

Scholarship as a Preparation for Teaching.

We are anxious that it should be clearly understood that this subject is not selected for the purpose of discussing the relative merits of scholarship and pedagogic training, or in any way instituting a comparison between them. No one is more deeply impressed than we with the importance to every teacher, and especially to those who purpose making teaching the business of their lives, of informing themselves of the results of the experience of those who have been most successful in the profession, and of the investigations of those educational enthusiasts who, to an untiring zeal in the prosecution of scholastic work, have added an ingenuity and fertility of resource, a patience and perseverance, and a sobriety of judgment and power of generalization unsurpassed by many of the most noted workers in other departments of mental activity. Every province has its normal school, in which the discussion of principles and methods is intimately and wisely conjoined with their practical application to the business of the classroom; and thus the student-teacher enters upon the duties of his profession equipped in some degree for their discharge, and with open and intelligent mind, prepared to modify and adapt the instruction of the lecture-room to the peculiar circumstances in which he is placed. And the result has upon the whole been satisfactory. There has been a gratifying advance in the tone and character of the schools, and the community at large has no doubt felt the benign and humanizing influence. But there are mutterings of dissatisfaction which are becoming articulate on every hand, not confined to these Provinces, or to the Dominion of Canada, but already loud-voiced and clear-toned in the United States and Great Britain. There, as here, fault is found with the inadequacy of the curriculum of the school to meet modern wants, but chiefly because the education too frequently provided in them is unworthy of the name. And we are not at all surprised that enlightened public men, literary men, and the "men of light and leading" in the profession itself, have poured forth the phials of their contempt upon the modern system, of which cram is the most striking feature, and have sought to overwhelm it under a down-pour of denunciation, sarcasm and invective.

The demand for thoroughly educated men as teachers does not necessarily imply a condemnation of the work which has been done in the Normal School, or an expression of opinion that scholarship is paramount, and theoretical and practical training of secondary importance. It expresses the conviction that true education can only be obtained from one

who is himself truly educated. He may or he may not have had a course of training in a normal school; he may be but little acquainted with the history and development of systems of education, but his mind is disciplined, his acquirements are varied and accurate, his sympathies and tastes are literary, and his manners and habits bear the impress of culture. And, if to these he superadds an enthusiastic temperament, high character, singleness of purpose, sound judgment, and a readiness and clearness of expression, he possesses the chief attributes of a great teacher.

To provide such by any system of training is clearly beyond the power of either normal school or college. Teachers, like poets, are born, not made. And as there are many pleasing verse makers who, although they will never be numbered among the sacred few, contribute by their compositions to the happiness and instruction of mankind, so it will ever happen that the vast majority of those who choose teaching as their profession, be they useful and perhaps distinguished in their day, will never attain to the high ideal we have formed of the great teacher. The educational institutions from which proceeds the great body of our teachers can only avail themselves of the instrumentalities within their reach, and make the most of the conditions in which they are placed. The opportunities for what is properly normal school work, and the appliances at the command of the skilful instructor in pedagogics, in the best equipped of our normal schools, are perhaps as good as can be expected in present circumstances. But what shall we say of the department of scholarship, as distinguished from that of professional training? Are the instructors in English, mathematics, science, and classics, so satisfied with the results which are obtained during the short time that the students are under their care, that with confidence they can recommend them as teachers of these subjects? Have they found their students on matriculation in such a state of preparedness that they can, with the hope of success, enter upon studies appropriate to those who intend to teach? And do they observe in them, as the outcome of their class and home work, a consciousness of their powers and a perception of how to exercise them, and that influence upon character to which, above all, we look, by their instrumentality, for the elevation of the morals of the community?

We greatly fear that an unqualified reply, in the affirmative, cannot be offered to these questions. The very presence of a scholarship department in normal schools, is in itself an evidence that the student-teachers need instruction in the subjects which they will have to teach in their schools. And even if the students were much better prepared on entering