

signs they had traced, similar to the talisman of eastern tale, brings before him, the familiar faces of the absent, with whom he may converse, laugh or shed a tear; shows them to him in the midst of endearing associations, transports him to the home of his youth and to the bosom of his family. Without the power of reading the absent would be like to the dead; indeed they would live in the memory, but we should no longer know where they are, how they are occupied, we could have no certainty that they still hold us dear and at times think of us and treasure our remembrance. Take away those written conversations, which enkindle such gentle feelings and knit in close bonds the ties of friendship, then distance will soon sever the links of the most sacred connections.

The man that knows how to read, holds communication not only with his friends but with the whole universe! The earth extends for him far beyond the horizon; he participates in the universal life; to him no man is a stranger, for he has passed through every country; to him there are no unknown lands, for he has seen the world in books as in a mirror.

The man who knows how to read converses even with the dead. Bending over the writings to which they have confided their thoughts, they speak to him eloquently from the mute page, their thoughts leap into his soul. His teachers, the companions of his solitude, the friends of his lonely hours, are those great geniuses scattered in the path of time as are scattered the stars in the path of our planet. He profits by their experience, to their reflections, he adds his own reflections; he becomes the universal inheritor to that heir-loom of wisdom amassed during the course of ages.

The man that knows how to read may learn every thing. Instruction arrives directly to him without the intermediary of a master; books are to him ever open schools, whose portals no power can close.

The man that knows how to read is never lonesome; he has at his command every thing that can awaken his curiosity, interest his mind, or excite his imagination. Does he wish to travel to distant shores, or to hear an account of the disasters or triumphs of his country, or to listen to the inspired verse of the poet, or to assist at the wonderful discoveries made by men of science, or to follow the romantic adventures of imaginary heroes, reading, an ever obliging fairy, transports him whither he wills. Sovereign all powerful, the greatest intelligences are his courtiers, the obsequious slaves to his pleasure, ready to speak, or to remain silent as he may fancy.

In fine the man that knows how to read seems to multiply his faculties and to dignify his nature. There are a thousand offices which may be confided to him, and to him alone. He possesses one sense more than the ignorant; in reality he belongs to a higher order of beings.

But reading is only the half of the indispensable science; it prepares man for the fulfillment of his social duties, writing perfects him in it. The man that cannot write roams the thoughts of others, but his own can never travel miles, and even dies before they find an echo; he listens, but he cannot reply; he hears, but he cannot speak; his conversation with the absent is an eternal monologue, of which he is the only auditor; he cannot commune with a distant friend, nor ask him a simple question, nor tell him a simple want.

The man that knows not how to write mistrusts his memory: he has no invariable mark whereby to fix an actual event; time obliterates all recollection of the past, with the dates, the names, and the circumstances, for he has not had the power to connect them with precise signs. His brain resembles the slate on which we write a phrase or a cipher, which must be effaced for the work of the morrow.

The man that knows not how to write cannot explain to an absent acquaintance an affair on which may depend his fortune or his happiness. He is oppressed, but cannot apprise those that govern him of his wrongs. Obligated to borrow the aid of another man's hand he seems doomed to a kind of eternal infancy; he is a minor whose acts are of no avail without the consent of the tutor.

The man that knows not how to write, is ignorant of the art of putting his thoughts into order, and of expressing them with conciseness. Accustomed to the diffuseness of extempore discourse, he has never been able to construct his sentences, to discuss his expressions, to arrange his arguments, to study in fine that science of language which teaches us how to express our thoughts in the best form, and in the fewest words.

But the man that knows how to read and to write is like the fledgeling; he feels his newly acquired powers; winging his flight he may travel through space and penetrate into eternity! He has obtained over space and over time the victory which the shepherd prayed for in his dream.

Now all depends upon the use that he will make of those powerful instruments! The tree of life, and the tree of death, draw their nourishment from the same soil, and spread their branches in the same garden! The man who knows how to read and to write may fall, but at least it shall not be without knowing it: his faults will be the results not of ignorance but of choice, and he shall be held legitimately responsible before men as he is before God.

H. G. M.

Thoughts for Teachers.

Applicants for certificates of qualifications to teach common schools occasionally complain, those rejected especially, that the examinations are too severe, and the requirements demanded of candidates unnecessarily difficult and numerous; while our best teachers recommend the elevation of the standard of qualifications still higher, and thus exclude unqualified teachers from our school houses. Our most successful teachers are desirous to have candidates subjected, each year, to more rigorous and complete examinations, whereby their profession may be more respected, and their remuneration thereby increased. Especially is it the manifest interest of the public, that there be a diminished number of certificates issued by Boards of Examiners; for the opposite course necessarily increases the multitude of teachers, causing greater competition for situations to teach, and thereby reducing their well-earned wages, and by inadequate compensation, discouraging and driving competent teachers into other more lucrative employments, who thus abandon our school houses to be afterward occupied by fourth-rate teachers, and those utterly unqualified by nature and education, and wholly unfit to have charge of our youth.

There are many persons who have taught school, term after term and year after year, merely as a matter of pecuniary convenience, without increasing one iota their original stock of knowledge. We find teachers who think themselves insulted if advised to study after they have made their debut as instructors. They forget that there is in society a constant progress; that those who are competent to instruct to-day will not be to-morrow, unless they make corresponding additions to their stock of knowledge and mental discipline. These loitering teachers fall behind the time, and will be set aside for those who have been wide awake to this exigency, and have prepared for it. A poor teacher is a great nuisance, which should be abated, for he stands in the way of, and prevents the employment of, a competent teacher.

One great object and duty of a teacher is to communicate knowledge, and unless he employs his own mind in diligent study, in acquiring new facts and fresh principles, he is unworthy of his profession, and fails in his duty to the patrons of his school. We find occasionally persons who have been teaching five and ten years, and have during that time made scarcely any really manifest improvement, or increased their small fund of general information. Their acquirements might have been considered respectable a few years ago, but they have neglected to advance with the educational progress of the times, and now their scholarship and ability to teach can no longer be regarded as worthy of employment or respect. The true interests of the teacher's profession, the manifest welfare of the common schools, demand that the Board of Examiners should unhesitatingly tumble such stationary teachers overboard. Other teachers, although not exactly or positively stationary, who make but snail-like progress on account of inherent dullness, should make way for others, who are already fully equipped with the amount of mental activity and ripe scholarship demanded by the teacher's charge. A successful teacher is always an earnest and diligent student of books, and of the world around him. A true teacher, growing mentally rich by active industry, is one of nature's noblemen. That office, which confers the power of moulding the minds and morals of the men and women of the next generation, is as honorable as it is responsible; and common schools are assuming an increased importance in the opinion of the public, by whom they have been too much neglected and undervalued, and their interests committed to unskilful hands.

The assertion is sometimes made that 'any one is competent to teach a common school, and especially one of small children.' Ignorant persons, unable otherwise to earn a living, are pronounced fit and qualified to gather around them the freshest, youngest spirits, and to inscribe the most impressible page of human existence. It is sometimes urged that as particular branches will not be taught in certain districts, that these should be omitted in the examination. The law designates what branches are required of every candidate, and to omit any one of these branches in an examination, is a