

same. A parent or guardian may say: "My son, it appears to me that your walk in life lies this way," and point out the advantages likely to accrue or that can be absolutely given him if he adopts the suggestion, but this is all that should be done. If he revolts or objects and says "I cannot," do not retort with "you shall, or you are no son of mine." You will live to repent it. You will wear sackcloth and ashes for it. Humble yourself a little before you overthrow him. A boy has a right to his choice. He has an inalienable natural right—you, a constitutional one—to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Words mean something, and the choice of an occupation embraces all of these. How can you force a boy into a workshop to learn a trade when he has no aptness whatever for it, except that he has been seen to make boats, or kites, things that a child naturally amuses himself by? You cannot: you have no right. Consider the matter somewhat. If he is a tractable, affectionate, and docile boy, so much the worse; you use his natural affection as a vehicle to work your will with him, not seeing that in after life he will become a listless, moody, inefficient laborer in the vineyard, because you have trained him to a stake, or spread him on a wall, instead of allowing him to go free and unfettered as he should. Consider this matter in some other light than your own inclinations. He will doubtless live many years after you are gone. How shall he best perpetuate your name and family? By allowing him to follow his own natural inclinations, or by trying to force his nature to run on a track of too wide or too narrow gage for him? Think over it!—*Scientific American*.

Teachers in Elementary Schools.

In estimating the march of education, with all its attendant benefits and blessings, we are in some danger of not rendering honour where it is due, and of overlooking those who, from the part they have taken in the work, have a special claim to our remembrance. We praise the zeal of the clergy, the liberality of the laity, and sometimes even the Government; but the teachers—where are they? Few public servants have done more useful work, and few have been less thanked. Yet it is to these that the country is largely indebted for the improved education which the children of the poor have received for the last thirty years! Theirs have been the hands that really did the work. Others founded the schools and built the schoolrooms, and brought together the managers; but when all this was done, it was upon the teachers that everyone depended to give this preliminary work its full effect by their zeal, their industry and the influence that naturally comes of capability and good character. Without these the progress of popular education must have been slow, the Government inquiry would have ascertained a totally different result, and society and religion would have been serious losers. Compare, for a moment, the habits and daily life of the working class of this generation with those of its predecessors. How great is the change for the better! Any experienced employer of labour will acknowledge that the young men of the present day are more sober, more intelligent, more regular, more valuable every way, than those of a generation back. And the improvement is largely due to education, and therefore to the schoolmaster. It has been a subject of remark that Mechanics' Institutes and Societies for Mutual Improvement are not only greater in number, but have a larger membership than they formerly had. The cause is quite clear; boys have had in the

elementary school the previous training necessary to enable them to take advantage of the openings which these different institutions offer. Till now these institutions were in advance of their age. The schoolmaster has made them flourish by supplying the missing link. It is to the credit of elementary teachers that they have themselves been an improving race. We speak of mistresses as well as masters. Both have risen intellectually and socially, and have made their office respected. How different was the elementary teacher of thirty years ago from the cultivated men who, for the most part, hold that position now! We do not mean those who commenced their career then, but those who had occupied the place for years. It is enough to say that in most parts of the country he matched and fitted in well with the room in which he taught, the books he used, the managers he served, and the standard of instruction that prevailed. He "minded" rather than taught his pupils. For this, little more was required than the power of setting copies, working simple sums, and mending pens. A superannuated servant from the squire's house, or from behind a counter, or a parish clerk, was held to be qualified, and the cases were not solitary in which the schoolmaster was put into office to keep him off the rates. That office was sometimes spoken of as a somewhat lower depth to which any man who could read and write might sink in the decline of life if matters did not go well with him. He is not more to be reproached for this than the clergy and gentry of that day. There were noble exceptions, indeed, but the common prejudice was against the education of the labourer's child beyond the mere power of reading and writing, and the schoolmaster only shared the feeling of the rest. That was the twilight of the Education movement—even the first streaks of dawn were scarcely visible. With sunrise came the idea of Normal schools. The Training College in all its fullness was the growth of a later period. The Normal school met the demands of the moment. It took such candidates as it could get, and after passing them through a course of instruction in books and method for a few months, sent them forth to do what they were able where they were wanted. Very good service did those men render. Public examinations, classes, and certificates were not then invented. The teacher at that period had none of those advantages, and it has been the fashion to hold very cheap both their qualifications and their services. That is not our view at all. They did the work of their day, and for the most part did it well, and it was not their fault that greater opportunities were not afforded them. There was often a great deal of thorough respectability, high conscientiousness, and persistent industry in the teachers of that day. If they were not highly trained, they were at least not conceited. They went to their work as if they were not above it, and they kept to it under many disadvantages of poor pay and increasing competition. They are now almost an extinct race, but the present generation inherits the benefit of their pioneering, and owes them its meed of grateful remembrance. We wish we could add that it had also shown its gratitude in a practical way—by some sort of provision for those who must now be growing old in the work, and whose evening, after the burden and heat of the day, ought to be cheered with the consciousness that a well-earned pension relieves them from much anxiety as to the things of this world! The teacher of the present day, if he have well used his opportunities, is a man of considerable education. In some instances he has attempted with success the learned languages, but in any case he has been thoroughly grounded in those branches which in schools are generally comprehended under the term "English." He can not