

more confidence as I am addressing many who are my superiors in acquirements and experience. Having however alluded to the faults of others, I must not pass lightly over those of my own brethren. It is often, I may say generally, the case, that our profession is adopted, not as a permanency, but as a stepping stone to something which is considered better, or higher in the world, thus we miss that spirit of emulation which is of such advantage in other professions. A man is too apt to say to himself, "I shall only teach for a year or two, and so long as I can get on for that time with my present acquirements, why should I labor and study as though I were fitting myself for the occupation of a life-time?" But this is a very poor way of looking at the subject. We are told "Whatever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might."—What mines of wisdom are there in that command! Whatever your work may be, strive to excel in it. One member of the British House of Commons taunted another with having, as a boy, blacked his boots. "Did I not black them well?" was the admirable reply. All work is honorable, that is well done. Labor is worship, said the monks of old, and negligently performed labor is as disgraceful as slip-worship. But no man will work well who does not honor his work. And truly if all work is meritorious, that of the school teacher is worthy of all honor. Let us "magnify our office," if that is possible. What an awful power we wield for good or evil! On the Common School Teacher depends, even more than on the College Professor, the character of succeeding generations. He has to mould and form the plastic clay, which the latter but decorates and varnishes. He bends and directs the young shoot, and many a noble tree bears evidence of his training hand, while many a gnarl and rough excrescence may tell the tale of his abuse or neglect. The mind of youth has been compared to a blank tablet ready prepared to receive every impression. Let naught be written on that tablet, but what is pure and elevating. I said just now that we have an awful power—be sure that no less awful is our responsibility. To whom much is given, of him shall much be required. Then how ought we to strive to render ourselves worthy of our high calling. We should strive to inculcate virtue and morality, not by talking, but by acting nobly—by living such lives as we should wish to see our pupils live. We should "do noble things, not dream

them," or preach them "all day long.

And so make life, death, and that great forever,
One grand sweet song."

We must discharge our duties lovingly towards those tender minds, to whom we stand in some degree in a parent's place, and unless we feel that we can really do this, we have no business to be teachers. We must interest ourselves not only in the studies, but in the sports of children. I have been sometimes blamed for taking too much interest in the amusements of my pupils, and have been told that I was in a fair way to make them better cricketers than scholars, but I have found that I could do as much real good, during a game of cricket or a country walk, as in my place in the school-room. And do not let it be imagined that a teacher is forfeiting any of the influence of his position, or injuring the discipline of the school, by taking a share in childish games. On the contrary, if children see that you are really fond of them, and glad to find a chance to amuse them, they will obey you far more readily from love for you, and a desire to please you, than they will from fear or cold respect.

We must try also to render ourselves worthy of our profession, by becoming thoroughly competent in it. For this, continual study is necessary. It is impossible to attain perfection in any subject; but, the nearer we advance towards it the better shall we be able to illustrate our lessons. One great fault frequently committed by teachers is restricting themselves too much to one narrow round of studies. Our stock of information should be not only deep, but extensive. The different branches of knowledge are mutually dependent, and one illustrates the other; so that is a great mistake to suppose, as too many do, that the subjects laid down in the programme for our examinations are all to which we need devote our attention. One means of improvement to which great importance should be attached, is found in Teacher's Conventions. I consider these as a good substitute for that special training for the profession which is afforded by the Normal Schools; and this advantage pertains to them, that, whereas a Normal School education is conducted according to one slightly varying routine, at a Teachers' meeting we have the opportunity of hearing many different modes of teaching discussed, and adopting, that best suited to our own ideas or circumstances. Another advantage is, that they

serve to increase that spirit of emulation, which is always beneficial, and to form personal attachments among the members of our truly noble profession. So that I have, with pleasure, heard the remark made, in a district where these meetings are frequent, "How those teachers stick together!"

In concluding these desultory remarks, let me remark that our position can only improve as our attainments progress, and that if a word that I have said has stimulated a single person to increased exertions, I shall feel repaid for the time occupied in preparing this article, by the conviction that I have thereby helped, though in a most infinitesimal degree, to improve the standard of a calling of which any one may feel justly proud.—that of

A COMMON SCHOOL TEACHER.

March, 1861.

Written for the Educationalist

SIMILITUDE

Walking in the woods one bland May noon, I turned my footsteps through a narrow pathway that led up the breezy summit of a hill. A tiny gleam of silver, flashing before my eyes, caused me suddenly to pause. A spider had drawn its gossamer bar from one green hub to another, and I must break it or leave the path. Plucky as the barrier was, hanging there in the sunlight, I involuntarily dropped the hand which was raised to destroy it, and turned aside into the long grass. Groping through the thick undergrowth of hazel bushes, I became bewildered, and at length found myself far down the tangled hillside. Ah, thought I, while striving to retrace my steps to the upland, how frequently are persons beguiled from high aims. And the current of a life, how often it is wholly changed by obstacles as trifling as this. A gay joke it may be; a meaning glance, an idle presentiment, something we might dissolve with a breath, but there is a power in its very weakness to which we yield.

N. M.

TEACHERS ARE NOT REQUIRED TO MAKE FIRES.

The teacher is employed to teach the school, but he is not employed to make the fires and clean the school house, much less to repair the school house.—*Journal of Education.*

A great part of mankind employ their first years in making their last miserable.