

THE SCHOOL

The Project Method

Why do schools fail so often to yield the results expected? An age-old question, still unsolved! Modern educators, however, in their search for the cause are turning their piercing gaze from the much abused pupil to the teacher, frequently incapable and self-satisfied. They are especially condemning the method that assigns so many pages of text with a few inane attempts at explanation or hands out a bundle of notes which the pupil is expected to do little more than memorize for the next day's lesson.

The Project Method is a procedure, not altogether new nor yet fully defined. The literature concerning it is abundant but not all of equal value. The idea, however, as outlined by its best exponents is good, practicable and productive of results. It asserts that the subject-matter of the schools can be taught in a way that is more attractive, lifelike and thought-provoking; that if lessons appear useless and hence uninteresting to the pupil it is because the teacher has not associated them with life and its needs. The project aims to approach the various courses from the point of view of a problem to be solved or of an undertaking to be carried out. This problem or undertaking must arise out of the needs of the pupil as seen from his own experience or under the suggestion of the teacher. Under the stimulus of making himself fit for life the student attacks a problem or project, gathering here and there with the help of the teacher information and skills necessary to solve it. As a result he does not fill his mind with a multitude of unassociated ideas but grows in knowledge that actual use has developed and organized, he learns how and where to get the data necessary for new problems, and he trains his mind to think through, as he must in later life, situations that confront him. In the space allotted more cannot be done than to call attention to the project method idea and to the success that has accompanied a rational use of it. It requires earnest thought and great tact from the teacher, first to originate projects that are real and living to the pupils and then to keep them from running into useless channels; but experience has shown that the results obtained more than repay the care and energy expended.