

of a review of the difficulties which, at present confront the country school teacher, but I also append a few suggestions which if carried out will do much toward establishing conditions under which a teacher may accomplish better results. Here is the problem. Let us take the average country school; in this the pupils vary in age anywhere from six years of age to twenty, in disposition anywhere from the quiet, thorough-going student to the impulsive, hot-headed "incorrigible," in ability and teachableness anywhere from stupidity to cleverness. This brings up the difficulty of discipline, but there is also another difficulty in the matter of teaching which is of even greater importance; there are in the average country school at least five grades ranging from Grade I. to Grade V. inclusive, besides there may be some preparing for examinations such as Normal School entrance, etc. In addition to this we very often find that in the ungraded school a pupil does not always grade at the end of the year, but the grading overlaps, so to speak, and he is put into the next higher grade sometime during the year, which necessitates another class, making sometimes as many as eight classes. Now in each class there is an average of at least four subjects—the lower grades may not have more than reading, number and writing, but when Grade III. is reached the number is increased to include Geography, History, Nature Study, etc., and in the higher grades Geometry, Algebra, etc., making an average of at least four subjects which, multiplied by eight, the number of classes, makes thirty-two classes to be heard in the day. Some well-meaning men will say and have often said: "We should have more *teaching* in our country schools." How can we have teaching under conditions such as these, where the utmost time that can be given to one subject in each class is nine minutes in the ungraded country school? It cannot all be done, and though the task demanded of the poor little country "school marm" is impossible of accomplishment yet she is paid for her work at the rate of little more than sixty cents per day, and this rate has increased scarcely any during the last ten years, notwithstanding the fact that the price of living has gone up at least two hundred per cent. But the point I wish to make is the difficulty of the task with which the country school teacher of today is confronted. And new subjects are year after year being added which increase the already insupportable burden on the teacher. In view of these facts, and they are facts, is it any wonder that each year more and more teachers are leaving their native province to obtain better positions and better salaries in the West?

Compare these conditions to those which obtain in the graded school where each teacher has one grade only. Under conditions such as these *teaching* worthy of the name can be done, and the child can be given a good education—something more can be done than just merely

the hearing of lessons and "mumbling of dead formulae"; the elements of an advanced education can be given and the child's feet placed on the road to liberal learning, which shall not only vastly increase his usefulness and earning power, but shall also give him the capacity of working much more enjoyably. These conditions render it possible for him to receive the benefits of a scientific education which, in agriculture, etc., is necessary to the proper applications of the workings of Nature and co-operation with Nature's laws. Also, from the inspiration of larger classes he receives an incentive to work, and through good natured emulation his ambition is prompted to excel. A consolidated graded school is much more easily governed than an ungraded one because its organization is such that pupils of the same years and attainments are together thus eliminating the disciplinary difficulties which occur when small and large pupils are mingled together in the same room.

III.—From the standpoint of the parent.

All parents naturally desire the best for their children. They sacrifice themselves and toil and suffer that their children may inherit the land and carry on the world's work; they deny themselves surrounding enjoyments that their children may gain the means of earning a livelihood; all this is for the benefit of the state and of humanity in general; therefore it is a duty which the state owes to the parents that it should supply the means of giving to their sons and daughters an efficient education. The state is already more than willing to do its part, and in the measure in which the parents co-operate with the state along lines of educational betterment to that degree will the existing condition of things be improved. A consideration which affects the parent is that of the safety and comfort of the children especially during the cold winter months.

Under the present system of things the child suffers hardship and this naturally adds to the parents' trouble and anxiety for its welfare. Also the parent may suffer from the defects in the teaching; if it depends on the child to get up the lessons, as it must necessarily do in the inefficient district school, then the parent is for a certain time compelled to be teacher and to instruct the children and help along the work taken up at school. Now this is all very well, but if we hire teachers should we not have favorable conditions under which they can *teach* and where the education in the subjects of the school curriculum can be carried along without dependance upon the teaching of the parents. Even this dependance itself often proves to be very ill-founded for we see parents who take no interest whatever in the work of the school nor in the education of their children, and if the teaching is not done, as it *cannot* be done in the ungraded country school, then the instructors of the young are wasting the most valuable part of the life of the child,