

to mankind as the common school system. The school system of America is very young, scarcely out of its swaddling clothes. We try to answer without irritation, calmly and reasonably, the criticisms given us. We should criticise ourselves. We should say that we are the builders of the commonweal, we are the promoters of this great system which lies at the basis of the theory that society shall rule itself, a theory that stands above all others. We should feel the tremendous responsibility put upon us and courageously live up to it. However we may differ in methods and principles, we should stand together in one thing, and that is, that the children should have earnest, devoted, skilful, liberty-loving teachers.

No subjects essential to primary education can be legislated into our schools; they cannot be successfully introduced by special teachers; they must be thoroughly known by the regular teachers, and adapted to growing minds by the teachers. Thus the question of strong, educated, cultivated teachers is the one question of this day and future days, and as teachers and teachers of teachers, let us not allow any other question to stand in the way of the real one.

The conclusion is this: if the selection of thoroughly competent teachers is made the invariable rule, if such teachers have the requisite liberty to help their pupils in the best possible way to the best education, then whatever is wise and good, whatever is actually needed by the children, will be found and applied. The path of progress in education, as in everything else, depends entirely upon the knowledge, skill, and devotion of the workers to the work done."

—The inference may be made from this paper with apparent fairness that the writer does not appreciate the fact that there are very many excellent teachers now at work in our schools. Such an inference is very far from the truth. Taken as a whole, there is no class of workers more devoted to their duties than are the teachers in our public schools. If these excellent teachers had the liberty of true artists, if they were not hedged in and limited by a uniform system that demands the same results from each school, if good teachers had the means of constantly improving, this question of fads would never appear. The solemn fact is that most legislation, most rules and regulations, are made to get the best possible results out of inferior teachers; thus the really good teachers are too often bound to dead routine by rules that should only apply, if they are to be used at all, to teachers who must be bolstered up and hemmed in, in order to get seemingly fair results. Proper