

very vigorous and very complex, a system which from a small and tender root has grown like the giant oak overshadowing the whole country with its extending branches.

My memory does not extend very far back into the past, but I remember well the days when our educational system was but in its childhood. I remember the time when, in this portion of the country at least, we had no qualified teachers, i. e. teachers qualified by the holding of a certificate of qualification, when we had no definite system of classification, no series of text books, no free schools and no compulsory education. In those days the County school buildings were in many cases among the poorer classes of edifices, sometimes not much better than mere hovels; ventilation was, if not unknown, at least unthought of, and only through broken windows and chinks in the walls and badly fitted floors was it possible for pure air to find an entrance and vitiated air to find an exit. The seats were pine benches upon which a generation of school boys had tried the temper of their knives, while the desks, except an uncouth looking one here and there, were too often among the things invisible. Now some of our schoolhouses rank among our finest and most beautiful public buildings, and a profusion of modern means is brought into requisition for the purpose of rendering them not only beautiful but at the same time healthful and convenient. The desks and seats of the most approved pattern and made of iron and walnut are, as far as finish and material go, superior in beauty and cost to the major portion of furniture in private houses.

In those almost forgotten days the teacher was usually some discharged soldier who found the profession of teaching to serve the double purpose of eking out a small pension and preventing him from living an otherwise idle life, or if an educated man, one educated for a profession entirely different from that of teaching. Such things as Certificates of Qualification were unknown, and within my own memory, the highest boast of some of these instructors was to be able

to solve the puzzlers in Gough's Arithmetic, to write a fine legible hand and to know nothing of grammar. At present teachers are men and women who, having spent many years at our lower medium and higher schools, come into the practice of their profession versed (or at least supposed to be) in all the ICES and OLOGIES, and bearing each an official document which has been signed, sealed and delivered, and which testifies to the fitness of the bearer for teaching the young idea how to shoot.

In those days to which I refer we had no fixed school system, no elaborate educational machinery to grind out scholars by a sort of mathematical rule, no master minds sitting at headquarters to do the thinking for an army of teachers, and thus to render their work as much automatic and as little intellectual as possible. Each tutor had to think, and plan, and devise as well as carry into effect.

How different are matters now? Teaching has risen to the dignity of a profession, and although not a profession which many choose for life, yet in some of its departments, if not all, it is certainly worthy in every sense to be styled a profession. Teachers are prepared with a large amount of labour and skill, and therefore expense. They are required to know not only as much as they will ever be called upon to teach in a public school, but in the vast majority of cases a great deal more. So much more that I fear it is a common thing for a considerable portion of their tutorial stores to become in time mouldy and worthless for the want of being used.

And when the teacher comes into his school how beautifully and conveniently everything is arranged. A rigid system of classification has organized the pupils, and they stand before him, each in his own particular *custe*, as no intermixing is allowed.

It is vain for the intelligent teacher to ask, "But are there here no Sheridans or Scotts or Dicks in boyhood's disguise?—no children who are likely to suffer by this classification in hard and fast lines? and to which a different apportionment of subjects might be advan-

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