

your friends? You had yet to learn that in this fair land of ours education counts for very little—the merest trifle in applying for a school. If a medalist from Oxford or Cambridge were to apply for a rural school beside a person holding a third-class certificate, we all know that the holder of the third-class could get the school by coming under ten dollars.

But, to return from fact to fiction, we left our school secretary discussing upon the multitude of teachers (not a very encouraging subject to an applicant).

“What’s yer figures?” asked he.

“Three hundred dollars.”

“Three hundred dollars? Oh, that’s too high.”

“Why, I thought you were paying three twenty-five.”

“Well, we hev been a payin’ that, but we’ve got teachers offering to do it fur two hundred dollars! Experienced teachers, too. There’s Warden’s son over here on the 9th. He offers to do it fer two hundred and fifty dollars, and pay the janitor out’ that. We always payed him twenty dollars.”

Warden! The name suggests a fine brick farm-house you have passed, a man who owns two hundred acres of land and three or four mortgages besides. It also suggests a nice appearing young man in the Model School whom I shall not attempt to describe, since he is here in the convention with us (under another name).

Your pride swelled up for a moment as you left the house. These were the people you were to serve! to cringe and bow low to! the people of “the almighty dollar, the fifty-cent piece and the copper cent.” It was to prepare for this you had spent your best years and labor. You turned again to your own profession—the profession you had gloried in, idealized! And yet your colleagues could stoop to this! However, you mustered all the courage

that was left and went to face another trustee.

“Well, I’ve just made up my mind to have nothing to do with it,” said Mr. Derwent when you interviewed him. “The way they’re actin’.”

“Why is Miss Bonar leaving?” you asked.

“Well, Miss Bonar has always given satisfaction as far as we knew. She boarded here with us, you know. But this young Warden, he slipped around to Mackay, the secretary, an’ offered to do it for two hundred and fifty and pay the janitor. Then Mackay comes to Miss Bonar and tells her she must come down to Warden’s figures or resign. Well, she thought about it, an’ she just told them if they didn’t think any more of her than that, after the way she’d worked for the school, they could take Warden.”

You made some faint inquiries about the other trustee, and found that, in order to win his favor, you must come at least five dollars below Mr. Warden. I have headed this paper “Early Impressions of a Teacher’s Life.” Perhaps I might more justly have called it “Early Depressions.” For certainly you were considerably depressed on your homeward way. It did not make matters any better to be told, on your return, that the market was too full; it was the same with everything, when the market is too full the price goes down. But—are we sheep for slaughter, or swine for shipment, that our value should go up and down accordingly as there are many or few of us? But that is not the greatest evil to which our nation is exposed. Not only is the teacher sold, but also the children. There was a time, to be sure, on this continent, when human lives were sold, when the black man stepped down from the block into the hands of the highest bidder. But there is something else being sold now. Our present system reads something like this: “We, the trustees of