

THE NORMAL SCHOOLS.

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FOR some time the educational papers of Pennsylvania have been calling attention to the Normal Schools of the State, the character of their work, their inability to give an education broad and extended enough to meet the requirements of teachers at the present time, etc., etc.

The interest awakened by the discussion of this subject warrants its introduction in a College paper, and this more especially, since it seems conceded by all that the Colleges of the State must take up the work of training teachers for the common schools.

The ventilation of this whole subject was begun by Dr. E. H. Magill, President of Swarthmore College. He believes that teachers require the same careful and elaborate preparation for their work that is required for entering upon the other professions. He also considers the courses of study in our Normal Schools inadequate and particularly deficient, because the attempt is there made to train, in methods of instruction, those who are not familiar with the *subjects* to be taught; after quite an elaborate statement of the deficiencies existing in the Normal School system and practice he suggests what is termed the "new plan." This he presents in *six* propositions:

1. Stop all appropriations to Normal

schools, and cancel the mortgages held against these schools, as they were built by individuals and corporations, on the faith of the state that they would continue to be State institutions.

2. Open all Colleges in the state to men and women on equal terms.

3. Establish professorships of pedagogics in certain colleges (say ten or more) at the expense of the state.

4. Give state aid to these colleges in proportion to the number of students in pedagogics in each.

5. Require all preparing to teach to take the course in pedagogics for say the last two years of the college course.

6. Require a regular diploma, and the certificate in pedagogics combined, for all to be employed as teachers after a fixed date, say 1895 or 1900; and subject such to no further examination.

This "new plan" of Dr. Magill's has been commented on by a number of men more or less prominent in the educational work of the state. First among these is Dr. Wickersham, the father of the present Normal School system. He, of course, condemns the "new plan" and endeavors to show that the present system is not only an admirable one but perfectly adapted to the needs of our teachers in every particular. Among the most elaborate objections he offers to Dr. Magill's plan is this—

That lectures on theoretical pedagogics may be delivered in a college with good results as a department of instruction in psychology or metaphysics, but such a course supplies a very small part of the preparation a teacher needs. It is far more important that he be allowed to see the best teaching, to teach himself under directions,