

**THE LECTURES READ BEFORE THE  
AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF INSTRUCTION,  
AT TOWN HALL, SARATOGA SPRINGS, N.  
Y. JULY 6, 1880. WITH THE JOURNAL OF  
PROCEEDINGS**

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# **VARIOUS**

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# PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF INSTRUCTION,  
FORTY-NINTH ANNUAL SESSION.



# American Institute of Instruction.

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FIFTY-FIRST ANNUAL MEETING, 1880.

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## JOURNAL OF PROCEEDINGS.

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FIRST DAY.—TUESDAY, JULY 6.

THE fifty-first annual meeting of the American Institute of Instruction was called to order in the Town Hall at Saratoga Springs, N. Y., at P. M., July 6.

The chair was occupied by I. N. Carleton, of New Britain, Conn., the president of the Institute. The session was opened with prayer by Prof. W. G. Nowell, of Albany, N. Y.

B. G. Northrop, secretary of Board of Education, Conn., then addressed the association on the Quincy Method. (See Lectures.)

### DISCUSSION.

Col. F. W. Parker, late superintendent of schools, Quincy, Mass., on being called upon, said:—

I have not a word of complaint to make in regard to some of the criticisms I have heard. Many of the critics of

the Quincy method have a wonderful power of telling what the Quincy method is without examining into it or ever seeing it. We claim nothing new in our method; in fact, we put forward as a reason for using it the age of the method. We are glad to have critics point out its faults. There is no good in telling us that we are wrong without telling us *how*.

The fundamental principle of the "Quincy system" is to make the teachers as useless as possible, and lead the pupil to work for himself. The first element in this progress is freedom of action on the part of superintendents of schools. The teacher must also be free, and allowed to carry out original and individual methods of training. *Freedom*, and not particular method, should be striven after. All the world works in one of three directions, — after a pattern, a pattern cut out by others; after an ideal, our own creation; or we are cobblers, patching up the bad work of others. The work of the teacher should be to follow an ideal. We will find the ideal in the possibilities for development of the human mind. The purpose of education is mind-development. That which is most practical is best adapted to this development. Our purpose should be to lead the teachers to form an ideal of their own, by studying the experiences of others; by studying the mind and by studying the subjects, and then to let them work it out in their own way.

W. T. Harris, LL. D., of Missouri, said that in criticising a system we should bear in mind two important facts: there is a formal activity and a substantial activity of the mind, or a useful and a non-useful activity. Children may be instructed and interested in checkers, but it is useless activity; and though they may not be so much interested in reading, writing, and arithmetic, such activity is more substantial, and hence, more important. It appeared that the personal interest of

the child is secured in the schools at Quincy in a very remarkable manner; and to a certain degree, as in reading, substantial results also seem to be obtained, for which due credit should be given.

But it is one of the great errors of modern education that material nature is considered to be the only object from which to learn. People seem to forget that there is an historical as well as physical aspect of the world, and that the *human* world is, after all, of the most importance. You must learn the accumulated wisdom of the race, and be able to understand and combine with your fellow-man, or you are comparatively a zero.

As to *freedom*, so eloquently urged by Col. Parker, teachers should have freedom to teach what is *right*. When setting up the oral method against the text-book method, we must remember that the knowledge of the world is six thousand years deep, and all human activity that does not base itself upon this cannot expect to be successful. It is heresy to make the pupil depend exclusively upon the oral utterances of the teacher, and thus tend to deprive him of the printed page, the medium through which history speaks to us. I think all teachers should strive to retain the substantial methods, and be careful not to be carried away by any glamour connected with mere formal activities.

Col. Parker, in reply, said that he would not dispense with the use of books; he only objected to the methods of using them. There are more text-books in Quincy than in most towns.