

the friends of the University are wise they will thoroughly modernize its curriculum, economize its funds, take the people into their confidence and let the light of criticism have free admission to its halls and Senate Chambers.

THE PROFESSIONAL TRAINING OF TEACHERS.

The profession of the public school teacher differs from other professions with which it is often compared in many important particulars, this amongst others;—the young man or woman who enters upon it, has already passed over the road along which his pupils are to be led. Before one person can possibly train another for law, medicine, engineering, etc., he must himself have had either a special training or a special study and practice, in the particular profession. To attempt to teach it to another in the absence of such professional knowledge would be a manifest absurdity. But the youth, however raw or inexperienced, who engages to teach a child to read or write, or cipher, must in the nature of the case, have been over the ground himself and become familiar with it. He is surely the most stupid of mortals if he cannot recall and profit by some chapters in his own childhood's experience. He must know to a considerable extent the workings of the child-mind, the nature of its difficulties, and the best means of removing or overcoming them. He can, if not incorrigibly dull and unsympathetic, generally put himself in the child's place. And it should never be forgotten that this ready sympathy and insight are two of the very best qualifications of the true teacher.

Again most young men and women who in these days enter the profession have themselves passed under the hand of several teachers of different grades of education and ability. They have not only been brought into contact with these teachers in their personal relations as pupils, but they have witnessed every day for years, their training of numerous other pupils. They must, therefore, have become to some extent familiar with the methods and merits of various systems. By their intimate associations with their fellow pupils they have had excellent opportunities for judging the results, and learning where and wherefore this method succeeded and the other failed. They have also had daily and hourly opportunities of observing different modes of school government, observing them too, from the best possible position for learning their exact effects and defects.

Let it not be supposed that these observations are intended to deny the necessity or disparage the value of professional training for teachers. By no means. We are in hearty sympathy with the cry that is going up from every section of the educational field for more and better professional training. Our aim is to distinguish between things that differ, and to show that such training to be valuable must be competent, and to be competent must be in professional hands, that is, in the hands of those who are skilled not only in *teaching* but in *teaching how to teach*.

There can be no doubt that many a successful teacher may be an utter failure as a teacher of teaching, just as many an acute mathematician would be a poor teacher of mathematics,

or many a keen scientific investigator a very indifferent instructor in the principles of his science. A profound knowledge of theories is not always essential to the successful practitioner, but a thorough mastery of principles and a close study of their historical development and practical applications, are indispensable for him whose business it is to fit others to be successful practitioners.

The application of these remarks to some methods of professional training lately brought into vogue in Ontario is clear. Whatever is worth doing at all is worth doing well. It may be the part of wisdom and duty for the Education Department to require graduates and undergraduates in arts to take a course of professional training and submit to a professional examination in order to qualify for certain positions in the Public and High Schools. But in order to do this the Department is surely bound to provide thoroughly competent instruction. It goes without saying that such instruction can be obtained only from those who have fitted themselves to impart it by careful and protracted study of the principles and practice of pedagogy. If practice in teaching under the eye of a teacher is all that is needed, it is not easy to see why that cannot be obtained as well in the actual work of assistant under one master, as in experimental attempts under another who may be no whit better qualified. If, again, it is the study of certain professional text-books that is chiefly regarded, the candidate may well argue that he could fit himself for examination in those in the one place as well as in the other.

Further thought and experience will, we feel sure, convince all unprejudiced educators in Ontario that the Department has gone either too far, or not far enough, in the matter of professional training. Half measures in education, as in other matters, are generally failures. It is unfair and unjust to well-educated young men and women, desirous of enlisting in the army of teachers, to compel them to expend their time and means in further study, without giving them some guarantee of an adequate return. It is also, as we have before said, unfair to the masters of the institutions set apart as training institutes to require them to undertake the duties of a new and abstruse profession, in addition to the arduous labors of that for which they have already qualified themselves. If pedagogy is a true science and is to be studied as such, under official direction and compulsion, by all means let the work of instruction be taken out of the hands of amateurs already overworked in their own lines, and entrusted to those who have qualified themselves for the new profession and are prepared to devote to it the undivided time, talent, and energy which it pre-eminently demands.

“ How beautiful is night !
A dowy freshness fills the silent air,
No mist obscured, nor cloud, nor speck, nor stain
Breaks the serene of heaven ;
In full-orbed glory yonder moon divine
Rolls through the dark blue depths.
Beneath her steady ray
The desert circle spreads
Like the round ocean girdled with the sky.
How beautiful is night !”

—*Southey's Thalaba*,