

An Old Teacher to his Young Comrades.

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Whether you intend to make teaching your life-work or not, magnify the office. Is there any greater? I know not any. The chief benefactors of the race, and by those I mean the men who have impelled it onward to higher levels of thought and life, were content to be teachers. This is the witness of the West and the East alike. The prophets of Israel were the teachers of the people. After them, the Rabbis, who codified the law and preserved from destruction the precious remains of all that literature called by us the Old Testament, instituted schools as well as the synagogues where the people learned "the law, the prophets and the holy writings." Then came Jesus to whom all those who had gone before pointed, and throughout his public life he was known simply as a Rabbi or teacher. To Greece more than to any other country we owe intellectual stimulus and methods. In the universities of Christendom, the students who wish for highest honors in *literae humaniores* still sit at the feet of Plato and Aristotle, studying their immortal works for at least two years; and both Plato and Aristotle were students of that great teacher Socrates who taught men so much, for they learned how little they knew, by questions which seemed to them so easy. About the same time in the history of the world that Socrates was teaching the West, two men—also teachers—were inspiring the East. Gautama "the Enlightened" had found that the way to salvation was not by ritual or mortifying the flesh but by inward culture and active virtue, and he then devoted himself to teaching others, who went out all over India and beyond it, to enlighten the world. About the same time, far beyond the Himalayas

and Thibet, another teacher was laying the foundations of a marvellous Empire's cohesion, peace and prosperity, by compiling the classics, which have ever since been the mental food of the teeming millions of China. Who dares despise the teacher or the day of small things!

But do we not seem to be taking the step which leads from the sublime to the ridiculous, when we put the teacher of the rural school or even of the Collegiate Institute side by side with the Immortals just named? Yes, in the eyes of the vulgar, but not in the estimation of those who see "with other, larger eyes than ours." Material things, even their conditions of space and time, are as nothing to the spiritual mind. They are dissolved in the vision of the Eternal. Greater work was done in the home, the workshop and the school of Nazareth, and subsequently in the cornfields and along the dusty roads of Galilee, than in the Senate of Rome, the Sanhedrim of Jerusalem or where the legions thundered past in victorious career. The nation is made in the home and the school. The Iron Duke is reported to have said that Waterloo was won on the playgrounds of the great public schools of Britain; and certainly a wise man said, "tell me what Oxford and Cambridge are to-day and I will tell you what England will be to-morrow." A great tree is seen to fall suddenly, and men tell the day on which it fell. They seldom, if ever, have the date right. The fall was determined when the corrosive influences gnawing at its roots had done their work.

I say, then, magnify your office. We Canadians have an inspiring work to do, for just now we are presiding at the birth of our nation. We are getting the larger outlook which is indispensable to full national and imperial life, now that the world is no longer divided by mountains or oceans, and that the solidarity of the race is recognized as an elementary