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# The Prairie View Standard

Vol. XXV

Prairie View State Normal and Industrial College, Prairie View, Texas, April, 1934

No. 8

## Levels of Service

(By Mr. Gordon Worley, State Department of Education, Austin, Texas.)

So far as the health and happiness of his customers are concerned, why are not the work and service of the dairyman as important and noble of purpose, as are those of the white coliar or professional groups? Is not the well prepared and conscientious dairyman not only a nutrition specialist but a practical bacteriologist as well? Let him neglect, through ignorance or greed, these important aspects of his work and the product which he offers, will not only be foul of odor and palatably poor, but it may and often does become a positive health menace. Typhoid fever, tuberculosis, colitis, septic sore throat, and so forth, are spread through it to his customers to take their toll in human suffering and premature death. But, according to vocational surveys, the college aspiring Negro and white youth of today are little attracted to such very necessary and fundamental occupations as dairying, food production, and general farming. They are choosing all out of the relative importance of and to their relative chances of employment in courses that lead to the white collar or professional avenues of services. In fact, some very recent state surveys show college-aspiring Negro youths choosing the white collar vocations in about thirty times the present ratio of employment in them. Youth is not to blame for such disproportional choices, for even school leadership fails to take into account and to point out to youth probable future needs for and chances of employment in the vocations that are today attracting them all out of proportion to future chances of employment in them. Why these distortions in the choice, may I ask? You know the answer is based upon conceptions of possible economic returns and present conceptions of social levels of service.

About three centuries ago a socially ostracized and orthodoxically considered ignorant dutchman by the name of Anthony Van Leeuwenhoek, while doing janitor service at the courthouse and town hall in Delfst, Holland, made, polished, and arranged lenses so as to enable him to peer into and fathom secrets of the then unknown. With this simple type of compound microscope he peered into stagnant water, soups, tarter on teeth, saliva, and so on, and discovered for man's first time the existence of a realm of invisible or microscopic bacteria and protozoa. The society, which made of this man a so-called

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Professor Claude Leonard Wilson, B. S., M. E., M. S., Director of the School of Mechanic Arts, Prairie View State College.

## NEW COTTAGES FOR TEACHERS

Work has begun on the erection of two duplex cottages. The buildings are located on the east campus and will be modern in every respect. Built in colonial style, each cottage will contain two four-room apartments including two bed rooms, kitchen, living room, closets, pantry, and bath.

Plans and specifications were gotten out by Mr. C. L. Wilson, Director of the Division of Mechanic Arts. Most of the work will be done by students in the trades division under the direction of Messrs. Collier, Brittain, Martin, Muckelroy, and Fuller.

This project is in line with the program of Principal W. R. Banks, to provide adequate housing facilities for all teachers and employees. The cottages will cost \$2,250.00 each and will be completed by July 1.

## DR. W. T. B. WILLIAMS

Dr. W. T. B. Williams, distinguished educator, of Tuskegee Institute, talked to students and teachers during the vesper hour.

Dr. Williams spoke of the crowded profession of school teaching and stressed the importance of Negroes entering business. He was introduced by Prof. C. H. Waller, head of the agricultural extension division.

Following his address during the vesper hour, Dr. Williams was given a reception in Evans Hall, under the direction of Miss M. E. Saurez, dean of women. He spoke again to a large number of students and teachers who had gathered to hear him.

## PRAIRIE VIEW COLLEGE USES WALLER COUNTY NEGRO SCHOOLS AS LABORATORY IN RURAL EDUCATION.

In explaining his work as the first Negro supervisor for Negro schools of Waller County, Professor T. R. Griffith, among other things reports as follows:

Waller County in which Prairie View is located is used as a laboratory in rural education, supervised by Prairie View State College. The idea was conceived by Principal W. R. Banks, strengthened by the results of an educational survey of the Negro schools of the County.

Before entering this new activity, Principal Banks secured authority from the County Superintendent, Mr. Lisle McPherson. Taking advantage of this opportunity, plans were completed for the survey and various members of the faculty used their cars in getting to the different schools of the County. Returning to the Campus with many interesting facts, a research committee supervised by Professor J. B. Cade compiled the material and made recommendations for improving the conditions of the schools. Among the recommendations made was that a Special Supervisor be appointed to act as a co-ordinator of the rural Negro Schools and Prairie View State College. This co-ordinator was to be a member of the faculty and to serve as contact man for the institution. To meet this demand, was quite a problem as the Waller County laboratory was a new project for the College.

Studying the location and environmental conditions of the schools, the problem became more complicated. The appointment of a director was based on three main factors, namely, attitude, advanced training and back-ground. Professor T. R. Griffith employed in the Prairie View Extension School at Nacogdoches, Texas, because of his experiences there in the inter-racial matters as well as the qualities mentioned above, was chosen for the position.

The work in the educational laboratory began in October with no program with the job in the hands of the director or co-ordinator. He visited all of the Negro schools of the County and made maps of the physical conditions so he could study the situation at home and lay plans. The greatest need was money and advice on spending. Working out plans with teachers of the county for raising funds, the director received a very favorable response from the teachers and communities and many of the projects undertaken have been accomplished. The teachers are apparently happy over the success achieved and are

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### The Prairie View Standard

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W. Rutherford Banks .....Principal  
Napoleon B. Edward.....Executive Secretary

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#### Notice to Contributors

The Standard requests all professionals as well as the public in general to send articles for publication directly to the editor.

#### DR. JEREMIAH RHODES

Dr. Jeremiah Rhodes, eminent educator of the State Department of Education, Austin, Texas, addressed the College assembly at Prairie View last week. Following the singing of the Negro National Anthem by the assembly, Rev. Lee C. Phillip, Chaplain, presented Mr. Gordon Worley, who introduced Dr. Rhodes. Among other things the distinguished educator said: "I congratulate the race upon the progress and achievements it has made." Encouraging the race to still higher and nobler achievements, Dr. Rhodes said: "The purpose of education is to develop character. It makes man master of himself. We must develop normally, physically and spiritually. Nobody can be a teacher who does not love to teach. Nobody can live who does not love life. It is our duty to stoop down and lift our fellows up to a high plane."

#### PROF. A. W. RANDALL

In both the March and February issues of the "Mathematics News Letter" notice is given to the solution of problems in higher mathematics by Prof. A. W. Randall, head of the Department of Mathematics at Prairie View State College. The News Letter is published at Baton Rouge, Louisiana, by some of the foremost white mathematicians of the country.

The recognition of Prof. Randall's work by these distinguished scholars is a fine testimonial of his ability in the field of mathematics. It may be said that no small "bore" mathematician will be able to be associated in the high capacity which Prof. Randall enjoys.

### THE "CONFERENCE" METHOD VERSUS THE "RECITATION" METHOD IN CLASS PROCEDURE.

(By Chas. E. Carpenter, M. S., Head of Department of Romance Languages, Prairie View State College, Prairie View, Texas.)

We may say at the outset that the recitation method is a term so broad and general that it includes anything and everything that a teacher may do in presenting the lesson even though it may be nothing more than reading his questions out of the text while the student reads his responses appropriate to the questions out of the same text and at the same time. In other words, the term recitation method cannot be specifically defined.

The conference method may be circumscribed by more definite limitations. We believe that it has specific fields only where it is a commendable form of recitation.

The recitation method as ordinarily used sifts itself down in one form or another to a system of questions and answers aimed at a testing of what degree toward perfection the student has acquired the assignment. Usually due to the economy of time of the recitation hour, there is little opportunity to link the principles studied with actual living conditions, which alone is "digestion" of facts, without which there can be no "assimilation" and consequently impoverished mental growth is a natural result.

The conference method, though limited to certain types of study, lends itself first of all to stimulating initiative in the student. If Dewey is right that, "we learn by doing," then there is no learning without initiative on the part of the student; and we argue farther that the greater the degree of initiative on the part of the student, the greater become the receptive powers of the student and the more thoroughly and permanently are the principles studied embedded in the student's consciousness.

Secondly, the conference method cultivates reproachment between the teacher and student; it tends to soften the diffidence (inherent or cultivated) on the part of the teacher, and to vanish the formal pacificity on the part of the student. It produces a self-forgetfulness on the part of the teacher where he delves with sympathetic interest into the minutest needs of his individual students and strengthens their weaknesses in untiring effort.

There is an old adage which says, "Like begets like." So soon as diffidence on the part of the teacher is dissolved into warm sympathetic interest its direct complement arises in the mind of the student: that is, confidence in the teacher's interest supplants aloofness, earnest endeavor replaces indifference; and, initiative takes deep root

in the mind of the student.

Whereas several forms of conference recitations may be conducted according to the subject matter to be taught, we may mention two general forms which we have found productive of excellent results.

**First plan:** The teacher may lecture, discuss and demonstrate before the class, all significant points of the prospective assignment. Then draw out singly and collectively the whole class by definite questions until the class has offered evidence of fully comprehending the scope of the assignment. Next he may call for several personal or collective demonstrations on the part of the students until it is evident that the class thoroughly understands the work to be done. He should now be ready to offer an assignment for home work to be brought in at the next class meeting. When the work returns, he may collect and retain it for correction, underscore error; but should not make corrections. He should allow the student to make his own corrections in light of what has been taught in order that the correction may be a means of self-instruction by which means alone can the information become concrete.

**Second plan:** If the class is sufficiently advanced so that it has some background to draw upon, it sometimes proves more stimulating to initiative to merely state the subject for study and give the scope of pages where work is found; appoint the students (singly in turn) to prepare themselves to teach and fully demonstrate the lesson for the next meeting. This method has the effect of arousing initiative in the "teacher" and enthusiasm in the remainder of the class to show themselves just as well prepared as the "teacher." Our experience in this method is that the instructor finds it immediately imperative that he become metamorphosed from a fireman who fires the boilers to an engineer whose stringent duty it is to control the steam valves.

After the work has been demonstrated in class, the assignment for home work may be the same as described above. In either plan the instructor should be in readiness to clear up all difficulties.

#### INTERSCHOLASTIC LEAGUE

The Texas Interscholastic League of Colored Schools which convened at the College April 19, and 20, was the largest in history. More than 700 schools joined the league and became interested in the county, district and state contests.

Principal W. R. Banks and all associated with him in directing the league are greatly pleased with every phase of the state meet. It is estimated that more than 5000 attended the meet.

The debate against Le Moyne College was won by Prairie View State College. The decision of the judges was unanimous.

#### LEVELS OF SERVICE

(Continued from page 1)

illiterate, socially unrecognized, and low cast manual laborer, sang the praises of the then self-styled upper groups, some of whom were able to read Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, and to adorn the drawing rooms, occupy the pulpits, and drive the armies in the destruction of fellow human beings. The patient, painstaking, manual laborer, now world renowned Dutchman, was unable to speak any but the lowly Dutch language, and it remained for the great world characters: Robert Koch, Louis Pasteur, and Theobald Smith who had already earned an acceptable level to delve into the secrets of that invisible realm and to popularize the work of microbe hunting, and thereby to make the ignorant Dutchman, near two centuries dead, a hero even in his own country and among his own race. Why, may I again ask? The answer comes. Microbe hunting even though extremely important had not reached the status of respectability among the advocates of levels of service.

How foolish we are. Ditch digging was once considered most menial, but rationalization has taken place in this field of work, as it has in microbe hunting. The ditch was a necessity formerly and is now. It was a ditch formerly and is now. It was excavated formerly with pick and shovel. It is now done with tractor and plow. But the man who drives the tractor is not relegated to the same level in society, as the man who wielded the pick and shovel. The tractor driver did not make the tractor, nor did the shovel wielder make the shovel. Each dug a ditch with the best tools society provided for him. In each ditch water mains or sewage drains were laid or swamps drained and the health and happiness of the community were enhanced. The social status of the man, who accepted the challenge and performed the necessary work for society is determined in this case, not by the job he did, but by the tool he used in doing the job. Why, may I again ask? And the answer comes. Tractor drivers are fewer in number and can be accepted into an imaginary higher level of service without too much danger to the status of those already there.

I am not trying to lower the estimated worth of any useful and necessary profession, business, or occupation; rather, I should like to see all necessary work, which at present is classed as menial and low, better understood, more appreciated, and more fairly compensated, by society than now obtains. Doubtless, Negro teachers as a group have even better opportunity to help dignify and popularize the worthwhile occupations than have the white teachers, for the reasons that the Negro race has not sidetracked so far on the levels of ser-

vice ideas, nor has it had quite so high a percentage of its membership embraced in the covetous levels. I feel that it should be the mission of both Church and School among the colored and white to aid in the developing of better understanding of the importance of and fairer compensation for all worthwhile but arbitrarily low classed occupations. If the time we spend in trying to keep ourselves in certain imaginary levels of service or to get ourselves into the next arbitrarily fixed level of teaching service, as for example, to pass from the rural school to the elementary city school, or to the high school, and then to college, was devoted to the development of a better understanding of the needs and honorableness of the work in which we find ourselves engaged, society would be better served, and we should be happier. But as Sam Walter Foss puts it in his poem, "The Calf Path," we are too much engaged in trying to do what others have done, to be much concerned about what we should do. The Poet sings:

#### THE CALF PATH

"One day through the primeval wood,  
A calf walked home as good calves should.

But made a trail all bent askew,  
A crooked trail, as all calves do.

Since then three hundred years have fled,  
And I infer the calf is dead.

But still he left behind his trail,  
And thereby hangs my moral tale.

The trail was taken up next day,  
By a lone dog that passed that way;

And then a wise bell-wether sheep  
Pursued the trail o'er vale and steep,

And drew the flock behind him too,  
As good bell-wethers always do.

And from that day, o'er hill and glade,  
Through those old woods a path was made.

And many men wound in and out,  
And dodged and turned and bent about,

And uttered words of righteous wrath,  
Because 'twas such a crooked path;

But still they followed—do not laugh—  
The first migrations of that calf,

And through this winding wood-way stalked  
Because he wobbled when he walked.

This forest path became a lane  
That bent and turned and turned again;

This crooked lane became a road,  
Where many a poor horse with his load

Toiled on beneath the burning sun,  
And traveled some three miles for one.

And thus a century and a half  
They trod the footsteps of that calf.

The years passed on in swift feet,  
The road became a village street;

And this before men were aware,  
A city's crowded thoroughfare.

And soon the central street was this  
Of a renowned metropolis;

And men two centuries and a half  
Trod in the footsteps of that calf.

Each day a hundred thousand rout  
Followed this zigzag calf about

And o'er his crooked journey went  
The traffic of a continent.

A hundred thousand men were led  
By one calf near three centuries dead.

They followed still his crooked way,  
And lost one hundred years a day;

For thus such reverence is lent  
To well-established precedent.

A moral lesson this might teach  
Were I ordained and called to preach;

For men are prone to go it blind  
Along the calf-paths of the mind,

And work away from sun to sun  
To do what other men have done.

They follow in the beaten track,  
And out and in, and forth and back,

And still their devious course pursue,  
To keep the path that others do.

They keep the path a sacred groove,  
Along which all their lives they move.

But how the wise old wood-gods laugh,  
Who saw the first primeval calf.

Ah, many things this tale might teach—  
But I am not ordained to preach."

(Continued next issue)

The cadets of the R. O. T. C., under the command of Captain Edward L. Dabney, dean of men, were given a close inspection Monday, April 2. Among the inspectors were: Col. William Castle, of Fort Sam Houston, San Antonio, Texas; Col. A. R. Emery and Major D. R. Alfonte, of the A. and M. College of Texas.

Progress and sentiment do not always move along the same lines and directions.

## A WORD ABOUT HIGH SCHOOL

By Dr J. H. Dillard

Ten years ago it fell to my lot to make a brief address at Harvard University. Speaking of educational problems in the South I expressed the conviction that the weakest place in our Public School system was the High Schools: I am sorry to say that I still think so. From what I hear I believe this is true not only in the South, but that it is pretty generally true in other parts of the country, and that most of our educational observers hold this opinion.

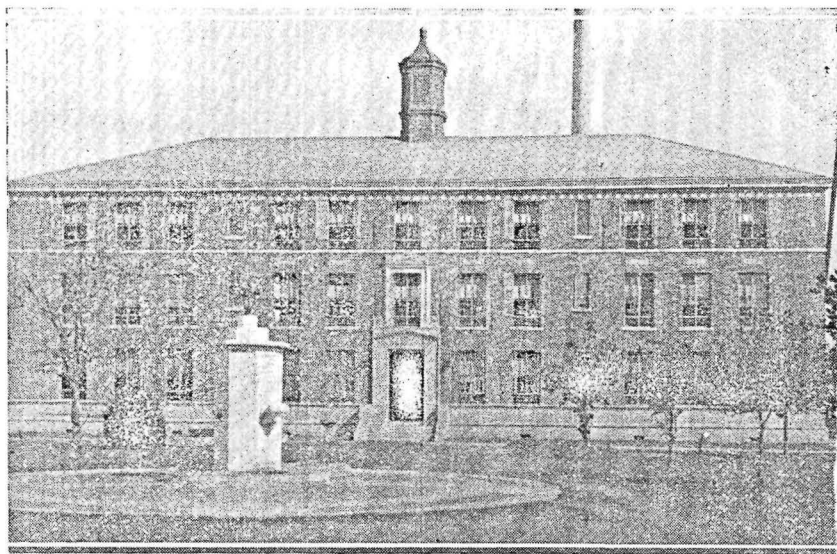
There are three considerations which seem to support this view. First, one hears from business people employing High School graduates that these graduates are lacking in at least two accomplishments which they ought to have. They are lacking in ability to write English correctly, and in ready and accurate use of figures. I have myself recently heard this complaint from three thoughtful business men.

A second complaint comes from colleges. It is a common thing to hear that a majority of students entering from High Schools are not prepared to do college work, because of their poor English, because of lack of habit of close study, and because of lack of foundational preparation in the subjects which they are pursuing. I heard a distinguished teacher of Physics in a leading college say that he much preferred to have students in his classes who had not studied this subject in High School.

A third consideration which has led many to have doubts about the efficiency of High Schools is that the students, when questioned and tested, seem to be hazy in their knowledge. An examiner who visited a large number of High Schools says that it became almost ludicrous, when he would ask a question, how the answer would be, Ain't it so and so?

It is my belief that at least one cause for these honest complaints lies in the curriculum. The students have too many subjects and not enough concentration. It seems to me that there is too much changing of subjects during the four years. It would be better, for example, for the student to have one science two years, than to have two sciences, one each year. It would be better for him to have French three years than to have French two years and Spanish one year, or vice versa. The point is that whatever the subject be, it should be carried on long enough for the student to get a grip on it. In English courses not enough writing is kept up during the four years, and there seems a lack of careful correction and prompt return of any papers or compositions that are required.

Now if the complaints about High Schools are fairly well founded, of course



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we want to seek a way to improvement. In spite of the obvious fact that there are some High Schools doing good work, and that we may well take pride in the increase and development of High Schools, there seems to be justification in the criticisms. In looking for ways of betterment we shall have to keep in mind one sure fact. The fact is this, that, however the curriculum may change, education in its essence is a thing which does not change. In the process of time subjects may change, as they ought to change. Yet it is still true that the most modern, progressive education finds its highest value in simply doing the job right.

MR. G. W. BUCHANAN DELIVERS  
DEDICATORY ADDRESS AT CONROE

The new school building for Negroes of Conroe, Texas, has been recently dedicated. It is estimated that this structure cost \$25,000.00. The building is well equipped throughout and is a credit to the interests of education, local and state.

The dedicatory address was delivered by Mr. George Washington Buchanan, manager of the College Exchange, and long a student of education and public affairs. On this occasion, Mr. Buchanan discussed to an appreciative audience, white and colored, "Is Education the Remedy?" He insists that education of the proper kind is the remedy for the social evils afflicting the country and declares emphatically that proper education should embrace at least two major factors, namely: (a) Scholarship and (b) Character, justice, honor and unselfishness. Sound and seasoned in the affairs of life, and gifted as an orator, his address left a lasting impression for good in Conroe, and Montgomery county.

## PRAIRIE VIEW COLLEGE USES WALLER COUNTY NEGRO SCHOOLS AS LABORATORY IN RURAL EDUCATION.

(Continued from page 1)

looking forward to greater achievements in the future. One pleasing accomplishment, not measured in dollars, was the change in attitude of some of the teachers towards supervision. Convincing the teachers that the supervision was only to assist and try to make teaching more pleasing and effective, the reception became inviting. The Waller County project is serving the rural population, and the people appreciate the interest that Prairie View State College is taking in improving local conditions.

## KIRBY HALL

Prairie View was founded in Kirby Hall in 1876. This building was formerly a slave mansion. Many of the former students and teachers look upon this building as a mile post. But it is now being torn down and the lumber will be used for the erection of modern teachers cottages. All wooden structures in the immediate campus area will be razed in the near future leaving nothing but fire-proof and modern structures.

The district meet for district 27, composed of Austin and Waller Counties, was held during the past week at Prairie View. The meet was held under the immediate direction of Professor B. S. Luter, District Director General. Members of the College faculty joined in making the meet harmonious and entirely satisfactory.

## ENROLLMENT

We are happy to report that the enrollment this year shows a 28.5 per cent increase over that of last year.