

directly by the State, and in the second place that a large proportion of the present indebtedness has been created by the demand of the State that the buildings, supply of apparatus, and general professional outfit, must come up to a fixed standard. The school having but one hundred students is compelled to have as complete an outfit as the one with three times as many, even in the matter of faculty. Again, the competition with ten schools in the field has been considerably closer than with but three or four; as a consequence no young school has been able to make itself self-sustaining in the first few years of its existence.

"What we think the State of Pennsylvania ought to do, is to follow the lead of some of the more progressive sister States on this Normal school question in giving to every student preparing for the profession of teaching in good faith, free instruction. The amount needed to pay the current expenses incident to the matter of instruction would be but little greater than that now required for the usual appropriations. But even were it considerably more, why should not a great State like ours, with a free school system second to no other in the Union, be willing to strengthen this right arm of her public school system with the requisite appropriations if she can thereby add to the efficiency of her schools and promote the cause of education?"

The essayist then turns to the professional work done in the Normal schools:—

"No one claims that they should be wholly academic in character, for that would place them on the same educational plane as high schools and academies. The only question that can arise is this: Shall they be what is called strictly professional in character, or shall they mingle academic and professional instruction? The opponents of Normal schools have always held that these schools should be strictly professional, but back of this argument lies a grievance, and we shall have to exclude this class of persons from the discussions, being incompetent to decide on the question. Of the friends of the system not a few have claimed that the academical work of the school should be relegated to the high school and the academy. But even with these one important fact is either overlooked or forgotten; it is this, that teaching pupils in the ordinary high school or academy with the view of either imparting knowledge or securing discipline is a vastly different thing from teaching the same facts and principles to those who, as teachers, expect to impart this knowledge and training to others, and this truth must govern the teaching throughout all the departments of a Normal school. The academic work is thus modified, and becomes in itself both academic and professional.

"The Normal school professors and teachers that fail to appreciate this important fact are, to put it mildly, not prepared for their work. Possibly there are such teachers in every school; that, then, is a local defect. I am prepared to say that I doubt the efficiency of any Normal school that advertises to do professional work only; and I am willing to go further, and say that no Normal school ought to send out young men and women as graduates who have not been taken carefully over the ground which they are expected to cover in their ordinary school work, either as teachers or as superintendents. A knowledge of the branches which they expect to teach these young men and women must have. How shall that knowledge be acquired? The opponents of Normal academic instruction reply, 'In the high school.' Now, I have a great deal of faith in high schools, but I give it as our experience that graduates of even high schools, and we have had many of them, require at least a year of instruction to complete the Normal school course, and this is the academic work as well as the professional.

"If I were to make a criticism on this class of pupils, I should say that almost without exception we find them inclined to

memorize rather than think and reason for themselves, and we are compelled to reorganize entirely their mode of study. No class of students that ever come to our Normal schools understand even the ordinary common branches as teachers ought to understand them. We find many, of course, who are thoroughly versed in special text-books; but, as a rule, when they come to apply principles they are woefully deficient. There is not that breadth of culture, that ability to look on all sides of a question, which is a requisite in one who expects to teach. The scholastic instruction therefore which most students receive in schools not designed to prepare them for teaching does not answer, and academic instruction, modified as I have indicated, becomes a necessary part of Normal school work.

"It is an undisputed fact in the Normal school history of our State, as also in that of other States, that those who have received their preliminary training in the common school branches before entering the Normal school have always done their poorest work in the branches which they neglected to take in the Normal school itself; and this is simply a confirmation of the truth, that in general a teacher will teach as he was taught.

"Example is more powerful than precept, and in this the Normal school graduate is no exception to the general rule. Give him an example of your work, and he will impart his knowledge much as he acquires it; but give him the theory only, and you place a two-edged sword in his hand without imparting to him the practical skill to use it effectively.

"I am tempted to make just one other suggestion—every teaching student ought, before attempting to practise in the Model school, to spend several months in observing the work of first-class instructors. It will be well also to have him observe and criticise the work of those who are soon to be sent forth as graduates. It will do both parties good."

From the following our readers will draw their own conclusions:—

"The argument that the Normal schools of the State do not furnish any considerable number of teachers has some force, but the reason for this seeming defect lies not against the system so much as against the unwise financial policy of school boards, who often look not to professional qualifications and aptness to teach as the requisites in a teacher, but rather to the amount of his muscular development, directoral kinship, and a general cheapness of shoddy material sufficient in quantity to fill the chair on the platform. So long as school directors are selected because they have sons and daughters or nephews and nieces to be provided for in the school-room as teachers, so long the Normal schools will not be able to induce young men and women to prepare themselves for the professional part of the work of teaching. It will be a glorious day indeed when the Legislature shall enact such laws as will forbid this nepotism."

From the discussion on the paper we find that graduates of the Normal schools are liable to be re-examined by district superintendents. This practice was condemned. One speaker said:—

"I am grieved to find that one of the wealthiest commonwealths in the world should ask fees from those who are to render services that can never be fully remunerated. I cannot conceive of a successful system of education in which the Normal school is not paramount."

Dr. Wickersham, ex-State superintendent, remarked:—

"The Normal school is as deeply rooted in Pennsylvania as in any State of the Union; and unless great changes have taken place since I talked with the great educators of the west, they as well as we are still engaged in discussing questions of detail, for that is all that is at issue here, as the principle has long been settled. The fact that men in the Legislature