

It may be better that I now enter upon the part of my subject which more immediately concerns yourselves, as members of the profession of teaching, and the youthful members of society who are committed to your charge. As regards yourselves, I do not imagine that it is necessary to indulge in any high flights of rhetoric, or to marshal any formidable array of facts or arguments, to impress you with the conviction that monotonous mental toil, too richly spiced—as I know with you it often is—with mental worry, is a very poor sharpener of the appetite, a very lame invigorator of muscular tone, and a very unreliable soother of nervous excitability. Whatever may be our sphere of work, or whatever may be the toil undergone in the performance of it, if we but know that our efforts are duly appreciated and gratefully regarded by those we serve, the load is wonderfully lightened, and we are cheerfully stimulated to persevere in our course. The physician, when he succeeds in freeing his patient from suffering, and restoring him to good health, generally secures his gratitude and good opinion. The tradesman who does good work, and charges low, is praised by his customers. Even the day-labourer, who works faithfully, is respected by his employer and has his wages paid to him cheerfully.

But how is it with you? The very people whom you work hardest to serve are those who most revile you, and who reward your efforts with the greatest ingratitude. They would have you give to their children that which they have themselves failed to endow them with—good brains and the love of learning. They would have you engraft into their wild stocks those qualities of obedience, order, industry, moral probity, self-respect and self-control which, neither by precept nor example, have they ever tried to inculcate on them. If you fail in these stern requirements, as you certainly must, then you too well know what awaits you. What! tell a fond, ignorant mother, or a rude, swine-headed father, that his boy is dull, lazy, inattentive or ill-mannered! O, no! for if you do you are, so far as that woman's and that man's eloquence and offended majesty can reach, a doomed pedagogue; and Heaven only knows how many more wasps may be in the hive.

As to your clever boys, whose domestic training is well looked to by intelligent parents, everybody knows how little trouble you have with them. They *will* learn, even in spite of your laziness, should you unfortunately—or, may I say, fortunately?—be gifted with that conservative quality. Happy the teacher whose quiver is filled with such arrows! He must make many bull's-eyes; I would very much like to meet with him. Barnum would make a mint of money out of him.

I recently cut from a city newspaper the following paragraph, which I would fondly hope depicts an experience to which only an unfortunate few of your body have been subjected; for if the occurrence narrated be not very exceptional, our conception of the moral and intellectual attributes of rural school trustees must be of a very painful character: