

HOW CAN TEACHERS GET HIGHER SALARIES?

The matter of salary is something in regard to which very few are indifferent. Every man who has labor to sell, no matter of what kind, likes to sell to the highest bidder, or to the best advantage. In this way both brain, muscle and skill are a marketable commodity, the highest price being always paid to the best quality of each.

The teacher's labor comes under the same general commercial law as the labor of any other class who have something to sell. Our artificial mode of living at the present time makes it convenient to hand over the education of our children to those who make such work a specialty. Parents seldom educate their children after the mode so eloquently advocated by Cowper in his "Tirocinium." And so long as children are educated after the present system, they will be anxious to secure the services of those best qualified for such work. They will also be willing to pay the highest price for the best commodity.

There are various circumstances, which, for a long time, kept down teachers' salaries. We can remember a teacher in the palmy days of old, who labored his six hours a day, every day in the week, for nine dollars per month, with the additional luxury of "boarding all round." Since then both the social and financial condition of society has somewhat changed. Prices, in every department of labor, have advanced. The style and standing of the profession have improved, and what might have been considered a first class teacher then, would not even approximate a third class now.

But, even with all our modern advantages, salaries of teachers are said to be low still. And in a certain way they are really low—far lower than they ought to be to secure a fair share of the talent of the country. By the Chief Superintendent's Report last year, the average salary in counties was, \$254 for males, and \$182 for females—the highest to a male teacher in a county being \$825, and the lowest \$100. That such a disparity should exist between the salaries of teachers and clerks, and others who sell their labour in departments of far less responsibility, is very much to be regretted. Indeed, it betokens a rather low state of public sentiment in regard to the great interests of education. How often does it happen that the man who pays a clerk \$500, to sell goods from behind a counter, hesitates to pay a teacher \$400, for the more important work, both to his children and society, of developing the immortal mind? How often does it happen that your day laborer unhesitatingly gets his one dollar and a half per diem, for the most common sort of labor, and the teacher has to be content with his one dollar for the most important labor? Evidently there is a disparity, and that disparity the very reverse of what one would naturally expect to find when the duties of the teacher are contrasted with those of other classes of society.

It is held by some that the teacher should be protected against the apparent niggardliness of the public by a provision in the law as to what should be a proper minimum at least. Now, we hesitate not to say that protection to the teacher, as in