Community Ideals and Boy Life

(By J. W. Storey).

Part III,

Of the primary institutions that are co-operating in the life of the boy today, without a doubt the public school is the most efficient and most serviceable. The public school is the prominent socializing institution of our modern democracy. It is, potentially, probably the most powerful institution for the ushering in of Democracy. "The new conception of education is to so organize the schools, as to reach all the people who need inspiration and assistance to surmount the high and difficult places in life, and thereby extend to them the real blessings of a democratic government." (Foght).

It is not a charity shaken out of the gold sacks of rich taxpayers, but an atmospheric, inalienable right, a blessing to be shared alike by the sons of poverty and the sons of plenty.

Because of its varied and continuous contact with boys during the habit-forming years, it is the most potent factor, aside from the home, in the institutional character building of boys.

The school itself, the teacher, the pupils, the studies, and voluntary activities, are all important factors in moulding the boy. It may be worth while to enumerate some of the character-making influences that the modern school is emphasizing. Among them are: the beauty of the building and its surroundings, the care of the growing plants by the scholars, and the supervision of the play hour by the teachers, celebration of patriotic days and the birthdays of heroes. The new curriculum, with all its "fads and frills," makes more distinctly for character than did to end one. Manual training, physical training, literature, science and nature study are especially valuable. In pursuing such studies, the spirit of wonder,

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reverence and humility, the love of accuracy, truth, enthus'asm, honour, and self-mastery are inculcated.

In most schools the type of ethical teaching is much loftier than that of the street and indeed of many homes. The heroes exalted are the poets, the seers and those who lived and died for others. The teaching is also more wise than in the Sunday school, for it is done not by sermonizing, but by making each child discover moral truth for himself.

It is a commonplace to say that the teacher is the greatest moral force in the school. From the standpoint of the needs of adolescent boys there is considerable cause for alarm because the lure of commercial success and the competition of women have produced a feminization and lowering of masculine quality of the teaching profession. The danger is that our boys shall be taught, as one writer suggests, only "by young girls and weak men."

The teacher today in Canada has little to remind him that he is working under the eye of the nation and for the nation's good. When Germany's leaders set themselves to Prussianize German education, and to drill into the mentality of the whole people that the state is supreme and that each individual must regard himself as a cog in a vast machine, they did not trust to chance. They forged a system and the result was seen when the whole nation responded to the call of its masters and plunged the world into blood and desolation. Germany has given to the world a clear and unmistakeable illustration of the power of a coherent national system of education having a single aim, and consistently maintained through a series of years. It has been demonstrated that ideals for a nation can be wrought out by national leaders and then made universally effective within the nation by means of an educational system. The outlook, ideals and ambitions of a great nation can be transformed and made both distinctive and dynamic inside of two generations, through a national educational system. No wonder then that Von Moltke in 1871, riding at