

most successfully correct mistaken notions and ridiculous applications of mere theoretical and abstract learning. Common sense enables us to judge and act where the experience of common life can be applied, but no further. To exercise it thus far is, however, of the utmost importance to every one.

When a young man has completed his education and goes forth, into the midst of the realities of life, to exercise his calling, or fulfil the duties of his profession, he will find innumerable cases in which he cannot be guided by technical rules alone, but must use, also, a measure of judgment and tact to adopt or vary the rules of art to the peculiarity or emergency of the case he may have in hand. Or, setting aside success, it is necessary in order to save ourselves from ridicule, to see that an application of learning is not in opposition to the plain perception of common sense. This has long since been strikingly illustrated in the vanity of the sophistical youth, just fresh from college anxious to display his logical attainments, proved to his father that a *horse chestnut* is a *chestnut horse*, but who received a good lesson in common sense by his father giving him a saddle and bridle and a *horse chestnut*, that he might enjoy a ride as a reward for his proficiency!

During many years experience as a member of the Board of Public Instruction and as superintendent of schools, the writer has had abundant reason to notice and lament the great lack of good sense, in the candidates for certificates, and in the teachers engaged in teaching school. Many who could furnish good answers in the regular routine work of the different branches, would write the most absolute nonsense in answer to questions which required the exercise of judgment and the dictates of common experience. The writer remembers some cases that were so very silly that they may probably be attributed merely to nervousness or absence of mind.

Let two illustrations suffice.—Printed question, "What relation was Abraham to Jacob?" Answer, by the erudite candidate, "His grandmother!" Question in grammar, "What is plural of woe?" Answer, (probably by some learned old bachelor), "Women?" In the course of one examination a series of instances nearly as absurd, and which were undoubtedly attributable to bad mental training, presented themselves to the annoyance of the examiners. And then in the school-house the teacher might be seen hobbling on the crutches of definitions, rules and keys, or strutting on the stilts of scholastic idealism, instead of moving onward in the exercise of good practical judgment and common sense. Of course, when there are these deficiencies in the instructor, the pupils must lack a very important element in their education, an element too, which is so very apt to be overlooked and neglected in after life, that an educated man may be a learned simpleton. The reader must have met with many such in all the different vocations of life.

The educated farmer who prides himself upon his knowledge of agricultural chemistry and vegetable philosophy, who can talk by the hour, most philosophically, upon the organic and inorganic elements of soils, the proper rotation of crops, and the utility of artificial manures to supply the needed constituents of plants to the soil which nourishes them, and yet allow his vulgar, common place dung heaps to accumulate, year after year, at his stable doors, under the dropping of the eaves and the flowing of spouts, the water carrying away the vegetable substance of the manure into the stagnant ditches of his barn yard,—had better with all his getting,—get a small portion of common sense.

The eloquent barrister who delivered his carefully prepared speech, replete with acute discriminations and learned criticisms, based upon the items of his brief, but entirely inappropriate after the evidence in the