

to this provision for elementary training, the proportion of Normal-trained teachers varied from one-sixth to one-eighth of the whole teaching body. I will not discuss at this point the defects in the training imparted, the comparison at present made having reference only to the number really trained with those wholly untrained. But the study of facts accessible to everyone, regarding progress of education in places where attention is given to the training of the teacher for his work, will show beyond question the necessity of such training. In regard to the proposition sometimes advanced that experience may fairly offset the lack of training, there is this to be said in its support: That the man who loves his work, and intelligently uses his best efforts in it, will eventually discard what is false or useless in his method for that which at least common sense will not condemn. On the other hand, it must not be forgotten that invaluable time is lost by even the most apt learner before he acquires the necessary skill, to the injury of the material worked upon. Again, the teacher outside the centres of population is an isolated being, debarred from the opportunities of observation and interchange of ideas concerning his work that are generally within easy reach in other departments of labour; but the most serious danger to the untrained and uninstructed teacher in acquiring skill by experience alone, is that of becoming the slave of false methods, which, for want of correction in the earlier stage of his career, become eventually fixed habits, impossible to be eradicated—which finally stamp him as “old-fashioned” or “eccentric.” Another proposition—that teachers are born, not made—is one that I should desire to qualify very materially before giving my adherence to it. I think it is quite true that some persons could never

be teachers, training or no training, whatever their scholastic attainments might be. Most of us have come in contact at some time with an unfortunate of this kind, who was vainly striving against fate. There are also some persons blessed with qualities of mind that fit them peculiarly for teaching, the success of whose work commands our admiration, and the apparent lightness of whose efforts excites our envy. But the class is so small that any idea of this becoming a test of fitness is at once recognized as impracticable. Some persons in the same way have a natural fitness for being musicians or artists or mechanics. But in all cases the truth of these two propositions will be admitted: First, that the ranks of no profession can be filled exclusively by those only possessing natural aptitude for its work; and second, that the possession of this natural aptitude or fitness by no means frees the possessor from the necessity of the cultivation and development of those qualities from which it is derived. The universal testimony of great artists is that hard work and constant study have been the chief factors in their success; and many a “man of talent” has made his life a failure from his unwillingness to supplement his natural talent with faithful application. Applying, then, the principle of the two propositions above given to the teaching profession, we come to the conclusion that, in all cases, a period of training is absolutely necessary (1) to bring into useful service all the natural talent of which the beginner may be possessed, and (2) to prevent the waste of time and energy that follows the effort of the student to be his own instructor in the art of teaching. Two questions here inevitably occur: (1) How is this training to be imparted effectually and universally? and (2) What will it do for the student, the better to fit