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EDUCATIONAL COMMENT

THE IDEAL SCHOOL TEACHER

Is there an ideal school teacher? New York City claims one—Miss Millicent Baum, principal of the Andrew Sloan Draper Junior High School for thirty-four years. Her associates hailed her as such in honoring her on the eve of her retirement after fifty years of consecutive service. The Mayor, school associates and civic leaders praised her.

What were the qualifications to which they considered she measured up? A member of the Board of Education said that she was 'seventy years old and fifty years young, because of the years which sit so lightly on her shoulders.'

Anyone on whom the "grind" of teaching for fifty years can sit lightly has achieved distinction. Another speaker paid tribute to her "sweet, fine and wonderful character." Mayor LaGuardia perhaps came nearest to distilling the essence of her service when he said that her school "has been like a lighthouse to the neighborhood through the years."

There seems to be warrant for awarding an accolade of "ideal schoolteacher" to Miss Baum. There are other ideal teachers, but the crop ought to be larger. The

size of the crop depends not alone upon the teachers, but also upon the attitude of the community toward them and their work. A teacher needs not only natural mental endowment; she also needs adequate preparation and support.

One scarcely could expect ideal teachers from girls who are leaving high school or even grammar school at sixteen years of age in some states and becoming "teachers" in the public schools. But because they will "teach" for a pittance, short-sighted school authorities believe they cannot afford better prepared teachers. It is a responsibility of school authorities to develop the forces of public opinion and official action which will demand better teachers.

Another essential of the ideal teacher is that she should be paid! One of the most disgraceful things which has happened in the United States during the depression is that thousands of school teachers have gone unpaid for long periods. A teacher should not only be worthy of her hire, but should receive her hire on time. American school districts owe teachers in the aggregate more than \$40,000,000 in back salaries. Dr. William C. Bagley of Teachers' College, Columbia, declares that no nation but the United States cuts school budgets to reduce government expenses.

An ideal teacher in any school, in good times or bad, is one whose individuality and character leave an imprint upon the pupils as much as his or her teaching. There are thousands of such teachers, mostly unknown and unsung. They are the salt of education. Mass production in education often has been responsible for diminishing if not almost destroying the rich fruits of personal relationship between pupil and teacher. Even the ideal teacher cannot have an ideal effect without the opportunity to teach classes small enough to permit individual attention to each pupil, and not only inculcate wisdom but awaken the intellectual interests and moral aspirations of students—*Christian Science Monitor*.

TOCSIN

Education has always been the basis of American progress.

The republic itself was founded upon the ideals of the "Little Red Schoolhouse."

Yet now, at the moment when foreign nations have realized the importance of education, and are making great progress in educating their people and fitting them for world competition, we are curtailing our educational program.

Education is not merely for the upper classes.

The reason the American workman has been able to compete successfully is because of his educated intelligence.

The reason our Nation has been so successful is because of the high average of intelligence of the electorate.

No democracy can succeed, and no nation can compete under modern conditions, without an intelligent and educated citizenry.

Politicians—in whose hands these matters rest—will blame the depression.

This depression is only temporary. But the effect of restricting education WILL BE PERMANENT.

America should have the same progress in education in these days of depression that we would have made in good times.

In point of fact, the depression should teach us that if we had a sufficiently educated and enlightened electorate, we might be able to obviate such catastrophes altogether.

Let the people wake up—AND SAVE THE SCHOOLS.

The Omaha Bee

TRENDS IN READING

More than four million new readers have registered in public libraries since 1929, making a total of over 20,000,000 registered borrowers throughout the country. This does not take into account those who use the reading rooms but do not take books

home. The circulation of books has increased, it is estimated, approximately 40 per cent. Library facilities are taxed to the limit to care for the unprecedented demands.

Serious reading has increased beyond all previous records. Books in economics, history, religion, political science, and vocational literature on trades and professions lead in popular demand. The free public library has proven to be an essential relief agency, ministering as it does to a people confused and hungry for leadership, needing comfort, humor, and a new perspective with which to make life more livable.

IS THE PRESENT A TRAGIC ERA?

The World War was the meeting ground of material forces battling for supremacy. Millions of men and their families were the innocent or stupid victims of the catastrophe, and millions of younger men and women are the victims of the aftermath and the present breakdown of the economic fabric. Whether the breakdown comes from within or without, from the slow suicide of what we term "capitalism," or the growth of rebellious movements such as communism, something on a gigantic scale is taking place before our eyes, if we have eyes to see with, and on a scale more universal and intimate than ever before in civilized history. In so far as death is tragic, as starvation and privation are tragic, and the enslavement of the many by the few and the betrayal of the mass by its elected leaders, we may dub an era tragic. But is there not another side? Are not the forces of evil clear to us now, or to those of us who use our hearts to feel with and our heads to reason?—ALFRED KREYMBORG, in *The English Journal*.

We should not only do to others as we should wish them to do to us, but think of others kindly as we should wish them to think of us.—*Sir John Lubbock*.

AUNT HET ON SCHOOL TEACHING

"One o' my girls had her heart set on bein' a school teacher, but I talked her out of it. Teachin' school is too much like bein' a preacher's wife. It's a high callin', but people expect you to give more'n they pay for.

"You take the teachers here in town. The only difference between them an' Christian martyrs is the date an' the lack of a bonfire.

"They was hired to teach an' they do it. They teach the younguns that can learn, and entertain the ones that fell on their heads when they was little. But that ain't enough. They're supposed to make obedient little angels out o' spoiled brats that never minded nobody, an' wetnurse little wildcats so their mothers can get rest, an' make geniuses out o' children that couldn't have no sense with the parents they've got.

"But that ain't the worst. They've got to get up plays an' things to work the school out o' debt; an' sing in the choir an' teach a Sunday school class, an' when they ain't doin' nothin' else they're supposed to be a good example.

"Then they don't get no pay for six months an' can't pay their board or buy decent clothes, an' on top of ever'thing else they can't hold hands comin' home from prayer meetin' without some pious old sister with a dirty mind startin' a scandal on 'em.

"I'd just as soon be a plowmule. A mule works just as hard, but it can relieve its soul by kickin' up its heels after quittin' time without startin' any talk."

ROBERT QUILLEN

WANTED—HONESTY AND
COURAGE

The chief needs of American public service are five very simple ones: honesty, courage, common sense, knowledge, and vision. The character-building forces of the nation—the home, the school, the church, the college—must be depended upon to pro-

vide the honesty and the courage. Nature, and Nature alone, can furnish the common sense. To honesty, courage, and common sense, the university can and should add knowledge and vision. Given these qualities, we are in the presence of the ideal public servant.

NICHOLAS MURRAY BUTLER

EPITAPH

*Here what is mortal of her lies
Entombed beneath the pensive skies.*

This is her grave on the lonely hill
Where the whimsey wind is never still,
And the trembling trees and the wistful
rain

Tenderly murmur a dim refrain.

While time lives this will be her home;
Never again will her fancy roam
With mine through the mist that slow
drifts down

Like a grape-blue veil o'er the distant town;
Never again will her warm eyes gaze
With mine at the world beyond the haze,
Striving to pierce through its mystery.
Never again—for her soul is free.

Here on the hill her body lies,
One with the clay; but her spirit flies
High with the rapturous wind, and shrouds
Itself in the happy-colored clouds,
Flames in the rose-lit halls of the West,
Thrills in Aurora's soft-flushed breast,
Lives in the heart of all lovely things,
In voice of bird and in butterfly wings.

Only her ashes are here; again
Her spirit lives in the sun and the rain,
Is one with the brooding, hovering night,
One with the stars and the pale moonlight,
One with the shining, flower-soft sea,
One with the soul of Eternity.

*Only her flesh is claimed by the sod,
She lives in the endless dream of God.*

—EDNA TUTT FREDERIKSON