

**THE AMERICAN SCHOOL;  
A STUDY OF SECONDARY  
EDUCATION**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649363605

The American school; a study of secondary education by Walter S. Hinchman

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Cover @ 2017

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**WALTER S. HINCHMAN**

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*The American Books*

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**THE  
AMERICAN  
SCHOOL**

*A Study of Secondary Education*

BY

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UNIVERSITY OF  
CALIFORNIA

GARDEN CITY                      NEW YORK  
DOUBLEDAY, PAGE & COMPANY

1916

LB1607  
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## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Walter Swain Hinchman was born September 13, 1879, at Burlington, New Jersey. His schooling was in Philadelphia; 1896-1900 he studied at Haverford College, and in 1900-01 as a postgraduate at Harvard. 1901-03 he was teacher of English at Groton School, Massachusetts; he then spent a year studying at Berlin University, and since 1904 has continued as English master at Groton. He is active in the New England Association of Teachers of English. Mr. Hinchman obtained the degree of M. A. at Haverford in 1903. He has also had considerable opportunity to study the methods of the big English "public schools."

Mr. Hinchman is the author of a number of articles on educational topics. His published books have been "Lives of Great English Writers" (1908), "Selections from Matthew Arnold" (1910), "The Autobiography of Holmes Hinkley" (1912), "A History of English Literature" (1915). Also "Tintagel and Other Poems" (1910), and "William of Normandy," a play in verse (1910).

## PREFACE

THE main purpose of this book is to interest the parent, quite as much as the teacher, in the problems which confront American secondary schools. Americans pay more for their education than any people in the world; and though it may seem to the educator that they might reasonably pay yet more, it is not so much to the point to urge greater appropriations as to show what education may do and to interest the citizen in the problems connected with it. He will not be likely to appreciate its importance just because he pays high for it; but he will be ready to pay high for it if he appreciates its importance. And the great thing, above and below all, is that he shall appreciate its importance, for no system of education can relieve him of his office of chief teacher of his children.

Though the title of the book is "The American School," it deals primarily with the secondary school. In such limited space it seemed better to restrict the field than to attempt to cover the

whole matter of school education; but five of the twelve chapters do touch questions pertinent to the elementary as well as to the secondary school. The secondary school, indeed, is itself far too large a subject for adequate treatment in a small volume; and on this account, instead of seeking to crowd in mere mention of all sorts of problems, I have selected six which seem to me of outstanding and national importance. As it is, I have been forced, in such brief compass, to indulge in rather more generalizations than I could have wished; since generalizations always carry a large probability of error. For the sake of clearness, but at the risk of some repetition, it seemed wise to separate the statement of the facts concerning our schools (chapters III-V) from the discussion of the problems (chapters VII-XII) and to include two chapters (II and VI) dealing with broader aspects than an entirely specific consideration of schools would imply.

It is impossible to acknowledge fully my indebtedness, for such an acknowledgment should include many unrecorded expressions of opinion, some of them quite "by the way," which friends have unwittingly supplied. I feel under special obligation, however, to Professor Henry Fairfield