EDUCATIONAL EVERYTHING

Clipped and Culled from Various Sources and Commented Upon, by W. A. Bynum, Principal Covington High School.

Illiteracy in Louisiana.

Recently the federal government issued a bulletin that showed Louisiana at the top of the states in illiteracy. This is not the first time that such a report has gone broadcast over the land. While we acknowledge that the report must be correct, we have a right to be proud of the fight we are making to reduce the illiteracy. As the New Orleans States says, it is regretable that equally wide circulation cannot be given to a bulletin of the University of Virginia, contemporaneously issued, in which Louisiana is shown at the head of the States of the South in increase of appropriations for educational purposes during the past dozen years. The New York Times adds: "Between 1901 and 1910 only two southern states failed to raise their school appropriations 100 per cent; and Louisiana witnessed an increase of about 250 per cent, or from $1,200,000 to $4,300,000."

Commenting, the States says further: "Such a statement is impressive, and it is an earnest of the Louisiana spirit in the matter of educational advancement. No people are striving more sincerely to break down the walls of illiteracy in their midst. The task is a difficult one, but it is impossible to believe that, so far as the whites are concerned, the heavy expenditures we are now making in the next few years will lift the State out of the unenviable position in which these government statistics place her."

School Children and Entertainments.

The Alexandria Town Talk recently said: "The midterm examinations at the public schools, which were completed yesterday, revealed a state of affairs that will probably be a surprise to the parents of many of the pupils. It is stated by Prof. Brazie, principal of the Alexandria High School, that there is a noticeable difference in the standing and marks made by a number of pupils that does not speak well for them. He attributes the cause to the increase in the number of social affairs that are attended by these pupils. It is impossible for children to do well in their studies at school if they have been out half the night at a party or other gathering. Their recitation next day, as well as their heavy and sleepy eyes tell the tale all too well."

Covington might profit by the conditions in Alexandria. The school board should fix a requirement for the teachers that they do not attend entertainments or shows unless some special occasion during the week, not have company or callers more than one night. This does not mean Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights. Teachers should set the example. While the time may be theirs when not in school, their duties demand that they have a clear brain and sane temperament while teaching, which they cannot have, if they have been entertaining or being entertained till 12. And after fixing such a requirement for teachers, a like requirement should be made for the pupils. Children cannot do school work and go to a picture show every night.

Home Study for School Children.

Recently State Superintendent Harris sent out a circular letter wherein he tersely assailed those teachers who "hear lessons" and let the parents do the teaching. The letter made no distinction in pupils, and the writer of these notes wrote him, expressing agreement in the main, but taking exception in the case of high school pupils. Mr. Harris replied that he never had in mind the discouraging of home study by high school pupils. There is one thing certain as life or death, and that is, the average pupils cannot successfully accomplish the present high school grades without more study than he can do while at the school house. He must either get up most of his work at home or the school days be lengthened. Gauging other schools by that at Covington no pupils are doing extra well with their work. While most are passing their grades, they are doing so and that's all. High school pupils should have it as their daily task, five nights in the week, to study not less than two hours at home. High school pupils should learn how to master a subject alone. It teaches self-reliance and independence. There is no doubt that teachers are doing too much for them. Not half the pupils have the courage to tackle a new case in algebra. They want their lessons given them like medicine is given to babies, sweetened up. Then it has to be poured down a number. Children are tired when school closes, and should do up their chores and get a lot of fresh air and exercise. After supper, from 8 till 10, they should study. It seems people can do better brain work at night. The great masterpieces are night productions nearly all of them. There is nothing outside calling them from their work—or there should not be. They can concentrate their minds better, and can learn about three lessons. Then with a swift review next day, they can meet their recitations prepared. Usually they have study periods at school for the others not learned at home. Some system is needed, and the quicker parents help it the better for the pupils.

Red Schoolhouse Is New But a Memory.

The following from the Christian Herald will bring up pleasant memories to the older readers; but in most cases in the South the school house was not red; not painted at all. Anyway the pleasant memories still cluster about it:

"There are some today who can look back with warm emotions to the life of the quaint red schoolhouse which once dotted the country. A few of these one-room halls of learning still stand here and there.

"Many prominent men and women profited by the training of these pioneer educational institutions. Here we were taught the three R's and the rudiments of other branches. The master formed the young minds entrusted to his care with the aid of the birch rod, the dunce cap and other primitive equipments.

"The science of the pedagogics of the period was largely based upon the principle that "to spare the rod was to spoil the child." It was the day of singing geography and the spelling bee. Handwriting and literary style was formed upon the old-fashioned slate. Long before the days of hygienic equipment the water supply consisted of a pail from which all helped themselves with the same dipper.

"The modern school is a vast advance over the methods that were employed in the little red school and yet the "wider use of the schoolhouse," which would make it the center of community activity for civic welfare, is only the development after all of the educational system which had its first expression in that same small, one-room, poorly equipped, unlovely but greatly loved little red school house."

The Three R's.

The New Orleans Times-Democrat would have us return to the "good old ways," in so far as emphasizing the three R's goes. And experience teaches us that the position of that paper is correct. The public school has been repeatedly assailed for not teaching spelling and arithmetic. It is charged that these subjects, the essentials, are too much neglected. The writer acknowledges that the accusation is just. While they have been badly crowded by other subjects being introduced into the courses, cutting short the time to be given to these subjects, there is no doubt but that the teachers have grown to consider them of less importance than they really are. By all means spelling should be emphasized, and taught throughout all the grades. The Times-Democrat points out the revival of interest in spelling in the New Orleans city schools, and mentions the plans of the authorities there of giving arithmetic like emphasis by instituting annual contests in that subject as is now manifested in spelling. There is no doubt of this being a wise movement. And the other R, reading, is likely too much neglected these days. Good readers are scarce. This may be explained by saying that the good, old custom of family reading has passed away. Every member now wants to read for himself, hence little incentive is offered the pupil to aspire to become a good reader.

The revival in spelling is not confined solely to New Orleans, but is almost nation-wide. Since Mr. Roosevelt failed to fix the phonetic method of spelling, the country seems to have accepted the old or long way as firmly fixed (which it is, no doubt) and schools have gone to work to really teach spelling. Friday afternoon spelling bees are hard to beat. Alternate them with literary programs for Friday afternoon, and you have profitable exercises for that particular hour, when children's minds need a change from the routine class [illegible]

Attacking the Public Schools.

Every now and then some periodical jumps onto the public schools for laxity, shallowness, or something. The severest non-sectarian sources seem to be fashion or women's periodicals. A few years ago the Delineator was about to destroy the public schools. Men prejudiced against the public schools were seen going around with one of that publication in his pocket as if it was finel authority on everything educational. He reminded one of an old woman trying to decide on a new style of petticoat. Then the Ladies Home Journal a year or two ago ran a series of articles attacking the public schools from start to finish. It even said that giving the pupils examinations was the most absurd thing on earth. The absurdity of course comes in the statement itself. Now, the Pictorial Review is going to tell us all about the public schools, and is going to do better than the others. It is going to offer cures. Don't you imagine some enterprising druggist will patent the receipts and sell them with the "Great American Fraud" cure-alls?

All these articles have some element of truth in them. No one knows the defects of our public school system better than the school people. Thre isn't the fixedness we all would like to have. But how can there be in this swiftly moving age? Where is there any fixedness in anything? New inventions are patented and installed this year to be superseded next. So it is with text-books and methods. It is a sign of progress. We would be foolish to expect everything else to advance and our school affairs remain at a standstill. Be assured of one thing: Our leaders in educational thought have their ears to the ground and their fingers on the public pulse. They will give us what the times demand, if the country just didn't run off and leave any plan before it could be installed.

Moral Training in the Public School.

One of the common criticisms cast at the public schools is that it neglects moral training. The writer of these comments acknowledges that he is just old-timy enough to believe in the Bible, and there is one passage in that work that he particularly likes. It says, "By their fruits ye shall know them," which means to him to judge a thing by its fruit, by its product. It is a pretty good rule, if it does come out of the Holy Word. And so far as he has been able to observe, it appears that where the public schools have made the best progress and are better established, the morals are away yonder higher than where the public schools have made but poor headway. If anybody doubts this, let him or her investigate for himself. There is one thing that public school teachers stand for, and that is moral conduct among the pupils. They try to eliminate cheating on examinations, and will not knowingly accept any work not honestly done; through the text books on hygiene excessive use of alcohol is warned against; we have never known a teacher to inculcate bad habits; through well selected literature [illegible] eral reading, a pure life is held out as the proper one. And the teacher whose example is immoral does not last long. So it is our honest opinion that the criticism that the public school does not stand for the highest morals is unjust. Facts do not bear out the accusation.

Anyway, despite the criticisms from various quarters, the public schools are increasing in efficiency and popularity every day. If the trend seems to be towards greater immorality, you will have to find some other cause to charge it to. Public school people decline to bear the responsibility.

Impeachment of Our High Schools.

Frequently we hear the high schools impeached for not teaching the practical things of life. As elsewhere admitted, there may be some ground for the criticism, but here are some things worth considering: A year or two ago the government published a bulletin which cited that the average income of the farmer who had a high school education was several hundred dollars ($450, we think) greater than the income of the farmer without as good an education. In other words the farmer who has completed a high school course earns $450 per year more than the farmer who has not. Again, some statistics gathered by a young lady of Homer, La., regarding her home high school is typical of elsewhere. Upon careful investigation she found that the men and women who were graduates of the high school were earning $22 per month more than those who had quit school before finishing. Many were filling positions of honor. Again she found that not a graduate was unemployed; every one was a producer. She found that the street loungers were of those who had stopped out of school.

We venture the statement that like conditions may be found in every town that maintains a high school. The young men who stick to their schools till the course is finished have learned valuable lessons, how to study, self-reliance, independence of thought, and they have had their ambition quickened. They usually make useful men. The girls make noble, useful women, leaders of society of the right sort, home-makers, wives and mothers who are a credit to their towns, state and nation.

Battle Ship Schools.

Secretary of the Navy Daniels has issued an order providing for daily instruction on each battleship, the period to run from 1:15 to 2:30 p. m. The teacher will be the officers of the ship, usually the ensigns. The commanding officers are instructed to increase the hours of school so far as practical, and to encourage classes for night school. This course of Secretary Daniels has two attractive features: first, it shows the young men who enlist in the navy are to be properly looked after, showing that Uncle Sam has the welfare of his employees at heart; second, it acknowledges that academic instruction makes better soldiers.

It is hard to find any line of work in which men or women with academic education cannot excel their less-favored co-workers. Even there is [illegible] the "Knights of the Road" are taught the tricks of the "profession." We have schools for everything. And all mix in a certain amount of "book learning."

Parents' Censoring Their Children's Reading and Entertainment.

An exchange remarks that when parents select the reading and entertainment for their children, a saner attitude will have been reached. As to the reading, with no intention of casting any reflections, numerous parents are not capacitated to select reading for their children. The "yellow back" book may be the cream of literature, as all of the best books are bound in cheap material, after the copyright expires. So the binding is no guide. Fortunately the best literature has been selected, adopted and graded by our State Department of Education, and parents should require the children to read as much of the adopted readings as they can. The high school course requires a certain amount before a diploma will be issued. Every teacher is required to have a course of study, wherein is listed the books to be read. Parents should buy these books, or some of them, for their children. They are adopted with a view of profitable entertainment for the child. They cover the entire field, as biography, history, travel, adventure, invention—things that appeal to the child. Yet very little "romance" is included in the list. If any, it is such a chaste, high-toned nature as awaken the noblest sentiments, not the sickly, love-sick sort.

As to the entertainment of the children, parents should know something of the nature of the show before letting their children go. And if children are trained to read the right kind of books and attend the right kind of entertainments, and are reared in proper atmosphere at home, there is no reason for their not growing up pure, noble-souled men and women.

Latin in School.

Latin seems to be the terror of the average school boy and girl. But a small fraction of high school pupils like it, and a number mortally despise it. While we would have it different, and can see much good in the study of that subject, the children do not see any good in it and it is a hard matter to get them to study it. The main trouble with it is that Latin is just hard. It requires hard work to get it, and most children haven't the vim or something to master it. Many pupils quit school before they finish the ninth grade, because they have failed in Latin. The question is, what are we going to do about it. The State course of study provides a remedy. For boys a commercial department may be substituted for Latin. Of course, girls may take that too. And a department of home economics may be adopted for girls. A study of either for three terms, as required for Latin, may be substituted, the same credit towards graduation being given. And after all the fine mental training that Latin gives, the beautiful so-and-so's connected with that language, wouldn't the commercial and domestic science department be of more practical use in real life? This writer likes Latin; he agrees on every good point mentioned by the devotees in its favor. But the question bobs up, we must substitute something else for it or the high schools will not meet the purposes for which they are maintained. It shuts out more boys and girls than any thing else. Of course, boys and girls ought to study it and all o' that, but they just won't; so there you are.

"NEUTRILITY" TOWARDS THE SCHOOL.

Teachers, did you ever hear this: "Well, I don't hear any kick, and as long as you don't hear any in this town, you may consider yourself doing all right, I reckon." If it were not for the injurious effects of this intense mumness towards a school, it would be rather amusing. Perhaps half the schools in Louisiana that are running smoothly have not been the subject of a favorable remark that reached the teacher's ear. We all boost our air and water and town and nation; we find favorable things to say of our ministers, our grocers and our everything else except our school. The teacher works and she knows she is having a good school, but if she says so she is afraid that the patrons will not agree with her and will make sure it is a sign she wants her job again. So the school runs on, unboosted, the children get the notion it has no friends, the teacher just knows every body is secretly opposing her and are just itching for the session to close so they can hand her her "walking papers," and sure enough the schools goes to smash, all on account of the everlasting mumness, the lack of a little boosting.

Patrons, trusees, there is no neutrality towards the school. If you don't know whether it is running or not, go and find out. Visit the school. If it isn't, see if you can help it get right. If you have not the ability to tell, then boost it. That mumness is depressing.

A lot of people might think it good policy just to play mum till school is out, then either ship or re-elect the teacher. It is fine policy, if you just naturally want to ship her. And that kind of policy precedes the shipping. In fact you are helping just as hard as you can to wreck it. That seems untrue, perhaps, but it isn't.

One morning I got up before my school and said: "Children, I know you, as well as the teachers, like to hear your school well spoken of. I heard some good news this morning. I heard a very intelligent lady say that we were having a good school. She's in a position to judge, too, and capable of it." It seemed to do the youngsters a lot of good, and they seemed to start in with a new zeal. Poor things! I never told them the lady never had a child in any school, and that I knew she just did it with the hope of encouraging me.

Remember when you boost the school a little, the teacher is not taking it all to herself. You are encouraging your children; you are boosting them; you are boosting yourselves, in a sense; you are awakening in the children a new confidence in their teacher, filling her with a greater determination, throwing a little dash of sunlight into her work. There is a great deal of something like Christian Science in school affairs. Say you have a sorry school and you will have it; say you have a good one, boost it, and it will be good. And then if you can't see anything at all deserving of some favorable comment, then kick for all you are worth. Put some spice and ginger in it. Don't play mum. Favorable comments made on your school is not a sentiment; it is the way to get results; it's business; it is necessary.

Teachers, whatever you do, don't knock your school or your pupils. Boost it on the streets, in public. Don't knock an individual pupil, where you have no business. It does not do a bit of good, but does do considerable harm. Don't be a knocker, anyhow. Learn to speak well of people, especially your pupils. If your patrons won't boost, then boost for them.

Louisiana State Normal School

Natchitoches, La.

¶ The business of the State Normal School is to train teachers. To this end the State of Louisiana has equipped the institution for thorough work. The attention of parents is directed to the many inducements surrounding the teaching profession today. It is one of the most inviting fields open to young men and young women.

For circulars, catalog, and other information, address

V. L. ROY, President

FRANK PATECEK

...UP-TO-DATE...

OUTFITTER FOR MEN and BOYS

AND TAILORING

314 COLUMBIA ST. COVINGTON, LA. PHONE 125 POSTOFFICE BOX 314

New Orleans Office: 124 St. Charles St. Phone Main 3873

YOU ARE INVITED

To visit the greatest and only gent's and boys' furnishing store in St. Tammany Parish. Just received the new spring styles of

SUITS HATS SHOES SHIRTS

TIES BELTS SUSPENDERS

Sole agent for Curlee's suits and pants, Hanan shoes, "Everwear" hosiery for men, women and children, Lion Brand shirts and collars, John B. Stetson, Falcon and Fawn Brand hats, Newport and Lion brand overalls, with or without aprons.

"WETMOON" RAIN COATS

Do not stick or crack. - Made in walking or riding coats, with sleeves or cape and pants and jacket suits.