

One who does not continue to read, who does not gain strength through experience, who does not feel the professional spirit, who does not have the desire for expertness and then for still greater expertness and usefulness, who does not find in himself the strength of mind and the power of thought which can and will move outward and forward on its own motion, who does not grow kindlier, richer and stronger with the advancing years, has no proper place in a teaching profession.

A MATTER FOR CIVIL SERVICE REFORMERS.

There are great numbers of people who are so much interested in the movement for the improvement of the civil service, as to be commonly called Civil Service Reformers. Some of us do not agree with all they advocate, but I apprehend none of us are wanting in respect for their purposes. Probably all of us would go with them more than half way. The principal things for which they contend, are that all appointments in the public service shall be made upon a merit basis, and when once appointed the tenure shall be permanent. There are thirty thousand teachers in the public schools of New York. They are paid twelve millions of dollars annually. I know that the number is far greater than that of all other employees of the state taken together. The character, the competency, the manly and womanly independence of these teachers is of incomparably greater consequence to the state, than that the clerks in the public offices shall not change with a change in the dominant party, although as to the greater number of clerical positions, that is probably not without consequence. For obvious reasons, it seems to me that the principles for which the reformers of the civil service contend, apply to teachers in the public schools

more forcibly than to any other class of public employees. I cannot, therefore, withhold an expression of surprise that gentlemen who have given so much intelligent thought, and so much disinterested effort to the improvement of the public service, by advancing the character and protecting the interests of the public employees, should have done so little to protect, elevate and dignity the position of teachers in the public schools.

CONCLUSION.

My limits of time force me to an early conclusion, although I have not covered the ground contemplated at the outset. Possibly I have gone far enough for my purposes.

Teaching in the common schools of the country cannot be advanced to the standing of a professional employment, so as to justify its classification with the learned professions until the conditions which obtain in many of our states are materially modified.

It is absurd to think of reaching that consummation so long as competency is placed in ruinous and destructive competition with incompetency; so long as the best qualifications are scarcely able to earn a living or maintain independent self respect, while boys and girls not yet mature physically or mentally, and older persons, who are unable to succeed in other vocations, are permitted to secure better pay for alleged teaching in the schools than they can obtain in any other way.

It is idle, and I think, censurable, to temporize with the matter. There is no cross-lot road to a teaching profession. Even in this age of wonderful inventions we are not likely to discover any new process for constructing one. Without a scholarship which is at home in any intellectual center, without special training which can readily prove its utility, and force the necessity of its recognition, without