

partment of the practice school has its regular or responsible teacher who presides while the apprentice work is in progress; and over all is the critic teacher whose function is to witness the giving of the lesson by the tyro, and at an appointed hour to call together these pupil teachers and make a critical estimate of their performances. Each trial lesson is observed by a certain number of the student's classmates, who note the weak and the strong points in the exercise; and during the inquest they are summoned to express their opinions on the work they have witnessed. The judge or arbiter is the critic teacher, who gives a final estimate and summing up of each case. This is the usual *modus operandi*, as I have witnessed it in representative schools, and is my text for a few observations.

The general allegation that may be brought against this practice teaching is that the conditions under which it takes place are so artificial and unnatural that it is more likely to be harmful than helpful to those who take part in it. The student teacher knows that the pupils whom he is attempting to instruct are not his own and that he is only remotely responsible for results, seeing that they depend on so many others beside himself. His pupils are conscious of the same fact and owe no special allegiance to their temporary teacher.

It would be an abuse of language to call this real teaching. And what stuff must a youth be made of, who can teach in the presence of five or six official critics, who with pencil and note-book in hand, are spying out the slightest departure from the established code of methods? Each question, each response, even each inflection and gesture must square with the code or the penalty will be paid when the hour of inquest comes. The artificial is at a premium; the student teacher is inevitably and strongly

drawn away from the spontaneous and the natural toward routine and mechanism, which are the vices engendered and cultivated by this process of "training."

And what shall be said of the formal inquest, when, in the presence of the principal, heads of departments, teachers of methods, critic teacher and pupil critics, the student teachers are called up for trial? These official critics must criticize, for this is their function. Not to note a fault or find one would be neglect of duty; and the proof of critical penetration is to discover latent faults that lie too deep for common observation. And so the stock criticism is hypercritical. As there is an established code of methods, so there soon comes to be an established code of criticisms, and these speedily degenerate into cant. I have witnessed more than one of these sad spectacles, but I have no recollection of having heard a word of approval for anything done by one of these unfortunate students during his trial lesson. Under the conditions it is hardly supposable that any really good teaching could be done; but I have occasionally seen bright young people give a lesson which had some decided merits, which the official critics passed over in silence.

Teaching of high quality, that into which a gifted man or woman throws his whole personality, will escape all set rules and stereotyped methods, and, while obedient to the requirements of a general principle, will admit of countless variations and adapt itself to the special lesson, class, and occasion. One of the teacher's highest endowments is versatility, and to create this power ought to be one aim of professional instruction. Now it must be apparent that the general and almost inevitable result of the processes I have described is to mechanize instruction and to substitute "devices" and "methods" for