

He may be a Solon in wisdom, so far as a knowledge of the different branches is concerned, and yet for want of proper methods of instruction may fail utterly. The opinion is entertained by some that no special preparation for teaching is necessary. Should a man desire to become a workman in wood, in stone or in iron, an apprenticeship of three years must be spent in learning to shove the plane, handle the trowel, or blow the bellows; but no such preparatory training is deemed necessary to fit him to deal with immortal minds. May the time soon come when he who shall presume to teach without special preparation will not be countenanced. The teacher should have *his* Blackstone as well as the lawyer.

But while the teacher must understand educational methods, he must be superior to them. We hear much now-a-days of different methods of teaching, of object lessons, the lecture method, etc. Wickersham and Page, Holbrook and Ogden, Hart and Herbert, are conned and quoted. This is as it should be; but he who would attempt to apply any particular method to every instance will just as surely fail ingloriously. We must be able to use this or that, as our judgment may decide; or, failing to find a method suited to the case in hand, must, have the ingenuity to invent one for the emergency.

Again, the teacher must be ambitious—must aim at eminence in his profession. Our course in life is constantly retarded by adverse influence; we always fall a little short of reaching our aim. Hence, he who would succeed well must aim to succeed best.

Another requisite is good common-sense. The school-room is a place where cases full of difficulty are constantly occurring, for which human foresight can provide. To decide these, "administer justice and promote the general welfare" of the school, "he must rely upon his own judgment, and a large share of common-sense is necessary in order to provide for the highest good of the greatest number."

He must also have good eyes. Says Dr. John S. Hart: "Good eyes are to the teacher in the government of his school, worth more than the rod, more than merit or demerit marks, more than keeping in after school, more than scolding, reporting to parents, suspension, or expulsion, more than coaxing, premiums and bribes in any shape or to any amount."

The teacher must have a strong will. School is a place where mind comes in contact with mind, and will with will, and here as elsewhere, the weaker must yield. The pupils must feel that opposition is useless, and that when a command has been given there is nerve enough in the ruling power to secure obedience. Power resides in the will; having strength of will, he will possess that quality which boys admire so much, and which they so aptly name "grit," "backbone," "pluck." What steam is to the locomotive the will of the teacher is to the school; it makes it "go."

Another requisite is love for the work and devotion to it. The poet has aptly said,

"The toil you hate,

Fatigues you most, and brings no recompense."

This is emphatically true of teaching. Dislike it,

and nowhere else on earth can be found so dreary dull, detestable a place as the school-room; nothing can be conceived by mortal more troublesome, provoking—I had almost said Satanic—than a troop of schoolboys. But let the heart be enlisted, and each bright-eyed girl and laughter-loving boy becomes a friend; the "silken cord of love," stronger than bands of iron, binds together teacher and pupils, and gloom gives way to cheerfulness. Let Johnny and Emma feel that you love them, and at once an influence over them is secured. But devotion to the work, as well as love for it, should characterize the teacher.

A kindred qualification is sympathy with child nature, enabling the teacher to gain the affection of his pupils. Children's love is easily won. Their natures are confiding and they long for some one on whom to lavish the wealth of their affection. Let us be careful in this matter. A forbidding aspect, treating lightly their little troubles or joys—real to them—or a sanctimonious drawl may, like withering frost, blight the opening buds of their love.

The teacher must be able to control his temper. Anger is contagious, and when the flashing eye of the teacher is answered by the sullen look of the pupil, all hope of influencing the latter for good may as well be abandoned.

The teacher must be progressive. This is a day of improvement. Steam and electricity have revolutionized men's ideas. Thought flashes around the world. Old and long-cherished opinions are being closely examined, former methods carefully scrutinized. The spirit of improvement has entered the school-room and is driving out the barbarous punishments and unnatural methods of teaching which have long prevailed there. A brighter day is dawning upon our common schools. To prepare for this, the teacher must scan carefully every so-called improvement, accepting the good and rejecting the bad. He must go forward.

He must be self-reliant and patient. "Teaching is like fighting. Self-reliance is half the battle." Children are quick to discern any halting or hesitation in their instructors; and he who would succeed in impressing truth upon their minds, must not only know that truth, but must know that he knows it—must be master of the situation in every respect. "Line upon line, precept upon precept" must be constantly given; impatience and fretfulness must be banished. They destroy confidence and pave the way for rebellion. The schoolroom is no place for him who can make no allowance for youthful thoughtlessness.

The successful teacher is earnest and enthusiastic. Metals weld only at a white heat. The hearty cheer of a regiment sweeping onward to the bayonet charge makes each individual soldier, for the time a hero. Earnestness and enthusiasm enter into every great undertaking. They send a Livingstone to the wilds of Africa and a Kane and a Hayes to seek the Frost King seated on his icy northern throne.