

of the teachers. Any body can teach who can keep the children inside of four walls; and whoever will occupy the time of school-hours for the least money is sure of the position. With these people, education is a mere plaything, something with which to divert their children till they are old enough to be put to some profitable employment. Now what encouragement have such teachers to give time and money and preparation for the school-room? It would bring them no better position as teachers, no social distinction, no increase of salary, and what little income they did receive would be grudgingly given.

What is this but setting a premium upon ignorance? Recently the demand for good teachers is improving. How are we meeting this demand? The great State of Illinois, one of the leading ones in education, will furnish us an example. She is justly regarded as an example of educational progress, and she is certainly in earnest in making provision for better teachers. Her Normal University and County Normal Schools are crowded with teacher-students, who come flocking as doves to their windows, far beyond the capacity to receive them. Yet, we learn from one of her late school-reports that the annual increase in the number of her schools is greater than the annual number of graduates from her different normal schools. She has already 10,000 schools, and, by her own confession, only 1,000 thoroughly-qualified teachers. Now, Illinois employs over 19,000 teachers; deduct the 1,000 good ones, and you have over 18,000 teachers, none of whom are thoroughly qualified. The whole number of pupils drawing public money is over 800,000. This makes, as you will see, one thoroughly-qualified teacher for over 800 children. Only think of it! What a splendid soil for crime and pauperism! What wonder is it that we have so much folly and selfishness and civil strife, when we take so little interest in providing well-qualified instructors for our youth? But what can be done to remedy the evil? You have all heard of a king who, going to war, sat down first and considered whether he was able with only 10,000 to meet him who was coming against with 20,000. Now if this difference of 50 per cent was worth considering, what shall we think of poor Illinois as she goes into this contest against nearly a million with only 1,000 disciplined soldiers and over 18,000 stragglers in the rear? And yet we have faith in these 1,000 teachers. We believe they are the Gideon band that will put the hosts of Philistines to flight. But this is not her only disadvantage. The entire amount paid to her common-school teachers last year was \$3,592,643; allowing the 1,000 to be all male teachers, each receiving the highest monthly compensation paid by the state, \$250, their total salaries would amount to \$2,500,000. Deduct this from the whole amount paid teachers, and we have the round sum of over \$1,000,000, every cent of which was paid to these 18,000 unqualified teachers.

I have represented Illinois in stead of Iowa, because our picture would be too sad a one. For where she counts her good teachers by hundreds, we must count ours by tens. Many of her unqualified ones will compare favorably with some of those in our state who are regarded among our best, and her educational liberality in every department, when compared with our own, augments our insignificance. This being the case, you begin to wonder what you are to do to secure efficient teachers. Where are they to come from? They will come as soon as you are ready for them. When you invite a friend to your house, you do not expect him to eat and lodge with the servants. You do not dread his arrival, and take a long breath when he goes; but you set your house in order, and spread your table with abundance and the choicest of viands, and put your children on their best behaviour. You receive and entertain him with honor, and he goes forth with your benediction. This, is in some sense, what you are to do for your teachers. Enlarge your hospitalities. Establish your normal schools, attach to them ample and convenient living accommodations, secure the most competent instructors for them, and invite your teacher-students to this mental repast. Give them the opportunity of broad and generous culture on as easy terms as they now get homesteads on government lands, and make it

free to all those promising ones whose hearts are in the work, yet whose pecuniary circumstances are limited. Let all these young and ardent persons see that you regard them with respect, and give them the assurance that, as the instructors of your children, if they do their work well, they shall be liberally and amply remunerated. When you have done all this, you need ask for good teachers; you will be justified in *demanding* them.

A fruitful source of poor teaching is inadequate compensation. The income of many teachers, after deducting their expenses, is less than that of a common house-servant. It has been said "We say what grade of qualification we desire by the salaries we pay." Now we know in business that nothing demoralizes good workmen sooner than under-pay. The same principle holds good in teaching. For there is a law of equivalents in the moral as well as in the spiritual world, which will not be forced. If we disturb its harmonies, we produce only discord and confusion. To make the labor of the head and of the hand equal is to do this. It is to degrade the master and exalt the servant. Men of culture feel this, and naturally seek fields of labour where their abilities are recognized and their services remunerated. Our educators are yearly leaving the ranks for remunerative positions, and their places are being filled by those less competent, because, it is said, "we can't afford to pay higher salaries." This narrow policy extends to school-officers and district directors. The latter are required to perform school-duties gratuitously, and many of the former at starving salaries. County supervisors, legislators, county and state officers, constables, jail-keepers, are all liberally compensated; but who ever heard of a salaried school-board? We pay a street-cleaner, and give perquisites to the man who keeps the pound; but to pay a school-board—how absurd! And so through all the range of school-officers, from first to last; they are pinched to actual penury.

Do the people think that the way to keep a man honest is to keep him poor? to make him work without wages? Will dishonesty and bribery be any less a temptation because he owns nothing? Now what is our condition, as the result of this penny-wise policy which we have been practising? Our schools are not gaining in influence, and their progress is constantly retarded. Their moneyed interests are in a state of perpetual panic; for, whatever be the financial condition of the country, with them it is always hard times, and a crisis is for ever impending. Teaching has been driven from the business area and robbed of its professional character by making its labor unprofitable. This has destroyed its stability. Now, the moment you destroy its permanency, you dismiss the best and wisest workers, and open the vocation to adventurers of every kind. More than half of our public schools—nurseries of liberty, we are proud to call them—are to-day in the hands of novices and inexperienced young people. The majority of our population enjoy no other educational advantages than those offered by the public schools; and this business of developing the mental wealth of the nation, this work of laying the foundation of our moral and religious prosperity, we have given over to undisciplined boys and girls whom we would consider incompetent for the common business transactions of life. What do they know about that invisible, intangible power they are set to work upon? How can they discover the secret springs of virtue or the covered avenues where vice lurks? What ability have they to perceive the characteristic through which mind is to be reached? Their idea of the development of a child's mind is very much like their idea of a ball of butter—something to be patted and squeezed and stamped, and got ready for use. But if it be true that the foundation of character is chiefly laid in early life, if the tastes, the affections, are all shaped at the pliant period, if virtue can die and folly ripen even before maturity, if the seeds of right thinking and right living can only be successfully cultivated in childhood, what a terrible waste is all this labor! Its results are every where apparent in the incomplete character and insufficient lives of every one of us.—*Illinois Teacher.*