

PROBLEM OF HOLDING HIGH SCHOOL PUPILS

by Prof. W. H. Hand
Recent Meeting Held at
Florence.

My subject can be no new, whatever the des- given to my argument. The as old as organized schools. has grown immensely in impor- the adoption of the policy education at public ex- since the public schools are by a universal tax, it fol- that those for whom that tax should get the benefit of for this reason more than the states of the Union have enact- school attendance laws. these laws pupils are required school for a period of years usually at from 14 to 16 years. The annual attendance term, exemptions, the penalties and the widely in the various states, are concerned with a single phas- results—how well the pupils held in school. In states both and without compulsory attend- we are confronted with that pupils for one reason drop out of school with rapidly after 14 years of all the public school children United States, 93 per cent are first eight grades, and the re- 7 per cent are in the 9th, 10th and 12th grades, or the school grades. Of all the pupils first eight grades, 76 per cent the first five grades. The re- 24 per cent of the elementary are scattered through the 6th, 7th and 8th grades.

conditions in the white schools South Carolina are similar to but identical with the averages for United States. In our schools 12th grade is assigned to the high school. Ninety-four per cent of our pupils are enrolled in the first grades, or our elementary school, but 6 per cent are in the high

this state and throughout the we are confronted with the and disquieting fact that fully cent of the high school pupils the first year. The schools of large manage to get about cent of the high school pupils the fourth year. South Carolina only 5 per cent of hers so far ad-

this count there is another vexat- the boys leave school and in larger numbers than do and the ratio of boys to girls in high school is growing smaller by year. In many places in our state the number of boys leaving at the end of the first high school year is little less than an ex- For a local study of this situa- your attention is directed to the report of the state superin- of education for 1914. It is evident to all that the are losing hosts of pupils at any time they ought to be most concerned in equipping them- for more profitable study, for citizenship, and for becom- efficient and productive work- the economic world. After de- from the high school atten- those who are avowedly college

I think it safe to say that we holding only a mere remnant made a few earnest boys and girls securing all they can before day of opportunity ends, and a others groping their way in the with little purpose and less guid-

whole matter calls for serious, and intelligent study. Why these pupils dropping out in such numbers, and what should be done about them? We have already had theorizing, considerable guess- and some studying about why pupils are leaving schools. Every a while some educator has forward with an explanation remedy. Immediately some oth- another has arisen to point out and that the remedy was un- One of the most illuminating of this subject was recently at the University of Iowa. The are given in a bulletin entitled "Wages and Schooling of Eight Iowa Boys." In this study ment was made to get from the themselves the reason why each school. Their answers make interesting study, even after due has been made for the un- in the boy's own mind as to the left school. Some reference can be made to this bulletin.

of others, and after an eight- of the question in connec- with my own daily work. I have at a few definite conclusions. kind indulgence I submit them very briefly and leave to appraise their accuracy and

1. The popular belief seems to be that after 14 years of age the largest number of boys drop out of school because their labor is needed for either their own support or that of the family. This belief is open to very serious doubt. The fact that some of the poorest families in almost every community are managing to keep their children in the public schools as long as they are open to those children discounts this contention heavily. Turning to the Iowa Bulletin we find a good percentage of the 800 boys giving the need of their labor as their reason for leaving school. However, it should be borne in mind that even a deserter sometimes grows very heroic when pleading his own cause. A boy too lazy to study at school eases his conscience for leaving school by assuming the role of a young bread-winner. This claim demands very serious investigation, for if it can be shown that in our country child-labor is actually required to aid in the support of our population, our whole economic system should be investigated from bottom to top. No less a man than the Secretary of State at Washington uttered almost the same words months ago.

2. I am persuaded that pupils enter school too young,—not that they are too young to learn or even to study, but that they grow tired of going to school before they reach the age at which they are capable of appreciating the value of their schooling. The vanity of fond parents are and zealous teachers may not be always wise, and I believe here is an instance. I know some excellent school people who do not agree with me in my position, but I see too much of the evils of the present plan of putting young children into school to be convinced in its favor. I have observed too many first-grade and second-grade prodigies fall by the wayside and drop out of school before the age of fourteen. I should like to see the minimum school age in South Carolina raised to at least that of Virginia, Alabama and Texas—seven years. Luther Burbank in his little book, "The Human Plant," contends that the average child would be better educated if he were kept out of school until 10 years old. Doubtless his position is extreme, but it has much to commend it.

3. After all our improvements in school organization, there is too much marking time in the elementary grades. Is not every thoughtful and observant teacher compelled to admit that our pupils have acquired a disappointingly small amount of either information or power by the end of the elementary school? This marking time is due largely to the presence of immature children in these grades, as has already been suggested. Is it reasonable to expect as much work from a set of 9-year old children in the fourth grade as it would be if the children were eleven years old? Carry this scale of immaturity through seven school years, and you can account for at least a year of lost time. But there is still another explanation of this marking time—the overcrowded conditions in most of our schools. Can any parent or school board expect anything but marking time in a schoolroom with fifty pupils to one teacher? The pupil who marks time for a few years is ready at the first opportunity to leave school. Who can blame him?

4. There are yet among us too many schools whose courses of study are bounded by pages and paragraphs. That is to say, there are too many teachers and pupils restricted to a specific number of pages in a given textbook to be covered in a specified time. I have very grave doubts about the efficiency of any school whose superintendent can tell me by his program of studies on what page any particular class will be studying a month hence. It would be a hazzard to guess when such a superintendent will cut his wisdom teeth. His school will never be famous for holding its pupils, unless through some strong counteracting agency.

5. Very few schools are equipped with uniformly competent teachers. The weaker ones must be placed somewhere, and they usually are distributed among the middle grades where the pupils are already marking time. An immature pupil in an overcrowded room, under a weak teacher, and in a class marking time is not likely to remain through the high school.

6. Too frequently the high school teachers of least experience are placed in charge of the first year in the high school. The first-year classes are the largest in the high school, the organization is usually the most imperfect, and the pupils are the most difficult to manage. These teachers too often know nothing of adolescence and its significance in dealing with boys and girls of that age. If the teacher fails to catch and hold the adolescent at just the proper time, the chances are that he will never catch him. The pupil at this age must be understood and dealt with in a truly sympathetic, straightfor-

ward way, if he is to be held and to be taught. A teacher who does not really understand boys and girls at the beginning of the high school period will soon run them out of school. The personality of the teacher counts for much in attracting pupils or repelling them. Schools that change teachers every year can not hope to hold pupils with any degree of success.

7. High school courses of study are built on standards set by the colleges and fail to attract pupils not college bound. The now famous Report of the Committee of ten announced with great complacency and finally that a preparation good enough for college was good enough for anything else. These are some wise men and women to-day who do not agree with this pronouncement. The college preparation is too narrow and exclusive to be applied indiscriminately to the great army of boys and girls for whose benefit the high schools are maintained. It makes no difference how thoroughly convinced I may be that a certain course is best for a pupil, nor how doggedly I hold to my conviction, the pupil and his parent must be reckoned with. They are going to be considered. The tastes and ambitions and opportunities of both pupil and parents demand and deserve consideration. The colleges not only dictate what the high schools shall teach but they in practice undertake to tell the high schools how long they shall keep their pupils. Of what value is the mere advice of the colleges to pupils to remain four years in the high school, when every pupil knows that he can enter college after three years in the high school and graduate from college on schedule time? Here is one of the explanations of why three of the four largest cities in South Carolina have refused to maintain a four-year high school. The pupils college bound drop out of school to answer the call of the college, and those not college bound know only too well that the courses of study lead only to college and they drop out in advance of their fellows.

8. High school pupils, especially boys, do not have enough strong men teachers. Strong, clean men, please bear in mind. This does not raise the question of sex superiority. It simply means that we must recognize the decree of nature that a young boy needs the companionship, advice, guidance and restraint of a strong man. He needs them at this age as at no other. I anticipate being reminded of the distinguished sons of the number has been wonderfully ex-widowed mothers by remarking that agitated, and that there are perhaps more infamous sons than famous ones. In this connection I am often reminded of a remark of the late Sam P. Jones—that nature seems to have fitted a woman for almost anything except being the father of a family.

9. I am not disposed to overvalue high school athletics, but I must believe that the almost utter neglect of the systematic physical training of the adolescent has made him less enthusiastic about his school than he would be if his new needs were provided for. The play instinct is strong in the human race, and clean, manly sports are the cravings of all healthful, normal boys and girls. The high school whose teachers sit around the stoves during recess hours and whose pupils walk around the grounds or sit in the sunshine in winter and in the shade in summer will hold through four years none but the little Waldos and the little bluestockings. The live human animals with red blood in their veins will all have left before the end of four dull, monotonous years.

10. I am far from being disposed to hold the teachers and the schools responsible for all the shortcomings of pupils and for all the evils which overtake them. Parents must share the responsibility. The modern father and mother seem to have lost their grip on their 15-year old boys and girls. The fathers are absorbed in business and the mothers are absorbed in clubs sometimes organized to look after somebody else's children. I do not undertake to prophesy, but I risk saying that unless the American home resumes the natural prerogatives which it has wantonly attempted to thrust upon the school and the school teacher, American manhood and womanhood will soon be set back a century. If the boys and girls are dropping out of school in large numbers, I insist that the fathers and mothers be called upon to explain the exodus. They pay for the schools, they pay the teachers, and the children are theirs by divine right for control. Why do they permit these fledglings to drop out of the schools they have established for them? The challenge is direct and unequivocal.

11. The sentiment and the ideals of a community have much to do in determining this whole matter of attendance. In any community where the prevailing notion is that an elementary education is all that the people need or all that the public ought to provide, teachers nor courses of

study nor athletics nor anything else will stem the tide of pupils away from the school. The community absorbed in money-making or other material affairs will never be remarkable for keeping its pupils in school either long or regularly. If I may be pardoned for being in a degree personal, I know a community where the men, the kindred of the pupils, are so occupied playing poker that the school is a matter of little thought with them. What hope can there be for such a community so long as such ideas prevail?

12. Finally, Young America himself must be held responsible for his share of the blame for leaving school prematurely. Too frequently he is indifferent, recalcitrant, a truant, lazy or a spoilt and worthless malingering. The Iowa investigation shows that 296 boys left school for various detailed reasons falling under the general heading "Dissatisfied with school." The largest number simply "disliked school life," and the next largest number was "tired of school." Other reasons assigned were "disliked teacher," "disliked study," "school work too hard," "not promoted," and "expelled or had trouble." It is not difficult to see how many of these boys left school simply because of their own shortcomings, and it must be remembered that all this is the damaging testimony of the boys themselves. No matter how much sympathy we may have with youngsters, we can not blind ourselves to the fact that there are among them lazy ones, indifferent ones and worthless ones—deaf to duty, blind to opportunity, and destitute of gratitude. Teachers and schools should not be held responsible for the failures of such pupils.

THE COW AND HER PRODUCT.
Clemson College Weekly Notes For Farmer and Dairyman.

(These notes are prepared weekly by the Dairy Division of Clemson College, which will be glad to answer any questions pertaining to dairying.)

The milk last drawn is the most valuable. Milk the cow clean.

Milking the cow clean will develop her udder and help to increase her milk capacity.

Treat the cow kindly. Under gentle handling a cow will do her best. Harsh treatment gets less milk.

Have good air in the stalls and let light be admitted freely. This, and keeping the cow clean have much to do with her health.

In milking, work as fast as you can and try not to stop for any purpose until the milk has been wholly drawn from the cows udder.

When a cow turned out to pasture does not give so much milk as you expected do not blame the cow without fault of the pasture.

Wash the hands before milking and wipe them dry. Also wash the udder and wipe it dry. These two operations are essential in the production of clean milk, which is the only kind that should be produced.

Scores of Piedmont farmers are now getting a taste of real co-operative marketing through the co-operative creamery plan of Clemson College and the profits obtained make the taste a pleasant one. Any farmer in the Piedmont who is interested should write the Dairy Division of Clemson College for particulars.

It is time now to be thinking about that silo you want to build this year. A letter to the Dairy Division of Clemson College, stating your situation, will bring practical silo advice and this division will be glad to assist later in the construction.

Silage is the most economical succulent feed for dairy cattle. Cows fed on silage produce their full capacity of milk. It is a feed that any farmer can produce on his own farm at little expense. This state has too few silos. If you have ten cows or more, you need one.

Please Go 'Way and Let Me Sleep.

Atlanta, Ga., April 5.—Unnecessary noises which are likely to disturb passengers in sleeping cars, placed in stations for occupancy during the early hours of the night, have been put under the ban by the Southern railway.

Rigid orders have been issued in regard to the ringing bells by switch engines and loud talking by porters and other employes, a campaign for the suppression of unnecessary noises having been inaugurated by Vice president and General Manager Copman.

At stations where sleeping cars are placed notices were posted as follows: "Sleeping car berths on this train are prepared for occupancy at—m. Kindly avoid all loud conversations or other noise in or around sleeping cars after that hour."

The results have been so satisfactory as to eliminate almost entirely complaints from passengers arising from annoyances of this character.

White caps near Kingstree last week went to the home of an offensive negro man and administered a severe beating. Another inoffensive negro boy was also badly beaten and stabbed with a knife.

Governor Manning has stayed the execution of Greenwood Rogers, convicted of arson in Laurens county, until the board of pardons can investigate the case and see if there is need for clemency. Rogers was convicted last fall and was sentenced to be electrocuted October 23rd, but Gov. Blease reprieved him (11) April.

All Forms of Interchangeable Mileage and Penny Scrip Books Good for Intrastate Passage in South Carolina.
Effective Saturday, March 20, 1915, all interchangeable mileage and penny scrip books, forms Z, ZZ, SIM and Penny Scrip (regardless of date purchased) will be good, within limit, for intrastate journeys in South Carolina by exchange of coupons at ticket windows for passage tickets in accordance with contract and tariff provisions.

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FINAL DISCHARGE.
Notice is hereby given that I have filed with the Probate Judge of Kershaw County my final return as Administratrix of the Estate of J. M. Watts, deceased, and that on the 1st day of May, 1915, at 11 o'clock A. M., I will apply to the said Court for a final discharge as Administratrix of the said Estate.

MRS. M. L. WATTS.
Camden, S. C., March 27th, 1915.

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FINAL DISCHARGE.
Notice is hereby given that one month from this date, on Saturday, April 10th, 1915, I will present to the Probate Court of Kershaw County my final return as Administratrix of the Estate of J. A. Benson, deceased, and apply to the Court for Letters Dismissory.

BEULAH E. BARFIELD
Administratrix.
Camden, S. C., March 5, 1915.

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