

missal whose feelings are not so obvious to the eye of the spectator, or so apt to receive his sympathy. I mean the teacher himself, who stunned with the hum, and suffocated with the closeness, of the school-room, has spent the whole day—himself against a host—in controlling petulance, exciting indifference to action, striving to enlighten stupidity, and labouring to soften obstinacy; and whose very powers of intellect have been confounded by hearing the same dull lesson repeated a hundred times by rote and only varied by the various blunders of the reciters. Even the flowers of classic genius with which his solitary fancy is most gratified, have been degraded in his imagination by their connection with tears, with errors, and with punishments, so that the Eclogues of Virgil and the Odes of Horace are each inseparably allied in association with the sullen figure and monotonous recitation of some blubbing school-boy. If to these mental distresses be added a delicate frame of body and a mind ambitious of some higher distinction than that of being the mere tyrant of childhood, the reader may have some conception of the relief which a solitary walk, in the cool of a fine summer evening, affords to the head which has ached, and the nerves which have been shattered for so many hours, in plying the irksome task of public instruction." What a picture of the wretched lot of the unappreciated and martyred schoolmaster!

I am reminded of a couple of stanzas by a friend of my own who used, some twenty or twenty-five years ago, to "ply the irksome task of public instruction" in a quiet village by the sea. I had loaned him a book containing on a fly-leaf some juvenile effusion in praise of the refreshing influences of an evening stroll. The book was returned with these touching lines appended:

"But one there is o'er whose pensive soul
Eve sheds no ray of gladness;
He returns alone from his lonely stroll,
And his face is enshrouded in sadness.

Ah, well may his heart refuse delight,
And his visage be clouded with sorrow,
For the ghosts of numskulls haunt him by
night,
And their bodily shapes each morrow."

But all this belongs, let us hope, to a dead and buried past, buried beyond all hope of resurrection. Forever forgotten be the days when the schoolmaster was famous according as he had lifted up rods upon the big boys; when a tyrannic will, a pitiless eye, and an iron hand were much readier passports to the teacher's desk than the benevolent heart, the cultured mind, or the largest store of that subtle but mighty intellectual force which gently leads the timid and tractable, while it magnetizes and subdues the stubborn will. Ignorance no longer reigns in the sacred halls of philosophy, nor does ill-nature frown down from the usurped throne of discipline.

The schoolmaster had in the past—and I much fear the teacher has even yet—just ground for serious complaint of the want of a proper appreciation of the true, intrinsic dignity of his profession. Speaking as I am to teachers to-night, may I be pardoned if I express the opinion that for this teachers are themselves largely in fault? It is a saying no less true in some of its aspects than trite, that men and women are to a large degree taken by those around them at their own estimate of themselves. I sincerely hope for the good both of the individuals and of society that the maxim is far from being true universally. But of this there can be no doubt, that where a large proportion of the members of any guild or profession habitually think and speak disparagingly of that profession, it can never rise very high in the public