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Our School Department.

"Educators Personally."

BY "PUBLICUS."

AN American educational periodical which is doing excellent work—the "Journal of Education" (Boston) to be explicit—has fallen into the habit of running almost continuously, a series of articles entitled "Educators Personally."

One of these articles, for instance, told about a man "who came out of the West with a vision," a man who believed in the soil and what could be done with it. His name was Perry Greeley Holden, one-time director of the Extension Department of the Iowa State Agricultural College of Ames, and he saw, with his mind's eye, the picture of waving cornfields in Iowa, every one of them growing two stalks of corn—and twice as high—where only one stalk had grown before. Iowa is in the corn belt, but all of its farmers did not know how to grow corn. Holden preached and demonstrated, demonstrated and preached. "Test, don't guess," he said. "Know before hand that every kernel of seed you plant shall grow."—Makes one think of that Ottawa Valley farmer called Meldrum who, long ago, proved the doctrine of better seed by setting his big family of boys and girls at selecting the grain.—But to return: Holden preached good seed, good soil and constant cultivation, and, we are told, had before long doubled the annual corn crop of the State. . . . He was an educator, agriculturally.

In another issue the Journal told the story of Neil C. Macdonald, who retired recently from the State Superintendency of North Dakota with a record for country school progress that will make him long remembered. Here it is, in brief: More consolidated schools in the open country than in any other state in the union; more teachers' cottages in proportion to the population than in any other state; more country school nurses than in all the rest of the union; a larger per cent. of increase in state appropriations for rural schools than has ever been given in any other state; a greater per cent. of increase in music in rural schools than was ever known in any other state; a greater per cent. of increase in service of hot school luncheons in winter; a greater increase in standardized schools. . . . Just pause over those items long enough to realize what they mean.

And other issues bring acquaintance with those wonderful women Josephine Corliss Preston, Ella Flagg Young, and Emily Griffith, each of whom deserves a whole chapter to herself. . . . So many more there have been, also,—educators, not just school teachers.

For a difference is implied, even though it may not always exist *de facto*.

One sometimes wishes that word "school-teacher" were banished to the forgotten realms where the dodo, and the great auk, and the mammoth, and the veltrom, and the ichthyosaurus and the pterodactyl be! . . . "School-teacher!"—but one remove, in the association of ideas, from the "schoolma'am" or "school-master," the long suffering, half-educated, tortured, insignificant individual who once "kept" school.

There is some dignity about the idea of being an "educator!"—something powerful enough to make the school-teacher throw up his shoulders (or "hers"—drat our pronouns!) and realize his importance in the scheme of things. And yet, and yet, not every school-teacher is entitled to be called "educator."

Speaking very seriously, may we repeat again our conviction that there is no man or woman in any country more important as the real Educator. We fail to realize the importance of his or her work because we cannot, as a rule, see the results immediately. Of necessity the work is slow. It is akin to the way of evolution. And yet the Educator is working not only with the human material in hand but also with unborn generations. Even, also, in the day of the

children now sitting on the benches how far may not the influence of the Educator run? To use the old simile of the pebble thrown into the pool, his words and his example, the inspiration kindled by him, may spread out and out, like the widening circles on the pool, touching men and women farther and yet farther afield, moulding their lives, extending their influence. There is not a great man in the world to-day who did not one time sit at the feet of the teacher in a classroom.

It is a matter for regret that the examples of individuals given above, by name, include not one Canadian. There have been, and there are, real Educators in Canada, but the information regarding them is not at present in the hands of the writer.

But, after all, what matter? In all things good or beautiful—true education, high character, helpful science, music, literature, art, brotherhood—there can be no dividing line. Humanity is, and ever will be, greater than nationality.

In closing: Might we not make more of "Educators, Personally" in Canada? Might we not give more public appreciation to the man who is really trying to educate along high and right lines? Should we not accord to him the position of importance which will guarantee him support and a hearing? In short—should we not demonstrate that we ourselves are able to see the value to the children, the state, the world, of "Educators, Personally"?

For such recognition must inspire any Educator, man or woman, to greater effort and so greater results,—there is nothing that helps like encouragement.

A year or so ago, in a small American town, a teacher who had taught most of the men and women living there, celebrated an advanced birthday.—Rather the town celebrated it for her, for a public holiday was proclaimed and there were great doings, centering about the smiling old lady who had meant so much to the lives of the celebrators and the prosperity of the town. . . . Some day, in Canada, we may begin such recognition of our "Educator Personally," not always, perhaps, waiting for the "advanced" birthday. Then, and possibly not until then will the teachers themselves, as a class, recognize the full scope and dignity of their work, and a definite goal as the objective of capable teaching and an enthusiastic recognition of a great responsibility.



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