

our judgment, to say the least, is held in a very low estimate. Why is this?—it may be well to ask. I answer that it is our own fault as teachers, that our opinion is not respected. ‘The fault is not in our stars, dear Brutus, but in ourselves that we are underlings.’ Under the present political conditions, patronage, promotions, and elections, have an immense influence upon the positions of teachers, and instead of discussing these questions frankly, freely, openly, squarely, and reasonably, when the storm breaks over us, we cower, bend, and yield. Our place is to seek the reasonable ground of all these criticisms, to correct our work when it is wrong, and stand manfully by it when it is right. The schools are not what they should be, and can be,—only the best teachers can improve them. We know this but we do not say it, owing to risks incurred in being perfectly frank and open and just in our opinions. Another reason why our opinions are held so low is that these citizens who hold such a low opinion of us, are the products of our own teaching—they were our pupils, *i.e.*, of those of us who are older in the profession,—they do not respect school teaching and the dignity of the schoolmaster as they should, because the teaching given them has not aroused their powers of discrimination to a right level. Why was it that the opinion of George Howland was so potent,—why was it that he had such a great influence as a superintendent? Simply because he had a tremendous influence as a teacher,—simply because he made his pupils feel that he had no other motive than to assist them in the battle of life. The way, then, my fellow teachers, is to exalt our profession by courageously and freely giving expression to our true opinions. Suppose we, superintendents and principals, were asked the question, how many teachers under us are capable of the great work assigned them; what would be our answer? No such question has been asked, and no answer given.

Then one other answer to the unfavorable criticisms may be given, and that is the unbusinesslike and unpractical methods of paying teachers. In all other businesses of life, in railroads, manufacturing, and all corporations, men are selected for merit; it is not supposed that a number of years in itself enhances ability. ‘Time is the false reply,’ when the work of the teacher is recognized not on account of age, or years of work, but on account of real, genuine merit,—on account of the power to develop character; then our profession will be rated as it should be.

But after all these criticisms, there remains one consolation, that there never was anything on earth fraught with such good