

# ADOLESCENT EDUCATION

BY

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New York

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1931

• PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA •

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Set up and electrotyped. Published February, 1931.

TO THE MEMORY  
OF  
G. STANLEY HALL

One of America's foremost psychologists, pioneer thinker, educational prophet, great teacher, true friend, who saw in the youth of to-morrow the hope of a better civilization, this book is affectionately inscribed

## PREFACE

The past two decades have witnessed a growing interest in secondary education, not in the United States alone but throughout the world. Accompanying it there has developed a revived concern with child study and genetic psychology. The attention given to such questions as pre-school education, problem children, the youth movement, extracurricular activities, and pupil adjustment attest this renewed interest in the more scientific education of the child. The time seems ripe, therefore, for the writing of books in the secondary education field that are definitely based upon a scientific knowledge of the adolescent. Many books have been written that deal with school organization, but few writers have attempted an analysis of adolescent traits and their development. A scientific adjustment of education to adolescent needs can be made only when the dominant traits of the period of adolescence are known. The present study makes such a survey. It also suggests educational procedures in harmony with the unfolding nature of youth.

This book is the product of the interaction of many minds working together upon the problems involved in the survey. The reactions of thousands of students, with whom all of these problems have been discussed, have largely determined the selection of topics and the method of treatment. This will account to some degree for the concreteness and fullness of the illustrations.

My obligations are numerous. Every page bears witness to my indebtedness to other investigators for facts and to publishers for permission to weave into the work the material germane to this study.

FREDERICK E. BOLTON

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# ADOLESCENT EDUCATION

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## CHAPTER I

### A NEW ERA IN ADOLESCENT EDUCATION

#### 1. NEW DEMANDS FOR EDUCATION

**The modern crusaders.** No chapter in all the history of education has been so striking as the development of the secondary school. The rise of the universities of the middle ages and the Renaissance were of marvelous significance because of the foundations laid for the stimulation of research and investigation. The establishment of common schools in continental Europe, in Scotland, in England, and in America was romantic because of the heroism displayed by a few ardent souls who saw in them the only means of intellectual as well as spiritual salvation. But the growth of secondary education has been an adolescent drama such as the poet has not yet been able to put into fitting words. We usually think of the schoolboy being pushed or pulled to school, but in reality has it not been the schoolboy—and the schoolgirl—who have demanded the school as a means of self-revelation, a means of penetrating the great mysteries of life, a means of satisfying innate strivings and ambitions surging within them? They throng to school in ever-increasing numbers in direct proportion as the school helps them to answer some of the

great problems of life. Make the school minister to these felt needs and no compulsory education laws will be needed.

## 2. THE RECENCY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF SECONDARY EDUCATION IN AMERICA

Most of us came into an inheritance of secondary schools everywhere present and therefore can scarcely realize the recency of it all. This year I inquired of a class of seventy university students in how many cases both of their parents were high school graduates: seven responded. I then asked in how many cases both parents were college graduates and only four could answer in the affirmative. In a generation hence, the students whose parents are not high school graduates will be scarce, and vast numbers will come from homes where the parents are college bred.

**The beginnings of public secondary education.** The Boston Public Latin School was established in 1635, antedating by one year the founding of Harvard in 1636. However, secondary education was for long regarded as a purely private affair. We find utterances of eminent educational statesmen as late as 1850 saying that it is all right to maintain elementary education at public expense, but to maintain high schools by public taxation is undemocratic, un-American and unconstitutional!

According to Dr. Harris, former Commissioner of Education of the United States, in 1860, there were but 40 free, public, four-year high schools in the whole United States.<sup>1</sup> The accuracy of this statement has been challenged, but even with all allowances for inexact records of that time, the fact remains that it is probably approximately correct. In 1873, at the time of the establishment of a department

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings*, National Education Association, 1901, p. 175

of education in the University of Iowa, the first in the world with continuous existence for the training of high school teachers, so few high schools had been established that the Report of the Commissioner of Education of the United States has no statistics regarding them. There were then 56,000 pupils in private secondary schools. In 1876 there were 22,982 pupils in public high schools and 73,400 in private academies.

**Remarkable development since 1890.** During the decade following 1890 the total high school enrolment, public and private, doubled; between 1900 and 1910 it again doubled; by 1917 it had again doubled; and by 1922 it was eight times as large as in 1890. By 1924 the enrolment was ten times that of 1890 and now in 1930 it is approximately fifteen times as great as in 1890. Public high schools have grown even more rapidly in proportion. From 1890 to 1895 the enrolment doubled; by 1903 it had again increased another 100 per cent; by 1911, another 100 per cent; by 1916 it was 600 per cent greater than in 1890; and by 1920 it was ten times what it was in 1890. The estimate of enrolment in 1930 approximates 5,000,000, having more than doubled since 1920 and being nearly twenty-five times as great as in 1890. During the last decade there has been added, on the average, one new high school a day counting Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays. This extraordinary development of secondary education in the United States is indicated graphically in Figure I. In the State of Washington, 41,000 children enter the first grade, 30,000 finish the eighth, and 27,000 enter the high school. Nearly 12,000 finish the high school course annually. That is, nearly one in three of these who start in the first grade finishes the high school course.

To-day one out of every two adolescents of high school

age is in actual high school attendance. In fact, the proportion is even a little higher for the United States as a whole. In urban centers it is much higher. In the rural communities it is less. In cities of the United States 71.1 per

**GROWTH OF HIGH SCHOOL ENROLMENT IN THE  
UNITED STATES \***

1880 ■ 110,277

1890 ■ 202,963

1900 ■ 519,251

1910 ■ 1,000,000

1920 ■ 2,199,389

1925 ■ 3,650,903

1930 ■ 5,000,000

\* Based upon various *Bulletins* of the U. S. Bureau of Education.

Figure 1

cent of the children between the ages of 15 and 18 are enrolled in high schools. The average for the same ages in rural communities is only 25.7 per cent. When the parents of these youths were of high school age only one in seven took advantage of a high school education.



The great event of to-day is not the airplane, the zeppelin, Edisonian inventions, or the radio—marvelous as these seem—but the changed attitude which the masses are coming to have toward thinking as a factor in daily life. Thinking no longer means to the man in the street the verbalistic busy work of the cloister. He sees the fruits of thinking all about him. Many factors have contributed to this change, but in the large it has been made possible by the free public school and the consecrated teachers who have sought to pass on the torch from generation to generation to an ever widening group of youth until now the school exists for all. The school of to-morrow will be better still. It will be supported by a public which knows that the real wealth of nations lies in the health, intelligence, skill, and purpose of the masses. The school of to-morrow will add to this wealth beyond the most eager dreams of to-day. We are now in the midst of an educational revolution—slow but certain, coming like the mighty tide. This editorial is based on existing practices of schools that are prophecies.<sup>1</sup>

### 3. PSYCHOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF EDUCATION DURING ADOLESCENCE

**Formative period of character.** From many angles the period of secondary education is the most important in the entire life of the individual. It is then that the real character is crystallized. What an individual really is through life will be decided in youth. It is seldom that any great changes in character either for better or for worse occur after adult life is reached. Of course, after this, the world often comes to a knowledge of the individual at his true worth but the real character was crystallized generally long before the world recognized it.

**Pre-school period contrasted.** Much is being said just now regarding pre-school education. Many are asserting

<sup>1</sup> Morgan, Joy Elmer, "The School of To-morrow." *Journal of the National Education Association*, January, 1929, p. 1



that these are the most important formative years in the entire life cycle. They are certainly extremely important in the establishment of the foundations for physical health, the development of the organs and functions of the body, and for the unfoldment of the mental powers into normal activities. This is especially true of intellectual qualities like sense perception, memory, and imagination. Elementary emotional processes like fear and anger should be wisely trained through conditioned responses. Likewise the cruder unfoldings of volition should be determined through appropriate conditional reflexes. A considerable degree of foundational intellectual, emotional and motor control may thus become established. Many believe that if the child has been in the right environment and properly educated up to six years of age he will be so stabilized that no subsequent influence can possibly undo the work of the pre-school years. Those enthusiasts doubtless overestimate the effects of character formation in that early period. Formerly the church made the same misinterpretation. Some one said, "Give me the child during the first seven years of his life and the world may have him the rest." In this statement is expressed a tacit belief that by that time such a balance-wheel in character has been formed that no untoward later environment can possibly cause him to be deflected from the path of righteousness.

However, the higher intellectual powers like abstract thinking, critical judgment; the higher emotional states like love, altruism, loyalty; the higher powers of deliberate volitional control, all so necessary in moral action and in the development of real character, are still largely embryonic in early childhood. The powers absolutely necessary in genuine character formation, those requiring personal,