

(From the Connecticut School Manual.)

PLEASURES OF SCHOOL TEACHING.

The communication in the Manual upon the *Sorrows of School Keeping*, it seemed to me, did not tell the whole truth, only one side of the truth, and that, too, not the most desirable to have told. It is lamentable that teachers, who are engaged in a work necessarily attended with much perplexity and trial of patience, should be subjected to so many evils which are not necessary. Green wood housed in the ditch, broken windows, tardy scholars, and officious parents, are needless annoyances, and should be speedily removed. And being removed, I doubt whether the business of the teacher is any more sorrowful than any other employment or profession. With a convenient school-house, and scholars well supplied with books, I find more pleasures than sorrows, in teaching. There is, first, the pleasure of being engaged in a useful and noble work. No matter what public opinion says of teaching, it is, in itself, an employment as honorable as any other.—Look at the common lawyer; forever meddling with other people's business,—looking into their little, foolish quarrels; blackening or whitewashing, as the case may be, some good-for-nothing character; familiar, for the most part, with the vices, cheatings, duplicity, and all manner of meannesses of mankind; and one would suppose, not without a fair share of perplexities, and annoyances;—is his profession altogether blessed? Is it most improving to his mind or heart?

Or the physician, working over the bodily bruises, sores, contagions and all manner of ills to which *flesh* is heir; riding, if not "boarding, round," called up every dark and stormy night to leave wife and home, to attend the pressing calls of disease, which a bad night never fails to produce;—is his calling so very desirable? Is he free from anxieties, cares, troubles and all sorrows? Or shall the clergyman, with a half dozen snarling parishioners finding fault with his orthodoxy, or with his stupid mesmerizing sermons, or with his partiality in visiting the people, or prying into his family to detect some deficiency, —shall be pronounced the happiest of men?

True all these men are, about a useful and respectable work; but no more so than the teacher. What is a professor in college but a teacher? And his station

commands the best talents, men leave other honourable professions to be teachers of students. Yet a college teacher does not do as much to form character,—the mental and moral habits of the young, as the teacher of a district school. He is with his class only one, or two hours a day, scarcely knows their names, rarely passes a social five minutes with one of them, and cannot exert the influence upon character which the common teacher, who is with his scholars constantly, must have. Nor is the hearer of lessons recited in Latin and Greek and the higher mathematics, more improving to himself, than hearing the lessons of the school is to the public teacher. *Opinion* places teaching in college in a higher rank, and gives it a steadier home and better pay. But, whether it is more useful or honourable depends not upon the station or kind of teaching, but upon the teacher.

There is, again, the pleasure, of watching the growth and development of mind. The district school teacher, above all others, has this happiness. Minds of all kinds and peculiarities are under his training, and at a time when their expansion is so rapid that it can be seen. There is pleasure in seeing the opening bud of the flower, and the amateur gardener is in raptures every morning as he visits his "vegetable children." It is one of the purest joys of life to watch the growth of whatever nature, through our agency, is forming and maturing. The teacher of children and youth has this joy. Under his training, one faculty after another of the young mind, is shooting up, and giving promise of what it is soon to become. In every child there are all the susceptibilities and faculties of a Newton, a Napoleon, or a Paul; and the teacher is watching to see in how many, or in what favoured one, these may exist, in as great a degree. Half the distinguished men of our state and nation once sat, children, in the district school. And many of them enjoyed no advantage of instruction beyond this school. Probably four-fifths of all who will make themselves felt upon this world, in thirty or forty years hence, are now in these humble temples of learning; and the character and extent of their influence are every day being affected by the teacher. In all this there is a subject of pleasing reflection. How many men have blessed—and some have cursed, their early teachers! The teacher is conscious that he can turn those young faculties and susceptibilities into almost any chan-

nel, it is his express work to mould them into the noblest forms of manhood. And daily he can see them assume shape and permanence under his moulding hand.

To the teacher belongs the pleasure of invention. He can continually try new modes of teaching; see what manner of conducting recitations is best calculated to impress and discipline mind. He can experiment upon dull heads and upon bright ones. And one deeply interested in teaching, will continually be devising new ways of cultivating the temper, disposition, and whole character of his pupils. He finds this improving to himself, and profitable for the school.

On the whole, I cannot see why the business of teaching is not as full of pleasures as any other. Every calling has its cares and sorrows; even *doing nothing* is said to be a miserable business. Remove from teaching what need not and should not be incidental to it; give the teacher a home and a fair compensation, and he has no reason to complain above other men. One of the happiest men that I know is a school teacher, and has been for many years. He meets with more truly smiling countenances than the lawyer, physician, or minister. He improves himself as much as most men in other professions, and his usefulness is probably greater than it would be if he was in any other station. Let not teachers change their profession with the expectation of lessening their sorrow; but, if they love it, let them continue in it, and they will increase their pleasures.

SOLO.

PICTURES.—A room with pictures in it, and a room without pictures, differ about as much as a room with windows and a room without windows. Nothing we think is more melancholy, particularly to a person who has to pass much time in his room, than bleak walls with nothing on them,—for pictures are loop holes of escape to the soul, leading to other scenes, and other spheres. It is such an inexpressible relief to a person engaged in writing or even reading, on looking up, not to have his line of vision chopped off by an odious white wall, but to find his soul escaping, as it were, through the frame of an exquisite picture, to other beautiful and perhaps heavenly scenes, where the fancy for a moment may revel, refreshed and delighted. Thus pictures are consolers of loneliness; they are a relief to the jaded mind; they are windows to the imprisoned thought; they are histories and sermons, which we can read without the trouble of turning over the leaves.—*Doering.*