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A CENTRAL PEDAGOGICAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM FOR MASSACHUSETTS.¹

By G. STANLEY HALL.

During the last few decades educational literature has not only increased enormously in volume, but the best of it has grown special and even scientific to a degree unsuspected by the public, by the average teacher, or perhaps even by most librarians. While much of the teeming product of the pedagogical press, present as well as past, is smitten with the blight of the commonplace so that it relaxes mental tone to read it, there has lately arisen a choice body of expert journals, books and monographs that tend to lift the vocation of teaching to a higher level, that has gone beyond early authorities, erected new standards and made much, that was once helpful, obsolete. Scores of academic chairs in pedagogy have been established, laborious and costly researches undertaken, reforms that have absorbed years of the best work of select intelligences at home and abroad have been accomplished, and others are under way. Opinions have been collected over wide areas. Anthropology, hygiene, psychology, sociology, architecture, legislation, finance have often brought the best that was in them to bear. Experiments costing much time, money and labor, and made on precious human material, have, some of them, settled great questions and so are worth all they cost. Thus while the old and new, conservatism and progress, good and bad, are always found in every department of life, as is needful for healthful growth, the distance between these extremes has possibly never been so great, and the worth difference, measured even in dollars, between the best and the average books, buildings, laws, methods and teachers, never so great. Hence the problem, how to make the best known and prevail so as to work against the iron law that makes everything, everywhere and always in the sphere of education, tend to degenerate to apathy, mechanism and dull routine, is vital for the rising generation, and posterity will judge ours according as we rise to this great opportunity or fall below it.

Nowhere is this problem more vital than in this State, which has long led the new world in education, and does so still in the

¹ Address before the New England Library Association, May, 1905.

number of institutions and average pay, but is now, by general consent of the competent, being steadily outstripped in most respects by the more progressive communities of the middle west. Something needs to be done in this State besides recounting triumphs of the past, devising cunning comparative statistics, pointing with pride to buildings, paper schemelets and the pedagogical apologetics now too much in vogue. Something qualitative, new and effective is needed if we are to regain our lapsing prestige in public school work. A central library and museum is one opportunity now open to us which would help the State to regain its lost leadership. Let me first hastily sketch the ideal form of such an institution.

Rooms conveniently accessible and attractive should first be secured where Boston teachers can meet socially upon school holidays and after hours, where appointments can be made and special committees meet. I will not call it a pedagogical club house, but the need of some such opportunities as a club affords has often been expressed. But the chief feature should not be the buildings or rooms, but their contents. Here should gradually be gathered a professional library and here should be found the best educational journals, American and foreign, and the choicest vocational books. I say the best, because teachers in this country are in a special need of sedulous protection from the invasion of the flood of second, third and tenth best. Those who wish to see the plans and the furniture of the best kindergarden rooms in this and other lands, or of the best American and foreign grammar and secondary buildings, with cost per cubic foot, provisions for light, heating, ventilation, coats, hats, umbrellas, toilet, desks, blackboards, yards, roof, playgrounds, modern rural schools and grounds, should find this material gathered, classified and labelled in convenient form, as expert library art can now do, so that the visitor can speedily compare the best in different towns and countries. We began this work years ago at Worcester and went far enough to find that by excisions from university reports, by correspondence, domestic and foreign, it was entirely practicable to gather and group, at trifling cost, valuable data, the chief requisite being the service of a vigorous, competent and young assistant. School architecture is slowly becoming a specialty, and here it could not only be helped along, but the level of lay intelligence elevated. Many expensive new buildings might have been greatly improved and their expense reduced by knowledge thus gathered. From this collection I would exclude models, but not working plans.

School hygiene should be represented by the best apparatus for testing moisture, pressure, regulating temperature and the amount of carbon dioxide, determining the intensity of light on

desks in different parts of the room. Here the simple apparatus used in testing eye, ear, throat, lungs, the various curvatures, the simplest kit of the school doctor, now standardized in several European lands;— all this should be accessible and explained to those interested, with stated demonstrations of the instruments themselves with the aid of models, cuts and diagrams. The choice little list of books and journals solely devoted to this vital aspect of school work should be grouped, and even important articles catalogued, so that a teacher who wishes either to provide additional safeguards for her own health, or that of her pupils, would find the data at hand, or if a paper was to be prepared at short notice, it should not merely repeat platitudes, but diffuse real knowledge.

Child study has many aspects, the value of some of which is now universally recognized and taught in every normal school and often in the university. This already has its little body of literature, good, indifferent and worthless, and the best is a small but precious list of both books and journals that should be gathered and catalogued by subject. Some of its apparatus and methods should be seen by every teacher and be accessible in every school, and all should be loanable for long or shorter times. Here should be exposed to view the specimen life and health books coming into use in certain European cities, and used often as a new basis of promotion as well as of individual treatment. Everything indicates that this line of work is seen to be more basal for all lines of educational endeavor, and it is in great need of some adequate material installation.

Charts and illustrative apparatus should be another department. Nothing surprises the average American teacher more than to see the wealth of diagrams and devices used in teaching in the best European schools. Our buildings often seem beautiful bodies, but these are in some sense the soul of school buildings and rooms, without which they are beautiful but lifeless things. Wall cuts of steam engines, mechanism of balloons, scientific kites and tops, illustrating all the principles of physics; devices for making geography, geology, botany and zoölogy clear and simple; historic tables for illustrations for culture stages from savagery up;—always the central topic selected, the cardinal features brought into relief, details neglected or subordinated. We do not begin to understand what pictures can do and are doing in easing and short-circuiting the ways of ingress into youthful minds, and giving body and content to teaching, which is always prone to lapse to formality. Maps, curves, colored schemes, the devices of the graphic method seen, *e. g.*, in the census, are almost a new language. Add to these the scientific toys of Germany, some of which are masterpieces of the simplification of mechanical principles, and

are also models of cheapness and of the pedagogic art that taps vital interests. The Russian, French and Belgian pedagogical museums have rooms full of these devices, and some are duplicated many fold and loaned far and near. I wish there were time to dwell upon the manifold activities of these institutions, the thousands of lantern slides, of geographic, zoölogical, historical illustrations, diagrammatic and typical schematizations of principles, facts, periods, photographs of works of art, sometimes demonstrations of material and their use, popular lectures, and sometimes model classroom exercises conducted for a chosen few.

There should also be a collection of text-books on each school topic from the primer up, new and old, always including representative books from foreign lands. To my mind the best thing of all the St. Louis educational exposition was the German text and reference books for teachers and pupils. Among these masterpieces of their kind I spent many days. This collection, not large, should have stayed in this country, been provided with a home and made a valuable nucleus. Our publishers and text-book writers very rarely compare methods of other lands but focus all their efforts on the points likely to weigh with non-expert text-book committees against the books of rival firms. I have heard of a country judge who, as he grew old, refused to hear the other side of a case lest it should confuse his mind. So these textigraphers decline to consider foreign methods because so different. The trouble with most American text-books, even those by college professors, is that they are written with very inadequate knowledge of the best pedagogic achievements of others; the author has made no comprehensive preliminary survey, largely because the material to do so has not been available.

Once more, most governments publish valuable reports annual, triennial or quinquennial, perhaps blue books giving the history and present state of great reforms like the new school board in London, the twenty years' celebration of the courses of citizenship and morals in France, the marvellous story of recent indigenous education in India, and of the school system, pronounced the best on paper, England has produced—that of Madagascar,—documents as important for other lands as Dr. Harris's report is for ours. The proceedings of congresses, of experts in special educational topics, accounts of new departures in industrial education, elaborate illustrated descriptions of new institutions, the exposition books;—all these should be collected by some one who is long-sighted enough to see what is going on in other lands.

Such an institution should give aid at a distance. Some years ago I destroyed hundreds of letters of inquiry on peda-

gogical matters, most of which I was unable to answer, but where it would have been very easy, with time and assistance, to have rendered service. There were letters of inquiry about pedagogical literature of almost every kind. Requests for references, I think, led all others. Had this or that ever been tried, and, if so, where and with what success; how can I learn about the new Scotch law, the German classical discussion since the Kaiser's Rescript in 1892, school gardens in France, the higher commercial schools of Germany, the *Ecole du Livre* in Paris, the summary of the discussion on teaching arithmetic as ratio, reading machines, maps and charts of Bible study, the new moral and religious training methods in France, the new London board law, music in schools, a list of cities that have adopted small boards, the constitution of school boards in foreign cities; what are they doing in education in Argentina; something about the College of Preceptors; the best journal on school hygiene; what about schools for dullards, the doll congresses, the new London University, and the best school for my peculiar child; what is the Batavia system and is it unique; some literature on myopia in school children, or on tests and measurements, etc. Besides those who write many visit our library and consult its head. Now a competent librarian, specialized in pedagogy, could easily conduct a bureau of information and do consultation service personally and by correspondence, such as Mr. S. S. Green has for years done in a broader but less specialized field. This alone would widen the sphere of usefulness of such an institution and extend it to the whole State and beyond. My experience has almost led me to believe that a gifted, trained librarian in pedagogy could do a wide service, possibly greater than any other single person in the whole field of education is able to render.

This is the ideal in outline, or, at least, a segment of it. It would, of course, take years to realize and would have to be approximated gradually. Where and how to begin would depend upon many conditions. Let me briefly consider objections either actual or possible.

I. This need is already met. All who know the field know this is not true. Neither Harvard, the Boston Public, State Library, ours at Clark, the Congressional, or Library of the Bureau of Education, contain even most of the best of the books and journals. In all these places only a small fraction of the library resources can be devoted to this subject, and little expert knowledge is exercised even in selecting, and still less in making acquisitions available. Educational literature grows old and most of the contents of the alcoves in this field in the older libraries is of no value save for history. A few monumental works have outlasted their generation, but the rest are

now obsolete and dreary, and yet it is not more, but, above all, better literature, chosen from a wider point of view, that is wanted.

II. The second objection sometimes made is that such an experiment has been already tried and failed, but the two tentative efforts made in this direction in Boston years ago were both triply doomed to failure in advance, so ill chosen were the plane, plan and the man. The right selection of the latter is, of course, the most important of all. He must be familiar with, at least, French and German, be an expert in pedagogy and in knowledge of libraries. He should be a person with a distinct genius for just this work, adaptable, sympathetic, eager for the best, sympathetic with the new and the old, and young enough to think at least as much about the future as of the past.

III. The third objection is that teachers do not want and would not use such an institution. This, of course, cannot be fully known until the experiment is tried. Boston teachers are cloyed and hide-bound by opportunities for all sorts of culture,— so far more than they can absorb. They hear and attend all sorts of things, new and old, good and otherwise. They are distracted and have acquired a strange faculty of hearing every novelty, but of developing a strange immunity against infection in practice. The receptive and the effective halves of their soul are strangely divorced. The consensus of the older, dominant members of the guild is against new departures. If such an institution as I have so roughly sketched were to be given by Carnegie or to arise by magic over night, something like this would probably happen. All teachers would, of course, flock to see it, and the Boston guild would first ask Harvard its opinion and it would consult its interests. If they conferred with the leading members of your association I fancy the answer would be even more doubtful or adverse. Left to themselves the older teachers would find in such an establishment so much that would be confusing and at variance with their well-settled and habitual ideas that it would soon cause a somewhat troubled state of mind. It would probably, however, be commended with judicious and qualified terms of praise, tempered with many an "if," "but," and "perhaps," and rarely visited. A younger, ambitious, and progressive minority would soon find ready aid here for practical needs of their work, suggestions and aperçus that would give them more respect for their profession, perhaps convince a few that they could make it a permanent career. The papers and discussions by those who knew how to use its resources would grow meaty. Slowly new leaders would emerge from the average. Now and then a few would spend a summer in Europe following up

cues found here, and one or two would later take a year off and come home with a new repertory of ideas. Certain schoolrooms or departments in the city would slowly begin to stand out as superior, somewhat according as they had made connections with the new resources here opened. In time, one or two old leaders would recall with joy that they had praised the new departure at the outset and would do so with more effusion in the wondrous and benign light of the growing knowledge of success, would fancy they had foreseen at the moment of inception that an important epoch was being marked, and a surviving member or two of the State Board of the new Boston committee of five would feel the *juvabit meminisse* that the foundations of such an institution had made the day of their tenure of office illustrious.

But, jesting aside, who should take the initiative and found and support the institution? The head of a great library cannot do it for want of time, room, money, and expert knowledge. It should be a separate establishment. The teachers might do it. Lawyers and doctors have professional libraries of their own in many cities, often excellent, well supported and patronized. By this they effectively document the professional nature of their calling. Teaching, of course, should be a profession, but, measured by this standard, is not yet one. Moreover, teachers are not used to doing things for themselves. Like clergymen and all salaried classes, they wait for things to be done for them. Again, the city might do it, and possibly the new Boston board may take a large enough view of their calling to be interested. But cities usually respond to pressure and this will not arise. The same is true of the State. Legislators are more and more passive, following the lines of least resistance and most pressure, and are less and less likely, or even able, to take the initiative in statesmanship of which educational policies are the culmination. From the advisers of the legislature nothing but sage scruples and technical objections, bandying of responsibility, and voicing of average apathy and opinion are to be expected. To urge the opportunity of a great new step at the State House would, under present conditions, be useless. To undertake such an establishment in the wrong way, or to begin it too tentatively, timidly or feebly would be far worse than nothing, because it would be foredoomed at the start to failure, which would make later successes harder. Thus the only remaining hope for this State is in some rich man advised by a wise one, and here, after cherishing this ideal for years, I am beginning to fancy, although with no definite expectation, that I see a faint ray of hope. If this fails, I believe with complete assurance, with no shadow of doubt, that some such institution is certain to come, but that we in this State must resign ourselves to see it arise farther west.