

For the REVIEW.]

**Dr. J. G. Fitch on Education and the State.**

The July number of the *Contemporary* contains Dr. J. G. Fitch's presidential address before the annual congress of the Teachers' Guild. Its subject is "Education and the State." It is of more than local interest. After an interesting sketch of the history of the part which the State has played in the education of the English people, Dr. Fitch considers the question: "What, having regard to the idiosyncrasy and genius, the past history and traditions of our people, and the composite structure of our social life, is the form in which corporate and imperial influences may wisely be made available in England for the better organization of public instruction." His remarks upon the answer to this question are applicable not merely to England, but to English speaking communities. The French system of public instruction, with its systematically graded schools, its logically ordered courses of instruction, its officials, teachers, inspectors, appointed, removable, and paid directly or indirectly by the State—in a word, its entire system ordered and controlled from a central bureau—is in many respects to be admired, and is suited to the soil of France. Englishmen, however, though "they recognize that logical completeness is a good thing, have convinced themselves that there are better things still, and that freedom, variety and enthusiasm are worth purchasing at the expense of symmetry."

"One cannot look forward with any enthusiasm to a time when law shall formulate the work of every school, or lay down programmes of primary, secondary and higher education, which shall be applicable to all places and all local circumstances alike."

"Nor can we hope much from any attempt on the part of the central authority to decide what books shall be used in all institutions recognized as public schools."

That book is best for each teacher from which he can teach most effectively, which corresponds to his ideal and fits the special character of his own lessons. To force upon all teachers alike the use even of a good book would be to repress originality, to stereotype mere routine, and to deprive the best teachers of much of their interest in their work."

"Let us grant that it is the first business of a university to produce cultivated and well-trained men; there is also a secondary object to be fulfilled, the ennobling of the higher professions, the establishment of right relations between the liberal and formative studies proper to a seat of learning, and the claims of active, professional life. What we need is another faculty, that of didactics or of education. Considering

how large and increasing a number of undergraduates look forward to the teaching profession, it is not too much to hope that ere long all the universities of the United Kingdom will recognize the business of teaching as one of the learned professions, on the same footing as law, divinity and medicine, and will make such public provision for the future practitioners as may justify the State in confiding to those great corporations a large share of duty in the organizing of a completer system of public instruction."

"On the very practical question of the relative merits of inspection and examination as alternative methods of estimating a school, the last word has not yet been spoken. . . . The object of examination is to test the proficiency of the scholars and the thoroughness of the teaching. The object of inspection is to observe and criticise methods and organization, and to see that a given programme is carried out. Now the first duty requires for its fulfilment knowledge, accuracy, skill in questioning, and perfect fairness of judgment. But inspection requires higher qualifications—insight, tact, sympathy, a full knowledge of many methods, perfect freedom from "fads" and prejudices, and a determination not to be misled in a final estimate by superficial impressions. These qualities are much rarer than the others, and, taking the average of human instruments, you are in far greater danger of an unsound or inequitable judgment from a general inspection than from a detailed examination. Inspection implies a criticism of methods; examination seeks only to ascertain the progress of the scholars. . . . Probably it is rather by a wise combination of both processes than by exclusive reliance on either, that an equitable and efficient test of school work can best be secured."

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**The Teacher.**

[By Henry Harvey Stuart, Principal of the Benton, Carleton County, Graded School.]

The school-teacher occupies a most exalted position in society. The importance of his office is scarcely second to that of the parent and religious adviser. Between the ages of four and six the majority of the country's children come to him to be educated. The parent resigns, for about thirty hours a week, all control of his children to the teacher. Coming to him at that tender age, when their wills have scarcely begun to develop, a vast responsibility is thrown upon the teacher's shoulders. He has the moulding of the characters of the rising generation of men and women in his hands. How glorious a task to attempt the development of their minds and bodies in the right direction! How infamous for a teacher, intentionally or otherwise, to divert those young minds from the path of honor and