



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

THE MASTER'S DEGREE AS ESSENTIAL FOR A TEACHER OF PREPARATORY LATIN¹

WALTER DENNISON
University of Michigan

A unified and systematic scheme of education operative in all parts of the country has not yet been evolved in the United States, as it has in certain older countries of the world, but rapid progress in this direction has been made in the last two decades and discussion continues with unabated interest as a glance at the pages of the *Educational Review*, the *School Review*, and other educational journals will show. Teachers cannot come together, it seems, whether in national or sectional meetings, without considering some pedagogical phase of their profession; and this is a disposition greatly to be commended. A free interchange of opinion is a necessary prerequisite of true progress. Let us also add our contribution, and instead of taking up the question of the relation of the secondary schools to the university, or the ideal course of study for the high school, or the best way of teaching Latin prose, let us inquire what is the present meaning of the degree of Master of Arts, and especially whether it is expedient and advisable for high-school teachers of Latin to provide themselves with the training which this degree represents.

On this occasion I wish to consider briefly three aspects of the question, (1) the proportion in which holders of the Master's degree in all subjects, but particularly in Latin, are found on high-school faculties, and the esteem in which they are held by principals and school boards and others who are charged with high-school instruction; (2) the meaning of the Master's degree and the kind of training it should stand for, with especial reference to the needs of high-school teachers, and (3) the general question of the advisability of prospective teachers of Latin securing this additional training.

The answer to the first inquiry may be based partly upon statistics obtainable from high-school catalogues and partly upon the opinions

¹ Paper read at the annual meeting of the Classical Association of the Middle West and South held at Nashville in April, 1908.

of educators expressed in print or in written communications. To secure exact data I directed a questionnaire to the principals of 49 representative schools in the states of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, and Wisconsin,¹ believing that the information thus obtained would represent the conditions that prevail in a large portion of the territory covered by the Classical Association of the Middle West and South. On the staff of instruction in these 49 high schools I find there are 983 teachers. Of this number 19 hold a Doctor's degree, 130 hold a Master's degree, 638 hold a Bachelor's degree only,² while 196 have no academic degree at all. In other words if these figures represent approximately what is true generally in the Northwest, over 65 per cent. of our high-school teachers are college graduates and over 13 per cent. have secured the additional scholastic training represented by the Master's degree. Although 196 appear to have no college degree at all, this number, as a matter of fact, includes many who have spent a year or more in study at a university or normal school and eventually will swell the number of college graduates. Some of the teachers in this class (not college trained) are instructors in subjects which generally do not presuppose a college education, as, for instance, drawing, music, commercial courses, and manual training, while others are old and tried appointees who have held their positions from before the time when college graduates were chosen by preference. The principals of some schools declare that these teachers are more valuable and efficient than other younger, and more highly trained instructors, and this may well be. Experience is a great teacher, and no one can suddenly acquire the poise and good sense which a successful teacher possesses after years spent in making mistakes and

¹ These schools were Aurora, Chicago (John Marshall), Elgin, Evanston, Oak Park, and Streator in Illinois; Evansville, Fort Wayne, Goshen, Indianapolis (Shortridge), Kokomo, Logansport, Marion, Peru, Richmond, South Bend, and Terre Haute in Indiana; Ann Arbor, Battle Creek, Bay City, Calumet, Detroit (Central), Grand Rapids (Central), Kalamazoo, Lansing, Muskegon, and Port Huron in Michigan; Bucyrus, Canton, Cleveland (Central), Columbus (North), Elyria, Findlay, Greenville, Hamilton, Lorain, Mansfield, Newark, Oberlin, Piqua, and Sandusky in Ohio; and Beloit, Green Bay, Milwaukee (East), Oshkosh, Racine, Sheboygan, Waukesha, and Wausau in Wisconsin. Similar inquiries sent to other schools were not answered.

² That is, this number does not include the 130 teachers who hold the Master's degree but have also the Bachelor's degree.

more years spent in correcting them. The appointment, however, of high-school teachers for charity's sake or merely because their services are cheap is fast becoming a thing of the past. The demand now is for teachers who know something more than what they propose to teach. It will be noted that my statistics are taken from comparatively large city high schools where both position and salary are likely to attract a better class of teachers, and it is probable that if these figures were made to include also a representative number of small high schools, the percentages would be somewhat reduced. The general conclusion would, however, be about the same, I think, namely, that over one-half of our high-school teachers have at least a college Bachelor's degree, and that perhaps one-eighth of them have also a Master's degree.

It would be most interesting to know what subjects the holders of Master's degrees in our high schools are teaching. This information would be difficult to obtain for the smaller high schools where often a teacher is expected to give instruction in as many as four different subjects although he may devote his main energies to but one or two. In the larger high schools as a rule one teacher or even several teachers devote all their time to giving instruction in the same subject, as, for example, chemistry, German, or Latin, and fairly satisfactory information may be obtained. We classicists have been inclined to boast that the teachers of Latin and Greek in the secondary schools in this country are better trained than are the teachers of any other subject, but it now becomes clear that teachers of the sciences, of English, and history, and German may rightfully press their claims of equal equipment and preparation with their classical colleagues. Of the 130 Masters in the large high schools to which I applied for information I was able to learn definitely in what branches of study 91 were giving instruction. There are 22 teachers of science (15 of the physical sciences, 7 of the biological sciences), 20 are teachers of Latin and Greek, 20 of English, 12 of history, 9 of German, 7 of mathematics, and 1 of political economy.¹ This computation is made on the supposition that there is in a high school an equal number of teachers of science or of English and Latin; though this is not quite

¹ A computation of the subjects taught by holders of the Doctor's degree shows that more are teachers of science than of the classics.

the case, since it is likely that the number of science or English instructors will generally exceed those of Latin, the proportion is nearly equal enough to make the figures significant.

Since we find so large a proportion of high-school instructors in possession of the Master's degree, let us inquire what is the sentiment of principals and school boards as to their fitness to teach and their superiority in general over other members of the high-school staff. In the first place let it be said that school authorities do not place upon the Master's degree as such the value that its holders confidently expect when they set forth in search of a position to teach. Quite to the contrary, in the minds of some high-school principals and members of school boards there is lodged the opinion that a student who took a Master's degree in the year immediately following graduation from college, having had no experience whatever in teaching, should not as a general thing receive much consideration as an applicant for a position in their school, for it is frequently the case, they think, that such an applicant did not have sufficient attainments or force of character to get a position on his Bachelor's degree, or, failing in a position taken immediately after graduating, was obliged to return to the university for an additional year. Such a view is narrow and unfair, of course, but the fact remains that one who has an advanced degree will not *ipso facto* obtain very wide recognition as an educator. The degree as such, it must be confessed, has no particular value commercially. The simple fact is, however unpleasant it may be, that boards of education are in search not of a degree but of a teacher; they want better equipment, it is true, but they demand also greater efficiency; in brief, they want teachers of pupils rather than of subjects. At the same time everybody recognizes that one who has the instincts of a teacher will be vastly more efficient if he has had also a broad and thorough training than he could possibly be without such training. I think it can be said without fear of contradiction that the attitude of school officers is favorable toward employing by preference teachers who hold a Master's degree all other things being equal, and in many schools a larger salary is paid to a teacher who has this additional training, especially if greater efficiency is thus secured. I feel certain also that there is a growing tendency to employ teachers who hold the Master's degree in high-

school positions and that educators strongly sympathize with such a tendency.

But what does the Master's degree signify, and are the advantages, which an additional year of study affords, sufficiently great to make the expenditure of time and money worth while?

In origin the Master's degree is as old as the Doctor's and meant about the same thing. But their later history has not been parallel, England having adopted the degree of Master of Arts and Germany having held to the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. Through the influence of European educational systems upon American systems both degrees were introduced into this country, and here they exist side by side in a certain more or less well-defined relation to each other, the Master's being the minor degree. In America, therefore, the Master's degree has had a significance not found elsewhere. Being correlated with the doctorate it is often regarded as a stepping-stone to the higher degree. Its relation to the Doctor's degree is described by many to be the same as that of the pro-seminar to the seminar in a German university: the one obliges a man to begin specialization and to acquire experience in dealing with evidence in fields that have already been worked over, the other requires him to make his specialization more intensive and to carry his research into provinces as yet unexplored. In the United States there has been in practice, and there is still, a marked difference. In some of our universities great emphasis is placed on the Master's degree, in others but little. In some places a full year of resident study is required, in others the requirements may be met in part by work done *in absentia*. Again the larger universities usually make it obligatory on the candidate to pursue graduate or "seminary" courses in three departments of study, two of which are expected to be allied, while other institutions notably the smaller colleges prescribe a year of postgraduate study in courses that are presumably but not necessarily advanced, and usually along lines of work in which the candidate found especial interest in his academic career. In the Middle West, where one of the important functions of higher educational institutions seems to be to train teachers for the secondary schools, there exist two clearly distinguished methods of obtaining the Master's degree. One appeals to the creative mind and invites the student to spend much time and

energy in a comparatively small field of investigation. It implies intensive specialization and is indeed a step in the direction of attaining the Doctor's degree. This year of application constitutes the first of the three years of severe study which is crowned by the distinction of the doctorate. All, however, cannot expect to be of a productive type of mind and contribute to the world's store of new knowledge. There are many who must devote themselves to the perpetuation of present knowledge merely, to the instruction of boys and girls in our high schools—a most noble task. For such as these the second method of obtaining the Master's degree is particularly fitted. This method *tends* toward specialization in two or three or four separate fields of study, but does not demand excessive specialization. It does not, however, make the Master's year a fifth year of indiscriminate undergraduate study; that to my mind would be an altogether false position. While the candidate may be allowed to pursue a certain amount of elementary work (as, for example, first- or second-year French or German which may be regarded as subsidiary subjects), his choice of work is in the main well correlated and permits him greatly to extend and enrich his stock of *information* in the subjects he proposes to teach. This is the important point. During such a year of well-co-ordinated, thorough study he will acquire power for his future work of teaching, since he will become more and more familiar with his subject. He will, to be sure, store away many facts which he could not wisely use in his teaching, but they will broaden his understanding, will make him see things in their proper relation, and will enable him to meet an emergency; further, if a student so trained is also a born teacher, his success and power in the schoolroom are assured.

Let us briefly outline such a course of study for a teacher of secondary Latin which would lead to the Master's degree. We will suppose that the candidate is to work in Latin, classical archaeology, and German, and take elementary French as a supporting subject. In Latin his time will be devoted mainly to a seminary course which will make an intensive study of the works of some writer or writers with which he has never had an opportunity to make himself familiar, for example, the satirists, Juvenal, Persius, and Petronius. But will the reading of these masterpieces help him to teach Caesar and

Virgil and Cicero? The question may be dismissed as useless. He may never find it pertinent indeed even to mention these names to boys and girls only just in their teens, but by this intensive study of a representative group of Latin masterpieces he will come to know Roman life and thought and Rome's history better, he will get a firmer grasp of the principles of government by which Rome, mistress of the world, bestowed on every hand her civilizing influence, an influence which is felt to this very day, and most of all he will learn how to deal with sources of information, to weigh evidence and to draw conclusions. This last will be of service to him whether he ever teaches or no. Besides this seminary course the candidate will listen also to lectures on historical Latin grammar, will read facsimiles of Latin manuscripts written in various hands, learning what textual criticism is and by what means the works of Caesar have been transmitted through the ages from the first "autograph" copy to the twentieth-century edition, and he will become acquainted with the great body of Roman literature preserved on marble and bronze and stone, the Latin inscriptions, of which a collection of over 200,000 has survived. In classical archaeology the candidate will study Roman topography, that is, the monuments of ancient Rome, existing or destroyed, with their location, he will study Roman art in its various manifestations, he will study Roman private life in the remains of Pompeii, and he will glory in the splendor that was Athens' in her architecture and sculpture. The methods of work in German will be similar to those employed in the Latin seminary, and Goethe or Schiller may be selected for intensive study, the object being to train students to see things from the German point of view. While doing his major work in Latin the candidate should also pursue courses in collegiate Greek, or, if he was unable to get Greek in his preparatory school, he should begin the subject in the university. The reasons why the acquisition of this language is so important would lead us into a discussion aside from the purpose of this paper, but it may be stated conclusively that for the well-equipped, resourceful teacher of Latin a knowledge of Greek is absolutely indispensable.

Is this only an ideal course of study, one impossible of realization? Not so. It is entirely feasible and every year is proved to be so at many universities. Perhaps it seems a good deal to do in so short a

time, but a good deal can be done in a long and busy college year, if one is ambitious. Having obtained the Master's degree following such a course of study, if the prospective teacher can spend a year or two in study and residence abroad, as, for example, at the American School of Classical Studies in Rome or in Athens, his enthusiasm will know no bounds and he will bring to his teaching an inspiration that will animate even the dullest boy. But, finally, the teacher should remember that this year of training represented by the Master's degree will be worth while only in case it enriches his teaching after proper assimilation and judicious use of the learning thus acquired. His erudition should not obtrude itself in the classroom. Otherwise he will soon be teaching "over the heads" of his pupils. It is so tempting and natural for university graduates to introduce university methods into the high school, but there is nothing more fatal to success, especially to the young and inexperienced teacher who has not yet found himself and fails to realize that he is not dealing with men and women as at the university, but with mere boys and girls who present the rawest material. There is no question in anyone's mind, there can be none, that the additional year of collegiate training of the type which I have outlined is exceedingly valuable for the secondary teacher of Latin. Qualities of personality and efficiency being assumed as equal, the Latin teacher with such a training will from the beginning gain in competition upon the Latin teacher who has merely the preparation represented by a Bachelor's degree. The standards of qualification for secondary teachers in general are being gradually raised; and students who wish to devote themselves to the work of secondary instruction and to prepare themselves to hold ultimately the best positions owe it both to themselves and to the profession to give themselves, no matter at how great sacrifice, the best preparation possible.