

But the crowding of professional avenues leads to the degradation of talent in another direction. How many of the literati are doomed for a piece of bread to pander to a vitiated public taste in writing for the dime novel and yellow literature of the sensational market Periodicals which have swarmed upon us numerous and as loathsome as the frogs of Egypt—not from the grand Nile of inspired genius, but from the sloughs of impure passion and common sewers of fetid imaginations, or if from the Nile of genius, from that river profaned and turned to blood. Yes, some of these authors have talents fitting them to hold converse with angels, but who, to secure a pittance, are condemned to draw inspiration from the Lamia of the pit.

No doubt some of these authors turn with disgust to vomit the poison which they receive from this source, and which they seek to incorporate with the mental fare of their readers. They despise the taste which demands such fare, and themselves the more for having the meanness to furnish it. Oh! it is pitiful that men, aye, and women, too, can be found, who to gain a living, or maintain a standing in the literary world, to prostitute their talents to the goddess of sensuality. They are more the objects of pity than of blame, forced as they are by the inexorable circumstances of society to cater to the taste of a corrupt civilization or—starve.

This perversion of education is no doubt to be laid at the door of depraved human nature, but who can tell how much of its development is to be attributed to the aggravating force of circumstances, the abnormal condition of society, and to prevailing fallacies concerning position, office, and profession, which lead ambitious minds to seek for class distinction!

How much litigation might have been averted, quackery suppressed, sectarian bitterness allayed, literary prostitution checked, and how much truth discovered had other business been sought—business just as noble, because useful, as any of the learned professions.

3. A monopoly of learning, like monopoly in any department of human activity, is a bar to all true progress.

Men of any class are, as a rule, unwilling to receive truth as the most ignorant, if it does not come in the line of their peculiar profession. The conservatism of party has a blinding influence. There is the same disposition as of old to reply to those who are supposed not to know as well as they, "thou wast altogether born in sin, and dost thou teach us!"

Many examples of this reluctance on the part of classmen of being taught by those out of their circle might be given did time permit.

4. Now what is the cure for those evils? Set limits to education? confine our common schools to the merest rudiments of learning? Shut up our college halls against plebeian aspirations, and confine the higher branches of education to a privileged few? No! What then? Inaugurate the era of the Democracy of Education, and carry the common school system to its legitimate results.

What is the nature of the work before the educationist in connection with our common schools? What are the facts in the case? He comes into close contact with the common people, as they are called—the masses. His duty is to instruct them or their children. The system of education is by no means meagre now, and will be more comprehensive shortly—fitted to qualify our youth to occupy almost any situation in life, and to make any position in life honorable, as it will be when elevated by education.

We have just entered upon the cultivation of the popular mind. In view of the facilities now afforded by government for carrying on the work; in view of the possibilities of the future, and the many false notions to be removed, and which can be removed, I know of no situation fraught with more responsibility or that presents a wider sphere of usefulness, than that of teacher in our common schools.

It seems to me one most important duty before him, if he would obviate the evils to which I have alluded, is to inspire his pupils with the proper incentives for study. It has been customary to stimulate the young mind in a course of education by motives wholly evil—by appeals to love of self, power, and worldly position. These are the staple motives of lecture rooms, lyceums, and even the platform of the Young Men's Christian Association has not been altogether free from them.

Examples have been set before the young of men who have risen from the humbler walks of life to positions of honor and influence in the world, without much, if any, reference to that most sacred of considerations in this universe—THE LOVE OF USE. Under the inspiration of lower motives young persons have been induced to elevate themselves, not in character but in position, above the common multitude. This is wrong, all wrong. The tendency of such teaching is to prevent the growth and development of our Common School system, by fostering the aristocratic element of education, and thus preventing the growth of that sympathy; for and among the people upon which it must receive its valuable impulses. It is not affirmed that educated men have the feeling which would lead them to look down with any degree of contempt upon the people, otherwise our common school system would have few friends. It is, nevertheless, a fact that such motives have been presented as incentives for action. They belong to human nature. There is surely enough of this

feeling manifesting itself gratuitously, without having it stimulated into vigorous growth by positive instruction. It must be suppressed. Let no youth be taught to seek the walks of learning that he may escape the drudgery of labor.

Never let it be taught, even by implication, that labor is degrading, or that a young man must needs leave the plough, the plane, or the hammer, if he would hope to attain to honor and respectability, or achieve true greatness. As society is constituted—the great majority must be laborers. This is the normal condition of the world. Now, unless you can give the impression to your pupils that they can be great and good and noble where they are—as laborers—universal education will work universal mischief. You will upheave the very foundations of society as by an earthquake. You will misapply the power of education.

But the people must be educated—all educated, thoroughly educated—to this sentiment every educationist heartily responds. Very well, but unless you succeed in breaking down this class distinction and in removing the motives which underlie it you will never get the people thoroughly to sympathize with you in your efforts, because they will instinctively feel that only a few after all can obtain to this element of power, and they will naturally look with suspicion upon a system which furnishes motive and opportunity to any of their compeers to rise above them into a class with whom they can have no fellowship, and from whom they can have little sympathy.

We would set no limits to education, but would strive to dignify labor. We would proclaim between them the ban of marriage. We would not repress the aspirations of the young but would seek to purify and direct them. This, I take it is the especial work now before the educationists. He must insist that a first-class education is not too good for a farmer, a mechanic, or a merchant, or that any calling is too low for learning. In a word it must be shown that a thorough education is not the privilege of a special class.

Am I placing the standard of education too high in regard to either the exterior qualification or the interior principle? Or is this beautiful dream too far in the future as to its realization to induce you to look upon it with any degree of interest? I care not how far in the future you place it so long as you admit its possibility. Grant me then that there is such a high table land toward which education is ascending. Grant me that progress is a law of the human mind and from this time onward, a law of society, and that we have started on an era of especial educational progress and you admit all I claim to carry my conception into reality.

Time was, and not very long ago, either, when, if there was in the district a broken down, superannuated specimen of humanity, he was sure to be installed as school master, not to teach but to herd the children. When not fit for any useful employment he was considered qualified to keep school. The school master was abroad in those days. What are the facts to day in reference to education? Is not the standard continually rising? Is it not more difficult to enter the lists as a teacher in Nova Scotia than it was even five years ago? It is becoming more and more difficult. The standard is not so high now as these professors around me wish to make it. They, at least, do not think labor is incompatible with a sound education, or think it is a waste of power to confer it on the masses, or that work of the world does not need the comprehensive grasp of educated thought in these masses to make our civilization what it is destined to become, an industrial millennium on the basis of a general education. Call it by what name you will, such a condition of society—the true golden age—has in all time past been the burden of the prophet, the speculation of the philosopher, the dream of the poet, the hope of the philanthropist, and the prayer of the christian, as it is now the intuitive conviction of mind everywhere—

" 'Tis coming up the steps of time;  
'Tis coming, yes, 'tis coming."

But who are the human mediums under God to usher in this "good time coming?" Of all persons the teachers of youth in our common schools. Upon you depends the character of the next generation and of generations following. Providence has called you to a noble work, and in our common school system has furnished you with the means of accomplishing it, and accomplish it you will if faithful to the situation and hour. From the Superintendent's address, delivered in our hearing this afternoon, it would appear that teachers themselves do not feel the force of this conviction, otherwise so many would not be found making their calling merely a stepping stone to others deemed more honorable as the world goes, or, perhaps, more lucrative! This cannot be too severely reprobated. For ladies leaving the school room under peculiar circumstances there is certainly an excuse, unless we compel them to become perpetually what they are temporarily, sisters of charity; but for gentlemen, when smitten by the plague of aristocracy, there can be no excuse whatever. Unless they are constrained to teach schools by that heavenly motive THE LOVE OF USE, they are illy prepared to do the work assigned them in the Divine Providence in the opening of a new and better era.

What is your incentive, ladies and gentlemen? The motive with which you ought to inspire your pupils is the one that