

tions. That there are always to be found many able and self-sacrificing teachers we all know, but it is greatly to be regretted that the recruits and the drones are so numerous as they are.

This is one evil flowing directly from the low estimate put on the profession by the public. Another is the frequency with which teachers are changed in schools. Very few school boards adopt the plan of providing residences which they could easily do, and therefore the great majority of even married teachers are birds of passage, ready to take the wing whenever a favorable opportunity offers. The injurious effect of this tendency on both the schools and the teachers might be indefinitely lessened by providing rent-free residences for the teacher, and engaging him for several years instead of one. It is hardly necessary to add that the remedy can be made thoroughly effective only by paying decently liberal salaries.

The teachers have in their own hands to some extent the means of remedying the evils of which they justly complain. They have excellent facilities for co-operation, and there is no reason why co-operation should not be as effective in bettering their condition as it has been in bettering that of mechanics. Questions of salary, residence, and length of engagements are proper subjects for discussion in teacher's conventions, and though the members of the profession cannot by their deliberations and resolutions compel the taxpayers to be more liberal, they can improve their own *esprit de corps* and arrive at the best means of improving and enlightening public opinion.

They can do more even than this. The collective expressions of the opinions of teachers have always, and properly, had a great deal of influence with the education department, and the right to legislate in several matters which have an intimate relation to the teacher's status is vested in that body. We need not refer here to more than one of these matters—the qualification prescribed for entrance into the profession.

A great improvement has been made in this connection during the past few years. It is now impossible for a person to become a teacher without having had some professional training. But the time has come for making another advance. Attendance for a single brief session at a county model school is not enough. That period of preparation and probation should be greatly lengthened in the interest no less of the schools than of the teachers. It is still to a great extent the case that the teacher gains his professional skill and experience at the expense of the children on whom he operates, when he should be compelled to gain them more largely at his own. By judiciously increasing the difficulty of entering into the profession its standard may be indefinitely raised, and there is little reason to doubt that by unanimous and persistent efforts the teachers of this province can secure this wise reform.—*Toronto World*.

### NEW METHODS.

BY WILLIAM T. HARRIS.

I wish to offer a few words on some of the "new methods" in vogue. The reform of the reading-lesson through "Supplementary Reading" is one that I find most liable to abuse. Many teachers have been in the habit of conducting the lesson in reading as a mere test of the pupil's acquired ability to read at sight, and not as a means of instructing the pupil how to read well. They have accordingly given the child no lesson to study and prepare for the recitation, but have kept the reading-book away from him until the hour of actual trial. Then the books are suddenly placed in the hands of the pupils, and they are expected to "read at sight." They read what they have not studied nor seen before. The books, too, are not carried home by the pupils to be read in the family, nor are they studied by the pupil at school.

Only one step further could be taken in this direction, namely, entirely to abolish instruction in reading, and expect the pupil to read newspapers and books "at sight" whenever he may have occasion to do so in after-life.

I think it is clear enough that reading resembles any other branch of instruction, and is to be learned by study, and study, too, on the part of the pupil. The teacher must teach pupils self-help. Unless something is given for the pupil to prepare in reading, the teacher can not hold him responsible for results, and we have simply what is called a "pouring-in" process, or the old-fashioned, long since discarded habit of "reading round," which was a mere calling of words and a correction of pronunciation.

And yet "Supplementary Reading" has a place in a proper course of study. Each teacher should be furnished with a dozen copies each of three or four volumes of selections from the best of classic authors—the selections being made from what is most attractive to children. These should be loaned for home reading to those pupils who prove that they have time to spare for supplementary reading by learning well the regular lessons assigned them in school. Such books of good literature and history are likely to be read at home not only by the pupils, but by the parents and older brothers and sisters, and thus accomplish manifold good. When the set of books in one room is pretty well finished by the pupils in that room, exchanges may be made with the next room and different authors may thus be obtained.

One great object of the school in our time is to teach the pupil how to use books—how to get out for himself what there is for him in the printed page. The man who cannot use books in our day has not learned the lesson of self-help, and the wisdom of the race is not likely to become his. He will not find, in this busy age, people who can afford to stop and tell him by oral instruction what he ought to be able to find out for himself by the use of the library that may be within his reach.

Oral instruction, except as an auxiliary to the text-book—except as an incitement to the pupil's interest and a guide to his self-activity and independent investigation in the preparation of his next lesson—is a great waste of the teacher's energy and an injury to the pupil. The pupil acquires a habit of expecting to be amused rather than a habit of work and a relish for independent investigation. The most important investigation that man ever learns to conduct is the habit of learning by industrious reading what his fellow-men have seen and thought. Secondary to this is the originality that adds something new to the stock of ideas and experiences of the race. The pupil who has not learned yet what the human race have found to be reasonable is not likely to add anything positive to the sum total of human knowledge, although he will certainly be likely to increase the negative knowledge by adding a new example of folly and failure.

The first thing in education, therefore, is the acquirement of the experience of the world, in order that the pupil may not start anew at the bottom of the hill, but may begin with a goodly share of the results of the work of his race.

I find, therefore, in these considerations the justification for the action of your committee, by which you have required the pupils to own their reading-books, and study them as they study other lessons. I would recommend, however, that a certain sum, not less than five dollars each year per room, be appropriated for books of supplementary reading, to be loaned under the strict supervision of the teacher, to pupils who show ability in regular school-work to profit by such books. It would be understood, of course, that the books of one room are to be exchanged gradually for the books of another room, as circumstances require.—*Report to School Committee, Concord, Massachusetts, 1883.*