

## THE VIRGINIA TEACHER

Published monthly, except August and September, by the State Teachers College at Harrisonburg, Virginia.

Entered as second-class matter March 13, 1920, at the postoffice at Harrisonburg, Virginia, under the act of March 3, 1879.

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## EDUCATIONAL COMMENT

### TWO ENGLISH JOURNALS—WHERE ONE GREW BEFORE!

WITH the January issue, the *English Journal* began to appear in two editions — the first educational magazine to adopt such a policy. The regular edition will be devoted to the work of the senior and junior high schools, and the "College Edition" to English in higher education.

Originally the *English Journal*, which is the official organ of the National Council of Teachers of English, dealt with curriculum and methods in the traditional four-year high school and in college. With practically a five-grade span, the *Journal* was able to cover its field satisfactorily. Then came the great increase in high school and college populations, with consequent increase in number of teachers and in the amount of good pedagogical writing. About the same time the scientific movement in education began to be fully felt, and the editor's manuscript drawer overflowed while the pages of the *Journal* bulged.

The demands upon the *Journal* and the material offered it were still further increased by the rise of the junior high school, which has grown with startling rapidity. The U. S. Bureau of Education has a list of about 1200 such schools. One publisher has the names of 5000 junior high school teachers of English. No one, indeed, knows

how many there are, and if he knew today his figures would need revision tomorrow. Less noticeable, but not unimportant, is the extension of the influence of the National Council of Teachers of English, of which the *Journal* is the official organ, upward through the college.

One magazine was no longer adequate to cover this wide grade span, and the two editions were planned. The two editions will have jackets of different colors and interesting typographical changes make both more attractive than even the well-printed *Journal* has been.

### PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION OF THE HABIT OF READING

THE first meeting of a Committee to Study the Development of Habits of Reading was held in New York on December 13. The purpose of the study is to discover what it is in the experience of some persons which causes them to acquire and continue desirable habits of reading, and what is lacking from the experience of others which leaves them without such habits.

The preliminary study which is to be completed if possible within the next six months is to comprise: (1) a digest of the investigations of reading and related subjects which have a bearing on adult reading; (2) case studies of three or four hundred adults representing various social groups to determine the influences which account for their reading interests or lack of them; and (3) suggestions of additional investigations which will contribute to a clearer understanding of the general problem.

These preliminary investigations will be made for the Committee under the direct supervision of Dean William Scott Gray of the University of Chicago.

The Committee was appointed by the American Library Association and the American Association for Adult Education



and has received through the latter a grant from the Carnegie Corporation for its first year's work. The members are Dr. C. C. Williamson, director of the School of Library Service, Columbia University; Dr. W. S. Gray, of the University of Chicago; Miss Effie Power, superintendent of the Children's Department, Cleveland Public Library; Dr. Henry Suzzallo; and Dr. Edward L. Thorndike, Teachers College, Columbia.

#### SUMMER SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

OF VIRGINIA'S seventeen thousand teachers, 34.4 per cent were enrolled in education courses in the summer of 1927, according to a statistical report of the Research Division of the National Education Association.

Virginia's rank is thus above the average in continental United States, as the percent of teachers enrolled in summer school education courses for the entire nation is 29.2 per cent.

Fourteen summer schools were reported as in session during the summer of 1927, these enrolling in all courses 7,742 students, of whom 5,856 were registered education courses.

Compared with the summer school enrollment of 1926 in Virginia, there has been a definite increase from 5,968 in all courses to 7,742.

#### CHILD LABOR IN VIRGINIA

AT ITS coming session the Virginia legislature will be asked to improve its child labor standards, according to an editorial in *The American Child*, monthly bulletin of the National Child Labor Committee, which also directs attention to the absence of a continuation school law on the Virginia statute books.

"The present child labor law of Virginia contains many good features. It establishes a 14-year age limit, an 8-hour day, 6-day and 44-hour week, prohibits night work be-

tween 7 p. m. and 7 a. m., requires a certificate of physical fitness and regulates the employment of children in dangerous occupations. Its two outstanding defects are: first, children 12 to 16 years employed in fruit and vegetable canneries when the schools are not in session are exempt from all the provisions of the law except the 8-hour day. Second, Virginia is one of six states having no educational standard whatever for children 14 to 16 years leaving school for work. This defect is doubly serious, for Virginia has no continuation school law. Effort should be made to remove the exemption for canneries, to secure an educational requirement, and to pave the way for continuation schools."

#### BELIEF IN SANTA CLAUS

ALL five-year-old children believe in Santa Claus, according to a statement issued by the National Kindergarten and Elementary College of Evanston, Illinois. One out of sixteen six-year-olds was found to have lost faith in the existence of the jolly saint. The proportion of disbelievers became greater as the age of the children questioned increased. Those making the test concluded that a child over ten who unreservedly believes in Santa Claus is of low mentality.

#### MEMBERSHIP IN PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

MEMBERSHIP in professional and technical organizations as analyzed by the Research Division of the National Education Association shows that Virginia doctors are much more closely interested in their professional organization than either Virginia lawyers or Virginia teachers. The study discloses that 72 per cent of Virginia's 2,534 physicians are members of the American Medical Association, 22 per cent of its 1,981 lawyers (1920 figure) are members of the American Bar Association, but only 9 per cent of Vir-



ginia's 17,900 teachers are members of the National Education Association.

It is worth comment, however, that while the national organization makes a large appeal to most physicians, there are many teachers—and lawyers, too—who content themselves with membership in the state or other local organizations. To this extent the comparison is not altogether a fair one.

#### NEW REPORT CARD FOR NEW YORK CITY

A NEW form of report cards for elementary school pupils will be used in New York City schools this year, it is learned from *School*. Superintendent of Schools William J. O'Shea calls attention of teachers to these items on the new cards:

"1. The new form is of the same size and shape as the one now in use. It therefore fits the report card envelope.

"2. In order to make the report a little plainer to parents, some of the terms used in the old card have been changed in the new: (a) 'Effort' has been dropped because it is difficult for a teacher to evaluate it fairly and accurately. (b) *School Work* is substituted for 'proficiency' because it is believed to be more intelligible to parents. (c) *Conduct* is used instead of 'Department' for the same reason. (d) *Group* indicates the placement of the pupil into one of three groups: 1, bright; 2, normal; 3, slow. Hereafter, therefore, the groups in all schools will be numbered as above.

"3. The literal nomenclature of rating is retained because teachers and pupils are familiar with it. Special attention is directed, however, to this fact that the values of some of the letters have been modified in order to establish a five-step scale, having only one mark indicating failure. The scale is as follows: A far above average or excellent; B Plus, above average or very good; B, average or good; C, just passable; D, failure. By 'average' is meant approxi-

mately the middle 40 per cent of a class. About 30 per cent of the class will therefore be above average, and 30 per cent of the class below average. In rating any class the distribution of marks should approach this standard. Thus, if you have 40 pupils in a class, then the number of pupils of average attainment should be about 40 per cent of the 40, or 16. The number of pupils above and below average should be about 12 each.

"4. The requirement that 'ratings made at the end of any month after the first shall summarize all previous ratings' is hereby abolished. The mark given in any month will indicate the pupil's present standing.

"5. The back of the card lists all the subjects, but the teacher is required to enter marks only for the subjects in which the pupil has been unsatisfactory or failure, although all other marks may be entered if the principal so desires. The placement of 'Parent's Signature' immediately below such entries will force attention to these items.

"6. Habits: Cleanliness, honor and speech are mentioned, but other habits such as thrift, courtesy, industry, co-operation, etc., may be entered, as the principals may desire."

#### THE TITLE "PROFESSOR"

FOR a democratic people, Americans appear to be strangely fond of titles. In *American Speech* for October, 1927, appears the following significant comment on the prevailing usage of the title "professor."

The title "professor" is given respectful treatment in the latest dictionaries, like the 1926 STANDARD DICTIONARY, or the WINSTON SIMPLIFIED DICTIONARY. But is it not time that dictionaries suggested in their entries for this word that, to the mass of American readers, it conveys humorous ideas, or suggests a charlatan of some kind? Most of those who insist on being given the title "professor" are quacks or fakers of some kind, or they are chiropractors, or chiropodists, or tonsorial experts, or boxing instructors, or they are men teachers in secondary schools. In the United States the word has no aura of dignity, whatever standing it may retain across the Atlantic ocean.