

**The Teacher in Relation to Society.**

The teacher who shuts himself up in his lodgings after school hours and during holidays rarely excels in his profession. While it is necessary that a reasonable portion of his time should be given to the preparation of his work and to the acquisition of additional stores of knowledge, it is of equal importance that he should cultivate that sympathy with society and with popular modes of thought which cannot be obtained by the recluse. His pupils come from the homes of business and professional men where the surroundings are such as to habituate them to mental vivacity, ease of manner, and a cheerfulness which their daily associations naturally develop. The transfer of pupils from such associations to a school-room where the teacher's manner is cold and stiff, where his address is stilted and mechanical, where his want of sympathy precludes all friendly intercourse with him, have a tendency to stunt the growth of those generous impulses which are so natural to children during school age. The most successful teacher, other things being equal, is the man of a buoyant temperament, with an exuberance of spirits and with a certain rush of boyhood in his manner; who knows how far a child's disposition to enjoy himself should be subordinated to the duties of the school-room, and who is capable of looking upon the miniature world over which he exercises control as a world of pleasure as well as activity.

So much for the personal attitude of a teacher towards his pupils. Towards his own profession his attitude should be one of progressive sympathy. How often teachers are heard to speak disparagingly of their own calling, forgetting that the greatest philosophers of the day, and the professors of our best universities, are their own coadjutors. In pedagogy there is no aristocracy. The teacher of the kindergarten is the peer of the university professor. Without the inspiration which the child so often receives while studying his primer, there would frequently be no distinction for the university at which he may finally graduate. The honors are divided all along the line, and the log school-house may have played a more significant part in the child's education than the tessellated halls of Oxford or Cambridge.

To maintain that professional sympathy which is so essential to the dignity and supremacy of his profession, the teacher should keep himself in touch with the educational tendencies of the times. Education is an evolution. Its moods and tenses are ever varying; its phases in one state or continent differ from those of another, and the teacher who knows no more of the educational forces at work than those which

operate within the four walls of his school-room becomes a pessimist before he is aware of it and a drag upon the aspirations of his fellows. If his life is to be one of professional growth and enjoyment he must be a man of the world, at least so far as to avail himself of the momentum of the best tendencies of the age; his daily bread must be the best literature and his highest ambition must be to develop the individuality and character of his pupils. — *Hon. G. W. Ross, Toronto.*

**Natural Science in Common Schools.**

By reason of its importance the study of natural science should begin quite early in school. But on account of its methods, which require maturity in the student, as well as because of the fact that the study of nature is only a small portion of human learning, it must not occupy a large place in the programme. It is quite sufficient for common district schools to devote one hour each week to the purpose, beginning in the lowest grade of the primary school. This hour should not be divided into fifteen minute object-lessons and scattered through the week, but should be one undivided lesson. In it he should take up in systematic order the important results of science. There should be description, illustration by pictures, models, and natural objects, a conversation with the pupils, drawing out what they have already learned on the subject, and a critical comparison made with a view to verify or correct their previous knowledge, and thereby teach critical alertness in observation. Pupils should be set to work, illustrating and verifying the results presented, in their leisure hours doing the work, and lastly their knowledge should be tested and made exact by short essays written on the contents of the lessons.

Three courses arranged spirally in the eight years of the district schools will be found advantageous. For each child ought to see nature in all its departments, and not sink himself into a specialist in some department when he has not yet seen all the departments. For the lowest three years I have found it best to have for the first year a study of plants, their structure and habits and interesting phases; animals for the second year; for the third year such glimpses of physics as are involved in explaining the structure of playthings and familiar tools and machines, also the phenomena of the elements of nature. This is the first course, taking up organic nature and inorganic.

The second course of three years studies botany more scientifically, learning something of classification and much more of structure; also learning the