

TO THE COUNTY MODEL SCHOOL STUDENTS.

SIXTH ARTICLE.

In this, our last article to you as students, we wish to address you on the subject of growing in your profession. During your Model School term you have been under instruction. Your daily work has been provided for you and you have been required to do it. Within a few weeks this will be changed, and you will have no one to direct you. You will, so to speak, be your own masters, and the arrangement and performance of your duties will be left in your own hands.

It will be a most important change in your life. For the first time, in the case of most of you, you will be thrown upon your own resources, and will have to assume the real responsibilities, from which many of you will never again be relieved. It will be your first real entrance into the condition of manhood and womanhood.

The consideration of this change which involves so much may well cause you to think seriously, and to take stock of yourself, of your real character, of your capacity, of your duties, and especially of your purposes for the future.

It has been wisely said that it matters but little where we now stand, but very much depends upon the *direction* in which we are going. You know where you now stand. You are about to enter your profession, to cross the line, which, without offence, may be said to forever separate you from childhood and youth, and to enter upon the stern realities of life. The whole field lies before you. What are your aims in relation thereto? What is your determination? What is the goal which you intend to reach? Where will you be ten years from now? Will your present desires, your present ambition, your present habits, your present associations, tend to bring you there? It will be wise for you to retire within yourself, to stand aside and let the world go by, while you ask yourself some hard questions, and find out a good deal about yourself—find out just what you are and what you intend to be.

Your future will depend very much upon what you do during the next five years. If these years are virtually wasted, so far as your personal progress is concerned, no matter how hard you may work in your school as a teacher, the chances are ten to one you will never attain to any real distinction in your profession. It has been well said that if youth is a blunder, middle life will be a constant struggle, and old age one long unavailing regret. If, on the other hand, you do not allow yourself to stand still or go behind, but from the very beginning keep advancing in knowledge and in professional standing, you will have so risen in five years, and your ambition and professional zeal will have been so thoroughly established that your course in life cannot fail to be onward and upward.

To establish and maintain this course for yourself from the outset will require much resolution and stability of purpose, and will involve considerable self-denial

on your part. As you have done a good deal of hard mental work in preparing yourself to obtain a certificate, you will, perhaps, feel inclined to rest from your studies for a while, and you will also, possibly, think that your daily school work furnishes quite enough for you to do. You will, doubtless, find your school duties somewhat exhausting, but you will have much spare time for rest and relaxation, and also for mental improvement. The great point will be to arrange your work and your time systematically, and then adhere firmly to your private time-table.

You will find some difficulty at first in doing this. There will be many temptations in the Section to what may be called mental dissipation. You, as the new teacher, will be invited to many parties and to assist in many amusements which will war against your personal interests, and, perhaps, ere you are aware of it, you will have fallen into ways of spending your leisure hours and will have formed habits which you will find very difficult to change, and which, if continued in, will effectually prevent you from rising in life. What is called "having a good time" now will probably cause you to have a very *hard time* in the future.

As we said in a previous article, visit your people and become one of the community in which you labor, but do not forget your own interests, and do not be satisfied with your present standing or position. If you wish to stand in the front rank of your profession, you must qualify yourself for such a position. You must show yourself worthy of it. And the more thoroughly you qualify yourself, the more certain will you be to attain the end you are striving for. The world to-day is looking for specialists—those who can do something better than anyone else can do it. It desires the best. The average workman in any line has rather a hard time, and as competition increases year by year his condition will not be improved, but his difficulties will be rather intensified. It is easier to-day to fill twenty inferior positions than to secure just what is required for one superior position.

This is as true of teaching as of all other callings. Teachers who would rise in their profession must grow in accordance with what is demanded. Those who do not go forward will go backward. If they are content to sit on the fence and watch the procession of progress march by without joining its ranks, they have only themselves to blame. They must either remain alive or go to seed and become as barnacles on a ship. To remain alive they must grow.

Why is it that so many of our older teachers fall behind, become mere fossils while scarcely past the prime of life, and have to give place to younger men? Simply because they do not read, do not study, do not think, do not keep their minds in touch with the spirit of progress—in short, do not grow. They teach the same things in the same way, day after day, year after year, until both they and their pupils lose all interest in their work. The school fails to attract the children, the attendance falls off, and the teacher is

dismissed. He passes around from one school to another for a few years at a reduced salary, until the barnacle is finally scraped off the educational ship, and the teacher who has allowed himself to go to seed, after spending the best years of his life in the schoolroom, is obliged to earn his living in some other way, for which his long tenure of office in teaching has often but too surely unfitted him. This is a sad picture, but, alas! the reality is too often seen. It may be hard on the barnacle, but it is necessary for the well-being of the ship. It will be for you to determine, during the first few years of your teaching, whether this shall be your fate or not.

The body will not grow without food, nor will the mind, and the advanced thoughts of the best minds in the profession furnish strong food upon which the mind can feed and grow. Professional reading not only furnishes material for thought and for use in the schoolroom, but better than this is its subjective influence upon the reader. It awakens the mind and keeps the professional spirit in a healthy condition, and gives birth to the pleasure which always springs from the consciousness of advancement. It also inspires the teacher in his work, and, through its reflexive influence, awakens life among his pupils. Dr. Arnold said the influence exerted by a reading, progressive teacher compared with that exerted by one who had ceased to grow was like the taste of water quaffed from the cool, bubbling spring, in contrast with that drunk from the stagnant pool. Teachers may plead that they cannot afford to buy books, but if they intend to rise in their profession they cannot *afford* to do without them. Teachers should not only supply their private libraries with the best books of the day bearing upon their own work, but they should be regular subscribers for one or more school journals. These journals are specially published for teachers, and can exist only by being supported by teachers. They have no other constituency to which they can look for support or patronage. Lawyers support their law journals, doctors subscribe for medical journals, and teachers should feel their responsibility to assist in maintaining school journals, which, with teachers, are interested in the well-being of the teaching profession. Their interests are mutual. Many teachers, doubtless, subscribe for American journals, but, while they do this, they should not fail to subscribe first for journals published in our own Province; for it may fairly be claimed that these, not only from their true merit, but also from patriotism, have a priority of claim upon their support.

"And it is a pity that commonly more care is had, yea, and that among very wise men, to find out rather a cunning man for their horse, than a cunning man for their children. For to the one they will gladly give a stipend of two hundred crowns by the year, and loth to offer the other two hundred shillings. God, that sitteth in heaven, laugheth their choice to scorn, and rewardeth their liberality as it should. For he suffereth them to have tame and well-ordered horses, but wild and unfortunate children, and therefore in the end they find more pleasure in their horse than comfort in children."—Roger Ascham.