

THE DYING CENTURY PASSED IN REVIEW

ONE HUNDRED YEARS' PROGRESS IN EDUCATION.

American School System, Originally Misunderstood and Even Resisted, Comes to Be Regarded as the Republic's Best Growth.

From the Chicago Times-Herald.

With an invested school fund of nearly \$120,000,000, a public school attendance of 15,000,000 pupils, and a total of nearly 425,000 teachers, the United States has marked the century for universal education as no other country has done. And it has done so not through the enthusiast might of the 472 universities and colleges of the country, with their 12,500 professors, 160,000 students, and a total investment of more than \$300,000,000. Almost one-fourth of the school children of the world are in American schools, and if one institution of government in the United States is unassailable in the presence of an American it is the system of public schools. Touching upon this national characteristic, Francis Adams, secretary of the National Education League, writing in 1875, says, with British wonderment: "That which impresses me most with regard to America is the grasp which the schools have upon the sympathy and intelligence of the people. Those of the cities are the lions of America. An intelligent foreigner, and also—as it would appear from recent criticisms—the unintelligent foreigner who visits the states, into whatever town he goes is taken to the schools as the first object of interest. Among public school education occupies the foremost place, and of all topics it is that upon which the American speaker is most ready and willing to enlarge. Public intelligence has recognized the fact that the highest and best interests of the nation are indissolubly bound up with the question. This is the first time in the history of the world that a patriotic interest in the welfare of the schools, owing to this popular feeling their organization possesses a spring and force and energy which are in strong contrast with the sluggish instincts of the parochial system. It is a vast proprietary scheme in which every citizen has a share.

ADJUNCTS FROM THE SCHOOL.

As an additional fact pointing to the public school as an institution may be cited the 253 public and private normal schools of the United States, which graduate more than 4,000 trained teachers every year. When the century was very young education for the masses was a serious topic in several countries. Bavaria, Prussia and Switzerland were assisting and compelling attendance upon public schools. The new government of the United States had received the impulse from the early colonies, especially Massachusetts. But the common school education of the first quarter of the century was vastly different to what it is at this end of it. The "three Rs" literally formed the curriculum of the schools. In 1835 Horace Mann, in New England, began the agitation of the subject of education. In the following year the national administration cleared the country of the debts contracted by the war of the revolution and through the Louisiana purchase. A considerable surplus remained in the national treasury and this was parceled out among the states in proportion to their representation in congress. This, in some states, was the foundation of the public school funds of today.

STATES AND SCHOOL FUNDS.

Eight states in the Union have no public school funds. They are Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, South Carolina and Georgia. As compared with these, there are Illinois with a fund of \$1,000,000, Missouri with \$16,000,000, Kansas with \$10,000,000, and Texas with \$7,000,000. The national government's "school section" specifications in the public lands of the West is a monument to its appreciation of the public school. Through this the sixteenth section in every township of thirty-six sections becomes the property of the state, to be disposed of to the credit of the permanent school fund. Ohio was the first state to receive such a grant, and that in 1803. All of the newer western states have profited by this gift of school lands, and in their acceptance of the public schools necessarily have escaped some of the disturbing conditions that came with the establishment of the first free schools. One of the governors of Virginia has been quoted as thanking God that the free school had not come to his state. In many sections of the country the first free schools were frowned upon as charitable experiments, while the first attempts at compulsory attendance on these schools were denounced as out of harmony with American institutions and the first index of a dangerous centralization of the future. Today, as some one has put it, the public avails itself as freely of the free school as it does of a free bridge on a highway, and in addition to compulsory attendance on the public schools most states have passed laws prohibiting the employment of children under a certain grammar-school age.

SCHOOLS OFFENSIVELY FREE.

Francis Adams, who has paid such a high tribute to the public schools of the United States, has drawn a comparison with the British free schools, in which he says that the elementary character of the British free school is never allowed to lapse in the minds of either parent or pupil, and this, he

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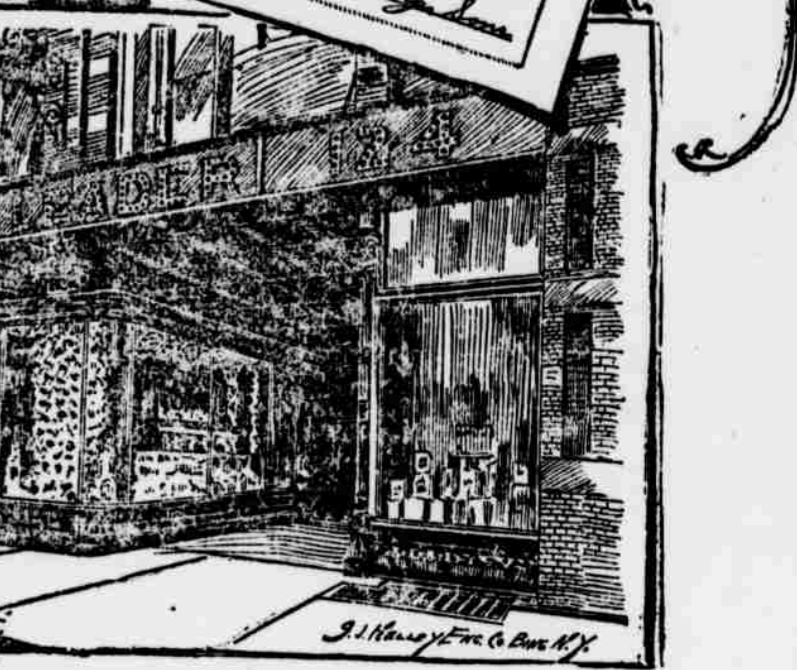
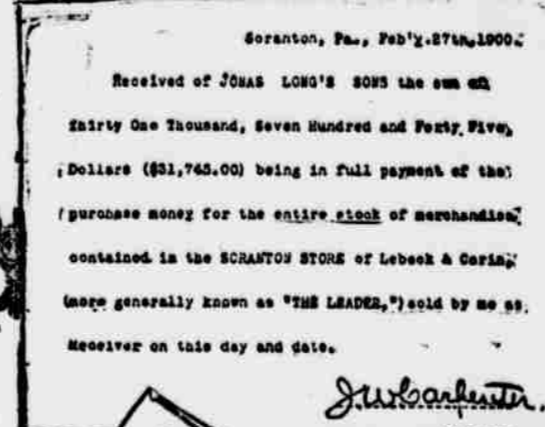
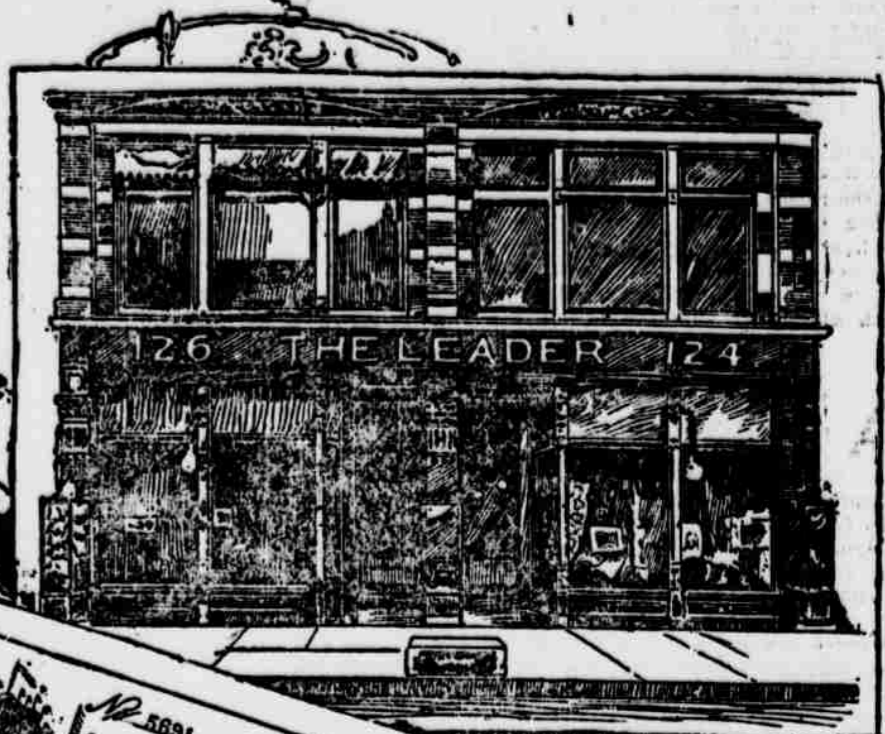
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says, has very nearly neutralized the work of this school system. If one thing were needed to show unmistakably the position of the American people with reference to the public schools it is the fact that the Bible has been excluded so widely from them. "The nation's book in the nation's schools" has been a plea of the churches, which have pointed to the Declaration of Independence and to the Constitution of the United States as recognizing the God of the Bible. And yet the growing sentiment of the people seems to be, "Take care of the education of the young and the Bible will take care of itself." It has been a significant fact of the century that wherever has come a broader liberty the demand for a broader education has followed it. In few countries of the world today could a public speaker claim the advantage of education as the sole privilege of a favored few of fortune. With a limited education once within the reach of the masses they have clamored for more. The "three Rs" no longer suffice. To the grammar grades of the United States public schools has been added the high school and to this the states have added state universities and agricultural colleges. Now manual training in the elementary schools is being realized and the domestic arts have been placed in the curriculum.

FIGURES FROM PHILADELPHIA.

As an indication of how persistently the demands for education have increased a few figures from the public schools of Philadelphia may serve. In 1897 the kindergarten was established in that city by private enterprise and the philosophy of Froebel and Pestalozzi put to the test. For four years the experiment was conducted successfully, and in 1833 the founders of the system appealed to the city council for aid. They got an appropriation of \$5,000 in that year and of \$15,000 in the next. In January, 1897, the kindergartens passed into the hands of the board of education and became an unquestioned part of the public school system. With one innovation established as a success another was easier, and in 1895 a three years' course of manual

training was adopted into the public schools and in 1888 the first graduating class was turned out. The Girls' Normal school had been experimenting in classes in sewing with such success that the board of education took the department under the wing of the public schools in 1885, and two years later a course in cooking was adopted from this normal school. And with all this there has been no complaint that the public school system of that city has been overweighed. Local self-government has been the principle behind the public school in the United States. Each state has been looked to by the general government as competent to judge of its own educational needs, and in like manner the state has looked to the county and the county to the city.

PUBLIC'S BEST INFLUENCE.

As a political proposition nothing could be more reassuring to the student of republican government than this disposition of republics to spread the influence of liberal education. On the face of it is an acknowledged honesty of purpose toward its people and a direct assurance of still wider liberties as education shall make them possible. With the spread of education in the past century, a broader liberty has come to the subjects of the most abject monarchy. The time is gone by when a people may be kept ignorant only that they may be subject, and the irresistible spread of education in these last hundred years is the most significant of prophecies for the future world republic of the dreamer.

Virtually there is no limit in the growth of the public school system in America. It will grow just to the extent that the people would have it grow. In pointing out the necessity for manual training in the schools of Chicago, Dr. H. H. Belfield was confronted with the argument that such a school was not legal. His reply was that this was no impediment; that if the school would be illegal under the existing law the people had every right and power to wipe out that law and put a law upon the statute books that would make the school legal. Thus,

with state universities everywhere and with the spirit of technical schools in the air, it would not require a great stretch of imagination for the optimist to see, as an accomplishment of the new century, a system of free technical education that shall do away with the old apprentice system to the trades. Europe in general is infected with the spirit of manual training for the young, recognizing the insistence of the educator who says that the training of the hand is a training of the brain, and that with manual training come better physiques and sounder brains than are to be found in the school that delves into text-books.

Japan, which has so suddenly awakened to a place among enlightened nations, is grappling with manual training schools and preparing to take a lead in them. It is the movement of this end of the century—a movement arising out of the question whether it is not better for the young man who is to be a machinist to have some knowledge of machinery from his school than to be stuffed with classics to the last hour of his school life and then be thrust into the world as an apprentice, ignorant of all in life that is to enable him to work his way in the world.

With the spread of schools has come a broader knowledge of educational methods. Perhaps the condition of humanity in adult life has been more ameliorated by liberality and progress than has been the condition of the pupil in school. The slave driver in the cotton fields of the old south was not more inexorable and exacting than the old-time school master, ruling with his rod of iron. He belonged to the age of the stoles—hard, unresponsive, inhuman in his narrowness. Punishment was regarded as necessary to enforce iron discipline and a part of this discipline was to exact the full measure of the task set to pupils. Severe whippings because a child failed in lessons were the rule.

Today, in many states, corporal punishment in the schools has been forbidden by law. Everywhere it is coming under the ban of public opinion. Not only this, but the pathological side of student life is being considered

as the dogmatic ruler of the old school never dreamed was a necessity. The hard-and-fast rule of classification, according to ages and to progress in studies, was never more in question than it is now. The physical nature of the child is considered as it never was before, holding fixedly to the belief that a sound mind is to be found only in a sound body. As between the precociously forward and the abnormally backward, the pathologist of the schools is undetermined as to which is the greater problem. But certainly he is as far from spurring the backward one to the pace of the forward one as he would be from practicing vivisection upon either. The movement of the day is toward classing both extremes as abnormal and treating them as such; toward separating them from the normal children of the classes and treating the backward or the forward according to his disposition and his physical and mental natures. There is inquiry as to how much the mentality of the forward one is sapping his physical strength and a question as to the causes of dullness in the other—whether it be nervousness, deafness or even lack of common nourishment at table.

FADS IN EDUCATION.

The cry of "fad" has marked the evolution of modern methods of education, and it would be strange if it were not so, and in some cases it were not deserved. But to one who looks unbiased upon the educational progress of the century there is the forceful assurance that the educator of the present has a far better appreciation of the ends sought than had the hard taskmaster of fifty years ago. The educator of today is moving toward an ideal whose mission is to be the preparing of the individual to merge with least friction into the great social world of which he is soon to be a unit. And not only this, but to make the unit as much value to the aggregate as possible to school training. It is recognized that the brain of a philosopher in the body of an invalid is a burden to society, far greater than might be the brain of a pigmy in the bodily frame of a Hercules; that something more utilitarian than a classical

education will have a tendency to smooth away many an economic ruffle that crops up in modern life. And just to the extent that this broad spirit is diffused in educational work, just to that extent may society be depended upon to recognize education as the foundation underneath it all.

NOVEL FRENCH TORPEDO.

Anchored and Operated from the Shore by Mechanical Towing.

From the London Mail and Military Record. The new towing torpedo, the Leger, the recent invention of a Frenchman, is an extremely fishlike weapon. Though it can be used much in the same way as the old Harvey torpedo, with which some of our ships were equipped before the advent of the Whitehead, by being towed at an angle under an enemy's ship (provided she allowed the operator to come near enough to do so), its principal function is the defense of ports and harbors. It differs from the Breanna, which to all intents and purposes is an automobile weapon, but at the same time it is much simpler, and probably much less expensive, though special arrangements have to be made for its use. An endless chain is stretched round four horizontal wheels or pulleys so as to cover the portion to be guarded, and is set in motion by means of a second chain, driven by an engine on shore. To the first mentioned chain a series of Leger torpedoes are attached at intervals, and the plan is that as the chain moves the torpedoes become the channel is constantly patrolled, as it were, by two lines of traveling mines moving in opposite directions, so that it would be practically impossible for a ship to pass through this guarded zone unscathed. Immediately the chain is stopped the torpedoes become harmless, for on the strain being taken off the towing lever it automatically folds back against the head, and in so doing moves a safety catch into such a position as to prevent the striker in the point of the torpedo moving. In this position it may be struck or handled with impunity, but it is

claimed that the moment it is towed through the water it becomes once more a deadly perit to any ship that may grace it. The Leger torpedo is constructed of Delta metal, which, while being as strong as steel, is not liable to rust and corrosion from immersion in water. The charge is of cylindrical shape, and is easily inserted and removed from the head of the torpedo, so that the apparatus can be stored with perfect safety ready to hand, while the charges are placed out of harm's way in a magazine. Other advantages claimed for it are those of automatically adjusting itself to the depth required, and, on encountering the defensive nets of an ironclad, of assuming a vertical position, diving beneath them and striking the hull with its point as soon as it is clear. The great point in favor of the new weapon would appear to be its simplicity; but, on the other hand, it does not seem impossible for an enemy to do damage or destroy the endless chain as to stop its motion, when the whole set of torpedoes would at once become innocuous. Nor, for that matter, does it seem very improbable that its workings might be affected by the explosion of one of its own torpedoes.

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