

SOME NEEDED EDUCATIONAL REFORMS

This subject I have selected for my address is, "Some Needed Educational Reforms." I intend to present a plea for the reconstruction of the relations of the main branches of our educational system and to add some suggestions for the improvement of the status of the Public and the High School teacher.

I. RELATION BETWEEN THE PUBLIC AND THE HIGH SCHOOLS.

This relation between the Public and the High Schools, although more satisfactory than it was twenty years ago, is not yet what it should be. The old Grammar Schools—the forerunners of the modern High Schools—were originally for the children of the official and governing classes; and, notwithstanding the gradual popularization of the High Schools under Dr. Ryerson and his successors, the notion that these schools are for the special benefit of the well-to-do and the aristocratic has not yet wholly died out. Now, what the position of the High School should be in our system depends altogether on our definition of popular education. On this subject, let me quote President Eliot, of Harvard University, than whom there is no abler exponent of the claims of liberal culture. According to him, "The fundamental object of democratic education is to lift the whole population to a higher plane of intelligence, conduct, and happiness." And again: "Democratic institutions cannot be safe until a majority of the people can be trusted to observe accurately and state precisely the results of their observations; but, above all, to draw just conclusions."

Put into practice, President Eliot's theory implies free education and a continuous system from the Kindergarten to the end of the University courses in arts. Only here and there as yet do we find state-supported Universities in the United States, but we do find everywhere, so far as my knowledge goes, free primary and secondary schools—Grammar Schools, High Schools, and Technical Schools.