

outlet for itself, will be complete. Add to these things the introduction of greater range of studies, and, in a less formal way, the introduction of consultation and coöperative methods between high school and college, and we have a broad, if sketchy, picture before us of the great changes wrought in the college curriculum and methods, in virtue of the conditions created by the high school. It is not empty conceit for the high school representative to congratulate himself upon having been an important factor in bringing these changes about.

But the high school has been an intermediary in another direction. It has not only brought a pressure upon the college, which has turned the latter to walk more closely parallel with life, but it brought pressure from the college and discharged it upon the lower grades. This reflex influence upon primary and intermediate work has arisen upon its face, through the need of securing a better preparation for college, doing more work in the same time and doing it better. But the outcome has been to give a deeper and a higher preparation for life to those who never see or think of college—who never even reach the high school.

The weakest point in our school system has been the grades from the fourth to the eighth, whether tested by methods used or results reached. Before this time the child has had a sense of power in learning to read and write; after this, instead of using his powers to master new fields, he goes on reading and writing. He has been gaining skill in drawing, in mastering numbers—he now goes on drawing and figuring. At the outset he has had the delight of an introduction to a new and expanding world; suddenly, the horizon walls shut down, and the child is confined to filling in his narrow world with more or less repugnant details. From the satis-

faction that comes by contact with the new, he has been switched off into the dissatisfaction that comes with the endless turning over of the old. The benumbing mechanical influence which is the serious evil of the average American school to-day is in full operation.

But a change has been occurring, and evidences multiply that the demand for the change is reaching an acute point. Within a dozen years, the university has thrown back an additional year's work upon the high school; within twenty, it has probably thrown back almost two years, besides demanding better work in quality. The high school has been able to meet this demand, and will be able to meet further demands which the college is likely to make, only by turning back and demanding better work, and work different in spirit and newer in method, from the lower grades. Much of this movement is in promise, rather than in evidence. But the signs are many and multiplying. There is the introduction into the lower grades of geometry and algebra, taught by rational methods, in place of the numerical contortions of the average arithmetic; the substitution of literary masterpieces as wholes for the grind of continuing to learn to read broken off fragments after one has already known how to read several years¹; the acquaintance with history at something like second-hand, at least, instead of the memorizing of text-books; the extension of science work and the introduction of simple experimental and observational methods; finally, the introduction of foreign language work (whether ancient or modern, I will not dogmatize) to that degree found to be advis-

¹ It is a common statement (and a common fact) that the child, upon entering the eighth grade does not read aloud with as much ease and effectiveness as upon entering the fourth.