

## CHAPTER X

### Part 1- A Surprise Package!

Early in the history I mentioned that later I would quote a man who had some well chosen words that said what I felt needed to be said and in a much better manner than I could ever say it. Why do I call it a "Surprise Package"? After you read the message first then I shall tell you. I think you might be just a little surprised too. I was --- very much so. To tell you now who the man is that I am quoting would betray my secret so all due acknowledgement to him will have to come later also. Here is his message, or rather -- messages, for there were two and written I believe about five years apart. And I quote:

"Much is said in criticism of the school that is absolutely unjust. That the schools are far from ideal no one skilled in educational affairs will deny. That they are doing better work than the schools of years ago is nevertheless true, in spite of criticism to the contrary. The child of 12 or 14 years of age is contrasted unfavorably as to his acquirements with the man or woman of mature years. If the boy cannot add a column of figures as readily or as accurately as the bookkeeper of mature age and long experience something is held to be wrong with the schools. If he misspells a word, the golden days are referred to when spelling was made a chief part of the work of the schools.

"The fact is that children of the present do more and better work than children of fifty years ago. They write better, they spell better, they are better in arithmetic and incomparably better in use of the English language. The proper comparison is the child of the present with the child of 25 or 50 or more years ago (rather than with methods etc)".

"The mission of the public school is to fit the youth of our land for life and good citizenship. The complexities of modern life require a different training from that required a half century ago or even a quarter century ago. Business life, social life, civic life all demand more -- much more -- than in the past and the schools must meet these increasing demands. These must be met also without sacrificing what were essentials in the past and still are essentials. To meet the increased demands of modern life without losing what is good in former years is the great problem that educators have to solve.

"The schools are everywhere just now in a process of adjustment to changed conditions, and until the adjustment is made there will be and must be unrest. It is impossible to get the schools back to the old meagre curriculum of 50 years ago and, if it were possible, it would be inadvisable. Complaints are made from time to time of an overcrowded curriculum, but when those who unite in making the complaints