

One Woman's View of School Salaries, School Work and Kindred Subjects.

"I am not a teacher, now," she wrote, "and never shall be again—so you cannot think I am influenced by the personal equation; but I declare I feel as though I should like to take the platform in behalf of my down-trodden sisters! For instance, last night, I attended a club with one of my boarding house *confereres*—a teacher. The topic on the tapis was one in which she was exceedingly interested, so she dragged herself along. Dragged

I use the term advisedly! As I looked at her weary face, and noted her conscientious efforts to 'brace up,' I thought, 'Well, it doesn't make any difference whether it is California, or Kansas, or Illinois, or Massachusetts

the energy, the exuberance of spirit, the joy of life is done for when you enter the ranks!' And I felt almost guilty—I who had worked steadily from eight that morning until six at night, with only one hour's rest, that I should feel so buoyant and fresh in the presence of this jaded, tired-of-life human being!

"And this makes me think of what Emerson says of teaching. Did you know he had been a pedagogue, and tasted of the soul-narrowing worry of the vocation? In substance, it is this: 'Cobble shoes, maul rails, pick up stones, plough, make hempen ropes, hang yourself at the end of one of them, but don't teach school.' And Carlyle it was who said, 'Whom the gods wish to make miserable, they first make school teachers of.' So I have excellent backing up for my attitude toward the profession, you see! And yet there must continue to be those who are fettered in the bonds of servitude. The world must have 'em. But there ought to be introduced various and radical changes. For instance:

"No teacher, at least a woman, should teach for more than five years. Why! Because of the wearing, tearing strain upon her. I have quoted before to you, but I am going to again, what the superintendent of the Chicago schools said at one of the big meetings there. (And of course what is true of the schools in Chicago, is true of the generality of other schools.)

"I am satisfied that under existing circumstances, no woman, no matter how healthy and young and strong she may be, can enter the schools in this city, do efficient and satisfactory work, and preserve her health and spirits for more than five years; and in many cases the anxiety and nerve exhaustion are apparent in much less time. You remember further, perhaps, what he says about the healthy young woman, once full of the vigor and enthusiasm of life, sobering down, until the flush has left her cheeks, the sparkle deserted her eye, and her motions and features have assumed a languor which speaks vainly of vital forces spent.

"Then let her, in these five years, receive sufficient compensation to enable her to lay up enough, at least, to support her while she is getting resuscitated from the strain, mental, moral, and physical, which she has undergone. How much this should be would be a debated question—but at the lowest calculation, double or treble which she now gets.

"Another thing: In these five years—five of the very best years of her life—she should be enabled to have a little of the joy of life. To this end, fewer hours should be inaugurated. I hold that she ought not to teach but half a day. Then, with the other half for 'resuscitation,' she will be able to do, with some degree of vivacity, what other people do!

"Third—and this would follow, perhaps, as a concomitant of her brighter prospects, her changed personality, etc.—added consideration, and a higher status in the world. How often do we hear, *Only a teacher*—only! . . . I declare it makes me righteously indignant!

"Now, of course, in exchange for all this, the teachers should be teachers in truth—men and women worthy the name; but do you not think they would be more apt to be so? Infinitely! As Mr. Speed said in an article in the *Forum*, 'Unless teaching is made an honorable profession in which distinction may be gained and an easy competence acquired, we can never expect it will attract the same class of persons as those now drawn to the law, to medicine, to engineering, to the pulpit.'

"What do you say, my friend?"—*Eleanor Root, Boston, Mass., in Popular Educator.*

Beautiful Objects in the School-Room.

"Into a school made up chiefly of children from the slums the teacher one day carried a beautiful calla lily. Of course the children gathered about the pure, waxy blossom in great delight.

"One of them was a little girl, a waif of the streets, who had no care bestowed upon her, as was evinced by the dirty, ragged condition she was always in. Not only was her clothing dreadfully soiled, but her face and hands seemed totally unacquainted with soap and water.

"As this little one drew near to the lovely flower, she suddenly turned and ran away down the stairs and out of the building. In a few minutes she returned with her hands washed perfectly clean, and pushed her way up to the flower, where she stood and admired it with intense satisfaction.

"It would seem," continued Miss Coffin, "that when the child saw the lily in its white purity, she suddenly realized that she was not fit to come into its atmosphere, and the little thing fled away to make herself suitable for such companionship. Did not this have an elevating, refining effect on the child? Let us gather all the beauty we can into the school-room."—*Exchange.*