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EDITORIAL

June, 1918

A New System of Education Needed

JUNE is a month of no little importance to mothers. It is a time of big issues for the young folks. It brings with it the conclusion of the scholastic year and all that that portends. For the more advanced student it often means the parting of the ways. They have passed the formative period and stand ready for the decisive step. It is in June, not September, that parents should assist them to formulate their plans for the future.

It is assistance they require, not the announcement on the part of their parents of a pre-arrangement that takes into consideration not at all, any desire or ambition the young folks may have been cherishing.

It is more than remarkable that under the present system, the children of to-day are achieving anything at all in the way of a practical education. They—the vast majority of them—go through public school under the "specialize in everything" system, struggle through high school on practically the same plan, and face university with a problem before them bigger than any of us imagine. They have given equal attention to nearly every subject, and the result is that each seems either equally attractive or distasteful to them. But they are far too old then, to reconstruct, too old to do anything but make the best of a bad job and blunder on.

At certain periods in the school life of a child its parent could do much to guide its particular genius—just, for instance when it passes out of the lower school. But, for the most part the remedy lies with the Government.

"I COULDN'T draw a straight line without a ruler, if I were to try for a year," a child confided to his parent recently. "I got only 20 per cent. in drawing, and that will pull down my percentage on the whole. It isn't fair, mother."

It most certainly is not!

An older child added: "And I just can't write the way they want me to. I can write so that it can be understood, and you can just bet I can get things down faster than a good many of the good writers. They gave me 24 out of 50 marks on my last exam., and only for being low in that subject I'd have come first in the class."

No one would be so radical as to demand that no attention be given writing, or drawing or other such subjects. A child must be taught these things for obvious reasons. But no child should be barred from distinction because he cannot attain a high standard of excellence. How many leaders among men

in the past and at the present, can be commended for their writing?

The same argument applies in a more restricted sense to every other subject. It is almost safe to say that no two children come into this world with the same ability for the

Kitty O'Neil

*O a bit of a dance in an Irish street,
Hogan was there and Hennessy,
Many a colleen fair and sweet,
And Kitty O'Neil, she danced with me.
Kitty O'Neil, with eyes of brown
And feet as light as the flakes of snow;
Was it last year, O Kitty aroon,
Or was it a hundred years ago?*

*Hogan is out on a Texan plain,
Hennessy fell in Manila fight.
And I—I am back in New York again
In my old armchair at the Club to-night.
And Kitty O'Neil—the snow lies white
On the turf above her across the sea,
And stranger colleens are dancing light
Where Kitty O'Neil once danced with me.*

*O the Antrim glens, and the thrush's song,
And the hedges white with the blossom-
ing may!*

*Many a colleen tripping along,
But none so fair as the one away.
"Musha, God save you," I to them say,
"God save you kindly," they answer me—*

*I shiver and wake in the dawning grey,
And Kitty O'Neil lies over the sea.*

*O a bit of a dance in an Irish street,
Hogan was there and Hennessy,
Many a colleen, fair and sweet,
And Kitty O'Neil she danced with me.
Kitty O'Neil with eyes of brown,
And feet as light as the flakes of snow—
Was it last year, O Kitty aroon,
Or was it a hundred years ago?*

NORAH M. HOLLAND

subject, but it should not be required of every student that equal prowess be attained in all.

A STEP in advance has been made in larger centres by the establishment of Technical Schools. At these institutions students may choose a variety of subjects and studies that particularly appeal to them, and specialize in these. The results achieved constitute a telling argument in favor of a wider adoption of this system.

The problem is a big one and an important one. It may involve a total re-organization of our provincial departments of education, a total overthrow of the present system. But the war has demonstrated that it is only necessary to get a grasp of weighty problems, in order to solve them.

Many thousand of the soldiers will return with the intention of continuing their education from the point at which they interrupted it, to enlist. It is a sad fact that a great many of them will not have the same physical ability to make this possible. Special courses—ideas that have had no precedents—must, of necessity, be worked out.

If a partial reconstruction of our educational system will be necessary then, is it not consistent and feasible, that the Government should plan now for a more practical and practicable organization that will affect all our schools—low and high—as well as the universities?

THE cause of truancy, of the utter disregard on the part of many children, for school and study of all kinds, lies in the fact that they are given no encouragement in the subjects they prefer, and for which they are best suited, but, instead are censured for their inability to grasp, with the same degree of efficiency, every subject.

A teacher can always decide whether a pupil is weak in one particular subject through inattention, laziness, or through a lack of fitness that is no fault of his own. The first two reasons can be corrected or dealt with as special cases direct. But the last is beyond the average teacher. The departmental regulations call for a certain percentage in that subject, and that percentage must be obtained before the pupil can be declared successful. What is the result? Absolute discouragement on the part of the child.

"Only for being low in that subject, I'd have come first," said the child. And because he conscientiously knows he can never hope to improve in that study, he often drifts into a general carelessness.

A new system of education in Canada would solve many a mother's problem, and produce many a clever citizen.

same study. Where would be our individualism, were that the case?

Some children revel in history, in literature, in English generally; others find these subjects distasteful. Some excel in mathematics; others abhor them.

Every child must, for his own good, and future use, have a general knowledge of every