

# THE HIGH SCHOOL AND THE COLLEGE

BY THEODORE ROOSEVELT

JUST before going on to the Progressive Service League meeting at Philadelphia last March, I happened to read some articles on the boys and girls of the High School and their problems, by Principal Lewis, of the Penn High School. Every man and woman interested in boys and girls—and what man or woman is not?—ought to read what Principal Lewis himself says; for no brief sketch of mine will do even the remotest justice to the way in which he grips and expounds the vital need of our high school and college education—the need that it shall relate to life, and shall offer to each divergent soul the chance that soul needs to train itself, along its own lines, for useful citizenship, domestic and public, in this great seething, straining democracy of ours. All I am trying to do is to make my readers go to Principal Lewis themselves; and what I say is drawn from what he has told me.

Irene Litchman is President of the Students' Association in a girls' high school that is trying to teach citizenship along with its languages, mathematics, *et al.* Under her leadership the student body of two thousand girls has become practically self-governing without any formal organization or systematic monitorial or police system either of faculty or students. Those girls have developed a community consciousness that will probably contribute as much to their value as citizens as a thorough understanding of the subjunctive in indirect discourse. Remember, I am not running down the subjunctive; I am merely exalting the community consciousness!

Miss Litchman is an A student—in other words, her standing in all her studies has averaged 90 per cent, or better, for four years. She has become interested in social work and wants to go to college, but she cannot go. Why?

She has had only one foreign language. If she goes to college—for she is not wealthy—she must go to the one in her home city. That college will not admit her to its liberal arts course without preparation in two languages.

Bulletin No. 7, just issued by the United States Bureau of Education, discusses the

case of Irene and of several thousand other girls and boys in our high schools whose possibilities of preparation for lives of the largest usefulness are being limited by the lack of adjustment between the public high school and the college. This bulletin is a study of the entrance conditions of 204 Colleges of Liberal Arts, 85 Colleges of Engineering, and 31 Colleges of Agriculture, by Clarence D. Kingsley, agent of the State Board of Education of Massachusetts, and chairman of the National Education Association committee on the Articulation of High School and College.

The report of this committee in July, 1911, showed how the demands for entrance to college were making it impossible for the high schools to perform their proper service of training in the larger citizenship. The bulletin just issued by the National Bureau of Education shows the chaotic divergence of these demands, and at the same time serves as a clearing-house that may aid the colleges in formulating saner requirements.

A unit represents a year's work in a subject. The following table shows some interesting contradictions in college entrance requirements:

Subject.	Colleges prescribing it.	Colleges not accepting it.
More than two and one-half units in mathematics.....	32	19
Seventh unit of foreign language.....	21	49
First unit of natural science.	91	8
Second unit of natural science.....	13	22

Every high school of any size has pupils preparing for several different colleges. It is, therefore, easy to see the difficulty entailed by this divergence in requirements.

An interesting and encouraging table shows that many subjects not formerly included within the pale of academic respectability are coming to be recognized. For example, drawing is counted for entrance in 124 colleges, shop-work in 97, economics in 92, business training in 88, agriculture in 80, and the home-loving academic infant, household economics, in 79. The list of colleges accepting household economics does not include one of the more important women's colleges of the East, such as Barnard, Wellesley, Vas-

sar, Smith, Mount Holyoke, Bryn Mawr, and Goucher. Now, I thoroughly believe in these colleges. They teach many things—among others the love of beauty; and no man or woman can lead a full life who does not love beauty, whether in nature, in art, in literature, whether the beauty be that of great forests, of dim cathedrals, of haunting music, of wonderful paintings, or of the poets we can all read, and the birds and flowers that are at the doors of so many of us. But usefulness comes even before beauty, and no man or woman has a right to enjoy beauty unless he or she can pay for it by some kind of useful work. Once I stopped at the house of a farmer friend at harvest time, and became worried about the haggard looks of the farmer's overworked wife. After inquiry of my friend himself why he didn't substitute for one of his hired men a hired girl, as an obvious act of justice to his wife, I asked the latter why her daughters did not help her. "Oh," she replied, in perfect good faith, "they can't work; they're educated." Well, this always struck me as a fine example of what education should *not* be. Contrast it with the case of one Southern woman of whom I know—a college graduate, devoted to books and flowers; not of large means; and she runs a farm, is bringing up her eight children, and is the great social and industrial influence for good in her neighborhood. That is the kind of college product worth producing!

The Bulletin shows at a glance the attitude of each of the 204 colleges listed. Among the most liberal are some of the great institutions of the country, notably Harvard, Chicago, Leland Stanford Junior, Clark, Michigan, and Wisconsin. This bulletin will make it easy for high school principals to distinguish between those institutions that do and those that do not recognize themselves as an integral part of the democratic educational machinery of the country, and to advise their pupils accordingly.

The report of Mr. Kingsley's committee, above referred to, gives the following valuable summary of the conditions which make the present bulletin of such vital importance:

“Dr. Henry S. Pritchett, in his Annual Report of the Carnegie Foundation, finds that American education, from elementary school to college, is suffering from the attempt to teach too many subjects to the same student at the same time. He believes that students taking the newer subjects should not

be required to carry all the older subjects. He states emphatically that this is no argument against the enriched curriculum of the high school; but that, on the contrary, the high school must go on still further enriching its curriculum, and that it is the duty of the college to adjust itself to the high school thus broadened.

“It is the duty of the tax-supported high school to give every student instruction carefully designed to return to society intelligent, able-bodied, and progressive citizens. Moreover, hard work is to be secured, not by insistence upon uniformity of tastes and interests, but by the encouragement of special effort along lines that appeal to the individual. Our education would gain in power and in virility if we made more of the dominant interest that each boy and girl has at the time. The boy who pursues both the liberal and the vocational sees the relation of his own work to the work of others and to the welfare of society; whereas the liberal without the vocational leaves him a mere spectator in the theater of life, and the boxes in this theater are already overcrowded.

“Mechanic arts, agriculture, or household science should be recognized as rational elements in the education of all boys and girls, and especially of those who have not as yet chosen their vocation. Under the authority of the traditional conception of the best preparation for a higher institution, many of our public high schools are to-day responsible for leading tens of thousands of boys and girls away from the pursuits for which they are adapted and in which they are needed, to other pursuits for which they are not adapted and in which they are not needed. By means of exclusively bookish curricula false ideals of culture are developed. A chasm is created between the producers of material wealth and the distributors and consumers thereof.

“The high school should in a real sense reflect the major industries of the community which supports it. The high school, as the local educational institution, should reveal to boys and girls the higher possibilities for more efficient service along the lines in which their own community is industrially organized.

“Our traditional ideals of preparation for higher institutions are particularly incongruous with the actual needs and future responsibilities of girls. It would seem that such high school work as is carefully designed to develop capacity for and interest in the proper management and conduct of a home

should be regarded as of importance at least equal to that of any other work. We do not understand how society can properly continue to sanction high school curricula for girls which disregard this fundamental need, even though such curricula are planned in response to the demand made by some of the colleges for women."

I need hardly say that I am not decrying cultural education. I believe in it with all my heart. But I believe that it comes second, and a long way second, to training along lines of social and industrial usefulness; and, furthermore, I believe that the effort should be made to meet the widely varying individual needs of each individual boy or girl.