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## *The Educational Weekly*

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In a recent number of *The Current*, a writer, after quoting at length from Mr. Andrew Carnegie's "Triumphant Democracy" in which the common-school system of the United States is highly praised, says:

"It will be found that the splendid results of the system have depended upon two things: First, the liberal disposition of the tax-payers; and, second, the self-sacrificing devotion of the teachers. The former have provided ample means, but the latter have not received anything like their due proportion thereof. A just share of the money has not been spent for teaching. Building contractors have received too much of it. Local authorities have always held the provision of competent teachers to be of secondary moment. Therefore we find in States which boast of their educational facilities and the magnitude of their annual educational budget, the teachers receiving, on an average, less than the wages of unskilled labour in other vocations; and we also

find in these same States, where one would expect naturally to meet with liberal ideas resultant from these mighty educational processes, women regarded as disqualified, by the mere fact of sex, from receiving the wages given men for the identical work."

He goes on then to show that the teacher is deserving of greater recompense at the hands of the State. "If," he says, "the State deserve the unremitting and unswerving services of the teachers, it should pay to them such wages as would enable them to live in comfort and respectability while engaged in that service, and, as they cannot be expected to engage in outside pursuits for pecuniary profit, those wages should either be large enough to enable them to provide against the incapacity of old age, or they should be pensioned in comfort after they have spent their best days in the service of the State. But whichever be the better policy—and surely the teachers deserve as much at the hands of the State as the soldiery—it remains that the teacher at least should be relieved of anxiety lest he be suspended at the end of the school-term for no fault of his own."

One cause, and that a principal one, of low salaries he has well shown:—"Positions as teachers are now sought by many who deliberately use them as stepping-stones to something else—young women pending marriage, young lawyers pending the coming of their first clients, young doctors pending their first calls. The profession deserves better than this. It should not be regarded as a make shift, or a kind of temporary refuge for the distressed of other vocations. Such members can afford to work cheaply, and to such the school-boards look for recruits and have no difficulty in finding plenty of them, thereby being enabled to expend the people's money for the benefit of contractors and for paraphernalia of questionable utility. It is not to the work of such recruits, though they comprise a large proportion of the school-teachers of the country, that the progress of education

is owing; it is to those who, in the face of small salaries and other discouragements, loyally cling to the work to which they believe they have been called, who devote themselves to teaching as to a science which is worthy their continuous study and life-long pursuit. Teachers are not to be employed as we employ diggers of ditches. It is not every man who can teach, though there be few who cannot use a spade. They should be employed because they are skilled in teaching. The State confesses the need of skilled teachers in the provision of the normal schools."

But to skilled teachers he thinks the State cannot be too liberal. "The State can well afford to be generous in this matter. If such admirable results have been achieved through the free-education policy of the people thus far, it would be found, under a policy which would involve the improvement of the teacher's condition, that the cause of education would advance at a rate unparalleled in the previous educational history of the country. Made secure in their offices, they could go confidently forward in the great work they have to do, battling against ignorance, prejudice and the powers of darkness. They would not be tempted to trim, compromise, or abate their self-respect. They would acquire personally the prestige which properly belongs to their high and worthy office, and could command the consideration they must now implore. It used to be said during the war that it was the school-house against slavery, and the school-teacher triumphed most certainly when the shackles fell from the limbs of the bondman. For his services to humanity he receives much wordy tribute. It is quite time he should enjoy more substantial reward. The people are entirely willing. But the will of the people often finds curious expression from delegated authority, and things go strangely awry when the books of a State treasurer will show millions spent for education and the teachers receiving on an average but little more than a dollar a day."