

## Special Papers.

## THE TEACHER AND THE TEACHING PROFESSION.\*

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A MONTH hence, and in over 1,000 homes in this county, and that number multiplied by 100 in this Province, light-hearted boys and girls, youths and maidens, will be heard whispering to one another about the fast approaching holidays and the pleasures and pastimes which are to make that long interval pass speedily by. In a proportion of these homes, so large that we scarcely dare make a computation, other voices will be heard expressing opinions of the holiday provisions of the law very materially different from those of the buoyant

## CAPTIVES ABOUT TO BE RELEASED.

A mother, most amiable to the afternoon caller, wonders "how she can possibly endure having that boy home for two whole months." A grown up sister, very captivating in manner and speech when occasion demands, testily declares "that the house will be unbearable with these kids in it all day long for eight whole weeks." Big brothers, surly fathers, cross-grained stepmothers, and other relatives, even to the thirty-seventh degree of consanguinity, join in the same hue and cry, and all vote these holiday periods very horrid and "great nuisances indeed." What do such words and conduct mean? Is there something beneath the surface? Do these expressions really convey their true meaning? Do these guardians care nothing for their wards? Yes, they do, for there is abundant evidence of that. Let the little head be feverish and the mouth parched, and in great haste the physician is summoned. Let the slender arm be broken or the ankle sprained, and no lightning flash can bring the surgeon fast enough to satisfy the mother's heart. Well, then, why these words? Because it has come to pass that

## PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

in nine homes out of ten has been and is being handed over to the Public school and High school teacher. Given up for ten out of the twelve months, it is of little value for the other two. The Mosaic order, "Thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children," has been revised, and the new revision is, "Thou shalt elect school trustees to engage school teachers to teach them diligently, or otherwise, not only the A, B, C, but obedience, courtesy, loyalty, patriotism and the honoring of father and mother," and a great many other things too numerous to mention, but "laid down most fully in the regulations of the Department of Education for Ontario." With neither apology for, nor censure of, such parents, I turn my attention to an imperfect consideration of the tremendous responsibility placed upon the teachers of the country, and to a friendly criticism of the manner in which they assume and carry this load.

The State expects some return from the trust placed in the hands of those who educate youth. Not only a return in education, but in realization of State duties and of

## FUTURE REQUIREMENTS.

Surely no teacher will take the position of the French master who said, "We do not prepare our pupils for life, but for examinations." The teacher who is only a teacher, and nothing but a teacher, will hardly be a good teacher; nor will the teacher who is only a teacher *pro tem.*, and a great deal of something else most of the time be any more successful. The teacher who feels that whilst bending his chief energies to the profession of his choice, he has also the status of a citizen, and the honor of a churchman to uphold, will prove the ideal instructor and the best exemplar. Such a teacher will realize that the scholars before him require for the future something more than a drink or two at the fountain of knowledge. In return for the State trust he will teach the scholars manliness or womanliness, morality, patriotism, courtesy, obedience and usefulness. This work he will accomplish partly by his oral instructions, but partly also by his daily conduct. If you neglect your duties as citizens, how can you expect your scholars to

\* An address delivered before the teachers of the East Huron Association.

## BECOME LOYALISTS?

If you care nothing for the uplifting of your neighbors by every righteous means, can you expect them to bear the fruit of unselfishness? If you are brusque and impatient why should they be polite? If you are listless and only anxious to reach the end of the lesson, why look for interest in those around you? But one says, "If I take any part in my country's affairs I become a politician, to become a politician necessarily means to become a party man, to become a party man means in a great many cases to offend some members of my Board and a large number of the people whose servant I am." Let me say just here that the meanest men to whom Providence loans the breath of Heaven, are those trustees and taxpayers who grumble and murmur and threaten, because the teacher they have engaged exercises the privileges of his citizenship differently from them, and refuses to barter his manhood for their "mess of pottage." Be sure of this, however, that the keen-eyed boys will discover your manliness and benefit by it if you courageously exercise your rights, just as readily as they will your recreancy and cowardice in

## BOWING YOUR HEADS TO HAMAN.

In your agreement with the trustees you may barter away part of your body, but there is no clause which calls for a delivery of your soul or heart. Would you, then, says another, have the teachers partisans? If you give to partizanship its proper meaning, yes; but if you give to it the meaning it is fast obtaining—the subordination of every right principle to party ends—no. The opportunity was never grander, the times never more propitious to exhibit the qualities of the patriot and to free the mind from the fetters of prejudice.

In my humble opinion the teacher should bestow more attention than is usually given to the attainment of at least a general knowledge of passing events in the world. If some quick-witted scholar were to travel a little outside

## THE ROUTINE LESSON,

and, with the map of Turkey before his class, ask the teacher why Russia and England so zealously watched Constantinople, how many could answer him truly? Upon the surface, at all events, does it not seem to be as necessary to know who is the present Prime Minister of England, as to learn that Wolsey was a Minister of State in the reign of Henry VIII.? If occasion required a reference to the story of Garibaldi, and an inquiring scholar asked, "Who leads the Italian people now?" What would be the answer? If your pointer travels over the Pacific until the site of Samoa is reached, and No. 4 says, "I read in the papers about a great disaster there a few days ago, tell us all about it," or another asks, "What certain men were sent to Berlin to do about Samoa," what replies would he make? I venture very timidly to suggest that the teacher would be equally as well off—nay, better off—if he knew more about Bright and Disraeli, and less about Cicero and Demosthenes, more about Blaine and Macdonald, and less about Washington and Richelieu, more about Carlyle and Tennyson and less about Cæsar and Virgil, when knowledge of the latter has been gained at the expense of being ignorant of the former.

In conversation with some teachers, they have said to me, "We have no time for these things." There is, I am convinced, some truth in the remark. By statute and regulation the school hours are crowded with exercises, and the home hours with preparation. Our Legislature and the Department of Education might have

## CONDENSED THEIR STATUTES AND REGULATIONS

into one General Act, entitled "An Act to suppress all originality and spontaneity on the part of the teacher," and "for the appointment of inspectors to see that the same is most effectually done." Our schools are being systematized to death; the Teacher is becoming an automaton, the children machinery moved by Act of Parliament or Departmental regulation. Given the same state of affairs, and Bronson Alcott's story of his school never would have been told. Had our system then been in existence, no one could now write with pride that he had gone to school to Daniel Webster or Harriet Beecher Stowe. Surely it is time some protest was made against a system which leaves

no moment for the experiment of natural methods by a teacher for a particular child or class. These experiments ruled out, by what means are improvements to be discovered? Must they be brought from afar to the undeserved

## DISCREDIT OF OUR OWN EDUCATIONALISTS?

A practical Minister of Education, such as the present one, should be able to remedy this evil. This overcrowding with studies and subjects affects the scholars as well as the teacher. It trenches still further upon the domain of the home. Dr. E. E. Hale, in the *North American Review*, gives these sledge-hammer blows at what he styles "the machine system":—"A few years ago, before the introduction of what is termed 'the true system,' it was understood that a boy or girl had many things to learn besides reading, writing and arithmetic. Thus it was understood that a boy must know something about his hands and feet. He must know what a bushel of wheat was when he saw it, and how a blacksmith shod a horse. He must know the methods of a town meeting. He must know how to milk, how to plough, how to cradle oats; how to drive, how to harness a horse, how to take off a wheel, how to grease an axle. There were ten thousand other things that he must know of useful importance, not one of which

## IS EVER TAUGHT IN SCHOOL.

For a girl it was understood that in average life she must know how to make and mend her clothes, and her brother's, and her father's; how to knead, to bake, to stew, to boil and to roast, how to wash, how to iron, and how to starch, how to tear a bandage and how to put one on. These things cannot be taught in the school, and the present system decrees that there should be no time to teach them at home. There are so many tasks and exercises, so much crowding and cramming, that what follows from the new system is the discovery, after a fair trial, that the children educated under it have no experience with tools, and no ability with their hands, and but very little knowledge of practical life. The State paying for the education of its children does not receive what it pays for."

A perusal of many of the regulations of the Department almost justifies the opinion becoming very current that they have not been prepared by men whose practical experience would entitle them to perform such a task, but by some theorist whose vanity is satisfied only by seeing his speculations in print duly stamped with the seal of the Education Department, and thrust upon the over-pressed teacher and scholars. Some of these regulations too have been forced into effect by unthinking trustees and parents. One subject after another has been clamored for until the curriculum is crowded, and every moment is taken up. To the simple course of what used to consist of three R's, this, that and the other thing has been at the instigation of Tom, Dick and Harry added, and still there is more to follow. In church some Sunday the choir fails, and a precocious parent commences an agitation for

## THE TEACHING OF MUSIC

in the school. A boy makes a mistake in the miller's office about a handful of wheat, and forthwith it is requested that "agriculture" shall be put on the course. Some untidy citizen neglects his yard for seasons, his family suffer from typhoid, and at once there is a cry for hygiene. Our Legislature refuse to do the right thing with the liquor traffic, and our well-meaning Temperance women knock at the door of the Department, and imperatively demand that the overtaxed little minds shall further receive lessons on Temperance. In the home these matters could have been dealt with in a more satisfactory manner than in the school, if the Minister had relegated them to that place. It surely requires no argument to prove that such things belong to the home domain. The best primary lessons in hygiene for the boys are clean yards and pure wells. Give the girls an organ or a piano, and they will take up music. Show the children the benefits of total abstinence by personal conduct, and they will not require lessons on the nature of alcohol. By the introduction of these extra studies the theory of education is wholly transformed, and

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