

MOTIVES IN TEACHING.*

BY THOMAS CHASE.

TEACHERS have an especial need of sympathy, and of being sharpened, as iron sharpeneth iron, by exchanging views and experiences with each other. To prevent our work, which should be a happy and a lively one, from degenerating into a dull, monotonous, lifeless task, and to avoid falling into stereotyped ways, no other influence is so powerful as the example of earnest and successful associates. If we have had difficulties and perplexities in our work, we find—when we come together in a meeting like this—that others have had the same, and thus we are relieved from undue despondency. Some of the problems which we have not solved have been solved by others, and in various ways we are encouraged, or corrected, or find our deficiencies made up by the experience of our fellow-teachers.

Not the least benefit derived from such meetings is an increased appreciation of the dignity and importance of our profession. A high estimate of this is a very different thing from a high opinion of ourselves personally. I have once or twice been present at Teachers' Conventions—not, however, among Friends—where speakers advocating the claims of the profession of teaching to high rank and esteem seemed to be thinking of themselves rather than of their calling. The complaint made was not so much "the value of our profession is underestimated," as "men do not look up enough to us personally." Now, I think the time has passed by when

the fact that a man or a woman was a teacher was considered as a presumption that he or she was rather inferior in ability to the average of men. The time has come when a teacher is looked up to in the community, if he deserves it, just as much as if he were displaying the same talent and faithfulness in any other occupation. There is still room for a little elevation in the notions of people in general in regard to the proper remuneration of teachers, and the proper standard of their intellectual, moral and personal qualifications. Friends of education may rightly labour to correct the public sentiment on these points. But, for myself, I may say, that I never felt that I lowered myself in any way by choosing the instruction of youth as my life-work, but, on the contrary, my fear has been, and is now, that I should not come fully up to the standard which befits the most useful and noble of those professions, for his labours in which it is right for a man to receive pay from his fellow-men.

We may be as humble as it befits us to be personally—and I trust we are all humble, especially when we contemplate the grandeur and importance of our work. I would add by the way, however, an earnest caution against undue self-depreciation. It is not a want of humility to be conscious of powers given us by our Creator and improved by our own efforts. It is not a want of humility, but only a proper self-respect, and one which is essential to our highest usefulness, to feel that we have any ability and any skill which we really possess. To deny our own powers, to hang our

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