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Editorial

YOUTH AND EXPERIENCE

It is quite true that teaching is a procession rather than a profession. The average length of service is said to be no more than three years. Under such circumstances it can scarcely be expected that the work done in the schools will be of the highest type. Very few teachers do their best work during their first year or two. They have not learned even the tricks of the trade. Yet they are not wholly at a disadvantage, for youth has always something in its favor.

Teaching is of such a nature that people, as they continue at it under ordinary conditions, tend to become "irritable, tyrannical and unattractive."

This is not true universally, and it is not true of anyone who will read this, even if it is true of his or her neighbor. The two pronouns are used, because "irritability and tyranny" are not peculiar to either sex. Possibly the word "unattractive" is intended for men alone.

There is this in a young lady's favor: She is bright; she is optimistic; she has ideals tinged with romance; she appeals to childhood; she is able to participate in the activities of children; she is prepared to take part in the social life of the community. She is, moreover, more adaptable because she is not so "set in her ways." She is naturally progressive; she is not in bondage to the custom of years. On the other hand she is not as likely to be nicknamed, caricatured and talked about lightly in the homes as an older teacher with uncertain temper and "pedagogic self-

assurance." There are obviously some natural advantages resting with the young.

There is, however, a danger in having the schools officered wholly or chiefly by inexperienced teachers. They have not the broad out-look on life; they act from impulse; they lack organizing ability. In matters of school routine they have not learned to act automatically. They require the guidance of those who have had life-experience and experience in conducting schools, so that they may use their energies wisely.

The best we can hope for in this country for some time is a modification of the present system in such a way as to link up with a group of younger teachers one with experience and expert knowledge. The two classes will help each other. One class will provide knowledge and skill, the other class enthusiasm and natural charm. In rural districts supervision by experts or the union of small schools into consolidated schools are the best means to be employed to make young and inexperienced teachers of help to each other.

An expert is not merely one who has had experience in teaching. A teacher may easily become a moss-back. She may be so conservative that she is hopelessly behind the young people who are just coming into the work. She may be living on the knowledge of a by-gone age. She may think that skill in handling classes is a proof of teaching ability, and she may be fundamentally wrong in aim, attitude, and methods. An expert is a scientific edu-