

THE INFLUENCE OF THE HIGH SCHOOL UPON EDUCATIONAL METHODS.¹

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THE high school is between two fires. More than any other portion of our educational system its work is marked by divided aims, and this through no fault of its own, but through opposed demands made upon it. About the function of the primary school at one end and of the university at the other, there is no dispute. Questions there may be, and are, about the best ways of realizing the end, or just how much the end shall include; but there is no question as to what the school in its main features shall stand for. But the high school occupies no such assured place. I do not refer to those who deny its utility completely. I wish to treat all opinions respectfully, yet I do not think that this question before this body¹ needs discussion or would suffer it. Carlyle says that a final question about every society is whether or no it possesses *lungs*; whether or no it can take capacity, talent, power for service, born in any section or stratum of society, and bring it to the place where it can do its work. Even though statistics should indicate that a much smaller percentage of pupils than is the case reach and pass through the high school, so long as that institution selects some choice youth and brings them forth to larger opportunity and more efficient service, it shall stand justified.

No, I refer to the opposed aims actually set before the high school by the conditions under which it exists. It must, on the one hand, serve as a

connecting link between the lower grades and the college, and it must, upon the other, serve not as a stepping-stone, but as a final stage, as itself the people's college, to those who do not intend to go, or who do not go to college. The academy which is distinctly a preparatory school does not have to contend with this difficulty. While we are thankful for the increasing number and the increasing efficiency of our distinctive preparatory schools, we must also be thankful that the split is not wholly between schools which prepare for college alone and those which do not; but that the division of energies exists within one and the same institution. However difficult the problem for those in charge of the high school, they have the consolation of knowing their sufferings are vicarious—that both primary and university education are reaping the benefits of their struggles. It is a helpful thing for the lower schools, and for the colleges that this conflict has to be faced and fought out within the limits of one and the same school.

It is of these interactions of the high school that I wish to speak—the influence it has exercised upon the rest of the educational system because of the peculiar place it occupies; not so much formally as informally, not so much of conscious purpose as through the conditions it has created. The proposition I wish to put before you is that the high school has been an intermediary in a very real sense; it has been the intermediary between the college, and the non-college business and professional public.

As this intermediary, it has oper-

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