

new generation upon the scene,—a generation born since the war, young men educated in a commercial era, and with new blood that runs unclotted by the great conflict. Sectional questions will no longer afford the uneducated demagogue a political advantage, as such, over the scholar, the lawyer, or the merchant. For the first time in half a century, the stigma has been removed from the honorable pursuit of politics. As our social conditions continue to approximate those of England, the lingering prejudice against college-bred men will disappear, and that element will occupy the prominence in legislation which it enjoys in other phases of our national life.

One naturally asks, What is being done to feed the sources of future influence in the new profession which will virtually be established when the people resume their sovereignty? Already our best institutions of learning are shaping their instruction to meet the demand of the times. Harvard, Yale, and Johns Hopkins now afford excellent facilities for a thorough education in political science and for the discussion of current public problems; while, at Columbia, the subject occupies a special department, with prize lectureships for the best original work. Besides the teachings of the best attainable text-books, much is accomplished by the personal influence of the instructors, who in some instances have awakened the pupils to enthusiastic interest in the subject. It is through such personal agencies, if at all, that a higher tone is to be reached in our public life. What could not be expected of a professorship of politics with such a man in the chair, for instance, as Dr. Lieber, or Charles Sumner, or President Woolsey, or Mr. George William Curtis?

It is easy to scoff at the absurdity of educating men for a profession so dependent upon the suffrages of their neighbors; but are not lawyers and physicians thus dependent? And is not the spoils system merely an interference with the law of supply and demand? And when the superiority of the educated statesman were once evident, would he not be employed as readily and as long as the lawyer or the physician? For one result of the vital teaching of political principles will be the preparation of educated men, if not to lead, at least to select the leaders.

Stripped of its old bombast, the truth still remains that the political interest of the world is centered in America, and awaits the realization of our destiny. We cannot too soon or too laboriously set to work to create an atmosphere about the minds of young men which will nourish a high ideal of political duty, and make a political career as honorable here as in England. Emerson, in "The Fortune of the Republic,"—that noble last word of warning and encouragement to his countrymen,—exclaims, with a prescience of patriotic faith: "I not only see a career at home for more genius than we have, but for more than there is in the world."

Over-organized School Systems.

THERE has been in New York, during the past winter, a very unusual interest in the public schools of the city. This interest has been due largely to a series of articles in the "Mail and Express" newspaper, in which the workings of the system were exhibited

more thoroughly and systematically than they ever before have been in the daily press. Commenting upon these articles, the editor of the "Popular Science Monthly," in a recent number of that magazine, struck a lusty blow at machine education. In deference to public opinion on the subject, the Board of Education, at the beginning of the new year, undertook, in the words of one of its members, to "ease up the machine" by modifying the course of study, and making a few changes in the direction of elasticity. These changes have not been long enough in operation to enable one to judge fairly of their effects. Our purpose here is to indicate the main features of the machine as it has existed in New York for some years past, and to point from them a moral for schools of other cities. It will be necessary, then, to restrict our view to those particular features of the system which bear upon the end in view.

The distinguishing peculiarity of the New York system is the superintendency. That, more than anything else, makes it the machine it is. The course of study prescribes what subjects, and what portions of each subject, shall be taught in each grade. It is the duty of the assistant superintendents to find out whether the exact ground laid down for each class has been covered by it, and how well the work has been done. In order to this, they visit each school at least once every year, and examine every class. The results of the examinations, recorded on a scale of percentages, are reported to the superintendent, and from these reports he estimates the character of the instruction. In this way, by having the same men examine all the schools, and by comparing one school and one class with another, a wonderful uniformity is secured, both in methods and in results. Every school is made just as much like every other school as possible. Children of the same grade in different schools are taught the same parts of the same subjects in the same way at the same time.

Even this, however, is not enough. In order to secure the completest uniformity, another step is necessary. If the liberty were given him, each teacher might use his own method of reaching the result supposed to be aimed at—the education of the pupil. Such diversity is effectually prevented by a provision which makes the teacher's standing dependent upon the percentage obtained by his class in examination. If the class obtains a certain per cent., the teacher is marked "excellent"; for a somewhat smaller per cent., he is marked "good"; and for a still smaller, "fair" or "bad." If two "fairs" or any worse mark stand against a teacher's name in the superintendent's book, he is a marked man, in more senses than one. The teacher's standing being thus entirely dependent upon the percentage obtained by his class in the yearly examination, the strongest incentive is provided for him to teach, not in the way that seems to him best for the class, but in the way that will enable his class to meet the questions of the examiners. It follows that he does not desire liberty in regard to his methods of teaching. He wants to know exactly how much of each subject will be required by the examiner, and just how that official wishes the subject taught. Theoretically the teacher is required by the examiners to develop in his class the ability to think and to reason; practically, he is driven to obtain "good marks" by

drilling them upon such questions as he has reason to expect will be asked at examination.

Just at present the New York system is in a transition state, in which the principals temporarily have far more liberty to use their own methods than they have had for twenty years past. The "Manual," a teacher's hand-book, in which are laid down minute directions in regard to methods, is in process of revision. This manual has proved an excellent servant, but a bad master. Originally written as a book of suggestions in regard to methods, it was made mandatory by the Board of Education, against the protest even of its authors. What effect the revised manual, used according to its original suggestive purpose, will have upon the system it is impossible to predict; but as this system has been working for many years, as it is still working to a large extent, through the momentum gathered in these years, and as it is in danger of working again after the revision of the manual, a more complete and effective method of stifling individuality in teacher and pupil could not be devised. As a machine, the system is perfect; but the end of this machine is its own perfection, and not the development of the faculties of the children. Under such conditions as these, education becomes a mere drill; stuffing is encouraged, or rather demanded; the relation between teacher and pupil is made, so far as possible, entirely mechanical; and the training is robbed of that ethical element, that relation to character and conduct, which should be its most important constituent.

A certain degree of organization in schools is absolutely necessary. An ungraded school is chaotic. The evils of disorganization have been clearly perceived; and the steps of grading the single school, of securing uniformity in different schools of the same grade, and of appointing a superintendent, a part of whose duty it is to see that the schools do preserve a certain degree of uniformity, have already been taken in most of our cities. The tendency seems to be toward the New York type, and the danger is that in shunning the evils of a lack of system, system is likely to be sought for its own sake. If this be granted—that schools in our American cities are tending toward over-organization,—it becomes a problem of very great importance how to secure a reasonable degree of system without crippling the teacher in his efforts toward the free expansion of the pupil's mind. Some machinery, doubtless, we must have; but the end of education is the development of character, and character cannot be machine-made by any process whatever.

In the solution of this problem, superintendents of schools must bear the most important part. A thorough knowledge of the principles of education, and a wise adaptation of those principles, will enable superintendents to develop their schools in the right direction. Their supervision should be intelligent and sympathetic; they should be the helpers, and not merely the judges, of their teachers; they should explain why certain methods are founded on right principles, and why certain others are not; they should occasionally take hold of a class and develop a subject in the teacher's presence, in order to show how underlying principles may be practically applied. A large part of these duties might be performed by principals,

who ought to be men fitted for such work. The distribution of supervisory functions is a mere matter of detail. The teachers' standing should not depend entirely upon periodical examinations of their classes in the New York style. Courses of lectures by eminent educators should be provided for teachers, and they should have the means of making a continual advance in the science and art of their profession.

In ways like these the problem we have indicated may be solved, and the dangers of over-organization, so strikingly exemplified by the school system of New York, may be avoided.

Two Rich Men.

Two men have lately passed away from life among us whom we should have been glad to make immortal. William E. Dodge and Peter Cooper were conspicuous examples of men of wealth using their wealth in promoting the wealth of others. They, in their own manner of living, solved the problem of capital and labor. If all rich men followed their system, and found riches to be only a means of doing good, all envy, jealousy, and hatred of the rich would fade from the hearts of the poor, and society would be freed from one of its most vexatious annoyances and most threatening dangers. But where one rich man appreciates the true use of wealth, a hundred regard it only as an instrument for luxurious indulgence and vulgar display, or for miserly and meaningless hoarding. It is this false use of wealth that loosens all the joints of society and makes our future uncertain. The reason why the two men whom we have named were fountains of blessing, is to be found not in demagogism, by which a Tweed gives coal to the poor as a means to secure votes, but in a benevolence which seeks the welfare of others as its end. Dodge and Cooper sought no office nor worldly honors. They were too noble to be receivers. They lived on the higher plane of giving. They understood the Master's words: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." They had an exquisite delight (such as the miser or spendthrift never knew) in an economy of benevolence, and made it the business of their lives to minister to the wants of men. What to the mass of men would be self-denial was to them the healthy outflow of a generous spirit. To have these streams dried up is a calamity not only to those who were immediately benefited, but to the whole city, which loses the force of these living examples of virtue.

The great, greedy crowd of money-getters were rebuked and bewildered when they saw the venerable man of fourscore and ten still planning how best to help the deserving poor. The weak creatures who make up fashionable society could not but get a glimpse of an idea that there were higher prizes than dog-carts and yachts, and all the paraphernalia of social distinction.

Peter Cooper was the antipodal energy to that of certain other rich men in our community, dead and living. The one energy came from heaven, the other came from a very different place. The one infuses health into the community; the other poisons everything it touches. The one energy is modest and loving; the other is brass-browed as Satan, and stirs up the fires of hell in the human breast.

To the youth of our city and country the two benevolent lives to which we have referred have been