

Widening Educational Horizons

This week the foreword "Drama" has been written by Mr. Norman Macdonald, one of the teachers of the Summer Session High School, as well as being a successful teacher. Mr. Macdonald is keenly interested in dramatics. No less than three full-length plays bear out this interest. One of these "Apron Strings," written and directed by Mr. Macdonald has been entered in the Prince Edward Island Drama Festival which is being held in Charlottetown the week of May 24th, and what the Music Festival is to those interested in music so is the Drama Festival to those who are interested in "The Play". Producing amateur plays is fun. There is a certain amount of work to it, both for directors, actors, and the people who look after properties, advertising, etc., but the rewards that come when the footlights go on, the house lights go off, and the curtain whipsers its way towards the wings more than make up the months of painstaking preparation.

The experience of being the centre of all eyes as he holds the mirror up to life gives the actor added self-confidence and poise. Even the extrovert for whom "all the world's a stage" gets special thrills out of this more organized process of displaying his talents to an audience. The introvert is especially helped. He is the centre of attention which his inhibitions prevent him from gaining in real life, where he dodges the spotlight, and seeks the shadows at the fringe of the crowd. Quite often he reveals facets of personality which none of his friends dreamed he possessed.

Then there is the feeling of comradeship which accompanies the putting on of a play. There is an excitement to opening night, and to the following nights of presentation that knits the cast together in the wonderful pattern stimulating experiences always create.

Teamwork is important. The success achieved by every player in the cast depends on the other members. The performance of the leads will suffer if the supporting characters are not doing a good job. Late entrances, failure to pick up a cue, and other errors of omission or commission affect adversely the success of the production. Every member of the cast from the leads whose rapturous embrace is very often signal for the final curtain, to the messenger, or the boy who appears briefly with a telegram in the second act should be imbued with the feeling that he (or she) is an important link, and without his very best efforts the complete chain will be less likely to hold the audience enthralled.

Choosing the cast is quite a problem in the realm of amateur theatricals. In small centres you can't act like a Ziegfeld picking girls for the chorus line on one of his "Follies." The people you will be choosing are your neighbours and friends. You must then select after trying them out for a role is dangerous procedure unless you are a born diplomat who can successfully sugar over the disappointment of a rejection. It is much wiser to "scout" the prospects before they are approached. In schools, church groups, etc. you can at least hear them reading or giving some sort of recitation. Small centres with a useful "scouting" material. In Little Theatre Guilds so many plays are presented that, as a general rule, you are not taking a leap into the dark when casting begins for an important production.

That the prospect will have a voice that can be projected to the audience is a "must." No matter how lovely the voice is, if the projection is poor, the audience will not hear. The emphasis, all is lost if the sound vibrations do not knock at the ear drums of the cash customers. It is just another example of the rose wasting its sweetness on the desert air. A carrying voice with less of the other desirable attributes should be given precedence. True, intelligent direction can sometimes work wonders with a weak, small voice, but the risk is there. The director may not have time, or for other reasons, may not be able to improve the voice projection, so it is much safer and more satisfactory to select someone with the necessary vocal equipment ready-made.

ward situation. Someone may have forgotten his part, or delayed his entrance, and in such a crisis an adroit ad libber can save the situation. But some actors have so much faith in their power of ad libbing that they do not bother to memorize all their lines, preferring to give an original twist to many of them, by using words often thought up on the spur of the moment. The playwright may have laid considerable trouble making sure that the lines are "in character." What preparatory conceits leads actors to believe that these half-thought-out lines can be improvised "on the spur of the moment" improvisations? They may get louder laugh by these changes, but we must not forget what the "loud laugh" sometimes bespeaks. Upbraiding merriment on the part of a section of the audience is no guarantee of the excellence of the play, or the ability of the actors in it.

Occasionally an actor is so flushed with enthusiastic audience responses that he continues to make faces, or to do other humorous antics in the background while the progress of the play is being advanced by other members of the cast. This, though it "splits the ears" of the "groundlings," as Hamlet admitted, is very bad technique, and should be avoided. It is very much the same as "hogging the puck" in hockey.

The main thing, however, is to get started on that play! If you break a lot of the rules, and your play is coming apart at the seams, you will still have a lot of fun, and so will your audience, believe it or not.

An address by Prof. D. C. Monroe, Director, School of Teachers, Macdonald College, Quebec, given in Prince of Wales College during the Easter Convention of the Teachers' Federation.

TEACHERS FOR OUR TIMES

I must first, of all express my pleasure in being your guest tonight. Many precious ties bind me to Prince Edward Island, not least of which are the friendships I have formed through the years with many of you members, who have made a contribution to the educational professional life of the Dominion out of all proportion to their numbers. I am very happy to be among so many old friends again tonight. I should like also to acknowledge the debt of my generation to the students, to the teachers, to your distinguished sons, Dr. Cyrus MacMillan, who was respected as an inspiring teacher during my undergraduate days. I like to think that some of my literary enthusiasms and particularly my appreciation of Shakespeare may be traced to his classroom where the lectures were always stimulating and scholarly. And, finally, I must mention my humble tribute to the founder of our College, Sir William Macdonald, whose educational benefactions are spread throughout Eastern Canada although a generous portion of them is concentrated in McGill University. His spirit lives in our College today and through it, I believe we have a firm and venerable bond with the following generations of Edward Island.

My subject this evening is "Teachers for Our Times" and I think it presents a problem and challenge. It presents a problem because I find a difficulty in giving you an entirely satisfactory definition of a teacher. Indeed I am reminded of an international Conference of scientists which was assembled before the First World War to study the elephant. After a long series of meetings at which many points of view were presented with great erudition, the members concluded that their knowledge of the elephant was insufficient and they agreed to adjourn for one year during which each would pursue his studies further. During the following months the delegates were variously occupied. The Englishman immediately made plans for a hunting expedition to Africa and followed this by the publication of a book called "Africa and Adventure." The American retired to Sarasota, Florida, where he began to breed bigger and better elephants. The Frenchman turned all the zoos and the zookeepers in his little article on the sex life of the elephant. The German searched the libraries (there were eleven volumes on "Genus Elephantis"). The Pole talked to scholars and statesmen, then wrote a study called "The Elephant and the Polish Question." The Russian retired to his garage, he starved and thought, he thought he starved, then wrote ponderous essay "The Elephant - Does he exist?" The World War intervened and the second meeting of the Conference was never summoned.

I encounter the same sort of difficulty when I search for an accurate and complete description of the teacher and a glance across the pages of modern history reveals some strange and disturbing facts. Frederick the Great is acclaimed as an enlightened ruler partly because he introduced a system of schools but, if I remember correctly, his school masters were the wounded sergeants and corporals of his army. For him, it would seem, a teacher was obviously someone who couldn't fight and I am afraid that this negative definition had made a deep impression on later generations. You all know the caricatures of the teacher which we find in Dickens' novels - Squeers, Mr. and Mrs. MacChoakumchild, Mr. Wopsle's Great Aunt and their ilk. You also recognize that not very flattering caricatures of Washington Irving, John Crane, These are the characters one remembers as representatives of the teaching profession in early Victorian and early Colonial schools and they do scant justice to a profession that included such men as Thomas Arnold, Mark Hopkins and John Strachan. Speaking in 1847 in the British House of Commons, Macaulay could describe teachers as "the refuse of all other callings, discarded footmen, ruled

as emergency training practitioners whose qualifications were devised and the standards of admission and training were reduced to a shocking level.

The crisis was rendered even more acute by another development. In science and industry new and exciting opportunities were opened to men and women with a sound education. Careers in medicine, in management, in engineering, in industry, in research offered both attractive salaries and public esteem. For a very considerable number of young people a brief period of training and a short term of service as a teacher opened the way to more lucrative professions. Thus, while a considerable number of skilled and devoted teachers remained in their classrooms, for a large number of talented men and women teaching became a stepping-stone to another career. And the success attained by these former teachers left some of a stigma on those who remained in the profession. The cynic again complained that the teacher preferred a cluttered life, surrounded by admiring children, and the rough hurly-burly of the world at large. The teacher was one who couldn't be a successful salesman, who couldn't build bridges or a power dam, who couldn't understand the intricacies of high finance. This attitude was, of course, summed up in the hackneyed phrase of Oscar Wilde "those who can do, those who can't teach."

Thus, an emergency was bound to develop. On one hand, the schools became more and more crowded; on the other, an increasing number of teachers were tempted into other occupations. Standards were relaxed. Instead of the wounded sergeants, discarded footmen and ruined peddlars, school authorities employed the immature and the uncertain, those who could not make up their mind which occupation to choose or, having determined on the church, the law, or medicine, could not immediately afford the long period of training required for those professions. It is true that reasonable standards were maintained in secondary schools, where fees brought additional revenue, but the elementary school was staffed almost entirely by young women with inferior qualifications and little experience, or by young men on their way to some other career. The system was supposed to compensate for the shortcomings of the teacher and a hierarchy developed in which the most influential and powerful positions were held by administrators or "super teachers" who had graduated from classroom duty as Edward Thring said in England "we must depend on systems because we cannot be certain of having the man".

Then came the specialist. When it became impossible to find a teacher qualified in all subjects and able to work with children of all ages, groups, school authorities employed kindergarten or elementary specialists and special teachers for Art or Music or Languages. Fundamental training was not required and these persons were not so much qualified to teach special subjects or grades as they were incapable of teaching anything outside the area of their own particular interest. This sort of thing has been carried to extravagant extremes until in Canada last year there were more than fifty different teaching diplomas. In other words there are at the present time about fifty different definitions of the word teacher in the various provinces of the Dominion. I am not surprised that the public should find it difficult to form a clear concept of the teacher. I have a good deal of difficulty myself.

This unfortunate confusion has not prevented the profession from attracting and developing a large number of excellent teachers but it has opened the door to some practitioners whose qualifications and performance to say the least, mediocre. Some time ago I was discussing school experiences with a friend who made this significant comment "I had quite a few teachers, fifteen or twenty perhaps, but only two or three of them really meant anything to me." "You must understand" he said, "I don't imply they did me any harm. They were well-meaning enough; they just didn't register." This experience is typical of a good many in my generation and it reminded me of a statement by the distinguished American educator, Jacques Barzun, Supreme exemplar such as "Socrates, Buddha and Jesus, show that no limit can be set to the power of a teacher" — no limit can be set to the power of a teacher. Then he added significantly, "But in the other direction, no other career can so nearly approach zero in its effects." We have the great teachers in our ranks; unfortunately, we also have others whose influence "approaches zero". Our problem is to determine what makes the good teacher; our challenge is to banish from our ranks those whose influence is zero.

The story is told of a University graduate in Economics who returned twenty years after his graduation to visit his old professor. After some preliminaries, he asked to see a copy of the examination paper which had recently been given in one of the courses in which he had taken honours during his undergraduate days. After a brief glance he remarked, "These are exactly the same questions that were asked twenty years ago!" "Yes," replied the professor, "In economics the questions are always the same, it's only the answers that change." I would not like to suggest that in education our policies and principles are unstable but our answers change and so does the attitude of the public. I think there is good evidence to prove that, during the past ten or fifteen years, the social climate surrounding education has altered greatly. Our communities are more anxious to understand the purposes of education and the operation of the school, more insistent that the standards of the teaching profession be maintained or even improved. The public is prepared to recognize and reward the good teacher, similarly it is growing increasingly impatient with the teacher whose influence is zero.

In the new social climate, in the face of this genuine concern about educational standards and practices, what does the public expect of the teacher? First, I think it demands competence. Through the years there has developed an unfortunate caricature of the teacher as a poorly qualified

helper who cannot be entrusted with the full responsibility of teaching. He has been chosen at random for his willingness rather than his talents, given a sort of token training, and placed under the iron-handed supervision of an inspector. I am happy to say that this attitude is disappearing among departmental officials and the inspector has become less of a super teacher and more of a colleague and consultant. However, there is a growing danger that his place may be taken by the textbook writer. In recent years there has been a steady improvement in the style and format of our textbooks and professional magazines but, with the best intentions, the publishers and authors have done a great deal to curtail the freedom and initiative of the teacher. Books follow rigid course pattern and are supplemented with elaborate teaching manuals and aids. The publishers assume that the teacher is too immature or too busy to do much planning for himself. Unfortunately this attitude has been accepted by teachers themselves. Within the past week I read a report on a new course of study proposed by a Committee of teachers which recommended a certain textbook because "for the inexperienced teacher it contains all the information he needs to know". I believe that we must rise above this level of incompetence if we are to justify public support. The teacher must master his subject, he must be competent to judge the needs and interests of the child, he must be competent to organize his subject material in a clear and stimulating manner. We must have teachers who can work intelligently with their colleagues in departments of education and who can employ the textbook, the film, the radio as effective aids to learning.

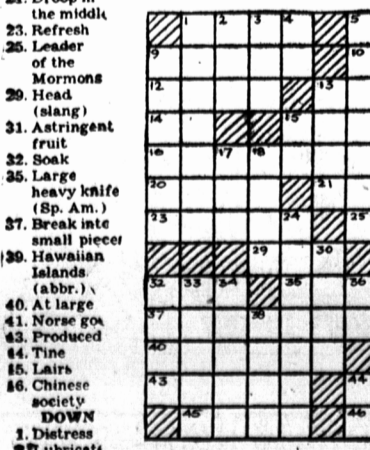
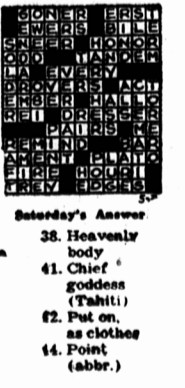
But competence is not enough. The public also demands conviction. The great teachers to whom Barzun referred were among the great spirits of history. You and I can remember lesser men in the history of education who also earned an accolade for the inspiration of their example and the depth of their devotion. Peter Abelard, whose students flocked from Paris after him when he was driven into exile; Richard Mulcaister, who built an enviable reputation in two Elizabethan schools; William Gilpin, whose distinction as a schoolmaster was no less than as an artist or a cleric; Madame Montessori, dedicated to the education of the underprivileged; Saunderson of Oundle, whom H. G. Wells judged the greatest schoolmaster he knew. These were men and women of burning zeal and high purpose. For each of them teaching was a way of life. I like

to think that some of my literary enthusiasms and particularly my appreciation of Shakespeare may be traced to his classroom where the lectures were always stimulating and scholarly. And, finally, I must mention my humble tribute to the founder of our College, Sir William Macdonald, whose educational benefactions are spread throughout Eastern Canada although a generous portion of them is concentrated in McGill University. His spirit lives in our College today and through it, I believe we have a firm and venerable bond with the following generations of Edward Island.

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DAILY CROSSWORD

- ACROSS**
- Unit of weight (10)
 - Temperature (7)
 - Sign of the zodiac (8)
 - Mistake (6)
 - Bend over (5)
 - Shelter for motor vehicles (4)
 - Department in China (4)
 - Rower (4)
 - Engrossed (5)
 - Shoebly (5)
 - Place (4)
 - The hole oak (4)
 - Droop in the middle (4)
 - Refresh (4)
 - Leader of the 340 tons (4)
 - Head (4)
 - (slang) (4)
 - Astringent fruit (4)
 - Soak (4)
 - Large heavy knife (Sp. Am.) (4)
 - Break into small pieces (4)
 - Hawaiian Islands (abbr.) (4)
 - At large (4)
 - Norse god (4)
 - Produced (4)
 - Time (4)
 - Lairs (4)
 - Chinese society (4)
- DOWN**
- Distress (4)
 - Lubricant (4)
 - Guided (4)
 - Like (4)
 - Gossip (4)
 - Blunders (4)
 - Biblical name (poss.) (4)
 - Roman garment (4)
 - Concern (4)
 - Shelter for motor vehicles (4)
 - Talks (4)
 - Gold (Her.) (4)
 - Coin (Nap.) (4)
 - Farm animals (4)
 - Excelsior (4)
 - Don (slang) (4)
 - Place (4)
 - Marquis (4)
 - Cerium (4)
 - Rubber tree (4)
 - (Met.) (4)
 - Not anything (4)
 - Turning to the right (4)
 - Destitute (4)
 - Crust on a wound (4)
 - Heavenly body (4)
 - Chief goddess (4)
 - (Faint) (4)
 - Purify as clothes (4)
 - Point (abbr.) (4)



DAILY CRYPTOQUOTE—Here's how to work it: Some letter simply stands for another. In this example A is used for the large L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, and hyphens and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the letters are different.

Cryptogram Quotation

XPC XWTR GO APHK OPQK
 JP APHK VK AKBCO GO—JKBBDOPE.

Saturday's Cryptogram: IN LIFE'S COOL EVENING, SATIATE OF ABE-LAISE—POPE.

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