

out a system, in which there are embodied the principles of energetic teaching and disciplinary skill? In school keeping, as well as in business, energy, skill, aptitude, are the great things—the *primary mainsprings*, which alone can ensure success. There must be the *ferret opus*—the *ars institutionis*. *We must not only strike the iron while it is hot, but strike it till it is made hot, and show skill in every blow.*—There must be skill and thoroughness with the teacher, and also earnestness with the scholar. Whatever the one undertakes to teach, he should be able to teach to its core, and the other to dwell upon it, till he makes it his own.—Smiles writes in his work—“Self-help”—“Whatever a youth learns, he should not be suffered to leave it until he can reach his arms round it, and clench his hands on the other side.”—“I resolved,” said Lord H. Leonards, “when beginning to read law, to make every thing I acquired perfectly my own, and never go to a second thing till I had entirely accomplished the first. Many of my competitors read as much in a day as I read in a week; but at the end of twelve months, my knowledge was as fresh as the day it was acquired, while theirs had glided away from recollection.”

Teaching power supposes *skilful aim*. Many teachers spread their efforts over too large a surface, by which they are weakened, and the progress of their scholars is hindered; and both they and their pupils acquire a habit of fretfulness and ineffective working. It is not so much the *quantity* as the *quality* that must be looked to. A few truths, of the right quality, intelligently stored in the mind are of more value than a thousand of others inapposite and ill understood. It is not the quantity of work gone through in school, nor the amount of reading that makes the best scholar, but the appositeness of school study to the purpose for which it is pursued; the well directed concentration of the mind upon it; and the habitual discipline by which the whole system of mental application is regulated. One of the mental diseases of our schools is *unskilful surface teaching, and too much aimed at at once*. With these two serious hinderances we have to contend, and so must especially the professors of our Normal schools,—those who have the training of our youth for teaching; and to whom, therefore, we have to look for the right kind of men and women for conducting our schools.—Against sending forth persons incapable of teaching with skill and intelligence we would respectfully forewarn them. We here address gentlemen too observant and intelligent, not to know that what we are stating is true—too true. Their own experience and daily observation show that one of the greatest difficulties with which they have to contend is fitting their students to be *intelligently skilful* in educating youth. How many do they find on being admitted into their institutions, sadly deficient in natural aptness to teach? How many when there add but slowly to their attainments—pass through their course deriving little benefit either in acquirements, or knowledge of the Art of skilful teaching? And how many others, though successful as students, show manifest deficiency, in every stage of their training, in that energy of character, and that devotedness of mind so essential in successful teaching? We are of opinion that more care should be taken to ascertain whether candidates for admission into our training establishments possess any degree of teaching power as a natural faculty. On admission they may be examined as to their attainments in particular branches of knowledge; but is the question generally asked,—“Does this man or this woman give evidence of those *natural qualifications* which, by a course of training, will well fit him or her to become an *energetic skilful educator*?”

One of Her Britannic Majesty's Inspectors of Normal schools states, in a little work lately published, as follows: “In all such establishments, admirable as their system of training and teaching may be, it is still to be wished that more pains were taken to deter thoroughly unfit persons from devoting themselves to the office. The principals of these institutions may very easily, and most likely do very quickly perceive who are and who are not qualified by nature for the work. The idea of rendering them so by art alone is worse than hopeless. Schools are numerous where the children are now sacrificed to the folly of supposing that because a man or a woman has attained a certain amount of knowledge they can, therefore, teach children. The letting loose these people on our schools is a great injury, and should be prevented by all who have the power, and assuredly none have it more than the principals of Normal schools.”—There is much truth in this language; and those at the head of our own training institutions,—of but recent existence—should profit by the errors and defects of much older similar establishments.—It is in their power to avoid the defects of other Normal schools, and be on their guard against injudicious admissions, and also the imperfection of

subsequent normal training. Attention to both cannot be too much insisted upon.—We do but justice to the officers of our training schools in acknowledging that their efforts in the intellectual training of their students, and storing their minds with technical knowledge deserve already high praise. Let aptness for teaching be equally well attended to, and developed by means of practice and instruction in the best methods of communicating instruction, and in training the minds of intending teachers, and in a few years we may be able to boast of schools equally distinguished for both skilful teaching, and intelligent educators.

There are many essential qualities which an examination, however searching, cannot reach, but which are, nevertheless, indispensable in a teacher's character,—such as zeal, patience, perseverance, and manner. It can give no evidence of a candidate's skill in the organization, discipline, and general management of a school. It is no criterion of his ability to conduct a single class. A short time's previous teaching would bring out these qualities, where they exist, in a way in which no examination can. It has, indeed, been recommended, and by high authority, “that the examination of training schools should be recognized only as preliminary and subsidiary to a final trial, in which teaching power,—elicited by actual teaching and conducting a school for sometime, would have due weight in fixing the candidate's position as a certificated teacher.” This is obviously the proper course, and we would strongly recommend its consideration to our school authorities. (1)

Let us look for a moment at the guards and securities which, in Prussia environ this sacred calling. “In the first place, the teacher's profession holds such a high rank in public estimation, that none who have failed in other employments or departments of business are encouraged to look upon school-keeping as an ultimate resource. Those, too, who, from any cause, despair of success in other departments of business or walks of life have very slender prospects in looking forward to this. These considerations exclude at once all that inferior order of men, who, in some countries, constitute the main body of teachers. Then come those preliminary schools where those who wish eventually to become teachers, go, in order to have their natural qualities and adaptation for school-keeping tested: for it must be born in mind that a man may have the most unexceptionable character, may be capable of mastering all the branches of study, may even be able to make most brilliant recitations from day to day; and yet, from some coldness or some repulsiveness of manner, from harshness of voice, from some natural defect in his person or in one of his senses, he may be adjudged an unsuitable model or archetype for children to be conformed to, or to grow by; and hence he may be dismissed at the end of his preparatory term of six months.”

In Prussia, and in Saxony, as well as in Scotland, the power of commanding and retaining the attention of a class is held to be a *sine qua non* in a teacher's qualifications. If he has not talent, skill, vivacity, or resources of anecdote and wit, sufficient to arouse and retain the attention of his pupils during the accustomed period of recitation, he is deemed to have mistaken his calling and receives a significant hint to change his vocation.

The march of knowledge, and the march of professional skill, we must not separate. The one cannot advance without the other.

But if many of our teachers show weakness in *teaching power*, we may be sure they show, in conducting their schools, weakness of thought, and little power of language. Their verbal memory is ill stored; their command of thought is as little as their command of words; and in abstracting and analyzing they cannot possibly have much capability.—This is the case with many teachers, (with diplomas too,) within my field of inspection. I believe the opinion among many teachers, and among more parents, is, that a certain amount of scholarship is *sufficient* qualification for one to undertake teaching. The power of teaching—of skilfully dealing with the minds of children in training and developing them—and the ability of making the whole work of education one of light and life—are never thought of. Yet these are the qualifications which constitute the good—the successful teacher.

It does not appear to occur to them that the work of the teacher—of the elementary teacher especially—is one of great difficulty. Yet so it is.—“A crowd of children comes to him, in whom the moral sense is in abeyance—who have never been taught to think—who have little knowledge which may form the subject of

(1) The pupil teachers teach in the Model School, and the Professors have every opportunity of testing their teaching power. Ed.