in inefficiency, ignorance, and crime.

The Gary school is a genuine child's community, the centre of all his work and play. It has an eight-hour day, with plenty of play and varied activities, and a voluntary Saturday school, to which, as experience shows, most of the children come. Instead of a two months' summer vacation, the Gary school runs all the year round, though attendance in the vacation school is voluntary, according to the demands of the State law. The idea is to make the school as inevitable and natural to the child as is his home, to give him the training and the opportunities for interesting work and play that even the well-to-do city home is not in a position to give him. At the same time the Gary school does not monopolize the child. On the contrary, if there are other institutions in the community which have something to give the child that the school cannot, then the school co-operates cheerfully with them. So the child in the Gary school may go home in school hours for music lessons or special training of any sort, or to the church for religious instruction, or to neighborhood houses or Y. M. C. A.'s. Superintendent Wirt's idea is to make the school what he calls "the clearing-house for community activities." It is not only the centre of the child's work and play, but the means through which he comes in contact with the community life.

It is obvious that the school which



plays such a rôle must be much richer in facilities and much more interesting than the ordinary public school, from which the child is glad to escape at the end of the school day. The Gary school is a large and complex institution. The Gary idea of a school-plant is "a playground, garden, workhouse, social centre, library, and traditional school, combined under the same management." Such a school as the new Froebel School in Gary is almost unbelievably rich in resources for work, study, and play. It occupies twenty acres of land, with playgrounds, athletic fields, school-gardens, lawns. The building itself, besides the ordinary classrooms and kindergarten-rooms, contains a big auditorium, with a stage so large that basket-ball games may be played upon it; two gymnasiums, one for boys and one for girls; two swimming-pools; botany, zoology, physics, and chemistry laboratories; music and drawing studios; kitchen and lunch-room; laundry; two branches of the public library; carpenter-shop, cabinet-shop, plumbing-shop, forge and foundry, machine-shop, paint-and-varnish shop, pottery-shop, and printery. And this small city of Gary has not only one school like this, but two, the Emerson School being only slightly less magnificent in its equipment. And it must be remembered that these schools are not high schools, where these lavish opportunities are reserved for only a small minority of the fortunate children of the community, but are primary schools as well, sharing all this wealth with the younger children. Mr. Wirt's philosophy involves a radical rearrangement of studies. He finds it absurd that four children out of five in America should leave school without having studied science or had any opportunities for vocational training. The Gary school represents a great broadening of the scope of the primary and "grammar" school. Years that are practically wasted in the ordinary public school are now utilized in introducing the younger children to physics and chemistry, letting them take up the trades or languages or sociological studies, while their minds are still fresh and keen and their curiosity aroused. Mr. Wirt says that children are natural scientists, and the experience of the Gary

schools has shown that the younger children are capable of taking up many studies which the public school has unaccountably reserved, important as the work was for the child going out into the world, for the favored few of the high school.

All this richness of opportunity in the Gary school is possible only because the schools are managed like a public utility. Mr. Wirt points out that if the schools or any department in them are to stand idle for a large part of the time, as is our general practise, the public simply cannot afford the expensive equipment that he would provide. The Gary schools are run, therefore, on the principle of "equalizing the load." The ideal of the ordinary public school, "to provide a desk and seat for every child," he says is as absurd as it would be to provide a seat in the park for every inhabitant. No public service is used by more than a fraction of the people at any one time. The Gary school provides the traditional classroom for about one-quarter of the children. While they are studying, the rest of the school is distributed in playground and shop, gymnasium and laboratory and studio, or at home. Then, by an ingenious redistribution of the groups throughout the course of the eight-hour day, the school is able to give every child participation in all these various activities every day, while all the facilities of the school are being used practically all the time. In this way the Gary school is able to accommodate in one school-building twice the ordinary number of children. The Gary school has two complete schools, each with its set of teachers, functioning together in the same building all day long. In the lower grades the child spends two hours daily in the classroom, an hour in laboratory or shop, half an hour in studio and half an hour in gymnasium, an hour in auditorium, and the rest in study, play, and outside activity. The older child has three hours for formal instruction, and two hours for more intensive shop or studio work. But merely by this intensive use of the plant, by this "rotation of crops" or "platoon" system, as it has been called, the capacity of the schools is doubled. While other cities are struggling with "part-time" problems, forced

to give a proportion of their children a shorter school day, the town of Gary, in spite of its phenomenal growth, already has accommodations for one-third more children than there are children in the town. And all the children are getting not "part-time" but practically "double-time."

This is, perhaps, the really novel stroke of genius of Mr. Wirt's scheme in Gary. For the sums of money saved on school-buildings by this plan are so enormous that an equipment is possible, at no added cost to the taxpayers, which surpasses what even the largest and wealthiest cities have been able under the old plan to afford. It is this that explains how a small and relatively poor city like Gary is able to support with perfect ease these public schools, for whose peers in physical equipment and educational opportunities one would have to go to the high schools of wealthy metropolitan suburbs. The significance of the Gary school for American public-school education is therefore the proof that, with the money now being appropriated for public schools, enormously better schools are possible. It is often said that if the taxpayers would provide more money we could have better schools and better teachers. Mr. Wirt has shown in Gary that we need not wait for the generosity of the public. He has shown that, merely by an intensive use of the plant, economies can be effected which make possible common schools almost as lavish in their resources as we can desire.

This intensive use of the school-plant in Gary is not confined to the day-school. The economies effected permit the operation of a large night-school at little increased cost to the community. Indeed, the night-school at Gary is as remarkable as the day-school. It has even a larger attendance. The people of Gary can say with pride that one out of every three persons in the city attends school. The night-school is a sort of town public university, attended by all classes of the population, from the mill-workers who want to learn English to the well-to-do women who wish to study French or history. All the shops and laboratories are open, and not only are the courses of the day-schools repeated, but advanced

courses in all the subjects are given on demand. A citizen of Gary need, therefore, never leave school. Children who are compelled to go to work before their schooling is finished may continue their shop work or studies in the evening. Even boys who are temporarily out of work come back and put in their spare time at their trade or at something that will fit them for a better position. There is no break between the Gary school and the community. The school is the place where the people come who want to use its equipment. The absence of formality, the great wealth of opportunities, providing for almost every kind of an interest, make such a school a really "public" school, perhaps the first genuinely "public" school, in the sense that it is freely used by all classes of the population, that we have yet seen in this country.

Remarkable as the Gary school is from the point of view of material equipment, it is no less remarkable in the democratic and libertarian educational principles which it embodies. It is the first public school to announce frankly an ideal of individual instruction and individual development. The ordinary public school has been organized and administered on the theory that children in large masses, such as our city schools have to cope with, could only be handled by uniform and semi-militaristic methods. Children had to be taught in large classes, curricula had to be uniform, promotions and examinations had to be according to rule. Drill and uniformity were thought to be the only methods by which public-school education was possible. It has always been thought that anything in the way of freedom or individual instruction was wholly impracticable, on account of the costly teaching force necessary to realize such an ideal. Educators have talked for many years about "individual development," but it is only recently that public-school methods have given any indication that children were not exactly uniform in their mental capacity, talents, interests, and future vocations.

Mr. Wirt has shown in the Gary school that it is just these administrative methods which crushed the initiative of the teacher and imposed programmes and rules and curricula upon her, that pre-

vented the realization of these freer ideals. The Gary school cultivates co-operation and initiative. The teachers also help each other, the younger acting as "apprentice" teacher, in much the same way that the younger child learns from the older and the older learns from the workmen-teachers in the industrial shops of the school. The teachers are allowed great leeway in their courses. They develop their own ideas, shape their own work, share each other's plans. The children are encouraged to develop their own ideas. Each person in the Gary school is thus at the same time, or at some time in the course, both a pupil and a teacher. The auditorium hour, which Mr. Wirt considers one of the most important of the day, is used for the development of expression. If anything interesting happens in any class, this hour gives an opportunity to present it in dramatic form to the rest of the school. The teachers take turns in providing an interesting programme. The children dramatize their history or literature stories, athletic exhibitions are given, musical performances, moving pictures. "Auditorium" is a sort of school theatre, where work of interest, that would be otherwise lost in the classroom, is vitalized and brought to the attention of the rest of the school community.

Great emphasis is laid on expression in the Gary school. There are special teachers for this work, and the lower classes all have what is called an "application" hour, in which they discuss what they have been studying or apply it in whatever practical form the teacher or the children can suggest. The Gary school makes every effort to train individual, expressive personalities instead of the uniformly drilled and trained product of the ordinary public school. Discipline is very free, for Mr. Wirt finds that when children are busy and interested they do not have time to be mischievous and that in the absence of strict rules they will learn naturally how to rule themselves. They move freely about the building with the unconscious air of owning the school themselves. Visiting teachers, though they are often shocked at the freedom, are never able to find evidences of depredation. The Gary school

seems actually to have solved a great problem by providing interesting activity which does away with the need of enforcing strict discipline.

Mr. Wirt has shown that these things are possible even in public schools that handle great masses of children. The Froebel School in Gary has twenty-five hundred children in one building, most of them very small immigrant children, yet every child will be able to get an education suited to his individual needs. Each child has his own schedule of work and goes through the school as an individual and not as a member of a "class." This plan does not complicate the administration, for each school has an executive principal, whose sole duty is to look after these schedules, while the instruction is supervised by special officers and the shop work is under the direction of a director of industrial work. The smaller children are, of course, busy in the earlier years with the three R's. But as early as the fourth grade the little boy or girl is allowed to go into one of the industrial shops or science laboratories as "observer" or "helper" to the older children who are at work there. One of the characteristic features of the Gary school is the arrangement of the rooms. Shops, laboratories, and classrooms are not segregated, but mixed together, so as to give an impression of the fundamental unity of this well-rounded education, which should embrace manual as well as intellectual work, the artistic as well as the scientific. All the rooms have glass windows and doors, so that the little child, running about the building, is led by his own curiosity to look in, and discovers what he is interested in before he enters the shop or laboratory. His interest is caught while it is fresh, and the roots of his skill are laid early, in marked contrast to the usual "vocational" training which takes the child only in the last year or two before he goes to work. In the Gary school the child picks up the new knowledge almost without effort. The older child learns, too, by teaching the younger. When the latter takes up the work in a higher grade he already knows the apparatus and technique. He has almost taught himself. The work of the teacher has been immensely lightened. Individual instruc-

tion, far from meaning a great burden on the teacher, means, through the Gary scheme, an actual relief.

This scheme, by which the child is able to select his own work from natural interest and gradually weed out those activities for which he is not fitted, seems to solve many of the most vexing problems of vocational training. For most public schools operated under the old plan the equipment of the necessary shops has been too costly. The schools have not been able to meet the demands of the present movement for vocational training. Mr. Wirt has applied an ingenious idea in Gary which not only provides this training almost at no additional expense to the community, but also gives the children a better training than even the professional trade-school at present generally provides. The children in the Gary school-shops are not engaged in practising "stunts" with wood and metal. They are not merely "rehearsing" for their trade which they will take up when they go out into the world. They are working at their trade now. What they are making are book-cases, cabinets, tables, desks, etc., for the school itself. The printery is printing the blanks and leaflets and cards used by the school. The cooking-class is preparing the daily lunch, which is sold at cost to the teachers and pupils who wish it. All the shops are contributing to the actual upkeep of the schools. And the children are working not under academically trained manual-training teachers, but under regular union workmen, selected on account of their intelligence and teaching ability, who are employed all the year round in equipping and repairing the school-plants. The pupils work under them in much the same way as the old-time apprentices. These workmen-teachers earn their salaries by the work they do on the building, and the children get the inestimable advantage of a vocational training which consists of real work done under a real workman.

This principle is not confined to the shop work. It is the key-note of all the activities of the Gary school, the fundamental pedagogical idea which distinguishes the Gary school from all other public schools and makes it definitely a new kind of a school. The aim is to have

nothing done in any department of the school which does not in some way add to the life of the school or in some way to a practical knowledge of the community and society in which the children live. Mr. Wirt believes that all learning comes from doing, that we learn only what we use in some way, that knowledge is simply the tool by which we grapple with life. School life in Gary is, therefore, not a mere preparation for life, but a life itself. The work that the children do is real work and therefore acquires all the interest of any profitable activity whose results can be seen. All the care of supplies, for instance—the school accounting, the secretarial work—is in charge of the pupils of the commercial department. The physics classes study the heating, lighting, and ventilating plants, and various machines like the automobile, and use this practical knowledge as the basis for scientific theory. The chemistry teacher in the Emerson School is city chemist, in charge of the municipal laboratory, and his classes work with him in testing the coal and cement which the school board buys. They work also with him in his sanitary inspection of dairies and food-stores, analyze milk and candies, and act in general as sort of deputy sanitary inspectors. The chemistry class is thus an extension of the municipal laboratory. The botany class takes care of the shrubs and trees on the school-grounds and cultivates the school-gardens. The zoology class has charge of the school zoo, with its foxes and rabbits and birds. All these things are used as living text-books by the children, and thus education becomes an answer to the questions that occur to them and an explanation of the curious things they see happening around them. The history and geography class studies local, State, and city government, town-planning, the life and customs of peoples in ancient and modern times. They read the newspapers and magazines, collect pictures, make their own maps. They study history backward so that it explains what is happening to-day. Even the work in composition and grammar, in most schools the deadliest of all subjects, becomes alive in the Gary school. For the children in all the classes are constantly



expressing themselves, writing up their experiences and experiments under the direction of the English teachers. The chemistry class last year prepared a milk bulletin which was printed in the school printing-shop. The zoology class recently got out, in the same way, a charming illustrated booklet, descriptive of the animals of their zoo. The studies work in together and fertilize each other in this extraordinary way. Educators have always held the ideal of approaching the abstract through the concrete, of working to theory through practise, but the Gary school is the first to realize the ideal in this thoroughly comprehensive manner, where the manual and the intellectual work stimulate each other and fuse together a genuine school-community life where the work is interesting and vital because it is real work and not mere practise.

Yet this varied activity is not achieved at the expense of the old studies. The longer school day permits all the studying to be done in school, and thus saves both teacher and pupil from the bugbear of "home work." Experience has proved that the Gary school is able to prepare a child for the State examinations and for the State university quite as well as the orthodox public school. But the genius of Mr. Wirt enables the Gary school to economize time and means so that the child may get all these advantages in addition to the traditional schooling. Owing to the economies effected by the double-school plan the Gary school is able to afford special teachers for the science work, the athletic and playground work, the music and art and expression, and even for the ordinary subjects in the "grammar" and high-school grades. These teachers are not supervisors, as in most city schools, who teach the teachers. They are trained specialists who teach the children directly. The "departmental" plan which obtains in many high schools is carried in the Gary schools down through the lower grades.

The child in the Gary school also has the benefit of working in the formal subjects with his equals in mental ability. Each class is divided into three groups—the rapid, average, and slow—according to whether the children give promise of

completing the school course in ten, twelve, or fourteen years. In this way the bright children are not retarded by the slower ones, and the latter are not hurried ahead and discouraged by the competition of the more able. Each makes his own normal progress under the most favorable conditions. Everything possible is done in the Gary school to break down the artificial competition for marks and promotions. The emphasis is on the work and not on the rewards. The lines between the grades are very loose. Children pass from one grade to another or from one group to another at any time without examinations, but on the recommendation of the supervisor and teachers. The ideal Gary school, like the Emerson School, has all classes from kindergarten through the high school in one building. There is no break between the elementary school and the high school, nothing to mark that "graduation" from the common school which means for so many children the end of their education. This plan emphasizes the unity of the school life, and creates a fine spirit of camaraderie between the older and the younger children. It makes besides for greater economy and efficiency. The shops, etc., which in the ordinary school system are provided, if at all, only for the high school, are in the Gary school available for the younger children, in that helper and "apprentice" system which is so novel and essential a feature of the Gary plan.

The Gary school, in short, is a genuine community for children, providing for every kind of a child, and providing the flexible training that he individually needs. It is difficult to think of any excuse except contagious disease for keeping a child home from such a school. And the child gets his education not by cultivating his memory, storing his mind with information and practising work against some future time when he may need the knowledge and skill. But the boy or girl is prepared by doing real work which counts in the school. The work and study is so devised that the children are constantly using what they learn. And each child, well-to-do or poor, gets a well-rounded training, physical, intellectual, manual. By cultivating all these aspects of education equally the Gary school

avoids specialization and yet makes possible intensive work for those who desire a special training. It is as good an avocational school as it is a vocational school.

In the Gary school American educational opinion is coming to realize that it has an incomparable instrument for solving most of the perplexing problems that are arising from the new demands in education, and the changing social and industrial conditions. The "double-school" plan not only solves the "part-time" problem, but saves money which may, and indeed must, be spent for greatly enlarged facilities. For the most ingenious point about the Gary plan is that unless the money saved in school-buildings is spent in these enlarged facilities the "part-time" problem is not solved, for the double school cannot be operated without them. The scheme of comprehensive school repair-shops run by trained workmen, whom the children assist as apprentices, shows the method of providing an incomparable vocational training at very small cost. The flexibility of schedules and curricula, the co-operation of outside community agencies, provide for a measure of individual instruction greater than any public school has dreamed possible. The freedom from formal discipline, the "helper" system, the abolition of "home work," lighten the effort of the teacher. The cultivation of initiative in both teachers and children makes for a genuinely democratic school. The longer school day keeps the city child from the demoralizing streets. The varied attractions and interesting activities of the school prevent a large part of that alarming school "mortality" which makes only one child in five ever even reach the high school. But perhaps the greatest advantage of all, from the practical point of view, is the economy of the Gary school. With all its wealth of facilities, it is no more costly than the old type of public school. Few communities can afford to remain ignorant of a school which not only provides the most comprehensive and practical education to-day but does it at less cost to the community. The mere economy of Mr. Wirt's idea

would force its imitation even if the democratic philosophy, and sound and fruitful educational principles, which he has applied in these schools did not. The experience of Troy, Sewickley, Kalamazoo, Passaic, New York City, and other cities and towns where experiments have been made with the Gary scheme proves its feasibility for imitation in almost any American town. Mr. Wirt has been engaged in New York in showing how old buildings may be remodelled and equipped with shops and laboratories, and their capacity thereby doubled. The large sums of money thus saved in the cost of new buildings that would otherwise have to be erected, may then go into providing playgrounds and school equipment, and the salaries of special teachers.

Fourteen congested schools are now in successful process of reorganization. Two schools have been running for nearly two years on the Gary plan, and it is inconceivable that they will return to the old limited and narrow scheme. The Gary plan is shown to provide a flexible framework for the public school which permits experimentation and meets the need of the individual child.

It is true that many of the details of Mr. Wirt's Gary scheme are being worked out in other schools in the country. But nowhere has there been such a complete synthesis, and nowhere such a consistent application of the best modern educational ideas. The Gary school has the unique advantage of being a successful institution. It actually works. It is neither a fad nor an experiment. Most visitors to these schools come away with the conviction that there is scarcely an institution in the country that the American public can less afford to remain ignorant about than the Gary school, built up by William Wirt. To produce citizens with the manual skill, scientific knowledge, democratic attitudes, individuality, historic and social orientation, that the Gary school tends to cultivate, is exactly the business of the modern public school. One can scarcely doubt that the Gary school is bound to become the American public school of to-morrow.



## THE POINT OF VIEW

Definition by  
Anecdote

THERE was an attempt made in this department a few months ago to set over against one another half a dozen different efforts to define a gentleman, some of them based on the external qualities of birth and breeding and some of them founded on the more essential characteristic of kindly feeling and of delicate understanding of the feelings of others. One result of the assembling of these definitions was to bring out sharply the divergence of the views taken by the British on the one hand and by us Americans on the other, our kin across the sea tending to insist rather on birth and breeding, while we on this side of the Western Ocean are prone to dwell on the more vital quality of human sympathy. Perhaps this is simply another instance of the irreconcilable antithesis of the aristocratic and the democratic ways of looking at the social problem.

One reader of the paragraphs in which these definitions had been collected was moved to wonder whether it was possible ever to frame a satisfactory definition of a gentleman, an entity so many-sided as to refuse inclusion within a precise formula. He wondered also whether it might not be possible to indicate the distinction of the true gentleman more adequately by the citing of instances of conduct under trying circumstances, which would exemplify the essential characteristic of the type without circumscribing it within a rigid form of words. After all, a fact, a concrete example, is often of more value than the abstract theorizing which seems sometimes only to revolve on itself in a vacuum—like those globes we sometimes see in the windows of opticians wherein a silvered weather-vane turns unceasingly in the sunlight.

Just then, by virtue of what Horace Walpole called serendipity—the unexpected good fortune of stumbling on the very fact needed when no effort was being made to seek it out—this inquirer was put in possession of an anecdote of a distinguished surgeon of New York, who left us poorer by

his death as he had made us richer by his life. He stood in the very forefront of his profession, recognized by all of his associates as a man of the highest character, as a practitioner of the most ample equipment and attainments, as one who had advanced the boundaries of science, as one who was skilful, kindly, generous, and conspicuous for his willingness to give freely for the relief of suffering—conspicuous even in a profession where this giving of relief is a constant practise.

He had—so the story was told—gone to bed late one night after an arduous day of labor in which he had performed successfully several difficult and dangerous operations. At two in the morning he was awakened by a telephone-call. The man on the other end of the wire apologized for disturbing him at that hour and explained that he had been a pupil of the great surgeon's a few years before and that he was now practising in the congested tenement-house region on the lower east side. He had suddenly been summoned to attend the wife of a poor little tailor and he had found that she had acute appendicitis, necessitating an immediate operation, which he did not dare to undertake himself. He had tried to summon expert help, but all the other surgeons to whom he had applied had been otherwise engaged. And he appealed to his former teacher to come to his aid and to save a human life.

Without a moment's hesitation the surgeon agreed to come as soon as he could; and within an hour he was at work. He found the case imperative and complicated; and by the light only of a kerosene lamp and with the assistance only of the young doctor who had telephoned him, he did what was needed. But it was dawn before he was able to pack his bag and make ready to go home after having saved the woman's life. While he had been operating he had been conscious of the presence of the husband, the little tailor, hovering anxiously in the doorway; and as he went out the man stopped him with profuse thanks, saying that he was