

spirit, and as a far more respectable man than king or kaiser who is content to rule his people in a careless, haphazard, or perfunctory manner. Once more let me say, it is the spirit in which we regard our craft and perform its duties which makes us workmen who need not be ashamed, or the reverse. And if this be true of other employments, it is so emphatically of yours, because you work not on perishable matter, but on immortal mind, and the results of reissness or unfaithfulness are far reaching in their deplorable effects. Of all earthly callings, the interests at stake render carelessness or indifference in your avocation inexcusable, nay, grossly criminal. And yet perfunctoriness I will not say pervades, but overshadows our entire system—broods as

A PARALYZING BLIGHT,

a pestilential pall, over our educational efforts; is domiciled in our college halls no less than in our humble school-rooms, occupies the professor's chair equally with the teacher's desk, while even our inspectors and other executive officers are not altogether exempt from its occasional companionship. How many educationists are there among us to-day who are habitually doing their level best in their vocation? Doubtless thousands are fully earning the pittance they receive; hundreds perhaps are doing fair work; possibly scores are doing good work, and a few, it may be, noble work but how many are accomplishing all they are capable of doing? Would it be rash to say that one might count on his fingers and toes—probably not all told—every teacher and professor and other school officer in this large and important Province of Ontario who, not spasmodically, but continuously and systematically, bends the entire energies of his being to his professional duties? And if the dry-rot of perfunctoriness is thus widespread and enervating among our teachers, can we marvel that our schools fail to achieve all we would have them accomplish—fail in large degree to secure even the alert intelligence, the awakened intellect, the larger mental capacity which are universally conceded to fall within their peculiar functions, and fail utterly in reaching and training the moral and religious susceptibilities, in forming the character and moulding the manners and fixing the principles and cultivating the taste—in a word, in placing the controlling and indelible stamp of high, true, enlightened, and symmetrical culture on their graduates? How is it, then, and how is it to be with each of you? Do you work from day to day in the spirit of the artist or in that of the day laborer? Do you, individually, purpose weaving for yourself and wearing the seemly garment of a zealous spirit and the energizing vestment of a master workman, or are you content to clothe yourself in the Nessus shirt of perfunctoriness, incompetence and sloth? Do you aim at simply earning your hire, or at earning in addition thereto the grateful and loving remembrance of your pupils, the thanks of the community, the sanction of an approving conscience, and the blessing of God?

THE DEFECT OF INDOLENCE.

The next defect in your equipment as

teachers to which I have to refer, is indolence. This is the Latin euphemism for what, in plain, homely, but expressive Anglo-Saxon, we call laziness. Unfortunately you are, I fear, but too familiar with the mental leprosy in question to need any definition of it, nor do you require to be reminded that the number of our schools not more or less spotted by it is small indeed. Indolence and perfunctoriness, though often related to one another as cause and effect, are not always coexistent in the same individual. A lazy man almost necessarily labors to the extent he does labor in a perfunctory spirit, but a really industrious man may, through false conceptions of duty and misdirected energy aim at quantity rather than quality in his results, and thus also turn out imperfect work. Laziness is so often the concomitant of impaired health, that in many cases it may be regarded as the result of enfeebled physical powers. I question whether any man or woman who is not of robust constitution, and in sound health, should be permitted to teach at all. A successful instructor of youth absolutely must have "a sound mind in a sound body." Physical energy and mental activity are essentially twin or associate qualities, and seldom or never dwell in a puny, weak, or debilitated frame. In my opinion, mental deficiency is scarcely more out of place in an elementary school-room than is bodily deformity or physical weakness. We already subject to a rigid medical examination every candidate for entrance into the army, the navy, the Civil Service, and even into nurses' training schools. When our Province becomes really awake to the interests involved, all applicants for teachers' certificates will also be required to pass through the winnowing process of a searching medical inspection, and only those permitted to proceed who are of good constitution and in perfect health. Let me address you unreservedly on this point. Indolence inexorably bars the teacher's way to success. If you are lazy it makes little or no difference, so far as its effects are concerned, whether your indolence is a matter of original endowment, or of broken health, or of faulty habits of self-indulgence, it will almost certainly cling to you for life, and very likely your proper course is to give up all thought of continuing to teach school. I do not by any means intend to imply that it is impossible for a really determined man or woman to reclaim himself from the wretched habit we are discussing, but really determined men and women are rare, and the shackles of laziness are as well rivetted as those of drunkenness, and reform is so difficult that few indeed are willing or capable of making the effort necessary to attain it. And when you remember how minutely your spirit and manner, and even, in many cases, your peculiarities of voice and gesture, are caught and reproduced in your pupils, you will readily understand what I mean when I say that in the school-room "laziness is as infectious as measles," and you will, I think, agree with me, that if school trustees ever get to look at the matter in a proper light, they will just as soon think of placing a leper or an epileptic in the teacher's desk as a lazy man or woman. In fact, except as a consequence of bodily disease, laziness

should meet with no toleration in society. When it is the result of mere mental inertia or pernicious habit, its victim is out of place anywhere, save in a house of correction or in some penal colony, where the strong corrective of coercion can be applied to restore him to mental health; and, certainly, nowhere under the broad canopy of heaven is he so utterly and disastrously out of place as in an elementary school-room, the presiding genius of which is expected to be the source of inspiration, of quickening influences, of intellectual alertness, and of mental and moral growth to the children assembled therein.

THE TEACHER'S TENURE OF OFFICE.

Possibly some of you may be disposed to excuse yourselves for one or other of the shortcomings I have ventured to touch upon by referring to the proposed brevity of your tenure of office. You are only using the profession as a stepping-stone to something beyond, and, in your opinion, higher. That is to say, because you have not embraced the teaching profession as a calling for life, you claim that the obligation to strive after excellence and to do good honest work is less binding on you than on those who expect to remain teachers permanently. Now I want to write what I have to say on this matter dispassionately, because it is one on which I feel, and have always felt, strongly. No blame can attach to you for desiring to better your lot. You have a perfect right to look up or down to any other profession as your preferred and ultimate field of labor. I do not suppose that the community has or can have any very serious quarrel with you for devoting any real leisure hours you may have to studies preparatory to other occupations, and, after you have spent some years in your present vocation, I can imagine your becoming so familiarly and minutely acquainted with all its details and requirements, as to really have such spare hours. If only from the standpoint of your pupils' welfare, it is far better that you should keep your minds alive and growing by studying something, even if it be only medicine, law, or divinity, than that you should not study at all. Mental stagnation means mental declension or collapse, and is closely allied to mental decrepitude and mental death, and in a school teacher is the surest and most saturated wet blanket that can be thrown over the aspirations and intellectual efforts of the young. It may be, and indeed is, by many thoughtful persons claimed that when you contract to teach a school, you tacitly bind yourselves to devote all your time and energies to the work, and that the only honest way to keep your minds quick and expanding, is by duly preparing your school lessons, and studying subjects cognate to your school duties and responsibilities. This, I confess, is my own view of the case, although I should not be disposed to visit with any very severe condemnation those teachers who strictly limit the time they devote to extraneous studies, to that which cannot justly be regarded as necessary to the efficient conduct of their schools.

(To be continued.)

If you wish to appear agreeable in society you must consent to be taught many things which you know already.—*Talleyrand.*