

THE STATE'S PURPOSE IN ITS EDUCATIONAL EFFORTS

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tional course is being taught, including community marketing. It will be worth the while of the reader to look up the article on Tabasco's radical departure in Collier's Magazine of February 23, under the title of the Scourge of Tabasco, by George Creel. It is enlightening from several points of view.

While the agricultural work of the state is worthy of the highest approval and should be enlarged, it is unjust that the agricultural teachers, through the joint provision of funds by the state and the federal government, are paid all out of proportion to teachers in other departments of the schools. In many cases, the agricultural teacher, instructing only a few students, gets a larger salary than the principal of the school, with the entire responsibility of all departments resting upon him, and in some cases, as at Louisburg, for instance, the oversight of the colored schools and, maybe, of outlying schools also rests upon him.

Other Practicable Vocational Studies.

Wood work, like agriculture, appeals to a large percentage of people. Shop work is another practicable vocational study. Domestic science or home economy is another. Drawing, while usually considered as pertaining to the ornamental, is really basic to a variety of vocations and should be generally taught. All these subjects are as truly productive of mentality as are other subjects in the curriculum—more so if the pupil has great interest in one or all and little or no interest in others, and less if the pupil has no interest in the vocation he is studying. I know a man who as a lad studied agriculture two years, and yet, I believe, he could hardly plant a row of beans so as to get them to come up in rainy weather. He was essentially a mechanic.

The great majority of vocations are beyond provision for teaching in the elementary schools. But from the practical standpoint that is little loss. If the study of those vocations were the only means of educating a group of pupils, it would be a different matter. As it is, the job itself is the practical teacher.

The Comprehensive Vocational Preparation.

It takes a spinner or weaver in a cotton factory only a few days to learn his job. A thousand other vocations are like that. Therefore, vocational training in the schools for thousands of positions is not only impracticable but needless. On the other hand, a general preparation of head, hand, and heart for any and all vocations or avocations for which the person has innate interest or talent sufficient to assure attainment of skill, is the most feasible of all methods for creating a potential economic efficiency.

No knowledge, particularly that of general principles and conditions, no skill in any line of mental or physical endeavor, no habit of close observation, no habit of self-reliance or initiative, nothing that can be learned will be found to be a handicap to vocational fitness, but most surprisingly the apparently least promising observation or fact may prove the key to success.

The airplane is a product of the study of kites, and almost every one of us as a child had within range the key to the flying machine when he "sailed" a disc of tin or a keg head and saw it, surprisingly, while sailing horizontally dart upward.

The Part of Play in the Educational Program.

Yes; play is an important means of education. See the youth seize the baseball and with a glance about the field as quick as lightning decide instantly where to throw the ball. Here are the elements of a potential fitness for life's emergencies. Quick and complete observation, prompt decision, immediate action.

In addition, play has its part in making a healthy and vigorous body, that a healthy and vigorous mind, and that a support for a sane and vigorous morality. Few things are doing more to teach boys and girls respect for the rights of others and a hatred of unfair practice than organized games.

But mind you, a thousand onlookers are not participants in the benefits of the game. Sitting on the bleachers is far from educational. No man makes a crop by looking at his neighbor plough his field. A most sensible program is that of the Long Creek High School of Pender county. That school was not satisfied with one basketball court for the picked team of the school—the very boys who need the benefits of the game the least. That school has provided many courts that enable the

hundreds to share the benefits and the pleasures of basketball.

Removing Physical Handicaps.

The state has in no way for the same money secured equal prevention of economic and social unfitness than by the work of the health department through the schools. Thus many handicaps both to physical and mental development have been removed. The wise state will in the future provide free medicine and free hospitalization as readily as it now provides free teaching. The health and efficiency of the body is fundamental. No means can assure economic or social fitness for a sick or dead person.

Not only must natural physical handicaps be removed, but the children must be taught to respect the natural laws that protect health. For instance, the person who goes from one of the state's schools and ruins himself by drinking alcoholic liquor must do so in the face of knowledge of the danger of the fluid. The laws have long provided for teaching of the physical, mental, and moral dangers of drink, but the teaching has been either lacking, faulty, or monstrously ineffective.

The Task of the Schools Gigantic.

In closing, let me say that the task of the schools is gigantic. The schools call for the best and the best in the best.

Dullards, sluggards, the immoral and the unmoral, the silly and the insincere, the godless and the loveless—none of these has any call to the school room and no increase in salary can improve them. They are a menace which must be either avoided altogether or discarded when discovered.

The real teacher, the one who makes for physical, mental, and moral fitness of his wards, is to be cherished and, not in order to keep him or her, but in appreciation of service well and worthily rendered, given a compensation as nearly commensurate with their services as possible. Every real teacher in the state is a benediction. Every poor one a menace and a curse. A poor teacher is one person who may do more harm in his job than good. And there are teachers in North Carolina who might well be sued for damages instead of having their salaries increased. There are others to whom if you would give \$10,000 as a bonus, you would not over compensate them for their unselfish and efficient labors.

William Rufus DeVane King

By CLAUDE H. MOORE, Turkey, N. C.

William Rufus King was the son of William and Margaret (DeVane) King and the grandson of Thomas DeVane of Huguenot stock, and William and Mary (Woodson) King, of North Carolina. He was born near Clinton, Sampson County, North Carolina, on April 7, 1786. He attended the private schools of Sampson County and entered the University of North Carolina in 1799 and was graduated with the degree of A. B. in 1803. He studied law and was admitted to the bar in 1806, beginning practice in Clinton, N. C.

King was elected as a Jeffersonian Democrat to the State House of Commons and served from 1807-1809, and in 1810 he became city solicitor of Wilmington. He was elected to the Twelfth, Thirteenth and Fourteenth Congresses, and served from March 4, 1811 to November 4, 1816. In 1817 he was secretary of legation at Naples, and later at St. Petersburg, and in 1818 he returned to the United States and settled at Cahaha, Alabama.

William R. King was a delegate to the convention that organized the Alabama state government. Upon the admission of Alabama into the union as a state, he was elected as a Democrat to the United States Senate. He was re-elected in 1822, 1828, 1834, and 1841, and served from December 14, 1819, until April 15, 1844. In 1826, King moved to Selma, Alabama, and became a planter. He was minister to France from 1844 to 1846. He was appointed and subsequently elected to the United States Senate to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of Arthur P. Bagby and served from July 1, 1848 to January 18, 1853. King was elected president pro tempore of the Senate on many occasions. He was elected Vice-President of the United States in 1852 on the ticket with Franklin Pierce. He took oath of office on March 4, 1853, in Havana, Cuba, where he had gone for his health, which was a privilege extended by a special act of Congress.

King returned to his plantation, "King's Bend," Alabama, and died there on April 18, 1853. His body was placed in the family vault on his plantation and was later moved to the city cemetery in Selma, Dallas County, Alabama.

BLIND TOM

There seemed nothing out of the ordinary about the lot of slaves offered for sale in the market at Columbus, Georgia, that morning. No one thought of giving a second glance to the tiny, wizened, black bundle that squirmed feebly in the arms of a middle-aged Negress. The pickaninny was frail, blind, misshapen. Perhaps that is why the Negress clutched it to her breast with such fierce tenderness.

Presently the bull-voiced auctioneer began calling for bids and in the course of time the Negress was put up for sale. Young, able-bodied slaves had a ready sale. But the mother of twenty, who carried a defective twenty-first in arms, was not likely to excite these keen-eyed buyers of human cattle. What good was an old slave?

However, one linen-clothed planter showed a trifle indifference than his fellows. The auctioneer named a ridiculously low price. The planter shook his head.

"Tell you what I'll do, General," said the auctioneer, wiping his streaming face. "I'll knock her down to you an' throw in the young'un to boot for the same money! Yessuh, jest to finish out the sale. Yes? You'll take her? Sold, then! Sold to General Bethune!"

By all logic the sickly slave baby should have died of its burden of afflictions. But it didn't. It got kind treatment in the home of General Bethune. In its warped way it grew, learned to crawl and fumble its way about the big house.

Tom, they called the little Negro, Blind Tom. And it became increasingly plain that something was wrong with the brain behind those dead eyes. He showed scant interest in anything, could hardly feed himself.

Only one thing seemed to arouse him. That was when the general's daughters played the piano. Then he would grope his way to a rose-bush by the veranda where he would hide as long as the girls played. When the last note died, from hiding would crawl little Tom, hissing shrilly as he always did on the rare occasions when something delighted him. This went almost unnoticed, perhaps marked down as another peculiarity of the imbecile child.

Blind Tom was four years old when, as had been the case with Mozart, he was discovered at the piano, picking out with his little fingers the notes of a melody he had heard the girls play.

General Bethune was quick to see the extraordinary in this. He gave orders that Tom was to be allowed at the piano as much as he liked. Thereafter the boy spent most of his time at the keyboard.

The laws of compensation had done a wonderful thing for Blind Tom. To make up for his blindness and all but blank mind, he had a natural genius for mimicry. The absence of most of the normal senses had left room for an enormous expansion of the talent. Even at this early stage, Blind Tom could reproduce accurately any piece he heard played through once providing its keyboard compass could be reached by his babyish hands.

At the age of eight Blind Tom toured the South, giving concerts which left his audiences gasping with amazement. Yet his power of mimicry was not limited to the piano. He was a human phonograph, recording sound of all kinds, re-issuing it at will. He could imitate perfectly birds, animals, the voices of men and women. His voice was a deep bass and he liked nothing better than to sing "Rocked in the Cradle of the Deep," all day long. But he could sing tenor and even soprano surprisingly well. Once when he listened to a session of Congress in Washington, he reproduced word for word, faithfully copying every small intonation and trick of phrasing, all the speeches he had heard. He hadn't the faintest idea what the words he repeated meant. A favorite feat of Blind Tom's was to sit, his back to the keyboard, and play, with one hand, "Yankee Doodle," with the other, "The Fisher's Hornpipe," and sing, "Tramp, Tramp, Tramp, the Boys Are Marching," at the same time.

After the Civil War, Blind Tom toured Europe, where he astonished the foremost musicians of the time. He played simple Foster tunes, Mendelssohn, and difficult Liszt transcriptions with equal ease.

Blind Tom couldn't have been expected to conduct himself as a normal person. At the piano he was always wriggling and moving his body. He seemed to have become a trifle more intelligent with the years. Yet he never lost the habit of leading the applause that greeted his playing. He would stand at the corner of the keyboard and bang his pink palms together vigorously, hissing stridently all the while.

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