

The correction of public sentiment when it has once taken a wrong direction, is a work of time; years must elapse before the subject will be viewed in its true light; in the mean while, much will depend upon the character and qualifications of those who are engaged in this work. If they resort to teaching from merely mercenary motives, as a last resort, or to pass an idle winter, it will be a long time before the profession will enjoy a very large share of public favor; the teacher will be merely tolerated as a sort of necessary evil.

In the want of suitable encouragement from other sources, the teacher may find ample motive to fidelity in the dignity of his calling.

An employment is elevated in dignity in proportion to the importance of its subject, or the materials with which it has to do. The magistrate, or the commander of an army, ranks above the herdsman, for the one governs brutes, the other, men. The maker of chronometers takes rank above the blacksmith, because he is employed with more costly and delicate materials. Upon this principle, the work of teaching, especially if we include in this term the work of the ministry, surpasses all other occupations in point of dignity. The farmer, the mechanic, the merchant, are employed with material and perishable things. The legal profession is busied with forms and precedents, with crimes and penalties, and, with the exception of its pleading, it has but little to do directly with mind. Medical skill is employed almost exclusively upon the outer man, the temporary habitation of the soul. But the subject of the teachers work is mind, the masterpiece of the great Architect, delicate in structure, transcendent in value, immortal in destiny.

The employment of teaching, if rightly pursued tends strongly to develop the better principles of our nature. This may be seen by contrasting the work of the teacher with other employments. The merchant or the stock-jobber, in every individual transaction in the routine of his daily occupation, has an eye to "Profit and Loss." This is his business. Such employment tends strongly to develop a covetous disposition. But the teacher is subject to no such sordid tendency. His daily duties are made up of efforts to cultivate and adorn the minds of his pupils, and to fit them for their high destiny. He must be bad indeed who does not improve under the influence of such an employment.

The triumphs of art over nature are the more easily achieved, since they are the conquest of *mind* over *matter*. But in the work of teaching, *mind* acts upon *mind*, and achieves its victories by the force of truth and reason upon intelligent, thinking beings. To curb the waywardness and rouse the flagging energies of the pupil, to awaken a thirst for knowledge, and set the timid and retiring on a career of improvement, is a work possessing all the elements of true dignity.

Philosophers tell us that thought is imperishable; that the faintest mental impressions are securely treasured up in the storehouse of the soul, and need only a favourable condition to be distinctly reproduced upon the table of memory. If this be true, we have in this fact a thrilling illustration of the importance of the teacher's work. He is tracing the lines of thought upon the susceptible mind of childhood, which "Time's effacing fingers" cannot erase. "I paint for futurity" said the old Grecian artist, when blamed for the tardiness of his work. The teacher's work is not to rescue from oblivion the changing lineaments of the countenance, and to give immortality to the transient beauties of the human face divine, but to impress upon the deathless spirit, the features of intellectual and moral beauty.

The Daguerrean artist places the polished metallic plate in the focus of his "Camera," and forthwith, as by magic, there starts to view a perfect and unalterable impression of the original. Whether the countenance be radiant with smiles or clouded with sadness, beautiful or ugly, the magic pencil of nature draws it with unerring accuracy, and no art can improve the picture.

Let the teacher consider well what lines he traces upon the susceptible minds committed to his care, for the light of eternity will give distinctness and permanence to the image.

High moral principles and sincere piety are indispensable qualifications of the model teacher.—*Massachusetts Teacher*.

#### COPIOUS KNOWLEDGE NECESSARY TO GOOD INSTRUCTION.

[We copy the following excellent remarks from an address delivered before the students of the Merrimack Normal Institute, by Prof. John S. Woodman, of Dartmouth College, and published in the *Massachusetts Teacher*. Prof. Woodman has held the office of Secretary of the Board of Education for New Hampshire, and is at present President of that body.]

Copious knowledge is necessary to good instruction. A long-experienced and distinguished teacher declares that copious knowledge lies at the foundation of all good instruction.

It is sometimes said that tact and skill in teaching will go a great way and make up for a deficiency of knowledge. There is no doubt these qualities will do a great deal with a little material. But if so, how much more usefulness and efficacy will they add to abundant

knowledge. It is very rare to find a man of such peculiar temper of mind that he will not prove an acceptable and profitable teacher of that subject in which he is thoroughly versed and liberally informed. It is of consequence that the teacher should be above the standard to which he is expected to elevate his class. The business of instruction is no heedless pastime. In all subjects the scholar must be watched with a quick perception, and checked with a prompt and ready hand, from his constant tendency to deviate to the right hand and the left, and kept in the middle highway of his pursuit. Who can do this easily but the teacher of copious knowledge? And who knows best where the middle highway lies? he who has only travelled through it, or he who, besides that experience, has also surveyed all the surrounding country, and contemplated the journey from all the overlooking hills? With such a guide every step is progress in the right direction. For instance, in teaching the subject of Arithmetic, some may suppose it will answer very well to know the rules and be able to work the examples. But in such a case it generally happens that both teacher and scholar move carelessly and without much interest over the simple rules and fractions and all the more useful parts of the book, and come down with great zeal upon the Progressions, Positions, and Almanac questions in the last part, and finally close the book with a kind of triumph at having discovered its mysteries and got possession of its jewels. Such instruction is liable to two very serious objections. The simple and most useful rules are never well learned, and although the student may solve the difficult problems with considerable skill, yet he even cannot write figures so that others may read them with tolerable convenience, or cast the interest on a note with sufficient promptness to encourage his friends to request such a favour a second time. What he ought to know from the book is not well enough understood to be of much practical utility. The next objection is, that the student becomes impressed with the idea that the point of the subject lies in the difficult problems and more complicated rules, that are often feebly demonstrated, and injudiciously placed in the arithmetic when they belong more properly to some other subject. He looks upon the subject as a kind of collection of Hobb's locks to be picked for the exercise of his skill.\* And this is not all the disadvantage. The student often carries the same idea into other matters and looks for the point and substance of everything else in some cunning riddle or mysterious puzzle. False views of many things will stand in the way of his success and usefulness. In the ordinary business of life men will not seem to succeed so much from upright conduct and industrious habits as from lucky thoughts and out-of-the-way expedients. But the well-taught pupil is made to place more importance upon the elements of the subject, and to spend the time which others devote to the difficult problems upon higher subjects where the difficulties properly belong and are easily overcome.

A teacher also wants copious knowledge so as to furnish abundant illustration. Different minds are differently affected by the same view of a subject, and that teacher has a great advantage who can furnish the illustrations which suit the occasion. Some subjects need to be expanded and enlivened so that the barren meagreness with which they first strike the learner shall be covered with some degree of life and interest. Others appear complicated and confused, and are to be condensed and thrown into a single sentence or a single word. How can the teacher of narrow knowledge do this well? Suppose a class are reciting in geography. The lesson in the book may be interesting, but how much more so if the teacher's extensive knowledge of the history of the region and of travellers' accounts of the appearance and manners and customs enable him to add some pleasing information of his own. How much such assistance would add to the ordinary lessons on the geography of Holland, Italy, or Switzerland. There is another reason why the teacher ought to be liberally informed. It is that the knowledge is eloquent. Whatever a man is full of will be impressed upon others in many ways. It will seem to clothe him like a garment. How much the trades, professions and pursuits of men contribute to give them character. The farmer, the clergyman, and the trader, cannot meet you without recalling to your mind much that belongs to their various pursuits. They may not speak of them, but the engrossing subject of the mind will speak through the dress, the countenance, the gait, the language, and almost every motion. So is the copious knowledge of the good teacher. It is eloquent, though he may not be upon that subject. Every anecdote and illustration has some turn or allusion that calls it to mind. This is true in regard to the branches commonly taught in the school, but it is especially important in regard to manners and propriety, and in regard to moral and religious instruction. Copious knowledge on these important subjects cannot well be supposed to exist without a practical illustration of them in the life and conduct of the teacher. And it will be found that the most valuable instruction in these things, which do more than all besides in forming a truly excellent character, is given more by the example, intercourse, and silent eloquence of worthy and respected men, than by all the books and lessons recited ever so much.

\* The reference is to the celebrated American door and safe locks, exhibited at the London Exhibition of 1851.—Ed. *Journal of Education*.