

Special Papers.

WAYS AND MEANS OF IMPROVING
TEACHERS NOW IN OFFICE.

Following is the first part of a paper read at a recent meeting of the Teachers' Association of the State of Pennsylvania, by Superintendent Buchele :

In the presentation of this paper it is taken for granted that the teacher is born right, that he has been properly educated, and that he has secured his position in the usual manner. It is also assumed that in a large majority of cases the teacher is a woman, and, where this is not so, the compensation, emoluments, honors, or whatever else *men* look for as a reward in this life are on such a small scale as practically to drive from the teacher's chair and into other vocations almost all young men of more than ordinary ability and ambition. It may be fairly postulated that teachers are very much like other men and women; they hunger and thirst at times, need clothing and amusements; some of them even love money, and occasionally, though very rarely, know how to acquire it and hold on to it like other people, and, wonderful to say, some of the men even dare to get married, and presume to raise a family. The perfectly natural result is, therefore, that for these and other reasons which need not be mentioned here, the ladies, heaven bless them! all expect to get married soon, and the men will soon leave for business, as it is called, or one of the other professions. It is also understood that the improvement here contemplated does not apply to personal appearance, as teachers, especially the ladies, do not stand in need of that kind of improvement—who would presume to paint the lily?

All that needs, therefore, be considered is ways and means of improving the teacher professionally.

Three causes additional to those already mentioned are at work to render special efforts to bring this about more necessary in this than in other professions: first, the payment of a fixed salary, not always proportioned to professional ability or success; secondly, employment by the public; and, thirdly, the very inadequate preparation for a life work made when the profession is entered upon. Four years at college, and three years of strictly professional instruction, is pretty generally required of those who enter the profession of law, medicine, or divinity, while the teacher is supposed to be fit for full admission to his profession with scholarship insufficient to admit him to the freshman class of a respectable college, and a course of professional instruction which, if pursued exclusively, could be completed in six months.

The payment of a fixed salary, not always dependent on the teacher's immediate exertion, also tends to check his efforts at self-improvement, as compared with the stimulus afforded the lawyer in the trial of causes where he knows that he must surpass his opponent if he is to win his suit and add to his reputation. The uncertainty of the results of the teacher's efforts, and the complex nature of the material on which he operates, together with the widespread public opinion that special training is unnecessary, and the general indifference to pedagogical blundering (who ever heard of a suit for educational malpractice?), prove how much there is to induce the teacher to let well enough alone. If the public is satisfied, why should he endeavor to do better?

Now the teacher, strictly speaking, is the parent acting in the sphere of character-building chiefly through instruction. He or she must, therefore, be regarded in a twofold aspect—as heart and mind—loving and teaching, loving because teaching and teaching because loving. It follows naturally that the smaller the child, the more neglected the pupil, the greater the need of heart in the teacher. Alas, for pupil and teacher, when the latter is almost pure intellect! The foundlings in homes and asylums in our large cities die for want of love and caressing, as the flowers and plants for want of sunshine and moisture. Who can tell how many pupils in our public schools are blighted in heart and mind for want of affection? How this affection influences teaching on the part of both the teacher and the taught!* Do we grow

*He who gains our heart, says Cardinal Gibbons, easily commands the attention of our mind.

weary of toiling for those we love? Is it not rather a delight to do so? How the hours pass swiftly along while the mind is intent to please, by some new acquisition on the one hand, or the presentation of some discovered truth on the other! The teacher that has a great mother-heart will not waste time in writing notes to the parents of her pupils; she will go to their homes, she will look on their poverty and neglect, on their untoward circumstances, with sympathetic eyes, and then more than ever highly resolve that so far as she is concerned these poor, forsaken little ones shall be lifted out of their slough of despond, I had almost said despair, to the clearer light of purity and truth. There are such teachers. I have had the good fortune to know such. It may be that they could not spell well enough to get a one in orthography. What difference did it make? Life and character do not consist in spelling, but rather in loving, in blessing, in living for others. "Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori," sweet and glorious is it to die for one's country—is it not even sweeter and more glorious to *live* for those whose "angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven"? In this spirit Froebel says, "Lass' uns unsern Kindern leben" (Let us live for our children). Ways and means of improving the teacher in this respect are not many—to a very large extent they must be born right—and yet something is possible even here. In the first place, those in charge of educational affairs, educators in authority, and especially the public behind them, must insist on and show appreciation of these qualities in the teacher's character. They must judge and estimate the teacher rather by what he *is* than by what he *teaches*. Unfortunately the beauty of holiness, the grace of charity, and the jewel of truth and purity are not esteemed as highly as the power of knowledge, the ability to outdo others, and the skill of the hypocrite. "People want to be humbugged," said Barnum, and his success as a showman proved that he was right.* Men forget that the cherub, the angel of knowledge, is inferior in the hierarchy of heaven to the seraph, the angel of love. A lofty ideal and a high estimate of the teacher's calling will exert a powerful influence in promoting improvement in the teacher in this direction. "What is more noble," says Chrysostom, "than to form the minds of youth? He who fashions the morals of children performs a task, in my judgment, more sublime than that of any painter or sculptor." Let the teacher realize that in moulding the character of his pupils he is creating living portraits destined to adorn not only our earthly temples, but those tabernacles not made with hands, eternal in the heavens; that as an artist it is his high privilege to attune the voices whose music shall unceasingly roll around the throne of God in heaven. In other words, when the teacher looks upon his pupils as the redeemed of the Lord, his Lord, whom he loves with love unspeakable, then and only then will he follow after the model teacher, Jesus Christ, even in his daily occupation. Here is Dr. Arnold's idea of this characteristic of a teacher: "What I want is a man who is a Christian and a gentleman, an active man, and one who has common sense and understands boys." But whatever may have been said as regards the overshadowing importance of the heart, it is, nevertheless, admitted that the teacher teaches only that which he knows, that knowledge is power, and that it is a good thing for a teacher to grow in knowledge. Says Dr. Arnold, "I do not so much care about scholarship, as he will have immediately under him the lowest forms in the school; but yet, on second thoughts, I do care about it very much, because his pupils may be in the highest forms; and, besides, I think that even the elements are best taught by a man who has a thorough knowledge of the matter." A greater than Arnold has said: "And beside this, giving all diligence, add . . . to virtue, knowledge."

HAPPY the teachers who have to do with intelligences naturally curious, but especially happy are those who know how to excite curiosity and to keep it alive. For this purpose we must skilfully appeal to the tastes of the child and favor them, yet without overtaxing them. Eagerness to utilize a taste may kill it.—*Compayre*.

*One of the schools of the ancient Greeks marvelled that men should love lies, and Bacon says, "A mixture of a lie doth ever add pleasure."

Write upon the blackboard and upon the tablet of memory:

Present.	Past.	Past par.
Set.	Set.	Set.
Sit.	Sat.	Sat.

Emphasize the fact that the three forms of the first are identical; that it means to place; and that, with this meaning, it is always transitive. The second never takes the form of the first, and is always intransitive. Now let us use them:

He sets the vase on the table. I set it on the mantel, and have set it there before. I sit at a desk, sat there yesterday, and have sat there for months. The box sits wherever I set it. It sat where I set it yesterday, and has always sat just where I have set it. I have set a chair at the window; will you sit there? The inkstand was set upon the table. Who set it there? Sit down. Set the lamp on the table. How long have you sat there? Have you set the chair in place? Where does it sit? Who sits in it?

The intransitive verb *set* is seldom used except in the senses to decline, to congeal, and to move in a certain direction. These must be pointed out and illustrated: The heavenly bodies set when they pass below the horizon; liquids set when they harden into solids; the current sets towards the west.

After all, eternal vigilance is the price that must be paid for pure English, and pupils cannot be drilled too much or too often in the use of all the irregular verbs in common use.—*Southwestern Journal of Education*.

MENTAL ARITHMETIC.

1. A school slate measures 10 inches long by $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide, inside the frame. How much writing surface does it contain?
2. Paper that measures 8 inches by 5 inches is called commercial note paper. How much surface does a sheet of commercial note paper contain?
3. If it cost \$1 to saw a cord of wood into three pieces, what, at the same rate, will it cost to saw it into four pieces?
4. Iron rails cost \$1 a foot; what will one mile of railroad track cost?
5. If half of what I receive for my watch is gain, what is my gain per cent.?
6. What per cent. of $\frac{1}{6}$ is $\frac{1}{8}$?
7. If my coffee cup holds $\frac{2}{3}$ of a gill, how many cups in one gallon?
8. What will one mile of wire cost at three cents a yard?
9. What will it cost to plaster a room 30 feet long by 20 feet wide by 10 feet high, at 10 cents per square foot, no allowance being made for doors and windows?
10. What will it cost to paint a front yard fence 60 feet long and 3 feet high at 25 cents per square yard?—*Forster Grammar School, Somerville, Mass.*

THOSE ASTOUNDING ADVERBS.

One evening a gentleman came home with a budget of news. An acquaintance had failed in business. He spoke of the incident as "deliciously sad." He had ridden up town with a noted wit, whom he described as "horribly entertaining," and, to cap the climax, he spoke of the butter that had been set before him at a country hotel as "divinely rancid."

The young people stared, and the oldest daughter said: "Why, papa, I should think that you were out of your head." "Not in the least, my dear," he said pleasantly. "I'm merely trying to follow the fashion. I worked out 'divinely rancid' with a good deal of labor. It seems to me rather more effective than 'awfully sweet.' I mean to keep up with the rest of you hereafter. And now," he continued, "let me help you to a piece of this exquisitely tough beef."

Adverbs, he says, are not so fashionable as they were in his family.—*Boston Post*.