

discussion and consideration, which will end in less attention to the far-off and comparatively valueless languages of trans-continental and trans-oceanic countries, and increased provision for the study of the native speech of millions living upon the same continent with ourselves, and with whom we, and especially our youth, must inevitably come into constantly closer and rapidly increasing business, social and political relations.

THE HIGH SCHOOLS.

There are two—the Boys' and the Girls'.

The Boys' High School is established to afford boys who have graduated from the Grammar Schools, or who have gained an equivalent education elsewhere, an opportunity for a more liberal education, and to fit those who desire it for entering the University of California.

The Girls' High School furnishes those girls who have regularly graduated from the Grammar Schools, or have received an equivalent education elsewhere, such higher culture as may prepare them for admission to the University of California; and qualify those who desire it for the profession of teaching.

The regular course in each school occupies three years. The Normal course consists of an additional year after the girl has duly completed the regular High School course.

It will be noticed that the boy who may wish to fit himself for the profession of teaching finds no provision made for him by the public schools of the city.

There is a strong and rapidly-growing conviction that the High Schools of this city, as at present conducted, are by far the most expensive, and much the least profitable, of all the departments of public instruction. Comparing the annual number of graduates with the annual cost of conducting the two schools, will presently disclose one reason of this conviction, even if it does not demonstrate the full truth of this assertion.

In the organization, support, management, and improvement of public instruction, as far as provided for in the ordinary Primary and Grammar Schools of both city and country, the people, through their agents, and, generally, in the choice of their agents, have done nearly, if not quite, as well as could have been expected; but in the organization and conduct of the High Schools and the University, they have fallen, and appear content to remain, very far short, not of any fine, impracticable theories, but of the actual performance which was, and is, really attainable under the circumstances.

In partial proof or illustration of this, consider the following facts in the management of the High School Department of this city:

1st. It maintains two separate schools, two district buildings, two well-salaried principals, two numerous sets of duplicate teachers, two sets of apparatus, and two libraries, where one comprehensive school, one commodious building, one competent principal, one set of thoroughly qualified teachers, one set of apparatus, and one library, could do the proper work and serve the special use of a High School, not merely as well, but very decidedly better.

2d. It may not be generally known that, within two years, the management of both High Schools has returned to the old, obsolete, Primary District, country-school plan of requiring every teacher to instruct his or her own class in *all*, or very nearly all, the branches which they pursue. In practical common sense and daily efficiency this plan is fully equal to what would be the case in the U. S. Army if each individual workman were required to make all the parts of each gun with which he had anything to do. Everybody knows that every teacher, like every mechanic, has some specialty; some one thing which he naturally does with greater ease, efficiency, and success, and that the best management is that which assigns to each teacher those branches in which he is specially accomplished, and therefore can teach with the greatest economy of his own power, and, what is of far greater consequence, with far greater profit to the class. This sound principle, almost everywhere practically recognized, has been disregarded and is still ignored in the High Schools of this city by educational officials, who sometimes seem to act as if very few principles in the science and art of successful teaching had been thoroughly tested and almost unanimously settled by the most advanced educators of the world years before any of

them began their costly experiments in this community.

This is not a theoretical question to be argued; it is an actual fact to be *proved* by experience and testimony; and even this proof need be brought only to those who, by reason of the life-long pressure of other and very different interests, have been so completely engrossed that they have never found or taken the time necessary to adequately understand and judge this most vital subject.

One of the strangest intellectual or social facts of the day is, that, while in all other public interests, or even departments of private business, we readily concede the superiority of the expert, defer to his opinion, and decide by his testimony, in the matter of education every man feels himself competent to pronounce the most decided judgments even upon the most complicated points; and a peculiarly unfortunate feature of the case is, that those most notoriously destitute of both education and experience are the most aggravatingly positive and self-assertive in the announcement of their most ridiculous opinions, and the precipitate enforcement of their most damaging plans.

Each successive set of new and inexperienced School Directors appears too prone to act as if its predecessors had known next to nothing; and its first duty, in its full flush of new-felt power and unconscious ignorance, was to upset something to begin with, as if to prove beyond question how much more it knew in a week than its dull predecessors had been able to find out in two years. If the results of such precipitate and self-conceited action had not, too often, been so injurious as well as costly, it would be almost laughable to notice how almost uniformly the average Director knows such an immense deal more about the efficient management of the almost endlessly multiplied details of a large school department, charged with the public instruction of thirty thousand children, during his first month of office, than he ever does again. And it is almost as entertaining, and vastly more satisfactory, to observe how uniformly he gradually settles into the final conviction that those same predecessors *did* know a little something after all, and that the public good does *not* absolutely require him to signalize the commencement of his official career by suddenly upsetting as much as possible of what they had done.

What the common sense of the people demand of our High Schools is this:

1st. Their *union* into one centrally-located, conveniently planned, commodiously-constructed building, amply yet economically furnished, and finished within and without with such solidity, simplicity, and appropriateness that the very sight of it should be a daily lesson in the highest school of true architecture.

For the site, take a block, or the center of some block, at the junction of Oak and Webster streets, or within half a dozen blocks of that locality, in whichever direction the best adapted or obtainable site may be found. Take a lot, one hundred and fifty by two hundred and fifty feet, in the center of such a block, and have four avenues of approach from the center of each side of the inclosing block. This would give the necessary freedom from the noise of adjacent streets, which is so great to any schools placed upon or very near any main thoroughfare daily traversed by loaded wagons, heavy drays, and rattling cars. In such a building, let the recitation rooms, library, reference room, philosophical, chemical, and astronomical apparatus, and teachers' rooms occupy the central part, and devote each wing to the study rooms of each of the separate classes or divisions; each sex by itself, or both together, as the authorities may determine.

2d. Into such a building bring both the present High Schools, and over the one grand, central, union High School thus created, place one experienced, accomplished educator, full of energy, enthusiasm, and, above all, of that personal magnetism which always distinguishes the true teacher; reduce the present number of classes, and, consequently, of teachers, fully one third, retain the best of those now employed, or get better, and diminish the annual cost of the entire High School instruction of this city by at least twenty thousand dollars a year, besides having it done in a much more uniform, thorough, and scholarly manner.