

Special Papers.

TEACHERS' SALARIES.

WILLIAM H. MAXWELL IN "THE EDUCATIONAL REVIEW."

WERE it possible to pay each teacher just what his or her services are worth—to make the remuneration proportionate to the quality of the service—an ideal system would be the result. There are public school teachers in every large city for whom no reasonable compensation would be too high. There are those for whom the lowest wages now paid would be beyond their deserts. Could the merit system of payment for public school teachers be introduced, many of the difficulties that now disturb boards of education would be at once eliminated. To get rid of a lazy or inefficient principal or teacher, it would be necessary only to make his salary sufficiently low. To reward merit, and to obtain the services of the most skilful teacher, it would be necessary only to make the salary sufficiently high. The highest teaching ability is always at the command of a board of education that will honestly look for it, and that is willing and able to pay the requisite price. Other things being equal men and women will seek that employment which gives them command of the largest amount of the good things of this life.

Unfortunately, the objections to the merit system of grading teachers' salaries are practically insuperable. It opens wide the door to favoritism of the most flagrant kind. The power that determines salaries is generally devoid of the special knowledge needed to determine degrees of merit. In private business, the matter is very different. There, the self-interest of the employer forces him to use his best ability in grading the salaries of his employees. He has every possible opportunity to discover what their merits are, as well as the special knowledge required for the purpose. A board of education has neither.

For this reason it has been found necessary to establish schedules of salaries. In some places, salaries are increased according to length of service; in some places, according to the grade taught; in others, they are determined partly by one, and partly by the other consideration. In a few cities the maximum pay in primary grades is the same as the maximum pay in grammar grades, but in most places it is much lower. It is in accord with the best established business practices that a beginner's salary should start at a certain point and advance with a fixed increment each year until a maximum is reached. But it is not in accord with sound business principles that there should be so great a difference as we sometimes find between the maximum salary in primary grades, and the maximum salary in grammar grades. There is no difference either in the amount or in the character of the work to justify the discrimination against the primary teacher. It may be somewhat harder to manage children of twelve than to manage children of seven, though even this is doubtful; but, if it be more difficult to keep order in a class of older children, the difference is more than compensated by the fact that the teacher of

younger children has usually a much larger number under her care. Boston has set a good example in making the maximum salary for all grades, except the three highest, the same. This maximum—\$816 per annum—it is safe to say, is the highest average salary paid for primary teaching by any large city in the country. The time has arrived when all large cities must raise the salary schedule at least as high as that of Boston, or else fall steadily behind in the educational race. The reason is obvious. It cannot set a high standard either of scholarship or of professional attainment. The teaching force is recruited almost exclusively from local sources. Local influences will inevitably prevent the establishment of a high standard for entrance to the teaching profession, so long as the compensation finally attainable is so low as not to justify elaborate preparation. Few men will undertake the expense of a systematic course of training for their daughters, if the ultimate compensation will barely suffice to keep body and soul together. Low salaries have had more to do with preventing the general spread of professional training for teachers than any other single cause. Hence, low salaries have done more than anything else to keep the standard of instruction low.

The argument against reasonably liberal salaries—that the supply of competent teachers is greater than the demand—is now heard in boards of education less frequently than in former times. In the first place, the avenues for lucrative employment that have been open to women, are now so numerous, that many of the ablest among the graduates of our high schools no longer look to teaching as a means of livelihood. The vast development of secondary education in the shape of High Schools which this country has witnessed during the last ten years, has itself attracted to these institutions many of our ablest and best educated women, who would otherwise have found their way into the Primary Schools. The young man or young woman who desires to teach prefers to take a college or university course and prepare himself or herself for High School work rather than to go directly from the High School to teach in a primary grade. Nor is this all. The medical profession and journalism are every year attracting a large number of gifted and cultured women who, twenty years ago, would have become teachers; while commercial pursuits, such as type-writing and book-keeping, are drawing away thousands who, with proper training, would make excellent instructors. It has come to pass that the great majority of Public School teachers are women; and there are very few women who would not prefer teaching in a High School, or even the longer hours of business vocations, to controlling the restless spirits and breathing the vitiated atmosphere in a primary class-room. Hence it happens that the supply of competent teachers is no longer greater than the demand, if, indeed, such were ever the case. On the contrary, there is probably not a large city in the country that is not experiencing great difficulty in obtaining the requisite number of trained teachers.

The demand for such teachers was never

so great as at present, and it is constantly on the increase. The curriculum cannot be confined to the "Three R's." The time has gone by when "hearing lessons" could be regarded as teaching. Scientific methods of teaching all the standard subjects are now a *sine qua non*. Moreover, drawing, manual training, natural science, are all slowly but surely effecting an entrance into the school-room. Your untrained or inexperienced teacher is as incompetent to teach according to scientific methods or to deal with the new subjects of the curriculum, as a hod-carrier is to run a steam-engine. Boards of education, though slowly, are beginning to recognize the fact that this is pre-eminently an age of specialization, and that above all other walks of life the teacher's calling requires special preparation.

Trained teachers must be obtained. For the teacher without training and without experience, salaries cannot be made too low. The trained teacher, or the teacher of experience—that is to say, if the experience has been good, and not, as it very frequently is, bad—should receive a salary that will enable her to live as befits a member of a liberal profession and to pursue the means of culture, without which she will almost necessarily retrograde.

A large city cannot do better than to follow the example of Boston in two things: First, to require that all teachers shall either have professional training or successful experience; and, second, to place salaries at such a standard that the supply of such teachers will at least equal the demand.

Literary Notes.

Our Little Men and Women for June is a most welcome visitor. For the boys and girls, six to nine—"youngest readers"—this magazine is unexcelled. The publishers, D. Lothrop Co., Boston, offer to send a specimen (back number), for five cents. \$1.00 a year; ten cents a number.

THE compulsory physical education of children is the subject of a timely and well-considered article by the Earl of Meath, in the current issue of the *North American Review*. The Earl has given much time to the subject, and presents it in a manner that deserves the careful attention of parents and educators.

The Kindergarten Magazine for June is a strong number, giving special attention to the discussion of the question of the Kindergarten in the public schools. This issue closes a year's work of excellent serials and contributions. The magazine's growth in worth and circulation is proof that this grand educational idea has indeed taken a firm hold on the hearts of the people. It is published in Chicago; \$1.50 per annum.

ONE of the principal subjects of the June number of *The Century* is the education of women. There is an illustrated article entitled "Women at an English University," in which Newnham College is described, with pictures of the College and portraits of Miss Clough and Miss Gladstone. The paper is by Eleanor Field, and one by