

The most important thing before the professional educators to-day is the broadening going on so rapidly in their conception of their duties to their profession and to the public. Too many have thought of their work as limited to schools for the young and during a short period of tuition. The true conception is that we should be responsible for higher as well as elementary education, for adults as well as for children, for educational work in the homes as well as in the school-houses, and during life as well as for a limited course. In a nutshell, the motto of the extended work should be "Higher education for adults at home through life."

To the great mass of boys and girls the school can barely give the tools with which to get an education after they are forced to begin their life work as bread-winners. Few are optimistic enough to hope that we can change this condition very rapidly. The great problem of to-day is, therefore, to carry on the education after the elementary steps have been taken in the free public schools. There are numerous agencies at work in this direction, reading-rooms, reference and lending libraries, museums, summer vacation and night schools, correspondence and other forms of extension teaching, reading circles and study clubs, but by far the greatest agent is good reading, and the greatest work before the schools is to send out their pupils with more practical skill in the use of books and libraries, with a stronger taste for good reading and a corresponding dislike for the weak, frivolous and sensational, and with a genuine love for the best literature.

This view is taking strong hold on all sides; in New York the regents have just appointed an expert in literature to give his whole time to the development of this needed inspirational teaching in the 640 high schools and academies of the State. At the

National Educational Association in the past week the demand was officially recognized by unanimous vote in amending the constitution to provide for a distinct department devoted to libraries as a reading factor in education. The end seems at hand of an educational system which contents itself with teaching to read, and then fails to see that the best reading is provided, when undesirable reading is so cheap and plentiful as to be a constant menace to the public good. As a great thinker has said, this is exactly analogous to teaching our young children the expert use of a knife and fork and then failing to provide them with food.

MELVIL DEWEY.

The progress of public schools is retarded more by the failure of the public to keep up with the rapidly advancing educational ideals than by any other cause. There are comparatively few people who yet believe that there is a science of education, and therefore every parent believes he understands how to train children as well as the teachers or superintendent. This makes advancement along the line of the new education somewhat slow.

The greatest difficulty in the way of public school teachers in cities is the lack of opportunity to develop the individual self-activity of their pupils. This results chiefly from the fact that the pupils are graded and are therefore taught most of the time in large classes. The developments of the next decade will be along the lines of individual growth, and securing the active co-operation of parents. Education will become the central thought around which the home, the church and the business leaders will concentrate their efforts for the development of the community and the State.

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