

to take account of the selective agencies at work in their student bodies. (See *School and Society*, vol. VII, pp. 178-180).

3. There is a large degree of unanimity in the answers given as to the purposes served by the system. Such a degree of uniformity as will relieve pressure upon members of a faculty and as will do justice to good students and encourage scholarly effort sums up nearly three fourths of the replies given here. Undoubtedly the matter of the weighting of the various letter grades, or credit for quality, concerning which data was proffered by a few who answered the questionnaire, is a very desirable step in colleges and universities but of less merit in the two-year normal school courses where the demands for specific knowledge and skill tend to limit the number of electives which can be offered.

4. One may venture the guess from the above that two other results are to be expected. The historical tendency of the lower schools to follow the practises of the higher, accentuated by the fact that the teachers who go out from our normal schools and colleges will have been accustomed to the new method, will undoubtedly in the next decade mean the wide adoption of rational, or group, grading in the high school and even in the elementary school. Similarly it is to be hoped and expected that the little entering wedge which has thus been driven by science into the age-long subjective traditional tendencies in educational practise will bear its fruit in other lines of development.

W. J. GIFFORD

A GRAY DAY

A gray, gray day—
The gray rain over all,
Wet leaves on the pavement,
Wet leaves on the wall;
A gray, gray day—
A nun-like veil of rain,
The only color in all the gray
Two bluebirds in the rain.

III

WHAT SHOULD BE ACCOMPLISHED IN ENGLISH IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

It is a very easy matter to say what *should* be done. The difficult part is to find a way to accomplish our purpose. But that we may have a goal on which to fix our eyes, let us see what may be reasonably expected of a child who has had the full English training in an elementary school.

In the first place he should be able to speak correctly in the sense of not making gross errors; to choose his words with some degree of care; to speak in a voice that is to a degree modulated; to speak clearly with the distinct idea of interesting his listeners, and making them hear each word. This does not mean that we shall try to develop trained speakers, but to train pupils to realize the importance of their manner of speaking to people and to make them wish to possess every possible grace in this direction.

This may be begun in the lower grades through story-telling, reading, etc., *done in the right way*. Too often pupils are allowed to speak in a voice too high or too low—allowed to speak in such a way as to be scarcely heard because of poor articulation. Since these are the wonderfully plastic, habit-forming years, we cannot afford to tolerate such conditions.

In the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades the material for developing correctness along these lines can be taken directly from the subject matter. Parallel reading may be given in history—stories about the men who are being studied, incidents of the special time under consideration. In geography, reports may be had from a variety of sources, as general reference books, geographical readers, and even magazines. Pupils enjoy getting up this extra material if given half a chance, and valuable help in the subject matter, as well as on the English side, will result.

In the upper grades a great deal can be done through oral composition, reports on magazine and newspaper articles, etc. Pupils in the seventh and eighth grades take great pride in this work. They wish to interest the class; so they keep their eyes open for interesting material. They are chagrined at making a gross error. They learn quickly the value

of clear, well-articulated speaking and the good effects of enthusiastic talking. They learn how to stand without seeming stiff and awkward. In their interest they forget to be self-conscious.

It is best, as a rule, for the teacher to give subjects for this work, but to make them such that the pupils can use their own experiences and observation.

The second division of what should be expected deals with written work.

Perhaps the greatest single point is to teach a child to *like* or *wish* to write. This can be done by giving him an opportunity to express his own experiences, his own ideals—*himself*. His ideas must be stirred and set in some kind of order, to be sure, but he must be let alone to express himself in his own way. Slowly his way can be changed into a standard way, but great care must be taken not to kill the individuality in his work.

Abstract subjects must be taboo. Imagine the consternation of a twelve-year-old on being told to write a composition on Truth. But give him an opportunity to tell about the plans his Boy Scout Chapter has on foot, about the big things it means to do, and he will enjoy doing it. Of course a pupil must have enough knowledge about a thing to be interested in it. When necessary, this knowledge may be given in class, or the pupil directed where to find it. Make-believe situations do not appeal to the normal child. The closer the work is linked with his natural interests, his play, his reading, his favorite pastimes, the greater will be the interest and real progress.

All this means that a teacher must keep in close touch with her class, their hobbies, their home life, their games and pastimes.

Nothing has been said about the purely mechanical side. There must be drill, drill, drill on ordinary forms and usage, sentence formation, and punctuation. This does not mean drills of a lifeless kind, but drills vitalized to the point where they take on real life, because their importance in getting a certain result has been highly emphasized.

The simple mechanics of the letter, both business and social, must have become second nature. This requires patience, perseverance, and hard work, but can be done. *Real* letters should be written—letters that take up a real situation, letters to somebody, letters that will be sent.

What shall we say about how much formal grammar a pupil must know when he enters high school? One point is certain: there is no use in teaching a pupil the parts for which a person in normal life will never have need. However, it is true, that nobody without a well-founded, workable knowledge of grammar is safe, either in his written or spoken English. Therefore the pendulum must not swing too far in the direction of leaving out grammar. A firm hold must be kept on the parts that relate directly to correct usage. By all means should a pupil have those parts that are *useful, practical, vital*; but he should be saved from those which serve only as material for mental gymnastics.

CARRIE M. DUNGAN

IV (a)

THE TRAINING SCHOOL

A PRACTICAL PLAN FOR THE TEACHING OF PHONICS

The study of phonics is not an end in itself. It is used in the elementary schools as an aid in reading and also as a help in spelling. Its purpose is to enable the child to pronounce words at sight. Without recognition of similarity of form and sound, the child is left without the power to recognize new words independently. He must go to the teacher for help. So phonics provides a key for pronunciation. It also shortens the task of reading and leads to independent work on the part of the child.

Clear enunciation is necessary to good work in phonics. Children will not get the idea of the sound, except as it is clearly spoken. It is sometimes necessary to tell and show the children how to use the organs of speech, in some of the more difficult sounds. The speech will eventually sink to a level of habit, so the aim must be to make the utterance of speech an unconscious habit.

A practical plan of how the phonics is taught in the primary grades may be useful at this point. The consonant sounds are taught by means of a story, bringing in the sounds in connection with the pictures rep-