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## EDITORIAL

FOR the past ten years the dull or backward child has received a great deal of attention from school authorities. The study of age-grade tables has revealed his numerical frequency, and the judgment of teachers supported by the Binet and other tests has picked him out individually. He has been specially classified in small, selected classes, he has been given exceptionally well trained and highly paid teachers, and no effort has been spared to give him the education of the normal child. The results from an educational point of view are far from satisfactory. With the greatest trouble and effort he masters only a fractional part of the normal course of study, and as soon as he escapes from the school environment he forgets practically all he has learned. The simple manual occupations which he can learn may serve to keep him busy, but usually are of little value

for a productive livelihood. So great is the discrepancy between effort expended and value received, that many are beginning to question the advisability of trying at great cost to educate the natively ineducable, and to urge concentration of attention upon more promising material.

It is now pretty generally admitted that the gifted child in our public schools has been neglected. Terman declares that no child in the schools is so seriously retarded as the gifted child. One reason for this is the wide-spread popular belief that precocity in childhood presages stupidity in later life. Many parents deliberately try to retard their bright children in order to lay a better foundation, as they think, for future success. Intellectual measurements show that this view is entirely fallacious, that the intelligence quotient is practically constant, at least through adolescence, and that, other things being equal, no harm can come from the judicious encouragement of native aptitudes. Another reason for the neglect of the bright child is the commonly accepted doctrine of teachers that he does not need any special attention, that he will always be able to look out for himself. In a certain sense this, of course, is quite true. With ordinary attention to class work and with a reasonable amount of application the bright child will surpass the median of the class, and will do more than meet the general requirements for a passable standing. But to rest content with this spells retardation, for the superior native capacities of the bright child demand higher standards of expectation than those set for the average of the class.

This brings us face to face with an important question of educational policy. In the past the public school has rather prided itself upon the application of a single standard to all pupils. This standard was necessarily an average one, or one which a large majority of the pupils could be expected to attain. In other words the whole effort of the school was directed to the attainment of mediocrity. This was defended in the name of democracy, and the single standard public school was lauded as the bulwark of democratic ideals. But does not modern democracy call for more than mere mediocrity? Does it not demand a recognition of individual differences, and the utmost development of each individual's potentialities? If this is so, the single standard, the uniform course of study will no longer suffice. Not only must we have different requirements for

different groups of pupils, but each individual must be considered in the light of his potential contribution to society. The child who is especially gifted in music or drawing or playing baseball should have a special curriculum constructed for him, emphasizing those activities which will contribute to the development of his gift, and minimizing work in arithmetic, spelling, handwriting and other subjects which are of little value to him or to society.

J. C. BELL.