THE FUTURE OF THE CHURCH AND INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS IN OUR SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS

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By John C. Campbell

The schools considered in this paper are those known popularly in the North and Lowland South as "mountain mission schools," as distinguished from the public schools and from the self-supporting or well-endowed private schools with their more general patronage. The title "church and independent" schools is more appropriate, however, than that of "mission" schools, because this latter term is associated generally with denominational work, and a number of the most influential schools in the mountains are not under denominational auspices.

The church schools are conducted under the auspices of denominational "mountain mission boards," under denominational bodies other than mission boards, and under the auspices of individuals or groups that trust for the greater part of their financial support to the denomination with which they are sympathetically affiliated. The independent schools are free from denominational connection or control, but have the same general purpose as have many of the church schools.

There are approximately 200* church and independent schools, the former maintained by 13 denominations. Those under denominational control form by far the larger group, outnumbering the independent schools ten to one. While laying no claim to having listed all schools in the Southern Highlands, of the type here considered, the suggestions made and the conclusions drawn in this study are based upon a consideration of the work of a large majority of the prominent institutions of this character.

Before discussing the future of these schools of the Highlands, however, it will be well to note briefly some general differences—especially in administration—between them.

* This number is exclusive of a score or more of influential stations at which schools were maintained until recently, but which have been changed to centers of community activities other than scholastic.

It is true, as a general statement, that the independent schools adapt themselves to changing conditions more rapidly than do the church schools, and that a number of them have from the beginning foreseen the needs of the future more clearly than have many of the church schools. While a number have been under the administrative control of organizations without the field, the most influential are those whose policy has been determined and guided by a strong individual or individuals upon the field, untrammeled by outside restrictions. Their weaknesses arise, however, from this very element of their strength, namely, from a too great dependence upon the strong characters who have given their impress to the work and who, in the mind of the supporting public, are inseparably connected with it.

The church schools as a whole have been longer in the field than the independent schools, and have followed more closely the academic traditions that prevail outside of the Highlands. This is due no doubt in large part to absentee control in shaping policy and management. Like the independent schools, however, their most successful work has been under the guidance of strong individuals on the field, well acquainted with mountain character and mountain life, who have been long in control of local work and in whom absentee officials have had such confidence as to allow them large liberty in developing their work. But although some of the church boards, under the able leadership of absentee officials well acquainted with the mountains, are shaping their work admirably to meet changing conditions, yet when one views the work of the 13 denominational boards as a whole, it is not overstating the case to say that the church schools suffer from long-distance control and from the submergence of strong personalities acquainted with the mountain people and conditions, in a policy formulated and generally governed by officials whose point of view is that of an entirely different environment, and cannot in the very nature of things be changed by infrequent or hurried journeys through the mountain country.

Keeping in mind, then, these general differences between the two groups of schools, we pass to a consideration of their future.

The schools are not all of the same character. There are day schools (almost invariably of elementary character); boarding schools (of elementary-secondary character); and a few colleges—that is, institutions that maintain a relatively small college and a very large secondary department.

Of the entire number of schools (approximately 200, as stated), 3 per cent are colleges, 36 per cent day schools, and 61 per cent boarding schools. Approximately 25,000 students are enrolled annually in these schools,* 14 per cent of whom are enrolled in the colleges, 16 per cent in the day schools, and 70 per cent in the boarding schools.

As a rule, the day schools are small and are regarded as of a temporary character, and it is likely that the policy followed by some denominations long in the field will be adopted by others, namely, that as good public schools increase in number in the mountains, church support for day schools will be withdrawn, and the funds formerly employed for their maintenance be applied to other activities in those communities, or be used elsewhere.

There is marked activity, however, on the part of at least one of the leading denominations in establishing new day schools in small and remote communities where the public school of the district is difficult of access for the children, or where the school term is so short or the instruction so poor that school privileges are almost negligible. To the credit of this denomination it should be said that it does not establish schools except at such isolated or inadequately equipped places.

As the need for local day schools supported by church funds becomes less urgent, they will decrease in number, and it would seem to be the part of wisdom for boards still maintaining them, as well as for boards that have in certain communities changed school to other local activities, to strengthen local opinion for public schools. Much can be done by church boards working in one way or another in mountain communities, to foster opinion for bettering the public schools that already exist, and to hasten the time when church day schools shall not be necessary as their substitutes.†

In illustration of a possible plan for future activity of church boards in communities where they formerly maintained day schools, an experiment may be cited which is now being tried by

* This annual enrollment includes old students as well as new students and non-mountain students as well as mountain students: it is not meant, of course, to indicate that an entirely new group of 25,000 students is reached annually.

† The same is true of independent schools, but the church schools are particularly spoken of here because there are but few independent schools in the day school group.

a denomination whose day schools were an influence in awakening a desire for the public school. When the time seemed ripe for the realization of this desire, the church day schools were closed. The denomination, however, at once undertook other public service and now maintains community work at these stations, endeavoring, through public-spirited men and women, to develop still further the self-reliant neighborhood spirit which was manifesting itself. The different communities are kept in touch with one another and with the outside world, and their influence widened locally by a corps of workers—physician, nurse, agricultural expert, domestic science teacher, boy scout master, pastor and others; all, as it were, circuit-riders of education in its broad sense—serving their own and other communities in the way in which they are severally prepared to serve them. As ambassadors of co-operation, they seek to link these communities together for the common good, and to enlist in co-operation with them toward this end the broader civic and educational forces of county, state, and nation.

The policy of this denomination has been to abandon its day schools when districts could support their own public schools, and its policy with reference to community work is to bring as many phases of it to self-support as early as possible.*

As an outgrowth of the influence thus exerted, several districts have united in establishing a consolidated public school at one of these centers, and plans are under way by these circuit-riders of education to meet the educational needs of those beyond school age, as well as other general needs† of the community for which provision has not otherwise been made.

There are still many inaccessible regions where poor roads and topography and the consequent public inability and inertia conspire against even good one-room-one-teacher public schools —to say nothing of consolidated public schools. The appeal of the children in such regions is strong. Probably for some time to come denominations new in the field, or those whose work is just beginning to be centralized, will feel this appeal strongly,

* A very interesting development in self-support and self-management in mountain church and school activities is seen in the organization by another denomination of a Highland ecclesiastical district, composed of the mountainous areas of several states, with authority vested in officials living within this district.

† A credit union has been organized.

but there is much of practical value for the future work of denominations that still support day schools, in a careful consideration of the development of the wider community service now maintained by certain other denominations.

There are a number of mountain "colleges" whose name gives evidence only of the hope of their founders, and even the 3 per cent here considered, without exception, have preparatory departments that, certainly on the basis of numbers, would place them among boarding schools of the secondary or preparatory type.*

In their collegiate departments, however, small though they are, these colleges attempt to do good work of the traditional type, and a few are succeeding admirably. On the basis of their effort to give mountain boys and girls the advantage of such collegiate training, they constitute a class group to which the name "mountain colleges" is given.

Of these, a few maintain special departments in which a strong effort is made to adapt education to mountain environment.

As the number of secondary and college preparatory schools increase in the mountains, preparatory courses will be eliminated from these "mountain colleges" which will then be likely to develop into the conventional colleges foreshadowed in the collegiate departments. It is to be hoped, however, that some will resist the temptation to develop along traditional lines and be willing to evolve, through experimental stages, into higher institutions especially emphasizing a training that will meet regional needs.

As has been noted previously, 61 per cent of all the mountain schools (or 117 of the 200 schools here considered) are boarding schools, enrolling over two-thirds of the total 25,000 students.† From the point of view of numbers and influence, these boarding schools constitute the most important group, and the question as to their future is now pressing.

Some of the denominations that have done the best work in the mountains followed the policy of placing their boarding

* From recent catalogues and data generously furnished by the large majority of these colleges, it is found that of the grand total of 3,000 students enrolled in the institutions furnishing the data, 580 (or 19.3 per cent) are in the college department.

† This number includes many "day pupils" who live in the community or neighborhood in which the boarding schools are located.

See also footnote on page 5.

schools at strategic centers—usually county seats—and since mountain counties are generally endeavoring to establish high schools, these organizations are now facing new problems. Of the 117 boarding schools, 33 per cent are in county seats, 31 per cent in other growing communities, whose importance has been increased by the presence of these boarding schools, and 36 per cent in less important places or in the open country. Thus nearly two-thirds of the boarding schools are in county centers in which the best public schools permitted by present circumstances should exist, and from which should radiate influences to establish them elsewhere.*

The general arguments which are advanced to justify the continuance on the present basis of these schools at strategic centers, despite the fact that their work duplicates in large part the existing elementary public school and the proposed public high school curricula, may be summarized as follows:

The state law for establishing county high schools cannot yet be put in force in most mountain counties because adequate funds are not available. And even if there were sufficient money available, there would not be enough students to warrant the maintenance of a high school because so many mountain students leave the elementary public schools before reaching the entrance grade to the high school. There can, therefore, be no real high school work.

These arguments seem to be put forward to justify the maintenance by church and independent schools of full elementary as well as of high school courses, in order that the few who enter

* When it is realized that within the whole mountain territory—from Maryland to central Alabama, and from the Blue Ridge on the east to the western boundary of the Alleghany-Cumberland Plateau on the west—an area of approximately 112,000 square miles—there are but 759 incorporated places, of which 12 per cent are above the United States census urban minimum (2,500 inhabitants) and 88 per cent below that minimum, it will be seen that the small towns in the mountain territory play a much more important part than they do elsewhere. Therefore a county seat of approximately 150 inhabitants—the population minimum of the county seats considered in connection with the boarding schools—is a much more important place in its influence than would be a place much larger in size elsewhere.

Only two of the county seats in which boarding schools are located are above the United States urban minimum of 2,500; of the others, 5 are under 2,500 inhabitants and over 1,500, 14 are under 1,500 and over 500, and 15 have less than 500 inhabitants. Of the places other than county seats, in which boarding schools are located, 1 has more than 2,500 inhabitants, 1 has less than 2,500 inhabitants and more than 1,500, 4 have less than 1,500 and more than 500, and 30 have from 500 to 150 inhabitants.

their high school departments may have come up through the elementary courses prepared for the higher work. If one has in view primarily the interests of the individual pupil—as is frequently the case—and secondarily the larger community and regional needs, the arguments find some justification.

It must not be assumed, however, that those in charge of mountain schools have been consciously neglectful of community and regional needs. They provide for them theoretically on the assumption that they are training promising students who after graduation will settle in mountain communities as leaders of the mountain people. Full data are lacking to show whether this theory is justified by facts; but from such as are available it is evident that in the mountains, as elsewhere, many school graduates, through financial necessity or by choice, leave their native rural environment.

Those who are familiar with the pioneer work done by church and independent schools, under the guidance of men and women devoted to the interests of the Highlands and its people, will not fail to appreciate fully their purpose and efforts and their effect upon the lives of individuals and communities; nor will any work they may yet do fail to receive due appreciation if they meet the future as pioneers of rural education. Whatever the shortcomings of these schools, whether resulting from changing conditions or from duplicating the public school curriculum, their single purpose has been to help the mountain student.

Some who feel that this can be done best by furthering denominational interests through the maintenance of denominational schools for denominational ends, or that only the church school can give the best preparation, will probably continue schools of the kind that they have maintained in the past. If one may judge from experiments of this nature elsewhere, it is likely that a few will develop into denominational academies, or preparatory schools for denominational colleges, but that many will disappear as good public schools become more widespread.

In regard to the independent schools that duplicate public school work, they have not even such justification as denominationalism offers.

To those who realize, on the one hand, that these two groups enroll but 25,000 pupils annually,* a large percentage of whom

* See note on page 5.

remain but a short time in school, that the number of graduates is relatively small, and that out of this small number a certain percentage, from necessity or choice, leave the mountain country, while, on the other hand, there were, according to the United States census for 1910, nearly 2,000,000 children of school age in the mountain country, the truth is forced home that for the mountains, as elsewhere in a democracy, free public education is a necessity.

For those in charge of church and independent schools who recognize these facts, the question resolves itself into one of ways and means of helping to bring public schools into places where they do not exist; of making them better where they do exist; of reorganizing their own educational work from time to time; and, without interfering with a public school system ever growing better, of pointing the way to the realization of higher rural ideals; of helping to realize these ideals through developing a type of school which may not be possible of attainment for generations in the public school system; and perhaps of finally working toward the ideal of a better rural life through church or other community activities, rather than through purely academic activities.

Many of the church schools have helped to bring in public schools where they did not exist by refusing to take public funds to teach a "free public term"* even when local officials offer them, thereby creating no obstacle to the establishment of a public school entirely independent of church connection. While independent schools that teach such a public term cannot be said to lay themselves open to the criticism of maintaining public schools under denominational auspices, they do, by accepting public funds and by assuming the function of the public school, tend to prevent the establishment of the latter by the community.

It should be said here that some church and independent schools are greatly helping the public school to become better by recognizing it, weak though it be, as an essential link in the educational system of the state, by not competing with it in the grades which it teaches, and by supplementing its work, but only

* In the past, it has been a common practice for church and independent schools to accept the public school funds of their districts, with the agreement that they would teach a free school for the three or four months permitted by the scanty public funds. At the end of the free public term, it was customary to teach an additional "pay term," financed usually by money obtained from tuition fees and scholarships from outside sources.

until the public school itself is able to include these supplementary courses in its curriculum.

To emphasize what I mean, let me illustrate with a story of an assumed church school.

A score of years ago, in a remote county seat, practically no school privileges existed for the children. Responsive to a strong local appeal, a denominational board established a good boarding school. This school trained boys and girls in the common elementary branches and some in the secondary. In addition it gave the girls a little domestic science and sewing, and the boys a certain kind of industrial work through their doing the necessary chores about the property. A fair percentage of those who graduated from the secondary course went to college.

Through the influence of this school, the hamlet grew into an enterprising village. People moved in to educate their children. Better residences were built. Perhaps because of better preaching at the church school, the churches in the neighborhood, to hold their own, called abler ministers. Through its influence, too, better teachers were demanded for the little public schools in the outlying neighborhood, and thus the work of the elementary public schools was greatly strengthened. Finally, because a law was enacted to establish a public high school in every county seat (or at some other strategic county center) a public high school was started in this particular place, and the public schools of the neighborhood became its natural feeders.

Confronted by this situation, what future usefulness lay open for this church school, whose very success was measured by the splendid community impulses it had awakened and by the visible signs of material and spiritual improvement throughout the countryside?

Fortunately, it had a vision of true service, for from the beginning it had realized that its mission was to meet a temporary need, and when the need was met—that of exciting in the district a general desire for education—its work must cease or be directed in other channels. Three courses lay open to those in charge of this school: to end the life of the school in this place, transferring it to another needy field; to remain and supplement the work of the growing public high school until the time should come when all outside help would be unnecessary and then to withdraw; or to so transform its work as to meet other needs of

the community quite outside the present sphere of public school activity.

In its strong desire to serve our school adopted the second course. It recognized the public high school as a necessary part of the state educational system and ceased to duplicate the curriculum of the latter. Instead, it supplemented its studies and helped to bridge the gap between the elementary schools in the neighborhood and the county high school. Since the high school lacked dormitory facilities, the church school opened its dormitory to the high school girls, and as there were no courses in domestic science, sewing, and music, instruction in these branches was offered. The teachers in the church school chaperoned the dormitory girls on Sunday to the churches of their choice, and in other ways co-operated with local churches.

Finally, as the high school grew in excellence and permanence, the church school sold its buildings to the county at a reasonable sum, to meet the increased needs of its public school. Thus our school went out of existence at that county seat and moved to a pioneer field to resume activities in the light of its past experience.

As a matter of fact, the outline of our story is largely drawn from life, inasmuch as some denominations are fostering the public school work in the ways described.

Another possible field of activity suggests itself in which the church and independent schools may aid the public schools. There is a great lack of good teachers in the rural schools of the Highlands, and for the better teachers opportunities are always open in the urban and rural centers within this region, as well as outside, at higher salaries than are paid in schools in the remote districts. At a recent conference of leaders in mountain work* the following statement was made by the president of one of the leading state normal schools within the Southern Highlands, setting forth in a concrete way this lack, as well as the loss by withdrawal of many teachers from the ranks: "In the three years past (prior to 1915) there were graduated from this school" —the only normal school in the mountain section of this state— "about 200 teachers, while the public schools in the mountain section of this state alone demanded the services of more than

* Third annual Conference of Southern Mountain Workers, Knoxville, Tennessee, April, 1915.

3,000 teachers, and that of the total number engaged, from 700 to 1,000 new teachers were needed each year to take the places of those leaving the field of teaching."

The question not unnaturally arises as to whether the church and independent schools of the mountains might not help to meet this need, which is as great if not greater in the mountainous sections of the other states as in that mentioned, by providing teachers for the elementary schools through what might be called junior-normal courses, adapted to meet the needs of students of satisfactory standing in elementary or secondary work.

In making this suggestion, the truth is not lost sight of that thoroughly equipped teachers* are most needed for elementary schools. But a condition, not a theory, confronts one, and until the vision of far-sighted Southern educational leaders† is realized, whereby surplus public funds may be diverted from wealthier communities where children are well provided for educationally, to help out rural communities where children abound and taxable sources are meager, something must be done.

Should the church and independent schools establish supplementary training courses, something should be done in addition to counteract the strong pull which tends to draw student teachers thus prepared from the schools in greatest need of them. Most of the church and independent schools in the mountains provide scholarships, some of which are large enough to meet from 50 to 75 per cent of the annual expenses of a fair number of pupils. It does not seem unreasonable to condition the giving of these scholarships upon service of one, two, or three years of teaching in the country schools of the mountains, with the promise of assistance in securing schools. At present the general practice is to grant unconditioned scholarships, and some schools pride themselves on having carried through their own institu-

* There are a few normal schools in the mountains, sustained by church boards; some of them compare favorably with state normal schools, and the officials of these schools recognize the need of readjustments in their work to prevent competition with state normal schools.

† See Counting the Cost, page 12, issued by Department of Public Instruction, Richmond, Virginia; Rural School Movements and Ideals in South Carolina, by W. K. Tate, 1914, issued by the University of South Carolina; also Recent Achievements in Rural Education, address delivered by Mr. Tate (of the George Peabody College for Teachers, Nashville, Tennessee, though formerly of South Carolina) before the Wisconsin State Teachers Association of Milwaukee (1916). See also A State School System: Its Administration and Finance. (A report. Southern Educational Association, Conference for Education in the South, Louisville, Kentucky, 1914.)

tions, by means of scholarships, certain promising students, and on having provided "a way of permanent escape from a limiting environment" by securing for them scholarships in higher institutions far away from the mountains. This practice, in particular instances, may be justified, but the institutions whose work will tell most for the mountains are those that work out practical ways and means for the welfare of the many, rather than those that help to retard the general welfare by robbing the mountains of gifted or exceptional pupils.

A very admirable service, too, might be done for certain classes of pupils and for adults. Many of the older boys and girls cannot attend school except every other year, or but a short time each year, and where families are large—as is usually the case—even all of the younger ones cannot attend school regularly. The amount of schooling these pupils receive is therefore limited, and if perchance their absence is necessarily seasonal, and the public school work be fairly well graded, they return unfortunately to take up the same studies that they pursued the year before.

One rural teacher within our knowledge*—though not in the mountains—has met this situation by conducting special schools for seasonal pupils, and by an arrangement of studies suited to the need of each, enables the student eventually to complete the public school course in less time as measured by weeks, though extending through more years than the average school course.

In this helpful practice, and in the teaching of adults beyond school age, as well as the many grown pupils in the mountains who feel themselves too old to enter the lower elementary grades, may be found a fruitful though temporary field of service.

Helpful as the church schools may be in assisting the public school to become a better one of the type that prevails—a type developed largely under urban influences—their greatest service will be to find through experiment, and to inspire by example, a new type of school which will serve the country. This truly rural school will meet more effectively the economic needs of the Highlands, will point out the possibilities of a richer, fuller life in the country, and will impart the spirit of altruism and the

* Kate R. Logan, former county superintendent of schools, Cherokee County, Iowa, and state assistant in junior work, Iowa State College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts, Department of Agricultural Extension, Ames, Ia.

training necessary to make the possibilities real. Economic betterment is absolutely essential to the development of self-supporting social, educational, and religious institutions. Church and independent schools, as well as public schools, have failed to meet this need, even when they have realized its existence. They have, however, endeavored to give the vision, and have in many instances imparted a spirit of altruism, but the training necessary to make this spirit effective in the mountain country has been too generally lacking. They can, if they will, realize their dream of thoroughly equipped, altruistic, rural leaders for the mountains. The effort to make it real is, for some generations to come, the special field of service for church and independent schools. For those who would undertake this special service there is suggestion and inspiration in the folk schools of Denmark and in the adaptation of these schools in Norway, Sweden, and elsewhere.

To state briefly the principles and purpose underlying the Danish Folk School, originated by Bishop Grundtvig, "poet, priest, historian, reformer," we quote the following:

"The notable points about Grundtvig's educational theory are: (1) It was not a ready-made dogma, created in an *a priori* philosopher's brain, but a matter of evolution, an outgrowth of his own life-experience, gradually taking form as he saw the need of the people, and finding utterance as his heart, moved by a great compassion, compelled him to cry aloud. (2) It does not locate the period of most effective education in childhood, where the schoolmasters of the past have placed it because of the readiness of the child's memory, his then uselessness for industrial purposes, and his lack of power to resist compulsion. On the contrary, it recognizes the suitableness for such purpose of what has lately come to be known as the period of adolescence, when the body, its rapid growth over, is mature enough to support mental activity, and the mind, already stored with details of observation, while building its whole judgments after plans furnished by the imagination, asks of its own accord for more information material. (3) It brought out the truth that the culture material of a country's youth need not be imported from foreign lands and ancient times, but lies ready to hand in the speech and life that formed their childhood's environment. By using this, there will be no more break between education and life than there is between the states of nature and grace. (4) It set as the aim of

individual education not so much intellectual strength and richness, as heart power and will power and a richness of emotional experience for social ends. Correspondingly, it placed as the goal of national activity the free, universal cultivation of the simple virtues of the people in harmony with the ideals inherited from their ancestors, in opposition to the fashionable splendor imported from abroad for the use of the classes and usually accompanied with degradation of the masses."*

"The purpose of the school is by unconventional lectures to rouse and nourish the spiritual life, particularly to further love for the Fatherland thru information about its language and literature, its geography and history, its condition in the past and the present. In addition to this, it emphasizes no less giving the students inclination for and understanding of farming, and therefore dwells particularly on those branches of natural science which bear on this purpose. By means of lectures and written lessons, it develops the elements of agriculture and stock-raising; it gives lessons in book-keeping, practices them in surveying, leveling, and mapmaking, chemical analysis, etc. . . . As to method, . . . the school does not underestimate the value of accurate knowledge and the development of the reasoning powers to clearness and keenness; but its purpose is nevertheless chiefly 'educative.' The development of the feelings and the will has for it greater significance than that of memory or reason. It would [like] to be for democracy what the church is for Christianity. Therefore, it must emphasize the concrete, the living, the stimulating, and the hour it succeeds in addressing the sense for the higher and nobler in human life, or spurs some one on to real active work to further this higher, that hour has for the [Danish Folk] High School greater significance than the hour in which there is added a new mass of knowledge to that previously existing, or even the hour in which the reason has learned to follow a new grammatical explanation or reach a new mathematical conclusion. Learning is here for life and not for the school. That they may leave us with a desire to take part in the work of life, the spiritual not less than the temporal, and with judgment to use the means life offers, that is what we wish

* Swenson, John Robert: Grundtvig and the Common-People's High School: Denmark's Contribution to the History of Education. (Course Thesis in Education 5. February 29, 1904. University of Texas.)

for our students. What they may lack in knowledge, they will know how to gain, and the faculties of reason will during the work receive the development they are capable of."*

From these folk schools, permeated with cultural and religious influences, have gone forth men and women who have been leaders in winning the barren heath-lands of Denmark to fertility; who have made Europe the market for the dairy products of Denmark, and who have been a vital influence in making the life of this little kingdom as spiritually rich as it is economically independent.† With few exceptions, the folk schools of Denmark are privately owned, and sustained in large part by the small tuition fees received.‡

It may be contended that, though such an educational ideal be desirable for the mountains, there are practical objections arising from lack of money. The annual budget of the church and independent schools is over $600,000; the property investment, nearly $4,000,000. One denomination alone has, during the past score of years, spent in a limited mountain area over $2,000,000. It would be far better for the ultimate good of the many in the mountains if a number of the church boards would dispose of their property holdings, especially those in county seats, or give them to the public school authorities and concentrate upon a few of their boarding schools best located rurally for development on folk school lines.

For those ready to consider such a change, helpful suggestions may be obtained from the reports of the specialists detailed by

* Extract from Sofus Rogsbro, quoted by John Robert Swenson.

† The opinion of Sir Horace Plunkett, who through the encouragement of co-operative agriculture has helped to revivify rural life in Ireland, is of value here. Sir Horace made a careful study of the work of the Danish folk schools, and speaking of the extraordinary national progress in Denmark, which he believed was due to these schools, says:

"A friend of mine, who was studying the Danish system of state aid to agriculture, found this to be the opinion of the Danes of all classes, and was astounded at the achievements of the associations of farmers, not only in the manufacture of butter, but in a far more difficult undertaking, the manufacture of bacon in large factories equipped with all the most modern machinery and appliances which science had devised for the production of the finished article. He at first concluded that this success in a highly technical industry by bodies of farmers indicated a very perfect system of technical education. But he soon found another cause. As one of the leading educators and agriculturists of the country put it to him: 'It's not technical instruction, it's the humanities.'"—Ireland in the New Century, p. 131. New York, E. P. Dutton, 1904.

‡ The state is empowered, however, to aid such schools as especially commend themselves.

the United States commissioner of education to go to Denmark and make a first-hand study of the organization and work of the rural schools,* and from the American-Scandinavian Foundation,† whose purpose is to promote an interchange of the best between America and Scandinavia.

It is not too much to hope that the desires of the officials of certain church boards, and of others interested with them in the readjustment of mountain work, may be realized through the several boards officially providing a way whereby some of their directors and leading men in the field may become acquainted with the working of these schools in their native environment. United States government officials and educational authorities would co-operate heartily in putting them in touch with the Scandinavian authorities who could direct such a study.

It is not to be expected, however, that a foreign institution could be transplanted without change to the mountains; there would need to be a readjustment to conform to generally accepted American ideals and to meet the special needs of the particular mountain environment in which the school was established. Such readjustment would be less experimental in character if picked men and women, long acquainted with the mountain field, should be given opportunity to study the folk schools in countries where they now exist, and then be placed over selected schools to direct their work in the light of their past experience and recent study.

Furthermore, to insure success, the organizations or trustees under whose auspices this new work is undertaken must give assurance of full support—a support that provides adequate funds for the school and sufficiently large salaries for the workers to enable them to satisfy their legitimate official and personal needs.

The most serious mistakes that have been made in school, as

* See United States Bureau of Education bulletins, issued as a result of special study in Denmark in 1913:

Foght, Harold W.:
The Educational System of Rural Denmark. Bulletin No. 58, 1913.
Danish Elementary Rural Schools. Bulletin No. 24, 1914.
The Danish Folk High Schools. Bulletin No. 22, 1914.
Friend, L. L.: The Folk High Schools of Denmark. Bulletin No. 5, 1914.
Hegland, Martin: The Danish People's High School. Bulletin No. 45, 1915.
See also Foght, Harold W. Rural Denmark and its Schools. New York, Macmillan, 1915.

† American-Scandinavian Foundation, 25 West 45th Street, New York City. Henry Goddard Leach, secretary.

well as in agricultural work—the fundamental occupation in the Highlands—have arisen from the assumption that what was good for the city school, or the school in the Lowland rural sections, or for agriculture elsewhere, was, without change, good for the Highlands. Transplanting exotics that die and exterminating the indigenous, would eventually leave even a land of promise—as is the mountain country—a barren waste. There is a native culture in the mountains that has been too much ignored, which should be given expression in any educational system intended for the mountains. There is great need, also, to introduce through the school and through state, national and other agencies for agricultural betterment, the best methods of working crops now grown with moderate success; to promote the growing of such crops as are especially adapted to each section; and to secure, through co-operative effort, the profitable marketing of produce and stock raised, and equitable loans when necessary. The mountain country, differing from the Lowlands, is itself a varied country, and agricultural as well as educational methods must be adapted to its varied needs.

The folk schools, with their extension systems, might lend themselves readily to meet the changing and varied needs of this land. In such a pioneer educational movement for the mountains, the church and independent schools are better able to take the lead than are public agencies, because the latter require the support of an awakened and progressive opinion before they feel justified in expending public funds. The difficulties of finding, training, and sustaining workers of the proper spirit and personality to conduct folk schools are not under-estimated; nevertheless, such workers can be found and they can be trained.

It is just here, in the solving of the problem of a richer rural life, that the church and independent schools have a unique opportunity to influence for generations to come the life of the mountain people, and thus to find their own highest service.