

... OUR SCHOOLS

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University of South Carolina

Our Schools

BY

WILLIAM H. HAND

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BULLETIN

OF THE

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Note.—The matter making up this Bulletin was recently published in a series of articles in perhaps more than twenty-five daily and weekly papers in South Carolina. So many requests have been received to have the articles printed in pamphlet form that this Bulletin is the answer. A number of minor changes have been made in several chapters, and a few paragraphs have been added.

W. H. H.

OUR SCHOOLS.

INTRODUCTION.

Today in South Carolina could be found very few people who would admit that they are unfriendly to popular education, and fewer still who would admit that they are not friends to our common schools. The people of the State have just passed through a somewhat vigorous political campaign. In this, as in almost every such campaign, many of the candidates for office have taken occasion to declare their deep interest in the common schools. The candidate "doth protest too much, methinks," but most of them are entirely sincere in their declarations. Some of these men will soon occupy positions which will enable them to demonstrate their interest in our schools, and their capacity for improving them. From the outside it would seem that very few of these men have made any careful analysis of the conditions of our schools, and certainly very few have offered any definite, practicable plan for their permanent improvement. By no means do I intend to cast any slur at these men. Perhaps it is asking too much of men busy with their own affairs and the affairs of the public to stop to study the problems of education—a field broad and rich in vexatious questions. Perhaps, too, those who have studied these problems, and are familiar with the conditions, have been remiss in not telling the people frankly what they see and know.

For fifteen years this writer taught in the common schools of this State, and for seventeen years he has tried to study the conditions which make for good or for evil in the educational system of the State. During the past twenty-six months he has traveled more than thirty thousand miles inside the State,

driven hundreds of miles through the rural districts, and visited fully three hundred schools in the State. He claims no wider or richer knowledge of the conditions than is possessed by scores of his fellow-workers. Yet he feels that he knows something of these conditions, and that he owes it to the people to set these conditions frankly before them.

Let me say at the outset that I have no disposition to forget or to disregard the many good things in our schools, or to withhold merited commendation anywhere, yet it is not my purpose to tax the reader's time and patience with platitudes and empty eulogies, so frequently indulged in by those who strive so diligently to blind themselves to our patent weaknesses. Our schools have been vastly improved within recent years. We should rejoice at their growth and ever honor those who have contributed to that growth. But we cannot afford to stop at that. It would be folly to assume that our schools and our school system are anything like perfect. Let us discover some of the glaring weaknesses, admit what we discover, and set ourselves resolutely toward improvement.

I wish to discuss some of the conspicuous weaknesses of our school system frankly, somewhat fully, and altogether dispassionately. I wish to avoid anything captious or hysterical. In these discussions I beg to offer, as unobtrusively as I may, some suggestions as to remedies—for he is a poor physician who tells his patient that he is sick but offers neither to tell him what the disease is, nor to prescribe any remedy.

LACK OF FUNDS.

To maintain good schools requires money. They cannot be run on ebullient sentiment; nor will spasmodic charity keep them at a very high standard. Money is absolutely necessary to build comfortable schoolhouses, to furnish these houses, to pay competent teachers, and to keep the schools

open nine months in the year. What is South Carolina putting into her common schools, the training school of the future citizenship of the State? In 1907 the State enrolled in the common schools 314,399 pupils, or about 18 per cent. of her total population. On these pupils was spent \$1,415,724, or \$4.50 per pupil. This \$4.50 includes the expenditures on schoolhouses, furniture, apparatus, libraries and teachers' salaries. The average attendance upon the schools was, of course, much lower than the enrollment, therefore, the amount spent per pupil on the basis of attendance was larger—\$6.37. In 1906 North Carolina spent \$6.90 per pupil in attendance; Georgia spent \$7.47; Mississippi, \$8.01; Tennessee, \$8.48; Virginia, \$11.05; Florida, \$11.30; Louisiana, \$14.83; Maine, \$20.65; Maryland, \$21.32; Wisconsin, \$28.34; Minnesota, \$30.19; New York, \$47.40.

In 1907 South Carolina spent for common school education 94 cents per capita of her total population. In 1906 Georgia spent 98 cents; Virginia spent \$1.12; Mississippi, \$1.15; Kentucky, \$1.19; Tennessee, \$1.49; Florida, \$1.96; Maryland, \$2.51; Wisconsin, \$3.79; Minnesota, \$4.41; New York, \$6.27.

If Virginia has found that it requires \$11.05 per pupil to maintain her schools, is it reasonable to assume that South Carolina can maintain good schools on \$6.37 per pupil? If Maryland is willing to invest \$21.32 per pupil in her schools, she must be satisfied with the returns, for she has been increasing her investment from year to year. The question at issue is not concerned with the relative wealth of these States. The question is this: If it pays to put \$11.05 a year in the education of a Virginia boy, does not a South Carolina boy need or deserve more than \$6.37 in his education? God has done His part by the South Carolina boy and girl; is the State doing its part?

Most people will admit that our school fund is insufficient. How are we to increase it? Several plans have been offered, and several ways are open. Some of them, however, do not appeal to men of experience. Not a few people insist upon increasing the school fund by private subscription. This plan is inadequate and rather vicious in its effects. The public schools are supported primarily for the benefit of the State, rather than for the benefit of the individual. If the support of the schools is dependent upon voluntary subscription, the less patriotic shirk their duty and the burden falls upon the willing few. Besides, such support is irregular, unstable and uncertain.

Frequently it is proposed by a few to increase the common school fund by direct appropriation from the State Treasury. Unless such appropriation were made upon the condition that each district receiving its part should first make a specific local effort, the result would be hurtful, as the districts would soon come to look upon themselves as beneficiaries of the State and would cease to make any effort to help themselves. Only a few years ago one house of the General Assembly passed a bill (knowing that it would fail to pass in the other house) appropriating \$200,000 to the common schools. How much relief would such sum give to the schools? It would increase the fund only sixty-three cents per pupil on last year's enrollment, or \$15.75 to a school of twenty-five pupils. An appropriation of \$200,000 disbursed in such way as to require the districts to raise in the aggregate something like \$400,000 in local taxes would be equitable and wise. I am at once reminded that this plan would not entirely relieve the strain in a few of the poorer counties, and I admit it. Our present plan of collecting and apportioning the constitutional three-mill school tax is not a democratic one. That tax is collected and apportioned by counties. Some counties, with

poor land, lack of water-power for manufacturing, and with no railroads to tax, are at a decided disadvantage. It would be unjust to collect and apportion the three-mill school tax as a State tax, but it would be just and democratic to make two mills a county tax, as at present, and make the other mill a State tax. Then the stronger counties would be contributing a well-guarded tax for the support of the weak counties.

So far, in this State at least, local taxation has proved to be the best means of increasing the school fund. It is equitable, it is stable, and it is certain until a majority of the people vote it off. It compels the unwilling few to bear their proportionate part of a legitimate and necessary community expense. The district which levies a local tax knows just where every dollar comes from and just where every dollar goes. Moreover, it is usually not very difficult to levy a local school tax, if there is only some safe person to lead, for, as a rule, the wealthiest persons in the district are the readiest to vote a local school tax.

Personally I am confident that the most just, equitable and reasonable way to increase our school fund is to inaugurate a sensible and honest system of returning our property for taxation. When you compare the amount of school tax raised in South Carolina on each one hundred dollars of taxable property with that of other States, the showing is very good. But when you consider that our property has been returned at perhaps twenty-five per cent. of its true value, the showing is not good. The habit of returning a piece of property at one-fourth its true value, then taxing it at four mills, instead of returning it at something like its true value, then taxing it at one mill to raise the same amount of money, is not only childish business practice, but it is a training school in dishonesty. Men who offer to return their property at something like its true value are actually laughed-at for their

artlessness. Civic honesty must decline under such vicious system.

Were the real and personal property in this State returned at something like ninety per cent. (and why should it not?) of their true value, the three-mill school tax alone would practically double our entire school revenue. In 1907 the land outside the incorporated towns in the prosperous, productive and wealthy county of Anderson was returned for taxation at an average of \$6.51 per acre. Marlboro, one of the finest farming counties in the whole South, returned her land at an average of \$5.28 an acre. Orangeburg is justly proud of her farm land, but she returned hers at \$3.54 an acre. Williamsburg has some poor land, but she has some of the finest fields of cotton and tobacco to be found in the State; on the tax-books her land is rated at an average of \$2.09. In these very counties I have been shown land whose owners would not sell for \$30, \$40, and even \$60 an acre. In one of these counties is a school district containing nearly forty-five thousand acres of land, yet the entire real and personal property of the district is returned at \$100,000. What would a four-mill school tax mean to that district? Increasing the tax levy while we reduce the valuation of our property reminds one of the policy of the master who undertook to punish his thievish coachman by periodically stealing back from the coachman what the coachman had stolen from his master.

BEGGARLY SALARIES FOR TEACHERS.

The services of a bank cashier, of a bookkeeper, of a carpenter and of a school teacher have a market value. The market value of these services is based upon what the employer feels that the employed is worth to the business. What valuation have the people of South Carolina put upon the services of a white school teacher? Last year the State paid

an average salary of \$267 a year, or \$45.87 a month for a little less than six school months in the year. This salary is lower, even by the month, than the wages of an experienced dry-goods salesman, or a competent stenographer. By the year the salary of the teacher does not compare with that of the unskilled carpenter, or plasterer, or bricklayer. Almost every town of two thousand people in the State pays, by the month, higher wages to its policemen than to its women school teachers. Men teachers are paid a little better, but beggarly salaries have run almost all the men out of the schoolroom. "As will be seen by the various figures I have given, either men or women working in the cotton mills and exercising less patience, are readily making more money than the average public school teacher."—*August Kohn, in The Cotton Mills of South Carolina.*

Is it reasonable to expect the services of competent men at \$60 and \$70 a month, and competent women at \$35 and \$40 a month, for a few months in the year? The answer involves a very simple question in economics. It has cost either person from four to six years in time, and from \$800 to \$1,500 in money, to prepare himself to teach. And if either is fitted to teach, his preparation fits him for something decidedly better pecuniarily. If neither is fitted to make more than \$267 a year in some other vocation, he is on the highway to penury.

Why do our people pay no more for teaching? Is it due to poverty? There was a time when that explanation could have been given, but not so now. We have on every hand too many evidences of plenty, and even luxury, to accept any such excuse. The real explanation is hard to admit: These salaries represent the valuation our people place upon education. "By their fruits ye shall know them." Our people rate the education of their children when they employ teachers

somewhat as they rate their land when they visit the taxlister. Our people are well able to pay better salaries, and they will pay better salaries only after they have come to appreciate the value of better teachers and better schools. Many of the praises of good schools are mere lip-service.

INCOMPETENT TEACHERS.

To discuss this feature of our schools is very distasteful, but it must be done, and done fearlessly. Every well-informed person knows that our schools are burdened with a host of incompetent teachers, persons fitted neither by nature nor by training. Such teachers waste the money of the children, ruin the children themselves, and discredit teaching itself. They know nothing about what to teach, and even less about how to teach. Time and again I have sat in schoolrooms watching the blind blunderings of teachers plodding through recitations, without ever getting hold of a teaching fact or a teaching principle, until my very heart ached in sympathy for the children who had to endure it all. Yet I have gone out from just such scenes to be told within three hours by some patron that in that school they had a fine teacher. The travesty of such teaching is bad enough, but when the patrons are pleased with it, it becomes pathetic. I can put my finger on the names of dozens of white school teachers who could not today pass an examination in the eighth grade in the Columbia City Schools. Yet to these incompetents are entrusted the education of children, and the people are satisfied, and are paying to them the children's money.

I know teachers by name who go to their schoolrooms day after day without having studied a single lesson they are supposed to teach. Some of them do not own a single book that they are attempting to teach. How can such a teacher succeed? If he has in him nothing of the student, how can he

expect to inspire a pupil with the zeal of the student? To such a teacher the names of Spencer and Arnold and Mann are but sounding brass and tinkling cymbals. Some teachers and some patrons bank largely on the teacher's experience. Experience is an excellent thing when coupled with other qualifications, but when divorced from them, experience is to teaching precisely what it is to the practice of medicine—it kills as often as it cures.

Scholarship, studiousness, training and energy are all necessary to the highest success in teaching, but there is another qualification which far outweighs all these combined—manhood! womanhood! The personality of the teacher is the first consideration. Is the teacher able to take hold of the life of a child and guide him upward to the limit of the child's capacity? Is the teacher's life worthy of being reflected in the life of every child he teaches? If not, he is incompetent. Will your teacher measure up to this standard?

Why are so many incompetent teachers employed? There are several reasons. The one most obvious is, that such teachers can be had cheap. Most people wish to keep open their schools a reasonable length of time, and the pittance in the school treasury will not employ a competent teacher for long. Hence, a plug, as the horse-jockey would say, is put in charge of the school. Whenever a school board goes out to find a cheap teacher it usually succeeds in getting a cheap one in every sense. If a man goes on the market with seventy-five cents with which to purchase a dollar article, he need not be surprised to get shoddy. A school board need not expect to get a \$750 teacher for \$267. Why will not a \$1,000 man teach school for \$500? Simply because he has sense enough to teach school. Today in South Carolina any competent man teacher of two years' experience can get a nine-months' school at from \$75 to \$100 a month. School boards are

advertizing for such. Why should I be willing to teach your school for \$50 or \$60 a month for less than nine months? When corn is selling in the open market at one dollar a bushel will I offer mine at sixty cents—if it is marketable? Does the school board hunting a cheap teacher catch the meaning?

However, there are other and more serious reasons why we have so many incompetent teachers. There is the daughter of the local trustee who must have some of the school fund with which to buy her clothes. What difference does it make if she has had no other education than that which she received in the very school she is going to try to teach? What difference does it make if she knows no more than some of her most advanced pupils? What difference does it make if she never saw an educational journal, or a book on the art of teaching? What difference does it make if she is but eighteen years old, and without a particle of experience in teaching or in life itself? Then, there is poor Widow Smith's daughter. The mother is poor, and the daughter is in poor health, perhaps. Really, the community owes both something, and the district school is the easiest charity to bestow. The uneducated daughter can somehow drag through the recitations and manage to keep the big boys inside the schoolhouse. She gets the school, and the people solace themselves by thinking that they have done "a mighty good thing." Then, again, there is Mrs. Brown, 70 years old. No one ever accused her of being educated or in any other way of being fitted to teach school, but she taught school just before the war or just after the war. Some enemy to competence advocates her election, remarking that "She is a mighty good teacher; I went to school to her forty year ago; in fact, she larnt me about all I ever was larnt." Mrs. Brown keeps the schoolhouse open most of the time for six months, draws \$150 of the defenseless children's money, and the community feels tranquil over its

act of pious gratitude. I hope that I am not misunderstood in this last example. I am glad to know that some teachers at seventy years of age, educated and vigorous, are able to do effective work, even in the common schools. Old age and misfortune should be gratefully remembered and cared for, but not at the expense of the education of our children. Pensions should be paid outside the schoolhouse, not inside.

There is yet a more serious reason for the presence of so many incompetent teachers—more serious because they are here under the sanction of law. Hundreds of incompetent teachers are in our schools because of the vicious system by which certificates are granted and renewed. I disclaim any intention whatever of casting any reflection against any set of persons, but under the present system we need not hope to get rid of inefficiency among our teachers of the common schools. Let us face the facts: Teachers' certificates are granted by the county boards of education, composed of the county superintendent and two lay members, appointed by the State Superintendent upon the recommendation of the county superintendent. The county superintendents must go every two or four years to ask the people to vote for them. Many of the people who help to elect the superintendents expect a return of favors. These superintendents must sit in judgment upon the efficiency of applicants to teach school. Who are some of these applicants? Sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, of men who helped to elect the county superintendent. Now, it would be an insult to intimate that any honest county superintendent would violate his honor by granting intentionally an unmerited certificate, but it requires no sagacity to see the unenviable situation of the superintendent in such contingency. He ought to be relieved of any such embarrassment.

It may be appropriate to give the facts concerning a few cases of abuse in granting certificates. The writer knows of more than one teacher that holds a first-grade certificate but that has never stood any examination whatever, though not exempt by law. Another is the case of a teacher holding a first-grade certificate for over ten years, but stopped teaching long enough to let her certificate expire. Later she returned to teaching, and on taking the examination failed to make a grade high enough for any certificate at all. Question: How did she ever get a certificate, and why was it renewed from year to year without examination? Some county boards have made such records for uprightness in granting certificates that any other county board feels safe in renewing one of the former's certificates; while a few have made such unenviable reputation in granting these certificates that no other board is willing to renew a certificate issued by the former. These are unpalatable facts.

The manner in which the county examinations are usually conducted is an invitation to dishonesty, and it is useless to deny that the invitation is often accepted. From a half-dozen to twenty applicants are crowded about tables in one room; silence is not required, and often the applicants sit and openly discuss the questions they are required to answer. The teachers of the common schools are usually not examined at all on one of the most important subjects they are required to teach—oral reading. Further, the practice of renewing certificates for nominal attendance upon county summer schools is demoralizing, unless a uniformly high standard of instruction were guaranteed and a higher standard of work required. The practice of renewing certificates as a reward for a teachers' reading course is open to serious objection. This reading is done under no guidance, may be carried on in an irregular and desultory way, without any substantial profit

to the teacher. Then the examination is held *in absentia*, and the State Board is absolutely ignorant as to the author of the examination answers.

Many claim that good teachers are assured by accepting the diplomas of reputable colleges in lieu of examinations. This plan is faulty. In our section of the country the term college has no definite meaning—in fact, it often means nothing but a high school; there is nothing by which one college can be legally differentiated from another. Therefore, all college graduates are accepted in the schools on equal terms. It is a fact well known to all educators that a person may, in the course of ten years, not only fail to improve as teaching grows better, but actually grow inferior. Besides, some college courses offer teacher training, some claim to do so, while others make no claim at all. Yet another defect must be taken into account: A student with very poor preparation may go through a fairly reputable college, taking only academic work, only to find himself lamentably ignorant of the common school subjects which he is required to teach. The best colleges and the pupils from the best colleges are the most willing to submit to examinations for teachers' certificates. The inferior college and its graduates are violently opposed to these examinations. No further comment is necessary.

The certification of teachers ought to be in the hands of a State Board, with well-defined qualifications. Thus a teacher's fitness would be passed upon by a competent board, wholly unembarrassed by local influences. This would at once relieve the schools of the conspicuously incompetent teachers, insure some uniformity in grading certificates, and a certificate would be valid in any county in the State. Moreover, a State certificate should be issued for, say, five years, instead of two as now issued by county boards. Last year Superin-

tendent Martin recommended the passage of such a law, and it seemed to be favorably received, but nothing was done. It is to be hoped that the General Assembly at its next session will take some step in this direction. Even with this improvement, however, the schools would still suffer from incompetents. A teacher may pass an excellent examination, but prove a dismal failure in the schoolroom. Such teachers can be eliminated only through a responsible and competent supervisor.

SHORT SCHOOL TERMS.

As has already been noted, the average length of the white schools of the State last year was less than six months. To be exact, the average for the town and rural schools was 117 days; the rural schools alone 110 days. While this is a better showing than we made a very few years ago, still our schools are in session a little less than two-thirds of our own standard school year of 180 days, or nine months. In other words, the white people of the State are giving their children less than two-thirds of the schooling which they declare a child ought to have.

Here again is a lack of school funds, which our people, I insist, are able to provide. In many rather thickly settled and prosperous districts the schools close after six or seven months because the funds are exhausted, yet not a dollar of local school tax is collected. I know districts with from fifty to sixty white children which depend upon the pittance of \$300 to \$325 to run their schools. Is it reasonable to expect such a district to keep its school open or to keep competent teachers? In some of these very communities I have been told, with a tinge of resentment, that the schools are better than those to which the fathers and mothers went. That may be true, and it may also be true that these same fathers and

mothers are hewers of wood and drawers of water today, simply because they are unable to cope with those who have been better schooled. He is a very despicable parent who is willing to withhold schooling from his child on the ground that he himself had few or no advantages.

However, short school terms are by no means entirely due to lack of money. Strange as it may seem, there are many districts which close their schools at the end of six, five, and even four months, with half as much money left in the county treasury as they spent on their schools. I know schools which have to their credit enough money to run them twice as long as they have been run any year within the past five. In fact, some entire counties are making what the officials call a good financial showing, at the expense of the school children. For instance, Florence county had on hand June 30, 1907, a balance of \$35,838 to the credit of the school fund, while she had spent only \$27,050 on her schools that year. In other words, the schools had at the close of the scholastic year a balance of \$8,788 more than the entire cost of the schools that year. Financially, that may be a good showing; how is it educationally? Let us see: Florence county kept her white schools open last year six months; she paid her white teachers an average of \$250 a year; she gave each white teacher an average of thirty-six pupils to teach. Chester county makes but little better showing. She kept her white schools open seven and one-fourth months, paid her white teachers an average of \$296 a year, and gave each teacher an average of thirty-one pupils to teach. Yet Chester county closed these schools with a balance larger than the total expenditure that year. I believe in running the schools strictly on a cash basis, and I know that it is necessary to close the books on the 30th of June with enough balance to run the schools until the next tax collection has been made. But is it sound busi-

ness or common sense to cut off the school year, pay beggarly salaries, and give each teacher too many pupils to teach, in order to show a money balance? Of course under such policy our school boards can boast of having money on hand. As I see it, we have more need for money on the children. A man could doubtless make a fortune on a salary of \$500 a year, if he were to go naked and hungry, and keep all his earnings at ten per cent. compound interest; but what would he be getting?

After all, do our people wish to keep the schools open nine months in the year? Repeatedly I have had fathers (mothers very rarely) oppose the attempt to lengthen their school beyond six months. Their contention is that the children cannot be spared from the farms and the mills for a longer period. Except in cases of extreme poverty in the homes of very unfortunate people, this argument means nothing less than that the child is looked upon as a bread-winner. The parent is either too shortsighted or too selfish to give his child the opportunity to become even a bread-winner, save in the humblest callings. Such a parent needs to be shown how his child may be trained until he becomes a master of something, and a citizen useful to the State. Every child should be taught to work—to work intelligently and profitably; but his ultimate success and usefulness should not be sacrificed to immediate selfish gain.

POOR SCHOOLHOUSES AND POOR EQUIPMENT.

There are at least two very distinct kinds of poor schoolhouses: The building itself may be worthless; and a good building may be unfit for school purposes. It is possible to invest a modest sum of money in a good school building, and it is even less difficult to invest a considerable sum in a very poor building. What we know as school architecture is yet in a

very crude and undeveloped state, if we are to judge from some of our recent school buildings. Some of even the larger towns of the State have taxed themselves liberally to erect new school buildings, and have very inferior ones. Not one cent of public money should be permitted to be used in a school-house until the plans of the building have been favorably passed upon by some thoroughly competent person. Some of the most common defects in our school buildings are small classrooms, low ceilings, insufficient window space, windows set in front and to the right of the pupils when seated, tops of the windows too far from the ceiling, poor heating, and poor ventilation. These defects are found in the town buildings and in the rural buildings.

We have some excellent schoolhouses. Among the larger towns the buildings in Florence, Darlington and Georgetown, together with the latest buildings in Greenville, Spartanburg and Sumter, are excellent in almost every detail. The Taylor School, in Columbia, is another excellent building, but I am forced to add that this is Columbia's only public school building worthy of the name. A number of the smaller towns have relatively excellent buildings, notably St. George, Denmark and Summerton. Belton, Brunson, Chesterfield, Fountain Inn, Manning and Seneca each will soon have a new building of modern type. On the other hand, some of the towns have very poor buildings. There are in this State four towns whose taxable property combined was returned last year at \$1,400,000, in round figures, and whose four schoolhouses for white children would not sell at auction for more than \$2,000. Of course these buildings cost much more than their present value, but they are almost worthless today as schoolhouses. In these same towns are beautiful homes, good stores, good banks, attractive churches, and even good barns for the horses and cattle. Can the citizens of these places make themselves

believe that they are not discounting schools? They cannot make other people believe it, I am sure.

The rural schoolhouses are relatively inferior to those in the towns. Many of them are little better than dingy sheds, unpainted, ugly in appearance, poorly lighted, poorly heated, and miserably equipped. Many of these houses are not ceiled on the walls or overhead. When they are ceiled, that overhead is often so low that the tallest boys can reach it with their hands. Not one building in three has enough window space properly distributed. The windows are small and placed equi-distant from the floor and ceiling. It is no uncommon thing to find a room of children sitting with their faces toward one, and even two, open windows, while the room at their backs is comparatively dark. In 1905 the State Superintendent of Education issued a pamphlet giving designs for modern schoolhouses, which has done much toward improving their character. With so many inferior schoolhouses, in both town and country, is the reader prepared to believe that several town principals have lost favor with their patrons because they urged better schoolhouses, and that more than one energetic county superintendent met opposition to reelection because they had built too many schoolhouses?

Very few of our schoolhouses are equipped as they should be. Hundreds of good desks have been put in within the past five years, but there are yet scores of schoolhouses seated with the most clumsy and unsightly and uncomfortable desks known to suffering backs and limbs. The blackboards are too few in number, made of the cheapest material, and the surface is no longer black. In many of our schoolrooms is not seen a map or a chart from September to June. Even the once famous Evans charts have been relegated to some closet of plunder. Were it not for the genius of my friend, Mr. Hughes, of Greenville, many of our schoolhouses would be

absolutely without any kind of globe. The State has very wisely provided hundreds of schools with small libraries. In most places these libraries are used much and well cared for, but in altogether too many places the books are torn to pieces, some scattered throughout the neighborhood, and some lost. What else can be expected when the schoolhouse stands open to everybody and everything?

A dirty schoolhouse is inexcusable, and is a disgrace to a community. Here the teacher is chiefly responsible. Any teacher, man or woman, who keeps a dirty schoolhouse is rather poorly fitted to train children. You cannot readily refine the tastes of a child who is compelled to sit five hours a day in the midst of filth and litter.

TOO MANY LITTLE HALF-SUPPORTED SCHOOLS.

Sooner or later our people are going to have more comfortable and commodious schoolhouses. Before the people put their money into permanent improvements, would it not be wise to reduce the number of schools in a great many places? A good four-room house costs less than four one-room houses of equal comfort and convenience. Sixty pupils in one building can be better taught and more easily taught than fifteen pupils each in four buildings. A four-teacher school will flourish where four one-teacher schools would struggle to keep alive.

In more than half the counties in the State are to be found dozens of schools with ten and twelve pupils each. Not many weeks ago I visited a rural school with an enrollment of eleven pupils; three miles off was another school with thirteen pupils, and in another direction was a third school with fourteen pupils. The three teachers were paid \$35 each; each schoolhouse was cheap and ill-equipped. In some districts six miles square are to be found as many as three white schools, each

with a small number of pupils scattered from first reader to high school grades. A good many of the incorporated villages have school districts coextensive with the incorporate limits. An accurate school district map of the State would look very much like a crazy quilt.

What is the remedy? Take the three schools cited above. Build a comfortable two-room house at a central point, and give the entire thirty-eight pupils to two teachers. Each pupil would then have his recitation time doubled, for there would be in the consolidated school no more grades, or classes, than there were in the most advanced of the three little schools. I am at once reminded that some of these children would have too far to walk. (It is marvelous how much trouble a father who walked four miles to school, and brags about it, makes over his child's walking one mile.) I grant that the consolidation puts the school too far for some to walk. What then? Take part of the money to transport these to the school. Prof. W. K. Tate, of the Memminger Normal School, says: "It is better and cheaper to transport the distant children to the good school than to bring a poor school to the distant children." Yes; one good school is immeasurably better than three inferior schools.

The transportation of distant pupils is no new fad. Several years ago the Eastover district in Richland county threw five schools into one. The district runs four wagonettes, made for the purpose, to haul the distant children. Another instance: Three adjoining districts in Fairfield county, with a combined enrollment of sixty pupils, have consolidated their schools at Bethel, have erected a \$2,500 schoolhouse, and are transporting all the children who live too far to walk. This consolidation gives the school enough pupils to establish a rural high school, with \$300 of State aid.

State Superintendents McMahan and Martin have zealously advocated the consolidation of small schools. Such policy would encourage the building of better roads, while the transportation itself would protect the children in bad weather, and would protect the small children and the girls from insult or violence at the hands of tramps or thugs on the lonely country roads.

NEIGHBORHOOD JEALOUSIES AND QUARRELS.

These twin evils have done more to prevent and to destroy the efficiency of the common schools than any other two agencies in the land. It is difficult enough to maintain a good school where everybody works in harmony, and it is well-nigh impossible where strife and division are. To listen to the petty contentions, the sharp bickerings, and the tales of discord in some communities makes one marvel that a school can exist in such a place. The petitions and the appeals which come before the various school boards are enough to make one turn pessimist. The worst of it all is, that most of these contentions and bickerings are childish and groundless, and that they are usually begun and kept alive by men who have at heart but little interest in any school. In settling most of these disputes, Solomon's judgment between the two women claiming the child would be wholesome.

It is to these jealousies and quarrels that we owe two, three, and even four, little starving schools where but one ought to be. To them we owe the little district unable to support a school. Every influential local celebrity wished to have a schoolhouse at his front door or in his back yard. To these jealousies we owe most of the defeated local tax elections. Nearly all the local disputes over the teacher have their origin in neighborhood jealousies, and the baneful habit of constant change of teachers has its roots embedded here.

A certain district school is supported by ten families. All is well, but the schoolhouse stands on the south side of a little creek which about once a year reaches a depth of four feet. A and B suddenly conclude that this innocent stream is a menace to the lives of their children, and petition for a new district. The next session finds a little 20x20-foot hull of a schoolhouse on the north side of that creek, and a little lifeless school on each side of it. Or, C's bad boy is punished by the teacher; straightway C raises the flag of secession, and proceeds to have his own little d-e-e-strict cut off. Or, one of the local economists gets tired of paying a teacher \$40 a month, since his daughter would teach for \$30; the trustees will not yield to the economist; then the economist canvasses the district in the interest of a new set of trustees, with the economist as chairman. Or, D and E are rival local physicians, already at odds; D says that Smith's boy has a contagious disease, and must be stopped from the school; E declares that the disease is only infectious, and that it would be silly to stop Smith's boy; the quarrel rages, the partisans array themselves, and down goes the local school tax proposed by the only really interested patron of the school. Or, X begins to discuss a new schoolhouse; Y says that the old one is good enough, and that X is trying to dictate to the district; no new house is built, and the old one gradually rots down. Or, Miss Brown, the teacher, boards with the Smiths; the Joneses feel neglected, and begin to whisper it about that the teacher cannot solve Sallie Jones' problems or parse Sallie's sentences; the Smiths retaliate by asserting that the teacher is able to teach the whole Jones family; result—the anti-Smith faction's children are taught next session by Miss Sallie Jones herself. Once more, Mr. Brown, with unreligious devotion to his church creed, demands that the new teacher shall be an X-ist; Perkins' Y-ism at once begins to ferment, while Stubbs

declares that Z-ianism has been outraged, since there has not been a Z-ian teacher in the school in five years. When the new teacher comes, is he to teach X-ist doctrine, Y-ist doctrine, Z-ian doctrine, or should he be a simple God-fearing man whose daily life will be a rebuke to these clamorous Pharisees?

All this may sound like satire, but it is a mask rehearsal of a play where the curtain never falls. Cannot some neighborhoods see themselves in the play?

INADEQUATE SUPERVISION.

In South Carolina there are three units of school administration—the State, the county, and the school district. “An educational system is a great business.” In every organized business there must be machinery; that machinery must be repaired, adjusted and articulated; and some competent, responsible person must supervise that machinery. A successful supervisor must be a capable man, an experienced man, and a courageous man. He must be reasonably well paid, definitely responsible to somebody, and reasonably secure in his position as long as he is efficient. What of the supervision of our educational system? What do we expect, and what have we a right to expect?

What does the fundamental law of the State require in the office of the State Superintendent? Does it require that he shall be an educated man, or a man of experience in school affairs, or a man who knows anything of teaching and of teachers, or a man himself qualified to teach? He is expected to direct the educational policy of a State, and to maintain a system of schools for over three hundred thousand children. What salary is offered to a man big enough to fill this position? Nineteen hundred dollars a year! How does this rank with the salary offered a man big enough to run one cotton

mill? How does he get the position, and on what does the security of it depend? What is likely to be his reward for any display of courage in his office? Every second year he is compelled to neglect the duties of his office for at least two months and to spend at least four hundred dollars to get the opportunity to speak ten minutes in each county telling the dear (indifferent) people that he should be reëlected. Under our present system of electing the State Superintendent, and with the two-year tenure of office, the entire educational policy of the State may be reversed inside one year. In a recent editorial *The News and Courier* pertinently says: "In late years the people have shown a growing improvement in their estimate of the place of Superintendent of Education, choosing, as a rule, trained teachers for it, * * * but there is no assurance so long as the office is filled by popular vote that incapable men will not be elected to it solely because of their ingratiating manner, or as a reward for political service. * * * The Superintendent of Education should be appointed by the Governor or by a commission, after thorough investigation, and the salary should be sufficient to command the services of experts, and at the same time remove them from temptation."

A succession of able State Superintendents could not build and maintain a system of high-class schools unless the county supervision be good. The wisest policies of a State Superintendent would avail but little, unless the county superintendents be able, willing and courageous enough to carry these policies to success. In the matter of administration the county superintendency is the key to the situation. What do we require of the county superintendent, what do we expect, what do we get, and—what do we give? Do we require that the county superintendent shall be an expert or experienced educator? Is he required to have any knowledge of schools or of teaching? Is there anything to prohibit an illiterate from

holding that office? He is not required to be competent to teach, although by law he is required to give his teachers instruction in the art and methods of teaching? Does the county demand that its superintendent be at least the equal of the superintendent in the courthouse town? To be perfectly plain and honest, have we not had men elected and reelected to the office of county superintendent, to supervise the whole county, who could not have been elected to any position in the best schools of their counties? Many of them would not essay to teach in the best schools of their counties. They understand full well that the public does not expect such fitness of them. That is our fault, not theirs. The public mind does not think of a county superintendent as a man of education, experience, tact and leadership in school matters. It thinks of him as a man who listens to neighborhood quarrels about district lines, and about the appointment and removal of trustees, and who sits in his office one day in the week to sign teachers' pay warrants.

In speaking thus of incompetent county superintendents I have no intention whatever of being personal. I am happy to count among my best friends in the State many of the county superintendents. Many of them are competent and efficient men, sacrificing themselves on the altar of an unappreciative public, for their reward is contemptible. We ask forty-two qualified men to direct over 6,200 teachers, to act as guardians for 314,000 children, and to keep and to disburse nearly a million and a half dollars; we offer them an average salary of \$684, an insult to an efficient man! The City of Greenville has convinced itself that it is economy to pay its superintendent \$1,800 a year to supervise the work of forty-four teachers; while Greenville county pays its superintendent \$700 to supervise 275 teachers. Sumter pays its city superintendent \$2,400 a year to direct thirty-six teachers; Sumter

county offers its superintendent \$900 to direct about 150 teachers. It is a source of wonder why we have as many efficient county superintendents as we have. All honor to the competent man patriotic enough to serve his county on a contemptible salary! But shame upon a people who compel patriotism to crawl in the dust!

I know that we have some people who claim that our schools are already too much supervised. That depends entirely upon what is meant by supervision. If it means the constant meddling in petty details, or the jealous interference with teachers in matters concerning only themselves, or the insistence upon teachers becoming cheap imitators of a fad-fiend superintendent, then perhaps we have too much. But if supervision means the readiness and ability to assist the teacher, the power to inspire her, the tact to prune and refine and strengthen her, and the manhood to sustain her (and it usually does), then I dissent vehemently. All over the State we have young men and women who as teachers ought to succeed, but who are failing because they have no one to advise them and to support them in the crucial moments of trial. This is especially true in the rural and village schools. Is it any wonder that the young teachers flock to the towns?

The rural schools must have better supervision. Nearly seventy per cent. of the white school children of this State are in the rural schools. They are entitled to as good and as close supervision as are any other children. Proper supervision cannot be given as long as we multiply the one-teacher schools with fifteen pupils each, and permit the popular election of supervisors at a salary of \$684. On such a salary what can a county superintendent do toward the real supervision of 150 teachers, scattered all over a county, in perhaps 100 schoolhouses?

Require that the county superintendent be an expert educator, let him be appointed by a board and be responsible to that board, keep him in office as long as he is efficient, and pay him an expert's salary. We shall find the men prepared to do the work. Go outside the county, or even the State, if necessary, to get such men. To refuse to go outside the county for a competent superintendent is childish provincialism. Then we shall stop frittering away the school fund, increase the fund, and get results. Sooner or later our people are going to come to look at this matter somewhat as did Superintendent McMahan in his report for 1900.

CHANGE OF TEACHERS.

The frequent change of teachers is a constant brake and clog on the progress of the schools. It robs them of anything like an unbroken course of work and fixedness of policy. Every new teacher introduces some new feature into the work of the school—perhaps a good feature in itself, yet no better than what it displaces. It requires readjustment to install anything new, and the time and friction are a loss, unless the change is decidedly for better. Generally speaking, our best schools are those which have the fewest changes in the teaching force. It requires at least one full session for a teacher to become acquainted with his patrons. By becoming acquainted with patrons I mean much more than mere social knowledge of them. I mean an appreciation of their tastes and their ideals and their ambitions, and a knowledge of their peculiarities, if you please. Until he understands these he is not in a position to serve them and to lead them, and a teacher who cannot lead is of but little force. Not until after a teacher has taught from four to six years in a community is he prepared to give it his best services. Yet how few teachers remain in one school three years.

Some places change teachers every year simply because they have acquired the habit of doing so. Like any other bad habit, this one grows upon people. The trustees and the patrons frequently realize that their school is inferior to some other school, and rush to the conclusion that they need a change of teachers, when the truth is that they have already injured their school by too many changes. Have any of my readers ever seen a pupil, or an entire class, set to work in the same place, in arithmetic for instance, at the beginning of each of three successive sessions—each time by a new teacher? Is it probable that this would have been done by any one reasonable teacher teaching the school the three sessions?

This evil of change reigns in the town and country schools alike. I have in mind one town in this State which had six principals in eight years. Change was the only remedy it knew, and it believed in heroic doses. A great many rural schools rarely have the same teacher two years in succession. Many of these changes, in both town and country schools, are due to the neighborhood jealousies and quarrels already discussed. Many a community has its chronic critics of the schools, who are dyspeptic by nature and sour by habit. A teacher never satisfies them longer than one year. They know all about schools, and their own children are paragons of perfection. If any teacher finds one of these children anything but a paragon, straightway there is trouble. To listen to these disgruntled fathers and mothers, with their tales of woe, requires patience and grace. In their eyes there is but one remedy—change teachers. Not two months ago I heard a man not far from sixty years of age declare that he intended to “break up” the only school in his district, unless the trustees dismissed the present teacher. It had never occurred to him that perhaps the trustees were in the right. Such a man is in a small way an anarchist.

In some instances fault-finding and dissatisfaction are unwittingly encouraged by the board of trustees. The board, either ignorant of its function or disposed to dodge an unpleasant duty, asks the patrons to elect the teacher. Such a course is an invitation to division and the disappointment consequent to defeat, and will inevitably bring about discord. What is the board appointed for, if not to manage the school by lessening the occasions for discord?

A good many towns make it a rule to employ only young inexperienced teachers, and at the end of each year drop those who have failed, keeping the more successful ones until they have become really serviceable, then let them go because the trustees and the patrons are unwilling to pay for good teaching at par value. Some places boast that their schools are the gateway to the promotion of their teachers. This may be a credit to the school, and a discredit to the people. It is not creditable, if the people are simply letting efficient teachers pass out from their schools in exchange for crude inexperience because the latter is cheap.

A few town school boards are given to the indefensible habit of advertizing every year for applications for every position in the school, when the board does not intend to elect a single new teacher. The king who marched his army up the hill, then marched it down again, did no more childish thing than these boards do. The thing is not only indefensible, but it is hurtful to the school, unjust to the teachers, and dishonest to possible applicants. What meaning does such advertizement convey to every teacher in that school, no matter how efficient or faithful she may be? When the teachers ask for its meaning they are told that it is only a matter of form, and that they need not be concerned. Great big grown business men playing like children! Then what about the innocent strangers who make *bona fide* applications in answer to what

common sense it is a violation of contract. Such conduct under ordinary circumstances is reprehensible, and wholly unworthy of an honest man or woman.

THE COURSE OF STUDY.

There is a small but turbulent class of overwise writers who periodically belabor the public schools. In their nightmares they see thousands of tender children murdered or maimed in the public schools, and give vociferous utterance to so much wild nonsense that they have but one effect—making people refuse to heed them even when they point out some real defect. Some of these writers have warned us against one great evil which we have gone on ignoring—that of an overcrowded course of study. To be brief, some years ago our educators realized the poverty of our common school course of study, confined almost exclusively to the three R's. A just demand was made for an enriched course, giving a wider range of subjects to the pupils. A number of subjects has been added. Now, in order to encourage individual initiative, I take it, the State Board of Education has never prescribed a maximum or a minimum number of subjects for any course. Instead it has adopted text-books covering a rather wide range of subjects, and grouped these into yearly grades, leaving each school to make up a course or courses from this list.

The building of a well-balanced course of study is the work of an expert. Comparatively few teachers lay claim to that stage of fitness. Yet each teacher, or at least each principal, experienced or inexperienced, sets about to make his own course. Theories, prejudices and tastes begin to clash for the mastery. One teacher is an arithmetic crank, and his course has but little else in it; another's favorite subject is grammar, and he makes his pupils analyze and parse everything in sight; another has no taste for geography, and he

practically omits it; another "dotes on" poetry, and the whole school is put to memorizing and reciting gems; while a lot of thorough-going teachers, who take everything literally, put the whole adopted list into one course and give it to every pupil in the school.

A great deal of ignorant and unjust criticism is made against the frequent and useless change of text-books. It would be neither wise nor defensible to have a child use the same reader through two or three grades, or to use the same geography through the fourth, fifth and sixth grades, for instance. If the book is suited to his advancement when he begins it, it is reasonable to say that it is not suitable two or three years later in his life. And if a teacher were to keep the child of one of these watchful guardians of the schools in a fourth reader, for instance, for three years, this same guardian would make the columns of the local newspaper smell of sulphur in declaiming against the outrage (then fail to sign his name). On the other hand, many of our schools do needlessly tax the patrons for books, and burden the children with books. Let me give concrete cases: I have just examined the published course of study in a ten-grade school in one of our towns. In that course are prescribed fifty-five separate texts, exclusive of copy books, drawing books, scratch-pads, etc. In the school are ten teachers. In another ten-grade school, with four teachers, there are sixty-four prescribed texts. In the first mentioned school there are ten separate texts required in the seventh grade; in the second mentioned school eleven texts are given in the eighth grade.

Every child ought to have the best obtainable book in every subject he pursues, and he ought to have all the books he needs—books suited to his age and advancement, but I protest that the above-mentioned courses are out of reason. To undertake to teach all these books to any one child in the

allotted time would make old Socrates catch his breath. In the first case, it would seem that the course given was measured by the physical endurance of the teachers—ten teachers pitted against ten sets of children. In the second case the physical endurance of the teachers was no limit—four teachers pitted against ten sets of children.

I am far from advocating only the three R's in the common schools, but our schools are undertaking too much, in the quantity of work and in the kind of work. School work must be circumscribed by time, space and the ability of the pupil. Take the eighth grade course already mentioned. Of the eleven texts prescribed, nine are to be pursued at the same time. It is no figure of speech to say that if a child's time is the dividend of a long division, the quotient, or result, must be small. For instance, in the first two years of a child's school life the schools very properly devote much time and energy to oral reading. But by the time he reaches the fifth grade so many things are crowded upon him that he does but little oral reading while under instruction—a few minutes a day, perhaps. Hence, when he reaches the high school his oral reading is scarcely intelligible, and he is often unable to get thought from the printed page. Indeed, many a college student, and not a few teachers in our common schools, cannot read as they should read on entering the high school.

These crowded courses of study have another fatal weakness. In the same school and in the same classes is a wide range of ability, taste and opportunity among the pupils. The bright and precocious mind, the sluggish but retentive mind, and the dull mind are found side by side. The pupil of robust body and vigorous health, the one of feeble body and delicate health, and the one with ample time for every task and the one with scant time for any task, all go to the same school. The unpardonable sin of the schools is to bunch them together,

give them the same work, and require all to measure up to a common standard. God made them in different molds, and it is useless for the schools to try to ignore the differences. It is unnatural and it is wrong. To march abreast twenty-five children in one grade up to a given deadline is neither possible nor desirable. Children with diverse abilities, tastes, and opportunities should not be required to progress with even step through such diverse subjects as mathematics, language, history and drawing. If a boy can do the language work of the sixth grade, but is prepared for only the fourth in mathematics, put him just where he is fitted to go. "Oh, he will not fit into my program," says some one. Then make the program fit the boy. The possibility of doing this is one of the great advantages that the small country school has over the closely graded school.

There is another thing which needs to be dinned into the ears of our people—both teachers and patrons—that it is folly for a school with nine grades and two teachers to undertake to do what a school with nine grades and six teachers accomplishes. The two-teacher school may be the better school within its limitations, but it must keep within these limitations. A one-horse farmer who would claim to be able to grow as many crops and as large crops as a four-horse farmer would grow would be laughed-at. Little David could not fight in big Saul's heavy and cumbersome armor, but with a sling and a pebble he did effective work.

POOR ATTENDANCE.

Even with insufficient funds, poor schoolhouses, short school terms and incompetent teachers, the people may still show a commendable educational purpose by sending every child to school every day the schools are in session. Much good may be got out of a very inferior school, if the children attend it

regularly and with the purpose of getting the most possible out of it. How are the white children of South Carolina attending the schools? In 1907 the white enrollment in the public schools of the State was 144,668, while the average attendance was only 103,304. The Federal census, taken seven years before (1900), gives South Carolina 217,972 white children between the ages of five and twenty years, while our legal school age is between six and twenty-one years. It is safe to assert that barely sixty per cent. of the white children of the State are enrolled in any kind of school, and not over forty per cent. are in average attendance. In 1900 thirty-six per cent. of the white children between the ages of ten and fourteen years were not enrolled in any school, public or private. In the same year Massachusetts had only six per cent. of her white children of the corresponding ages not in school, Connecticut had seven per cent., and Michigan eight per cent.

In 1900 South Carolina had 54,177 native white illiterates over ten years of age, only 792 fewer white illiterates than the State had in 1870, thirty years previous. At the same date Connecticut, with nearly twice the white population of South Carolina, had but 1,958 white illiterates over ten years of age. Again, South Carolina had 15,643 native white illiterates of the voting age; Rhode Island, with four-fifths the white population of South Carolina, had 550. We had 17,839 native white illiterates between the ages of ten and nineteen years; Michigan, with twice our population, had 1,141; Connecticut had 160, and Rhode Island 100. Is it reasonable to hope for the South Carolina of tomorrow, with her load of helpless illiterates, to cope successfully with those States and sections which have freed themselves from the bondage of ignorance? The day is forever gone from South Carolina when a few highly trained men of leisure could direct

and control the destinies of the people. This responsibility has been shifted to the shoulders of the masses, and now we are forced to consider the training of the masses. Only yesterday Superintendent Martin, just from a trip through New England, gave out this: "Several educational leaders in New England frankly told us that they are spending their money and building up their schools in order to retain and maintain their industrial supremacy. They realized that we have advantages and great resources in the South, but they propose to keep the lead, if possible, through the power of trained brains and trained hands." Intelligence and skill will win every time in every race. What is South Carolina doing to meet this open challenge from New England?

Who are these South Carolina white children not in school, and why are they not in school? Some are the sons and daughters of parents themselves ignorant and unable to appreciate or to understand what education means to their children and to the State; some are the children of fathers and mothers, greedy and selfish, who are more than willing to make wage-earners and bread-winners out of their young untaught offspring; a few are the children of parents opposed to education, because they have known some educated scoundrel; a very few are the children of parents who actually need the labor of their children to eke out a living; and many are the children of fathers engrossed in material affairs and mothers recreant to duty. Many of these children are at work on the farms, in stores and shops at a few cents a day, and in the cotton mills making good wages for children, while hundreds of others are roaming the streets and country lanes—the training grounds for idlers, vagrants and enemies to law, order and decency.

Two of the worst enemies to childhood and youth are overwork and idleness. Close confinement at manual labor is dull-

ing, stifling and destructive to childhood; idleness is poisonous and ruinous to youth. Attendance upon school may be used as a corrective for both evils. The State, in order to protect at least one class of its children against overwork, has passed a child labor law. Barring some notable exceptions, the abortiveness of that law is a common jest. To illustrate: In 1905 one of our city school superintendents lost more than twenty pupils from one schoolroom within two months. In company with one of the cotton mill superintendents of that town (a man in favor of schools), the school superintendent went from house to house in the mill village, inquiring for these missing children. In one afternoon he located twelve of them, every one of them unlawfully engaged at work in the mill, though only three of their names appeared on the pay-roll.

Now, the child of the lazy, greedy, selfish parent is at work, and not in school. The child of the ignorant and indifferent parent is neither at work nor in school; he is idling. Both children need to be educated; the State needs both of them; and the State has already decreed that the taxpayers shall establish and maintain schools for both. There remains but one logical thing to do—compel the parents of both to send their children to school. There is but little logic in compelling people to pay taxes to support the schools, then permitting the parents of the children who most need the schools deliberately to keep them from the benefits of the schools. The poorer the child, the more need there is for compelling his parents to send him to school. Compulsory attendance laws are aimed at the selfish and indifferent parent, not at the child. Of what advantage are good teachers, long school terms, and fine schoolhouses, unless the children attend the schools? In a recent election to increase the local school tax in a district in North Carolina, where they have recently enacted a kind of

local option compulsory law, a certain taxpayer made this declaration: "If you vote to compel the children of this district to go to school, increase my tax as you please; if you are not going to put the children into the schools, I am opposed to any further tax." That man's argument has no answer.

Some opponent to a compulsory law says: "You have not enough schoolhouses and teachers to take care of the thousands of children not in school." That argument is worthless, unless we are willing to admit that the white people of the State are actually unable to take care of their children. Let some outside philanthropist offer to aid South Carolina in matters educational, then you get an answer to that question. Will the schoolhouses ever be built or the teachers employed until there is a need for them? Would it be wise for a farmer to let a \$500 crop waste in the fields rather than build a \$100 house in which to store it?

The last argument of the opponents to compulsory attendance is that it cannot be enforced without truant officers, and that truant officers must be paid. Certainly. The present child labor law of this State is a dead letter, because no adequate provision is made for its enforcement. And the police of Charleston, Columbia and other places have to be paid, but it pays to pay them. We are perfectly willing to pay an officer of the law to arrest little negro boys in a ten-cent crap game, but it is too much to pay an officer of the law to see that a lazy, selfish father sends his child to school. We are paying today in actual money every year five times as much in tribute to the industrial supremacy of New England and other sections as it would cost us to put every white child in the State in school for six months in the year! What economists we are! And what philosophers we try to be!

THE HIGH SCHOOL SITUATION.

Counting the increased facilities added this year, it is easily demonstrable by figures that the public high schools of the State, aided and unaided, have increased in efficiency more than twenty-five per cent. since January 1, 1907. In more than one-fourth of them the efficiency has been doubled within that time. The chief increase is in the quantity and quality of the teaching force, thus giving longer recitation periods, a wider range of studies, and lengthened courses of study. The State appropriation of \$50,000 has been the chief instrument by which these improvements have been brought about, but it must be admitted that even with this lever it has been a task of magnitude to secure this increased efficiency. It has required courage and watchfulness on the part of the State High School Board to prevent the schools from taking the State aid for the high school, then turning it into the common school department without one particle of increase of efficiency in the high school.

The introductory statement might lead the uninformed to think that our high schools are reasonably satisfactory. Far from it. There are now not far from 140 public high schools coming within the minimum definition of a high school under the present high school law—one teacher giving all his time to not fewer than fifteen pupils above the seventh grade or seventh school year. Of these 140 schools, about thirty have one high school teacher each, eighty schools have two teachers each, and the remaining ones more than two teachers each. Only six schools have each the full teaching time of five teachers or more.

In nearly all the one-teacher high schools the recitation periods have been advanced to thirty minutes each, nothing less than twenty minutes being accepted in the aided schools.

In those with two or more high school teachers, fully three-fourths have forty- and forty-five-minute periods, while a few have one-hour periods. In an aided school of this class nothing less than thirty minutes is accepted. The greatest single gain has been this lengthening of the recitation periods, and upon the whole the situation in this respect is satisfactory.

Some noticeable improvement in the competency of the teachers has been made, but in this respect conditions are far from satisfactory. Many places are willing to pay from \$1,200 to \$1,500 for a supervising principal, but give him cheap assistants. It is utterly useless to talk about getting a competent and experienced woman, fitted to do high school teaching, at \$40 a month, or a man who has shown himself qualified, at \$60. It is painful to me to say this, for among just such teachers are some of my best personal friends. But I know only too well that the standard of the high schools depends upon the standard of their teaching force. Let me tell some things I have seen and heard. I have seen more than one high school teacher wrestle a half-hour with an ordinary problem in Wentworth's Practical Arithmetic, a book usually completed in the eighth grade. In Tarr's Physical Geography, a book really too difficult for the eighth grade, where it is usually found, I have seen teachers cover enough ground in one thirty-minute recitation to have given profitable work for three such periods. In one history recitation I have seen the class read the text like a fourth reader for one-half the time, then listened to the teacher ask twenty to thirty wholly unrelated questions, each suggestive of the answer expected. Day after day I see teachers vainly attempting to teach English grammar and punctuation vainly from the rules and the few examples given in the text-book, and seemingly oblivious to the fact that every text-book the child uses is full of the very illustrations needed. Latin is usually

referred to as a dead language; it might with propriety be called deadly in some instances. Not a few high school pupils after two years of Latin study are unable to separate a Latin word into its syllables, or to determine the length of a syllable. In translation it is no uncommon thing to hear such as this: "*Gallia*—Gaul, *est*—is, *omnis*—all, *divisa*—divided, *in*—in, *partes*—parts, *tres*—three," etc. As a specimen product of the vigor of the Latin grafted upon the flexibility of the English, note this: "The army having been drawn up more as the nature of the place and the slope of the hill and the necessity of the time than as the order and plan of military things demanded, since the different legions some in one part and some in another were resisting the enemy and the thick hedges having been cast down," etc. (See Caesar's Gallic War, Book II, Chapter 22.) The teacher who accepted this jargon holds a college diploma, and is exempt from examination of fitness to teach. On my desk are some specimens of spelling in the handwriting of high school teachers—all but one, college graduates: *Ceasar* (thus by four teachers), *latin*, *liturature*, *studdies*, *Enock Arden*. Buehler's Grammar has been in constant use in this State eight years, and Myers' Histories more than fifteen years. Here are some of the variations: *Myer's*, *Meyers'*, *Meyer's*; *Beuhler* (five teachers), *Beulah* (four teachers), *Buelah* (two teachers), *Beuhlar* (one teacher). A fifteen hundred dollar principal cannot make bricks without straw.

I realize that it is rash, impolitic and dangerous to say that the high schools are in need of more men teachers of ability. In discussing a question like this it is hard to confine people to orderly reasoning. For a moment let us divest the subject of sentimentality and ourselves of blarney and patronizing gallantry. The discussion is not to try to prove that men teachers are in anyway superior to women teachers, but to

show that each has a place, a very necessary place. The characteristics of the two sexes are distinctly unlike, but they are harmonious, they are complementary and supplementary. God wisely made them so. The child's existence is due to the existence of the two sexes, and his future welfare and development depend on what can be supplied by both sexes. The well-balanced training of the child is dependent on the retention of this harmony of dual characteristics; the joint training given by the father and the mother makes it a symmetrical training, and the absence of the training of either parent is a distinct loss to the child. In this joint parental training the child at different stages of his physical, mental and moral growth is more dependent upon, more responsive to, and more in need of, the peculiar influences furnished by the one parent or the other. Be the child boy or girl, it needs the directing and controlling influences of both parents. A manly man is not feminine, nor is a womanly woman masculine. The moment either crosses Nature's boundary line, loss of force and symmetry is the penalty.

What is true in the home is true in the school. In his education he is entitled to the influences of both sexes as teachers. For the first five years of a child's school life the average man as its teacher is all but a failure as compared with the average woman. The woman is more patient and gentle and sympathetic, and is in every way better fitted to furnish what the child needs. About the time the boy enters his thirteenth year he begins to manifest radical changes in his disposition, in his tastes, and in his ideals. He still needs patience, gentleness and sympathy, but he needs something more—restraint and control, perhaps; but he needs something even more important than mere control—he is yearning for that unconscious tuition which is involved in association with a manly man. The time has come for him to imitate, and to whom should he turn with

more confidence than his teacher? What mother of judgment would have her boy imitate the most perfect woman of her acquaintance, any more than she would have her girl imitate the most perfect man of her acquaintance. The silent power of imitation must never be lost sight of, and the boy's craving the companionship of a manly man must not be ignored. And to be perfectly candid, we are not going to keep the boys through a four-year high school course unless we give them more men teachers. The sentimentalist who insists on all women teachers for the high school knows down deep in his heart that he does so because they can be had for about one-half the salary an equally competent man will demand. Now, if the sentimentalist is sincere, let him give the woman high school teacher the same salary her male equal would get. Less than two months ago I watched a man and a woman teaching in the same high school. If I am any judge of teaching, the woman was superior to the man, yet her salary is just one-third of the man's salary. When I spoke to the board about increasing her salary, not one agreed to it.

Only a few high schools are content to offer a two-year course, although one of the best in the State is a two-year school. Nine-tenths of the high schools offer a three-year course, no matter how many nor how few teachers. Last year there were but four public high schools in the State with a standard four-year course, and enough teachers to teach it. The report for 1908-1909 will show perhaps eight standard four-year schools. To be sure, more than four schools claim a four-year course. Several schools claiming a four-year course were credited with fewer units of work than are required for a standard three-year course, and one school claiming four years fell below the requirements for a standard two-year course. The standard applied to the high schools was that generally accepted by the colleges of the State, and is below

that used by the Carnegie Foundation Board. The error into which most of these schools have fallen is to divide their pupils into four classes with six- and seven-month intervals of advancement between each two, then call each division a year in the course. That the reader may see the validity of some of these claims, some courses are here outlined. This is the fourth year's work in one school: The first half of Myers' General History, Commercial Arithmetic five times a week, three books of Plane Geometry, and forty-five hours during the year to Tappan's History of Literature. Another four-year school gets through the Second Book of Caesar's Gallic War, four books of Plane Geometry, and Tappan's Literature. Numbers of these courses show that the third-year and fourth-year classes are together in more than one study. One must not be misled by the term literature in many of these schools. It is nothing more than reading about the authors of literature—a little biography, if the truth must be told.

The poverty of some of these four-year courses is more than offset by some of the plethoric three-year courses, some of which are formidable affairs. At random I take one year's work from one of these courses: Arithmetic, Algebra, Rhetoric, Literature, Latin (reading, grammar and prose composition), Physical Geography, History, and Business Methods (an innocent little text). In this year's work every pupil takes everything prescribed, and each pupil is on recitation practically every period during the day. Several schools have Arithmetic, Algebra, and Geometry in the same year's work, and a few have Physical Geography and Physics in the same year, with practically no other science in the entire course.

The majority of the one-teacher high schools undertake the impossible—to teach full three- and four-year courses. One such school has classes in Arithmetic, Algebra, Geometry,

English Grammar, English Composition, Literature, Physical Geography, U. S. History, S. C. History, General History, Beginner's Latin, Caesar, and Ovid. One teacher may teach a few subjects through even a four-year course, and do it well, but on such a course as the one just given a teacher is wasting his time and energy. The greatest evil is to the pupil. His time and effort are divided up among so many subjects that he pursues none of them long enough and far enough to get any training or knowledge out of them. In even the better schools the average pupil gets but little out of such subjects as Physical Geography, Physics, and Civics, because they are not studied long enough to benefit the pupil.

The high schools, like the common schools, suffer from the endless changing of teachers. A comparison of this year's schedule with that of last year shows that the whole course in some schools has been overhauled and reorganized, and in some cases the new course seems to be given over to reviewing past work. Perhaps such course is necessary, but it shows a fearful waste of energy somewhere. In at least two cases the new teachers have taken the pupils out of last year's eighth and ninth grades, added a few recruits, and made a four-year school. Presumably that is progress.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

Who is responsible for our ill-equipped high schools, with their short, inefficient courses of study, their lack of teachers to do the work, and the relatively small number of pupils there? The answer is, the superintendents and principals, the people, and the colleges.

The superintendents and principals are rightly looked to by the people for leadership in building up the high schools. They are largely responsible for the educational ideals of their communities, and the attitude of the people toward high

schools. If the course of study is overcrowded with subjects, or is scrappy in its material, they alone are responsible. Many a high school without a map, a chart, a globe, or any other necessary apparatus, might have at least a few such things bought with the money spent on so-called commencements, baccalaureate addresses, invitations, programs, rule books, etc. Moreover, many a boy and many a girl not in the high school would be there if they had only a few encouraging words spoken to them. It is to be feared that the public high school teacher is not always mindful of the pupils who are out of school but ought to be in school. Finally, many a high school is running in a rut, because the principal is running in one.

The people are emphatically to blame for not supporting their high schools. They put neither their money nor their children in them. Throughout the State, in places easily pointed out, are high schools scarcely worthy of the name, but which might be made within five years to rank high, if the people in those places were only willing to use a little common sense business sagacity. Why a sensible man will refuse to help his home high school by patronizing it, but instead will help to maintain one away from home by sending his children there, is one of the strange things in life. He gets no better advantages for his own children, and refuses to help his neighbor at home who is unable to send his children from home. Hence, the home high school lags or dies. It costs today \$250 to send a pupil a year to school away from home. Why will four men, thoroughly familiar with the laws of business coöperation, take their sons and daughters from their own high school, to send them away at an expense of \$1,000 a year? Why will they not put even half that money in the home school, thereby keeping their money and their children at

home, and at the time when the children need parental attention?

The reports from eighty-nine high schools in the State show that from them this session 312 pupils have been sent away to other schools at least one year (many of them two years) before completing the course in the home school. These 312 pupils, at \$250 each, will cost \$78,000 this year. Their parents are putting upon themselves this unnecessary expense, sending this money out of their own communities, impoverishing their home schools, and aiding in depriving the children of their less favored neighbors of a good high school education.

Holly Hill had last year a good two-year high school taught by one teacher. The school had thirteen pupils in the eighth grade and five in the ninth. This year the people attempted to organize a high school with two teachers and twenty-five pupils. This would entitle the school to enough State aid to employ the second teacher at \$50 a month. The undertaking had to be abandoned, because the five pupils in last year's ninth grade could not be held in the school, most of them going off—to college.

Ridgeway last year asked State aid for her high school, and received \$410. The school had fourteen pupils in the eighth grade and twelve in the ninth. This year six of those pupils have been sent away from Ridgeway to school. The place is paying \$990 for two high school teachers, and is asking the State to pay part of that, while the school at this writing has not enrolled the required twenty-five pupils.

Jonesville had last year fourteen pupils in the ninth grade and nine in the tenth. Seven of those pupils have this session been sent to college and two to preparatory schools, and the home school opened with nine pupils in the ninth grade and six in the tenth, and an effort of the principal to add the

eleventh grade was defeated. These nine pupils away from home will cost the people of that community over \$2,000 this year, yet they are today paying their own three high school teachers a combined salary of \$1,775, and getting part of that from the State! Can these people expect to maintain a high school? Of course the entire community must not be held responsible for this folly, and the pupils unable to go off to school must not be forgot.

Central is struggling to maintain a high school; it needs money and pupils, yet three of her last year's high school pupils were sent away this session.

Batesburg attempted to add the eleventh grade this year, but four of last year's five pupils in the tenth grade left for college, and the effort was defeated.

Anderson, one of the four places last year with a four-year public high school, has had to abandon its eleventh grade, although twelve of her last year's tenth grade are off at college. Five from the ninth grade and seven from the eighth grade are—at college! These twenty-four pupils are costing the people of Anderson \$6,000 this year; Anderson is paying her entire high school teaching force less than \$4,000! Did Anderson achieve her business success through such methods?

Ninety-Six added the eleventh grade this year, kept five of her last year's tenth grade, sent nine out of the same grade to college, and pays two high school teachers \$1,360! These nine pupils, with one from the ninth grade, will this year cost the people of that town more than they are spending on their entire school from the first grade up.

The people of Pendleton, Seneca, Union, Woodruff, and fully twenty other places, are impoverishing their high schools in the same way. What is the trouble? The people are still blinded by that fundamental error—that the function of the high school is to prepare students for college. Nine-

tents of the pupils who finish the seventh grade never see the doors of a college. True, in addition to the subjects necessary to college entrance, we have added to the traditional course a large number of side-dishes, so to speak. These side-dishes are nothing but relishes, to be tasted occasionally. The people and the principals have put no meaty courses parallel to that single one which leads straight to the college door. The people, by their own short-sightedness and unwillingness to learn, stand and see their own strong and sturdy sons step out of the schoolroom at the end of the eighth grade, because these sons have found that their parents and teachers have put nothing in the high school except nourishment for the college candidate. A high school supported by the public will not live, and ought not to live, unless it offers courses of study suited to those who cannot go to college as well as to those who can.

Is the reader beginning to see wherein the colleges are responsible for the unsatisfactory high school conditions? Every college in South Carolina—State, denominational and private—is doing high school work in its college courses. This statement needs no proof; the high schools are not doing the work, and it must be done in the colleges, if done at all. Formerly, and not so long ago, the colleges were all but helpless in this matter—they had to take the raw, unprepared material, or close their doors against deserving boys and girls unable to get the proper preparation. I have already argued that the high schools are not yet ready to furnish properly prepared students to the colleges. The line of demarcation between high school territory and college territory may not be definitely fixed, yet with respect to the age of the pupil and to a majority of the subjects of study involved, there is considerable unity of opinion. Taking into consideration the actual conditions that exist, let the college set a reasonable

number of high school units (not grammar school units) as the minimum required for entrance. A standard three-year high school ought to do twelve units of work. Since most of our high schools are three-year schools, that standard ought not to be unreasonable. (A satisfactory standard of years cannot be set up; every one knows that the term tenth grade is not definite as to what is accomplished; besides, some schools run nine months, some eight, and a few only seven.)

First, let each college make its entrance requirements definite—let its standard be high or low, as it chooses, but let it be definite. Second, let the college live up to its published claim. Colleges need not be uniform in standards, but all can be honest in these standards. After all, it is a question of morals, and if a college should stand for anything, it should stand for unswerving rectitude. It is just as reprehensible for a college as a body corporate to advertize one standard and act on another, as it would be for one of its professors to promise one thing and do another. The popular mind has come to look upon the published entrance requirements of colleges as fakes. With a college catalog before you giving its entrance requirements in English, Mathematics, Latin and History, at a standard which the average school of ten grades is failing to reach, and you know it, your mind is likely to be disturbed when you know that the same college is taking pupils from ninth grades, and occasionally from eighth grades.

What are the facts? With fully twenty high schools yet to hear from, I have the names of 154 pupils who have entered college this session from ninth grades, and thirty-six pupils from eighth grades. Those students reported as entering the preparatory department of a college were of course not included. Every college in the State, and several outside, are reported as sharing the spoils—juvenile kid-

napping. It is hard to reconcile these cold facts with the constant wail of the colleges for better prepared students, and with the perennial announcements about having raised standards. If a college after ten or twelve years of standard-raising is canvassing for ninth grade pupils, and taking eighth grade ones, what must the standard have been when it began raising!

The college canvasser says: "Send us your ninth grade pupil; our college professors can teach him Latin and Mathematics better than your tenth grade teacher can." Perhaps so; but is he ready to admit that his so-called college has gone into high school business? Is he ready to admit that his students who are really prepared to do college work must sit idle in the classroom while these equipped professors make daily excursions down into high school territory for the benefit of the ninth grade fellows? The basic question is, Where does the pupil start on entering college? If he comes from the ninth grade, or second high school year, how much college work has he done at the end of four years? If a tenth grade pupil enters the sophomore class, how much college work has he had at graduation?

The last subterfuge of the college in excusing itself for maintaining a low standard for entrance and canvassing for half-prepared students is, that there are so many places where there is not even a two-year (nine grades) high school. There are many such places, but the college is hindering such places instead of aiding them. Why should a community maintain a high school so long as the college is anxious to occupy that field in order to secure the pupils? I have met this question in perhaps fifty places in South Carolina. Granted that there is no local high school in a community, does it not cost a parent as much to send his boy to a college to do his high school work as it would to send him to a good

high school? Then, how is the college aiding the unprepared pupil? Besides, the college is lending itself to shutting out four times as many other pupils from getting a high school education. The college has four obligations resting upon it—one to itself and the cause of education, one to its own students, one to those who cannot go to college, and one to the people. In the first instance, the college is the promulgator of educational standards and ideals; it is the duty of the college to lift up the secondary school instead of pushing it downward; the failure of the college to maintain a good standard is largely responsible for the presence of what has been dubbed the *collegette*. In the second instance, the college has no moral right to take a half-prepared pupil, give him two years of high school work, two years of college work, and a college degree; it promises college training to its students, and it should redeem that pledge. In the third instance, hundreds of worthy boys and girls will never get beyond the eighth grade so long as the college continues to do the work of the high school; those who are able to go to the college will do so, those not able must stop at the end of the elementary course. In the last instance, the masses of the people look to the college for standards in education; it is useless for the college to tell the people to maintain high schools, then sap the life-blood from them, finally destroying them.

The evil genius which dominates our colleges is greed for numbers. Boards of trustees, faculties and the people are all under the magic spell. There is no objection whatever to numbers in the colleges, if their presence is not bought with a price. The constant cry is, "Send us more students; make room for more students; look at the students being turned away from the college doors." The public mind in its hysterical moments fails to grasp the significance of the plainest

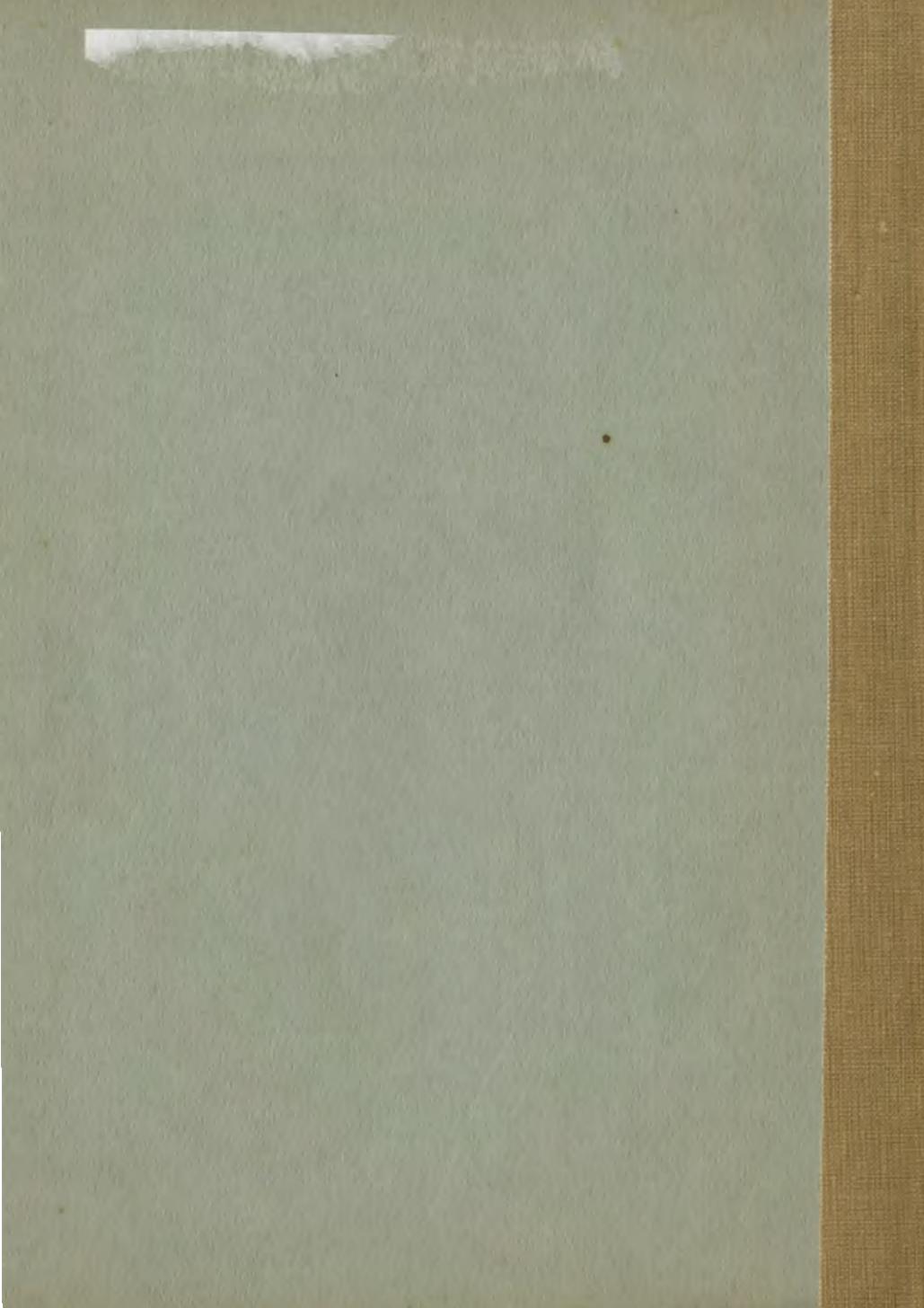
facts. For instance, the college enrollment in South Carolina last year was more than one-third the high school enrollment. What is the significance of this fact? Again, Winthrop College had this year 1,047 applications for admission. Five hundred and twenty were admitted; 527 were refused. President Johnson reports that fully 300 of those refused were not prepared to enter Winthrop at all. Clemson had 1,074 applications for admission. Seven hundred and twenty-eight were admitted; 246 were refused. President Mell reports that 206 applicants failed on account of examination. The other colleges have similar experiences. The cry should be for better high schools, better supported and better patronized.

AN EDUCATIONAL COMMISSION.

Many of our people are dissatisfied with our educational conditions. Not much longer will they willingly tolerate some things we now have. The people are going to demand a system of education. Such system as will be demanded would be difficult to establish under our present school law. Our present school law was framed more than thirty years ago. Since then conditions have changed, and almost innumerable changes have been wrought in the law. So many additions, amendments and repeals have been enacted during that time that the school law has in it innumerable gaps, inconsistencies, contradictions and inoperative requirements. To undertake to engraft upon the law as it stands some of the most necessary and pressing reforms, such as improvement in county supervision, would be an extremely difficult task. Before any more time is spent on patching up the present school law, it would be the part of wisdom for the General Assembly to provide for the appointment of an Educational Commission, of say five members, to rewrite the

school law. It would require a year to do the work as it should be. Only in this way can anything like a perfect system of education be evolved. Are we not ready for such step?

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