

Now, the case being as it is, the schools being open to almost anyone who may choose to enter them, the practical questions to be considered by him who proposes to himself to teach are not, Can I get a certificate? Can I "manage" a district school for a term or two, while I am waiting for other business? Shall I get out of the school without being turned out? But they are, Am I fitted for the work? Shall I love it, and rejoice in it? Can I devote myself to it as my life-work? Are my scholarly attainments and my natural endowments such as to justify me in assuming to become both the model and the moulder of a multitude of young, eager, plastic minds?

If these latter questions can not be answered affirmatively, do not venture into the work. Quacks in teaching should be held in the same esteem as quacks in medicine; and one who is unfitted for the service has no more right to offer himself as a teacher of the youth than one ignorant of the human system and its diseases has to set himself up as a physician. It is painful to know what compounds of ignorance, stupidity, and boorishness, get into our schools. I would not reflect upon the officers whose duty it is to examine and license teachers. They are as conscious of these facts and lament them as sincerely as any of us. But they feel obliged to license enough to supply the schools, and, doing it, find themselves under the necessity of granting certificates to many who, were there enough good teachers, would not receive them. Of course, a teacher deficient in scholarship can not succeed in any true sense. I have known such teachers to succeed in keeping school, but there is a vast difference between *keeping* a school and *teaching* it.

The first great cause of failure in our schools, then, as regards teachers, is a lack of scholarship. It is lamentable, but it is true, that there are teachers in our own State who can not, for the life of them, read with tolerable correctness a passage in plain English prose; who know precious little of the geography of North America, and absolutely nothing of the motions of the earth and the cause of seasons; who can not explain an operation in the fundamental rules of arithmetic, nor tell the differences between a common and a decimal fraction; who cannot parse the word "rode" in the sentence, John rode to the city, nor distinguish a conjunction from an adverb. It is

not surprising that such teachers fail, but it is surprising that persons with so little learning will presume to teach. They presume to teach because they have no conception of what the teacher's work really is and no adequate sense of its responsibility. But not only do such as these need to be assured that nothing but failure awaits them—we all need to remember that, other things being equal, our knowledge will be the measure of our success. Therefore, every teacher who is seeking for the highest and the best in his work is a student, an everyday student, a careful, diligent student; diligent, because conscious that the fund of learning which he is amassing is his capital, and in the end shall be his fortune. And he who does not love study for study's sake, who does not find his meat and drink in the fruits of the tree of knowledge, may well question whether he is prepared to inspire others with a love of study.

The second great cause of failure in our schools is inability to govern; and probably young teachers have greater fear from this cause than any other. Good order is essential; there can not be even apparent success without it, and how to secure it is the question of questions. We have received a vast deal of instructions here—line upon line, precept upon precept, treatise upon treatise, institute upon institute, here a little and there a little school government! school government!—and yet the question remains. Well, the fact is, you may just as well instruct a man how to be a poet as to instruct him how to govern a school. Rulers, like poets, are born, not made. One who does not know intuitively how to govern need never hope to learn. Rules and regulations amount to nothing; theories have no practical value; and even experience, grand teacher that she is, lags behind in the matter of discipline. The power to control is a personal power, manifesting itself very differently in different individuals, and always inimitable.

But while the power to control others is a natural faculty, and not an attainment, there are still observations to be made respecting it which may be helpful.

1. A teacher, in order to secure the right control of his pupils, must be able to command their respect, and without accurate scholarship, a fair stock of general information, and a basis of sound practical sense, this is impossible. As soon as pupils are