

persons destitute of professional preparation and of experience in teaching, and that a number of our schools should be under the independent control of persons who have not even submitted to the test of a literary examination and whose qualifications are entirely unknown, is certainly not satisfactory. These defects affect chiefly our small elementary rural schools. It is here, however, that the education of many children begins and ends. It is here that the children are found during the most plastic and most important educational period of their lives, when they require the most skilful treatment. The results which follow from this state of things are simply disastrous. These untrained and inexperienced experimenters fail to make their teaching interesting and attractive; hence the lack of interest on the part of parents and pupils, followed by irregular attendance. They fail to maintain discipline in an even and judicious manner, and they consequently develop a spirit of disobedience. They fail to give satisfaction and hence frequent changes of teachers. They fail to instruct the children, and hence the unsatisfactory condition of many pupils in the county districts after an attendance at school for several years. These facts not only affect the interests of that large proportion of our pupils whose education is confined to these schools, but the work of our superior schools is seriously affected by the inferior preparation which many of the pupils receive in these schools.

The whole scheme for our Superior Education must remain unsatisfactory so long as the arrangements for laying the foundations of an education in our elementary schools leave so much to be desired.

Not the least serious result of our present condition is the depression and discouragement which young teachers experience from having difficult work thrown upon them for which they are not prepared either by previous training or experience. Not being able to conduct their work with pleasure to themselves or profit to their pupils, they naturally drift away from the work of teaching as a disagreeable and thankless occupation. Such experiences deter others from even entering upon this work, and thus our schools are deprived of a most desirable class of candidates, who, under favorable circumstances, would have made successful teachers.

I have no desire to depreciate our teaching staff. They are doing all that could be expected of them under the circumstances in which they are situated. The efforts made by a large number of our teachers in elementary schools to qualify them-