IV.

CERTAIN DANGEROUS TENDENCIES IN EDUCATION.

We are now under the full influence of a great movement of thought, essentially socialistic in character. In time we shall be carried, by the wave-like progress of humanity, to an extreme of individualism; but, until this corrective tendency sets in, it behooves us to see how far the present movement will carry us. In many of its results a socialistic trend is beneficial. Some of its immediate effects, now so portentous, will quickly disappear. But at several points its influence has been distinctly bad. One of the social problems deeply affected by it is that of public education. Here the socialistic factor in human progress is spreading out of safe bounds into the region of wild experiment, with grave menace to our government. There exists a perversion of the public mind on this vital question, a perversion which finds its logical climax in the recent demand of an Alderman of Boston for a free public university.

Education is man's safeguard against his own ignorance. Ignorance and idleness are usually synonymous, and idleness is the mother of crime. Give a child a proper education, and he is endowed with power: power to think, power to act. He may use his power to think and act wrongly, but experience shows that he will think and act mainly toward the right. Since, to the State, crime, when it preponderates, is death, free schools are a necessity. But this necessity conceded, what sort of education is to be given freely, and how far is it to go? It is here that the socialistic tendency is, in my judgment, dangerous. The socialists and those who in the line of education, if in no other, are socialists, would burden the free school with subjects and methods belonging to the home, and would carry free education to a time of life when, by the
suppression of individual effort, moral stamina are weakened, and when, as a measure of common safety, school education is no longer necessary.

The home and the school are two wholly different forces brought to bear upon the growing child. Each has its proper sphere, and the methods of the one have no place in the system of the other. Judiciously exerted, one supplementing the other, these two influences should produce patriotic, moral, well-balanced citizens. No argument is needed to prove the unfitness of school methods to home training; there should be no need of proof that home methods have little or no place in the school. The child whose parents treat him from the standpoint of the pedagogue, is a pitiful creature, starved morally, surfeited mentally. A child who has been trained in a “home” school, by methods which have no right beyond the walls of a house, is even less well fitted for good citizenship. Home training should be always indirect, persuasive; school training direct, authoritative. Home training must be suggestive; school training, mandatory. Home training should be mainly by example; school training by fact and precept. Home training must leave free play to the child’s mental growth; school training must prune and control that growth. The home fits the child to be a man, the school prepares him to be a citizen; one is natural, common to humanity, the other artificial, peculiar to the State. It is seldom that the proper combination of these two elements is reached. The Scholastics took away love, making morality an abstraction; the sentimentalists, whose heirs we are, took away duty, making morality a passion. The right moral training tempers love with duty and duty with love. This moral training can be perfected only within the home. School life is but a mental gymnasium in which to make the child receptive and acquisitive.

To emphasize this training, the home must be made the center of the child’s existence. No stronger force exists to make it so than the double one of sacrifice and gratitude, the force of mutual obligation. There should be always present a
sense of duty on the part of the parent, to give the child such moral and mental armor as he can; and a corresponding sense of obligation on the part of the child to repay the self-denial of the parent by exertion to do his will.

But the socialistic idea of education destroys completely all necessity for sacrifice on the part of the parent, and all motive, therefore, for gratitude on the part of the child, and in time, all motive for that child, grown to maturity in ignorance of filial gratitude, to interest himself, much less to sacrifice himself, in the matter of his children's education. The tendency of the modern school is to restrict the duty of the parent to that of feeding and clothing the child. The father is to become a mere machine for supplying the material wants of the next generation. All higher duties are to be relegated to a special class, just as in the Middle Ages they were given to the priests—with what results, we know. The primitive races gave to their young such food and shelter as they could; an ambition to do more than this has, through long centuries, produced civilization. Destroy parental responsibility and the one concrete motive for human progress has disappeared. The French noblesse, sending their infants to peasant fostermothers, brought themselves, thereby, to the guillotine. Abstract precepts, the knowledge of right and wrong, will never supplant, as moral forces, the actual presence of children to whom ethics must be taught by example. If the State, that nonentity for which each one of us, and therefore, none of us, is responsible, is to bring up my children for me; if morality, good manners, and the domestic virtues are to be taught by someone else while I am but to provide the material things of life; then, forsooth, I will lay aside such sums as may meet these temporal wants, and with the balance, large or small, will eat, drink, and be merry; for surely I have no better use in the world. The fact that in a few generations the State will fall to pieces is not for me to consider, since I am credibly informed that the sacred duty of maintaining it is taught in the schools. This wicked and absurd result of socialism is, of course, extreme. There are, fortunately, human tendencies
retarding such a mad career as this. Of these are avarice, making us save even where there is no direct motive for saving; family pride, unwilling to resign the task of shaping its heirs; and, above all, parental love, refusing to deny itself to its offspring.

Socialism in school matters is, beyond its narrowest interpretation, wholly without warrant. Once having established the machinery of free schools, once having placed proper safeguards for its maintenance and protection, the State should determine the least that it must do to preserve its integrity and provide for its healthy growth. It should then rigidly exclude from the school all that belongs to the parent, as well as all that, being non-essential to the life of the State, ought to be left to individual effort. In following this course there can be no rigidity of rule. So diverse is our population that no general system of public education is possible. The hordes of immigrants, low and brutish, must be upheld by the strong arm of the majority through so many generations as it may require to bring them, mentally and morally, to the level of the older population. For them a socialistic scheme of education must be arranged under which they are to be brought by force or by persuasion. But for all rural districts, for many of the smaller cities, and for the better wards of large cities—in all which regions the good outweigh the bad—the integrity of the family must not be disturbed, honorable ambition must be encouraged, and the school must be kept to its proper sphere. Otherwise our republic will be of but short duration.

The socialistic tendency has brought about, in many of the United States, the passage of laws not warranted by such a view as this. Chief among these are the laws establishing high schools and those providing free text-books. The first are wrong in so far only as they make the high school absolutely free; the second, while justifiable in theory, are wrong in practice.

The maintenance of free high schools is unwise, first, because it obliges a whole community to pay for what only a limited number can enjoy; second, because, necessarily expen-
sive, it robs the lower schools of funds essential to them; and, third, because it offers to boys and girls wholly unfit for secondary education, a temptation to exchange the actual benefit of remunerative work at 15 years of age for the doubtful advantage of a training that can have no direct bearing upon their life work, and which, at the time of life it occurs, may do decided harm. The State must, of course, take the initiative in providing secondary schools separate from or in connection with those already established by private enterprise, and it must maintain such courses of study as the needs of the community demand; but for these courses there should be a graded system of fees, regulated by the nature and extent of the studies pursued, and, while a certain proportion of the cost of their support might be assessed upon the tax-payers, the larger share should be borne by those in attendance. When such a school ceases to be mainly self-supporting, the town or school district should have power to suspend it until the demand for reopening justifies its revival. In this way only can the high school do the work that should be required of it; only by such a pruning can the primary and grammar schools receive the money and attention they deserve; and only after such a bold first step can a real reform of the public-school system be begun.

The provision for free text-books is logical. If teachers and school-buildings are to be furnished at the public cost, why not books also? This position can be disputed only on the ground of expediency. It is well for the parent to feel at some point the immediate money responsibility of his children’s education. It is desirable that the child, at the close of his course, should have some tangible evidence of his school life, especially in those homes where text-books are almost the only literature. But these are minor things; there is greater danger lest, in the providing of text-books, there should be a neglect of more important provisions; for example, proper books of reference, good maps and similar aids, and above all, proper teachers. Minds, not books, are the motors in education. Rather than to provide books freely, it would
be better to furnish them at cost; then make changes from year to year only for good reason and after careful examination; and, best of all, reduce the use of text-books to a minimum. Substitute for the arid printed page the living words of the enthusiastic teacher, the eloquent map, picture, or other graphic aid, and the ever ready and busy chalk or pencil of the pupil. With these, the flesh and blood of teaching, there is needed only the barest skeleton of text.

Having suggested wherein the tendency in education seems wrong from an economic standpoint, I will look at it briefly from a pedagogic point of view. The kindergarten system, upon which much of the modern method of teaching rests, is built upon a profound appreciation of child-nature, and it has done much to free education from the fetters of monasticism. It has helped to broaden humanity and to make political freedom possible. But, like all good influences, it has, when carried to excess, its evil tendency. Child-nature is joyous, active, inquiring; the kindergarten, by its games, its dances, its handiwork, and its nature-study, takes advantage of these attributes to develop the child and lead him unconsciously to study and to application; but, in so doing, it loses sight of the fact that in this age of joy, of activity, of development, the power of habit is exerting itself even more strongly than in adult life, both because of the moral weakness of the child and through his natural tendency toward imitation. The kindergarten influence, being in the main but systematized and graduated play, is becoming a fixed habit of mind. All things appear to the child in the false, play-work light, and he acquires what I must call, for want of a better word, the dilettante spirit. This play atmosphere follows him through life, and takes from him the blessing of earnestness, without which the hard duties of life would be unbearable. With all their shortcomings, the Puritans possessed in a marked degree the earnest spirit, and it alone enabled them to conquer the wilderness and found the United States. The same spirit, in their descendants, preserved the integrity of the Union.

A lack of earnestness is the forerunner of political decay.
This half-heartedness seems to me apparent in many of the youth of the present day, especially in those who have been subjected to the emasculating courses of certain of the private schools, where the child is carried forward from one kindergarten to another, through a kindergarten botany, a kindergarten mineralogy, a kindergarten artisanship, to a kindergarten system of ethics and religion. The public schools, having no case-loving community to bid for, have not gone to such lengths as this, but in much of their work is seen the influence that puts the immediate pleasure of the child, the pleasure that weakens him mentally and morally, before the discipline which, if he is to hold his own in the struggle for existence, must be ready with its armed and trained faculties before his legal school age is past.

The kindergarten is an excellent adjunct to home training; it enables the mother to guide the child's play, to give that play an immediate object, serving at the same time as an indirect method of teaching. It is of use in the earlier school years as a relaxation, to assist in giving the infinite variety that must, in a measure, be granted to the growing mind; its rhythmic games are useful in the physical development and regulation of the restless body; but, through the very ease of it and the obviousness of its results, there is great danger of carrying it, as in so many cases it has been carried, to a point where it is a cumulative poison, unsuiting the child for usefulness in life.

In the line of advanced kindergarten work are the domestic arts, cooking and sewing. Setting aside the value of this instruction in the poorer districts of cities, where mothers have neither time nor inclination to do their duty, there is little excuse for adding these exercises to the school course. That American women are notoriously deficient in culinary knowledge and skill is no reason why the schools should undertake their reformation. Only the growth of general enlightenment will compass this reform; school standards will have no effect unless the home atmosphere is right, and, in that case, this instruction is superfluous. Because mothers fail of their duty
in teaching the domestic arts, therefore the school must supply the deficiency, is no stronger argument than to urge the teaching of morality because the majority of parents are blind to its importance. One of the strongest agents in preserving the family instinct is the force of tradition, the handing down from mother to daughter of the arts that maintain the home. It is through the arousing by the mother of these household instincts that the desire for a home is fixed and monogamy is preserved. It is not a mere sentiment, it is a psychological truth, that the parental influence, the haunting, intangible father-love and mother-love, keeps the next generation, to a great degree, from sin. The majority of men and women are preserved from evil, not so much by innate moral sense, not so much by custom, as by a love of parental approbation; approbation that is actual in earlier years, and in later life a tradition. The strongest hold, then, that parents can get upon their children is through the sense of obligation and the desire for their good opinion. To this end the relations of parent and child must be as close as possible, and no better means of establishing such relations exists than through the teaching of those things which belong to the home. Chief of these is, of course, moral instruction, and next ranks the teaching of the domestic arts, many of which should be made as familiar to boys as to girls. Because so many ways of instruction are, in the nature of things, closed to parents, there remains the greater reason for making those naturally existing as wide as possible.

The chief argument raised in favor of teaching the domestic arts in schools, beyond the plea of general utility, is that they train the hand and eye and serve the purpose for girls that the arts of the carpenter and iron-worker are believed to fulfill for boys. Putting aside the substantial reply that the feminine nature stands in only slight need of such training, being endowed with faculties of observation and deftness that are denied to the ordinary boy, it does not seem to me that these household exercises supply such a need to any degree commensurate with the time which must be set apart for
their mastery. Sewing has, of course, the rank of a manual art; but in using only two implements, the scissors for shaping and the needle for joining, there is lacking the infinite variety that the many tools and processes of the mechanic arts permit. Cooking as an applied science—and only as such can it really justify its presence in the ordinary school—is far inferior to chemistry; it lacks variety and precision, elements for which a study of this sort is chiefly valuable. The reactions in cooking are, to the ordinary student, few and uninteresting, while results are not seriously affected by a carelessness in weighing and measuring which in chemistry would be fatal.

To sum up, the introduction of the domestic arts into school courses, except for the purpose of bettering the condition of those children who, though not so in name, are in fact the wards of the State, has the grave effect, increasingly harmful from generation to generation, of weakening the tie between mother and child, the tie of responsibility on the one hand, of dependence on the other; and the lesser consequence of wasting time and money in bringing about results of dexterity, precision, and quickness of perception, that may be more readily accomplished by other means.

In the case of the mechanic arts the same arguments do not hold good. Not being domestic, their pursuit is difficult if not impossible. The boy needs, far more than the girl, the training in nice observation, in carefulness and manual exactness, that working in wood and metal certainly gives. But this excellent training has in many cases, it seems to me, been vitiated by the attempt to carry it out on kindergarten lines. Manual arts, if they are taught at all, should be taught thoroughly. It is as bad for the child's mind to have him only half know the mechanic processes as it is to half learn the science of numbers. A partial course in this branch of instruction reduces the art to a play, degrading it from valuable mental discipline to holiday pastime. It is not essential that boys should learn all handicrafts; it is necessary that whatever is done in this direction be done thoroughly and with full understanding. The object in view in manual training is not the
making of a thing, it is the making of a man. To this end, the mental range over tools and processes must be wide and thorough. The object of this branch of instruction is not to show how much may be imperfectly done with one tool, but how many and what perfect tools go to the making of one thing. Herein lies the unwisdom of jack-knife work, in which objects, crudely made with this one poor tool, could be perfectly and easily constructed with the many right tools. It is just as false to teach roundabout methods of handiwork as it is to solve laboriously, by processes of so-called arithmetic, problems that yield at once to the touch of algebra. It is not for variety of results, it is for variety of effort that we are seeking.

Another error that is too frequently made in the teaching of the manual arts is in divorcing them from drawing. Before an object can be properly constructed, it must be perfectly conceived in the mind. To arrive at a right conception, the child must be able to make an image of it; that is, to sketch it. Having put down the outlines, he must next be able to analyze it, to put it in form; or, in other words, make a working drawing of it. Only when the boy has completed this analysis, is his mind in condition to undertake the actual use of tools, the shaping of the object itself. Moreover, to go through those processes which alone make the pedagogic use of the manual arts of value, the mind must be somewhat matured, and boys in the higher grammar grades only are fitted to be so trained. Shop-work before that period of school life can scarcely be made complete, and is, therefore, of little value.

In our haste to take up with this recent notion in education, we have forgotten, or have scorned, certain excellent manual arts that have the merits of simplicity, cheapness, adaptability to all grades, and immediate application to all pursuits in life. I mean writing and drawing. The first art is, of course, limited, but is useful in gaining muscular control; the second art, properly taught, is capable of wide variety and expansion. The copying processes so much in use are almost valueless; all drawing should be based on the free use of the eye in
sketching from the object, and on an exact use of instruments, in working to scale. Only that school which has made the widest use of this means of manual and mental training has any right to enter upon instruction in other lines of handiwork.

Finally, and herein is the fundamental error, there is too much surface and too little depth to the ordinary primary and grammar-school course. Education is made an end rather than a means. It is not what we teach, it is how we teach, that is essential. In attempting to improve the public schools the mistake has been made of increasing the curriculum instead of the teaching force. Given the tools of reading, writing, and figuring, the good teacher will make one further study, if need be, serve every purpose of primary education. The mental vice of these newspaper days is superficiality; this vice the schools are doing much to encourage. Make the child accurate, thorough, persistent, logical, and let mere information take a secondary place. If he has acquired these qualities, he has learned how to study; in teaching him how to study the school has done its work. Beyond giving him the tools of knowledge, the primary teaching can do little toward increasing the child’s stock of information. That will come to him outside the schoolroom. As said above, and as cannot be too often said, the school is a gymnasium for making the child’s mind acquisitive and receptive. The teaching of many subjects does not conduce to this. The immature brain is naturally restless and roving; it is for the school to give it the power of concentration. A child’s mind is impatient and easily diverted; it is for the school to teach it patience and perseverance. A hasty clutching at many things is easier and pleasanter, to both teacher and pupil, than thorough mastery of one thing; but the child who has really conquered one subject is he who, in manhood, will win the knowledge of a thousand.

Boston, Mass.  

James P. Munroe.
VII.

THE STUDY OF PEDAGOGY AT CORNELL UNIVERSITY.

The department of pedagogy in Cornell University was provided for by the board of trustees toward the close of 1885, on the strong recommendation of the newly elected president, Dr. C. K. Adams. The writer, who had since 1879 been professor of geology in the University, but who had for twenty years previously been at the head of large secondary school in New York and Ohio, was selected to fill the newly-founded chair. The fact that a university professor of pedagogy has had practical experience in teaching in both secondary school and college, should be an advantage, since his theoretic views of what is desirable in such teaching are likely to receive a wholesome modification from a knowledge of what is practicable under existing conditions. At the outset it was obvious, from the experience of similar professorships elsewhere, that the least that ought to be attempted was to furnish those who might hereafter become teachers in colleges or secondary schools with the fundamental principles which underlie all good instruction, and also with a knowledge of the historical development of educational ideas, methods, and systems. Hence courses on the theory of education and on its history were announced.

The preliminary knowledge of the sciences of man,—physiology, psychology, and ethics,—which is needful for the study of pedagogy, was given in the university in the sophomore year by the professors of those subjects. Thus pedagogy was naturally limited to the last two years of the undergraduate course and to graduate students.

In the view that was taken, the theory of education has to deal with its aim, its laws, and its means. When considered historically and stated in its most complete form, the aim of
education would seem to be, not only to attempt a complete and harmonious evolution of all the powers and capabilities of human beings, that they may approximate to inward freedom, but so to put them in touch with all the legitimate interests of their race that, as men, they may feel that nothing which pertains to humanity is foreign to their sympathies.

A very considerable number of physiological and psychic sequences are sufficiently constant to entitle them to be considered educational laws. In treating these, my work is an application of psychology, with its physical implications, to the theory of education; and here, while strongly emphasizing the essential unity of the soul amid the multiplicity of its modes of manifestation, yet the order in which these spiritual manifestations rise into strength, and the manner in which they act and react on each other in the course of education, have served as a useful guide for the order in which they may be treated most clearly and effectively. Thus the order of relative development of the so-called faculties to the intellect and capacities of feeling, has been followed with apparent profit in discussing their educational aspects, and in suggesting the modes of treatment by which they might be brought into full and harmonious activity.

The consideration of the means of education is naturally a discussion of the educative efficiency of the studies and employments which are used in schools to promote the purposes of education. These may conveniently be discussed in five groups, viz., language, mathematics, history, the sciences of nature, and employments which call into play bodily capacities. These all differ widely in subject-matter, in essential methods of procedure, and in the kind of discipline they may give. They deserve, therefore, a careful and unprejudiced consideration; for it is only by the duly-proportioned co-operation of them all, with language as the central member of the series, at all stages of the work of disciplinary training, that the aim of education is likely to be fully reached, especially on the side of bringing the young into all-sided and sympathetic relations with all worthy human interests. A proper attention to
this grouping and to the relative worth in education of its members, will also be likely to be helpful in that most difficult and delicate of pedagogic duties, the selection, proportioning, and arrangement of studies in school programmes, which is now, in too many cases, a matter rather of individual preference in selection, and of haphazard in placing, than of clear pedagogic insight.

This classification and discussion of studies, with which education as a science ends, furnishes an appropriate introduction to the art of instruction. In this, the general principles of instruction, its useful expedients, and its modes of presenting various branches at various stages of progress, are all considered with reference to their basis in the science of education, of which they are only special phases and applications. In these days, when a passion for so-called methods prevails as panacea for all kinds of educational ills, it is well to emphasize the fact that the special kind of subject-matter and method of the group to which any study belongs should give the law to the mode in which it should be presented in instruction; and that, when this fact is kept clearly in view, any intelligent teacher may be trusted to devise expedients in his work, which are likely to succeed in his hands, but are hardly worth heralding as discoveries.

The manner in which educational institutions and systems should be organized, managed, and supervised, together with the subjects of school economy, school architecture, and school sanitation, has thus far been treated as a sequel to the art of instruction; though it might appropriately be made a distinct short course adapted to the needs of those who expect to be superintendents of schools.

As a supplement to the course just described, which has three lectures per week throughout the year, a conference has been established which has weekly sessions, and which, after successive modifications, has taken a form which seems well adapted to its purpose. One-third of the year is devoted to the investigation of selected educational subjects in the university library, the written reports on which form subtheses;
another third is given to the visitation of schools and discussion of their operations; and the remaining third is devoted to a discussion of the chief branches taught in secondary schools, of which each student selects one, leads in its discussion, and finally presents a written plan in accordance with which it should in his opinion be taught. Likewise, during the last half of the year, the time of one lecture per week is given to a quiz on previous lectures conducted by the members of the class. The two who are to conduct this each week, are appointed a week in advance, and the subjects of the quiz are assigned at the same time. The purpose of this exercise is to emphasize the necessity of thorough preparation for class-room work, to drill on the mechanism of the recitation, to give some practice in the formulation of appropriate questions and series of questions, and to afford some hint to the professor of the probable teaching power of the various members of the class. Incidentally, also, it secures a review of the lectures.

During the last three years, likewise, a pedagogical seminary has been offered to those select students who, having done all other work of the department, desire to go farther and discuss some of the thorough German works on pedagogy. The Allgemeine Pädagogik of Th. Waitz has usually been chosen; but at present, while one man contents himself with Waitz, another is working up a comparative view of the ideas of Bencke, Waitz, and Schrader. It is hardly necessary to say that these men are postgraduates.

To the history of education, forty lectures were at first assigned; but it was soon found that this allotment was by no means sufficient. Their plan contemplated, not only an account of the working out of national ideals of life in educational arrangements among the most important nations of earlier times, and of the gradual evolution of our present systems of education and means of culture, but also an analysis of the educational views of representative authors from Plato down to Herbert Spencer. At present, two lectures per week throughout the year are barely sufficient to accomplish this; and it is easy to see that a seminary could profitably be added
to this course, in which a few promising students might prosecute a thorough study of various phases of educational history.

Few students who did not intend to teach have hitherto selected any of the courses in pedagogy; and the tenacity of the old idea that success in teaching depends solely on knowledge of the subjects taught, or on a supposed inborn capacity to teach, is testified by the fact that not all who look to teaching as an occupation, consider it essential to make any professional preparation therefor. Of those who have had such courses, usually about forty each year, most are known to be teaching with gratifying success in secondary schools and colleges, or as superintendents of schools.

Samuel G. Williams.

Cornell University,
Ithaca, N. Y.