

* Special Papers. *

THE COUNTRY TEACHER.

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WHEN, at the request of the Editor of the *Monthly*, I consented to "write something for teachers from the standpoint of a director," the country school teacher was in my mind, and still is as I write. Teaching in the city may be as laborious as it is in the country, but it is less discouraging. In what follows, the writer has sought to economise space and time by addressing the country teacher directly.

1. Do not allow yourself to think that your work in the country is less important than that of other teachers elsewhere. It is true that the city teacher has more comfortable surroundings, greater facilities, more encouragement, and is usually better paid than you are; but on the other hand, you have the best, because the most promising material to work on. Remember that from the country schools have come at least four-fifths of the great, wise and influential men and women of the present generation; and that this is certain to be true of the next generation as it is of this. The city and the country teacher may be compared to two workmen who are engaged in making axes; the one has the finer shop and forge, but the latter has the finer steel to work on, and makes the greater number of good axes.

The permanent influence of the faithful country teacher is usually far greater, and this circumstance may well be a set-off to some of the inconveniences of school teaching in the country.

2. You should set yourself to do some missionary work in the cause of education. You will find yourself sometimes in a neighborhood in which ideas of what education should be are terribly insufficient for our time and country. It is your duty, as it may be your high pleasure, to help change this state of things for the better.

You should feel bound by every principle of honor to make your profession as respectable as possible. Read, think, reflect, and having settled for yourself what good school work is, go in with all your force to realize your ideal. Show your patrons that you mean business, and that you have a distinct purpose in what you do, and know what you are doing. Zeal, energy and steady effort will make a mark in any community.

3. Do not think that because the people of the district do not visit your school, they are indifferent to the progress of the scholars. Doubtless, there are some persons in most districts who do not care how the school goes on, but their number is small, and they are usually persons of no influence, perhaps without much character. The chief reason why parents and directors do not visit their school is that they do not see how they can do it any good by such visits. It is a fact that very few persons are judges of school work; the common standard is as often wrong as right, and unless a visitor has such knowledge as will enable him to judge the school correctly, his criticisms are quite as likely to do harm as good. If your school gets on soundly, the fact will become

known in good time, without visits from anybody.

4. Never despise the power of public opinion: it is a mighty social force in this country, and for this reason the wise teacher will try to use it for the advantage of his special work. Some earnest teachers, seeing that some trifling and inefficient teachers, by a plausible manner, and by using some of the arts of the demagogue or the small politician, make for themselves a reputation far beyond their real merits, are disposed to go to the other extreme and make no effort to become popular. Now, this is all wrong. No matter how good a teacher may be, popularity will add increased effectiveness and success to his work.

5. Get a copy of the school law and see what are your rights and duties under it. It is a shame that any teacher should go on teaching from term to term without any care or effort to learn what the law is that controls, or allows others to control his employment. Have your certificate and contract signed before you begin to teach: you may escape trouble sometimes by following this rule.

6. And finally, regard your business with pride and accustom yourself to think of it as a useful and honorable employment. Read the lives of Socrates, Aristotle, Pestalozzi, Arnold and other great teachers of ancient and modern times, not forgetting the Great Teacher, the greatest of all, and muster up your powers to follow in their footsteps.

Do not allow yourself to look upon your work as drudgery. It is and will be laborious, but put your heart into it and the drudgery is gone.

True, faithful, honest labor in the work will result in steady growth of mind and heart, in a way that will be a constant gratification.—*Ohio Educational Monthly*.

RESPONSIBILITY OF SOCIETY.

DR. FRANCES E. ABBOT says, in a recent address:

"How to secure universal moral education, not at all as a substitute for other kinds of education, such as physical, manual, industrial, intellectual, but rather as the completion of all other training in practical mastery of the art of living aright, is in truth the most pressing practical question of our time. The gravest difficulty lies in the fact that the world has no adequate idea of the magnitude of its own obligation to the child. What more can society do for the individual than to make him? That is what society does in the birth of every child. Yet what greater wrong can society do to the individual than to leave him only half-made? That is what society does when it leaves the individual morally uneducated. The child is born into the right to live and society recognises this right by making it murder to kill him. But the child is also born into the right of being taught how to live; and society tramples on this right in thousands and thousands of cases by leaving the little ones to grow up from the beginning in ignorance, misery and crime. It is every man's concern, it is your concern and my concern, that no

child shall be thus heartlessly and most foully wronged. Parents are, at the bottom, only trustees for society itself; and, if by reason of their own ignorance, or misfortune, or vice, they are unable to discharge the sacred obligations to their trusteeship, then society itself is bound to discharge those sacred obligations, and defend both itself and the child from the consequences of an immoral education. These truths are dimly felt by many, but they are clearly seen by few; and, perhaps, all that we can now do in the matter is to utter them and spread them as widely as we may. For universal moral education can never be realized in the world, until the world first gets an adequate idea of the magnitude of its own obligation to the child—until it comes to understand that it is fundamentally immoral, unjust, and cruel, to make the individual at all, if, by leaving him morally uneducated, it leaves him only half educated at last."—*The New Ideal*.

THE GREAT TEACHERS.

It was said of Longfellow by Rev. N. H. Chamberlain: "He laid the stress of his refinement on every member of the class." Here is something worthy to say of a teacher. Let us follow the thought a little way. It is easy to see that teachers are of three classes. 1. Those who go through a certain routine of "hearing lessons." 2. Those who pack away knowledge—the memory fillers. 3. Those who would build mind. These last are of many different kinds—Longfellow, for example, led the minds of his pupils towards beauty, taste, refinement.

Now the majority of routinists follow a plan that is deemed to be the correct thing for school rooms. Certain classes are to study arithmetic, geography, etc. They are to stand up when they read, etc. There is to be a recess in the middle of the forenoon. There must be no whispering, etc. These axioms being followed day after day, the teacher persuades himself that he is "keeping school" in orthodox fashion.

Another class go farther than this; they aim at exact knowledge, and the better ones of the class at a comprehension of what is learned; they set lessons and will have them learned; if not learned, they "keep in after school," and press the pupils until it is learned. They lay out so much for the quarter, or term, and by hard work secure progress. They measure progress by pages; they talk about "finishing" botany or geometry in ten or twelve weeks. The pupil acquires the habit of saying he has "been through" geography, and learns to believe that the chief end of school-going is to master certain books. This class rely on examinations; if a pupil cannot answer certain questions, they prophesy evil of him in future days.

This class of teachers is an advance on the first class, those who make the school a treadmill. Splendid work is done by those who grind the pupil fine when he comes to the recitation bench; yet it is not wholly the work of the teacher. These hard drillers do a good work, rather unconsciously than consciously. From this class