

adjunct to the country school-house, then we shall have made a great step to secure this much desired state of things. The plan seems feasible, at least in some country districts. In these provinces but a few decades ago the teacher had to board round. An enlightened public sentiment in rural communities has frowned down this custom. The country school-house, with its library and laboratory as a literary and scientific centre, and a teacher's home as a centre of social influence, is an ideal that may be realized in the next few decades.

The Status of the Teacher.

It is a favorable sign in education that schools and teachers are receiving a considerable share of attention from newspapers and periodicals. The *Atlantic Monthly* recently circulated widely among superintendents and teachers inquiries touching the permanence, freedom from improper influences affecting their appointment or removal, salary and status of teachers. Replies were received from nearly 1200 teachers and superintendents, representing all the states and territories except New Mexico and Oklahoma. These answers were turned over to Dr. G. Stanley Hall, president of Clark University, who has made them the basis of an introductory article in the March number of the *Atlantic*, where the case of the public schools is considered on the testimony of these teachers. The article is a very interesting one, and instructive from this point of view that a prominent teacher and leader of educational thought is dealing with candid expressions of opinion from prominent teachers throughout the United States on themselves and their profession.

We shall quote a few extracts from Dr. Hall's article, because the same tendencies which furnish data for the investigation of excellences or defects in the United States may be seen in our own system of education.

The answer to the first question, which asks the number of pupils to each teacher, shows that there are altogether too many pupils, especially in the city schools, for any teacher to do good work with. Thus, the strain on the teacher is too great, the work ineffective, and machine methods too common.

The second question, which asks for the proportion of teachers who have changed their profession during the last ten years, shows thirty per cent. in some states (New England), and as high as sixty-five in others (Western States). One fact in these figures contains food for reflection—that female teachers, most of whom are supposed to marry after a few terms spent in teaching, furnish the lowest average in the New England States where they out-number male teachers more than ten to

one; while in Alabama, where male teachers predominate, forty two per cent have changed.

Dr. Hall makes this emphatic statement regarding the lack of training in teachers:

It is well known that many young men teach as a makeshift for a few years, with no thought of making teaching a life work. They do so to pay college debts or get money to study further, or to acquire the means for entering one of the other professions. Other statistics have shown that nearly one third of the teachers in many sections of the country change their vocation every year. The fact that so small a fraction of the teachers in the public schools have had any normal or professional training shows, also, how few regard it as a life work. Of the \$95,000,000 paid for salaries of teachers for 15,000,000 children of this country, a large proportion is thus spent upon untrained and unskilled teachers who have little interest in making their work professional. No business could ever succeed or was ever conducted on such principles, and when we reflect that the "prentice hand" is here tried upon human flesh, blood, and souls, the waste in all these respects is appalling. Those who claim that teaching can be learned only by experience, are in part right, but even the school of experience is wretchedly inadequate in this country. Moreover, on the whole, it is the best teachers who leave. Here we are far behind other countries. It is only when a teacher has mastered the details of government and method that good work can be done.

In answer to the question "What proportion of teachers are over thirty five years of age?" the estimate for the Middle States, twenty seven per cent, is the highest and that for the Western States, seventeen per cent, the lowest. "The fact that financial depression increases the average age of teachers as well as the number of male teachers, while good times decrease both, is significant."

Most striking are the answers to the questions touching teachers' tenure of position and security from improper influences, such as the church, politics, personal favor, whims of school boards. We give a few answers, with the hope that if any of the gross abuses described exist or are beginning to appear nearer home, a healthy public sentiment may put them down. In Texas, one teacher reports: "If your school board are Democratic, the teachers are Democratic; if Baptists, they must be Baptists." Teachers are said to be "pliant, timid, and servile," and political "pulls" are potent. In Washington, a city superintendent says the tenure of position is affected by "personal friends and their influence, and by the lack of them." "We must trade with the merchants, bank with the bankers, take treatment of the doctors, consult the lawyers, connive with the politicians, and even go to school elections and work for the successful candidate." In Minnesota the religious