

They must have an exalted idea of the teacher's office, not as reflecting dignity on those who hold it, but as requiring much at their hands. It must not be assumed lightly, nor from unworthy motives. It must not be coveted as an easy and pleasant position. A pleasant position it is, to one who loves the work to which it introduces him, but it is an easy—an un-laborious position to none. Even when use and wont, and a consciousness of fitness for his sphere have removed out of the teacher's way the obstacles which at first encumber his path, his task is still a laborious one, requiring watchfulness, patience, firmness, and great power of endurance mental and physical. To one who has no aptness for teaching, no love for it, no success in it, teaching is a most painful drudgery.

The office of teacher must not be assumed in a mercenary spirit—just so much time and teaching given for so much money received. He who takes it in such a spirit will fail every way. He will disappoint, and he will be disappointed. If he is conscientious in the discharge of his duties, and at all successful in his work, he may go on with pleasure to himself and others for a while. But when the day of reckoning comes—when the balance is struck, he will find that the hard cash justly considered his due, will by no means remunerate him for the labor bestowed. He will say, "With less wear and tear I might have earned more at some other work," and it will be the truth. The outlay of the teacher is not of a kind that can be estimated in dollars and cents, and dollars and cents, even were they more liberally awarded to the teacher than they are among us—could never make to him a full and satisfactory remuneration.

Do not let me be misunderstood. We live in a world in which to the greater number of us, our daily bread must, in one sense, be the first consideration. To suspect as mercenary all who look to the profession of teaching as a means of obtaining a livelihood, would be foolish, as it would be unjust. Of a more sacred profession it is said "They who minister at the altar shall live by the altar." A teacher may with propriety permit himself to look to his profession as a means of obtaining honorable bread. But he must assure himself that if to obtain bread be his sole motive in choosing his profession he need never hope to become a successful teacher in the highest sense. His success must be the result of earnest self-denying labor which bread cannot pay. Unless he so loves his work, or is so impressed with its importance that he is willing to accept success in it, as the best part of his remuneration, he will be disappointed.

Upon this part of the subject—the fitness of teachers for their work—one might enlarge indefinitely. In one sense it may be said to cover the whole ground. As soon as the majority of our common schools shall be under the direction of teachers who have undertaken the work in a right spirit, from right motives, who have thoroughly prepared themselves for it and earnestly devote themselves to it, then shall we see the object aimed at by the system in a fair way to be effectually attained.

Again, measures should be taken to make the office of teacher in our Common Schools a permanent one. In passing from the care of one inexperienced person to that of another, schools must suffer, both as to instruction and discipline. Even when the skill and attainments of the successive teachers may be undoubted, this frequent change must interfere with the progress of pupils. Time must be lost before the stranger can ascertain their standing, so as to class them properly. When his mode of teaching differs from that of his predecessor, it must be some time before they grow accustomed to it, so as to respond to his efforts in their behalf. Progress must be irregular and fitful. The knowledge thus acquired will be fragmentary, and easily forgotten. Nothing can be well learned, and what is worse no proper habits of study can be formed, no love of study cultivated.

With regard to the teachers, they can hardly be expected to throw themselves heartily into a work, which three or four months may limit. Half the time will be over before they find themselves thoroughly engaged in their duties, or before they see any real progress in their pupils. To acquire a reputation as a skilful and successful teacher, is not of course the highest motive that can actuate one in the performance of duty, but it is still a legitimate motive. A teacher who looks forward to the close of the term as the end of his connection with his pupils, can have little hope that his ambition in this respect will be gratified. The progress of a school from term to term may and ought to be marked, but it is not in the first term that the progress is greatest. In those schools, in which every term is a teacher's first, the progress can scarcely be so evident, as to reflect honor on either teacher or pupils.

Besides, even on the minds of conscientious teachers, the knowledge of the transitory nature of their connection with their pupils, must, in another way, react unfavorably. It will not be unlikely to tempt to an evading of difficulties both in the government of their pupils, and in their instruction. It is often easier to endure passively what is disagreeable, or even what is positively painful or wrong, than to take a

firm stand against it, and the thought that a few weeks or months will put an end to the vexation as far as he is concerned, will often to a teacher prove a temptation to overlook what merits reproof in his pupils. The injurious effects of such a course must be too apparent to require to be enlarged upon here.

Notwithstanding the very evident disadvantages which attend these frequent changes, the cases in which teachers continue year after year in the same school, are the exceptions, not the rule. Indeed the cases are rare in which young persons are found preparing themselves for the office, with any idea of making it a permanent one. No such thing seems to be expected from them. It seems to be understood, that a young man, when his own school days are over, may very well spend a winter or two in teaching, until he shall decide as to his future occupation, or in order that he may obtain means to pursue his professional studies. A young woman teaches three or four months in summer in order that she may gain money with which to dress herself neatly during the rest of the year, and it is all as it should be with our Common Schools in the opinion of people generally.

But unless that is true with regard to the profession of teaching, which is true of no other profession, that the skill and experience which is the result of long practice cannot be made available in securing success in it, all this should be quite otherwise. Our Common Schools can never become the power for good, which they might be made in the country, until the teacher's office is made a permanent one.

With this frequent change from school to school, no doubt the restlessness and incompetency of teachers may have something to do. Young people becoming teachers, with no just sense of the responsibilities which they assume, or of the difficulties which they must encounter, grow impatient of the circumstances in which they have placed themselves, and choosing to believe, that what is unpleasant in their position, arises from something peculiar to the school or neighborhood, rather than from their own incompetency, they seek new situations, only to find new troubles. Higher requirements on the part of the Board of Examiners, would tend to correct the evil in as far as it is thus occasioned, by discouraging young persons who desire the office of teacher only that they may escape from the performance of distasteful duties at home, or that they may enjoy what seems to them a more desirable social position than they could otherwise occupy.

But the other circumstance out of which these frequent changes seem to arise—the fact that few enter upon the work of teaching, with any thought of making it their life's work—cannot be so easily dealt with. The cause must be apparent to all. It is not surprising that few are found willing to devote their energies to a profession however suited to their abilities and tastes, which offers no reasonable prospect of affording a livelihood. This ought not to be true, of even the Common Schools, in the long settled districts of Canada, but true it is.

The existence among us of prosperous academies and colleges, is evidence that the cause of education has advanced with the material prosperity of the country, but it is chiefly as regards these higher institutions of learning that the advance is apparent. Many of the drawbacks incident to the schools of a new country—the short summer or winter term—the giving place of one chance teacher to another—the "boarding round" system as it is called, and many other defects in arrangement, still cling to our Common Schools generally, and unite to hinder their efficient working.

It is time that these drawbacks were removed from the schools of the long settled districts. It would be a step in advance if they could be kept open longer each season. A prospect of being employed during the greater part of the year, would, even at the present rate of remuneration encourage suitable persons to qualify themselves for the work of teaching. But in schools generally, the rate of remuneration ought to be increased.

While it is important that teachers should guard against a mercenary spirit in seeking the office it is equally important that their employers should avoid that spirit of false economy which inclines too often to cheapen a teacher's services. It is true of teaching as it is true of other things—that which is valuable must be paid for. And it is true also, that the cheapest teachers, like other cheap wares, often prove the dearest in the end.

Let it be repeated here. Our Common Schools will become the power for good in the country which they ought to be, when the majority of them shall be under the direction of faithful and efficient teachers, and that happy day will not be very distant, when the office of teacher is made a permanent and remunerative one.

*To be continued.*