

change teachers, and before the close of the next year the schools will have changed characters.

How can we increase the number of *efficient teachers*? is, then a vital question; and the hopes of the earnest friends of common schools rest in the answer. We have the material: what preparation does it need? The future educators of Illinois are now pupils attending schools. How shall their education be directed, to make them better than their predecessors?

The first thought will be, if the present generation of teachers lack professional training, that *this*, at least, should be supplied to the next. And the conclusion immediately follows that whatever means is best adapted for supplying this deficiency ought to be within the reach of every one who aspires to the profession.

The question of the utility of Normal Schools, happily, at this day, requires but brief consideration. Introduced as an experiment by the advanced friends of popular education, they have demonstrated their usefulness in every community in which they have been established. They are no longer experiments. Suggested originally, doubtless, by the special schools for the other learned professions, they needed only a trial to prove their equal relative value. It would be singular, if the doctor must have his diploma from a medical college, if a lawyer must work his slow way through an office or a law-school, if the minister must have his theology revised and approved by a seminary, that the teacher alone should draw from a common fountain, open to all and partaken of by all, the knowledge, graces and accomplishments adequate to his weighty responsibilities. Men of thought and judgment said No. If one profession requires special culture, so does another; and *that* profession more than *all* others upon which hang the destinies of the world.

It is the province of the Normal School to give this special culture; to place before its students the results of the experience of the past; to furnish them, at the commencement of their career, with the rich stores of practical knowledge that others have acquired only by years of painful toil and experiment; to open the door and explain how the noisy, boisterous group of children, brimful of fun and vitality, shall be organized, classified, and converted into a quiet, orderly, hardworking school; to investigate the laws of mental development, and thereby deduce a natural order and system of education; to teach how to observe, how to think, how to study; to go beneath the rules and formulas of the text-books, to the principles from which they spring; to examine by theory and practice methods of instruction,—criticising those that are faulty and recommending those that are correct, showing what is wrong and why, and what is right and why. It is the province of the Normal School to push aside the veil, and, as far as possible, examine the hidden springs of human actions, for it is the knowledge of these that furnishes the chart of school government: to analyze the motives that prompt to good or bad deeds; to lay bare the key-board of the passions, upon which the fingers of the teacher, playing like a skilful musician, may evolve peace, order, harmony, or noise, discord, and confusion.

There can be no doubt as to the effect of such a course of instruction. There are, and will be, good teachers who have never attended a Normal School; just as there are self-made men who have become great, not in consequence but in spite of surrounding circumstances. But these exceptions furnish no argument. Native talent, however bright, will gain additional lustre by cultivation. The best teachers in the world might have been better by the advice, knowledge and experience of their brethren.

But we are not left to conjecture or the conclusions of argument alone for the demonstration of the value of normal training. We have it as a matter of fact, right here in the State of Illinois a patent fact, 'known and read of all men'. If there were no other normal school in existence, our own noble University would, with its brief experience, furnish ample proof of the worth and success of special culture. Its pupils have given in many school-rooms practical illustrations of their superiority. They have brought to their work enlarged views, correct theories, and hearty enthusiasm. Nor has their usefulness been confined to their individual

spheres of action. A spirit of healthy emulation has been engendered in other teachers. Watching closely the labors of their profession, they have compared them with their own, adopting what was approved, and neglecting what was condemned. They have thereby been led to *think*, and earnest thought in the right direction is the key that unlocks the door of success to every teacher. The people, too, the patrons and supporters of our schools, upon whose aid, sympathy and approbation we all must rely, have felt and answered the quickened zeal of their teachers, by increased interest and enlarged liberality. We venture the assertion that, in no single instance within our state where a well-qualified normal graduate has had charge of the schools of a town or village for the period of one year has the cause of common-school education failed to be invigorated, strengthened, and elevated.

But we are not confined to our own state for this positive testimony. Horace Mann, whose judgment no one will dispute, pronounced the success of the normal schools in Massachusetts "a practical demonstration of their high value as agencies for supplying the common schools with competent teachers," and emphatically declared them indispensable for carrying forward a system of common schools." In his Eleventh Annual Report as Secretary of the State Board of Education, he says, speaking of Normal Schools, "these institutions are steadily fulfilling their great mission." "They are gradually revolutionizing the methods and process of instruction, improving its quality, and enlarging its quantity, throughout the state." Hon. Edgerton Ryerson, Chief Superintendent of Public Instruction of Upper Canada, says, "Wherever Normal Schools have been established, it has been found that the demand for regularly-trained teachers has exceeded the supply which the Normal Schools have been able to provide. This is so in the United States, and in France. It is most painfully and pressingly so in England, Ireland, and Scotland. I was told by the head-masters of the of the great Normal Schools in London, in Dublin, in Glasgow, and Edinburgh, that such was the demand for pupils of the Normal Schools as teachers that, in many instances, they found it impossible to retain them in the Normals Schools during the prescribed course, even when it was limited to a year." Mr. Northrop, whose acquaintance with the actual work of normal teachers is equal to if not greater than that of any other man in America, declares, "The more I visit schools and observe their methods and results, the stronger is my conviction of the necessity and usefulness of Normal Schools. They have greatly elevated the standard of qualification for teaching, both among teachers and the popular estimate. The graduates, as a general fact, have shown greater thoroughness, more system in the arrangement of studies and in the programme of daily duties, more enthusiasm in their work, and devotion to their profession." The Board of Trustees of the State Normal School of Rhode Island report to the Assembly "that the almost uniform testimony is in favor of the marked superiority of teachers from Normal Schools." Equally favorable testimony is given concerning the State Normal School of Connecticut. Indeed, so concordant and so full is the evidence, that the Hon. E. E. White, Commissioner of Common Schools for the State of Ohio, in 1865, in response to a resolution of the General Assembly inquiring as to the practical results of normal schools and their success as agencies in the preparation of teachers, declares, upon a review of the whole subject, "that the only difficulty in answering these inquiries arises from the abundance and high character of the testimony on hand." He adds, "The experiment of specially training persons for the teacher's office has been tried on a scale so wide, under such a diversity of conditions, and with such a uniformity of results, that the evidence of its success is not only manifold, but superabundant for citation as testimony."

As we intimated before, we do not mean to deny that there are many teachers in our state, who have never attended a normal school, equally as competent and successful as those who have. We do not mean to say that the normal school is a universal panacea for all the teacher's ailments. We do not mean to say that