

the judgment, the conscience, and the will ; to quicken the minds of the pupils to self-activity and aspiration, to furnish them with right ideals of character, and to develop in them reverence, love, and self-control. As Thompson quaintly puts it :

“Delightful task ! to rear the tender thought,
To teach the young idea how to shoot,
To pour the fresh instruction o’er the mind,
To breathe the enliv’ning spirit, and to fix
The generous purpose in the glowing breast.”

If I am right in my conception of the teacher’s work, it would surely be difficult to find among the tasks which engage men’s minds one whose nature invests it with a nobler dignity than belongs to this.

Then, further, there belongs to the teacher’s work

THE DIGNITY OF PRIMACY.

If not absolute primacy, yet something that often approximates to this. The primal influence in all right directions should issue from the parents who have brought the children into the world. Such, however, is the pitiful incompetence of many parents that the first true hand upon the helm of child life is all too often that of the school teacher. Where parents are the most competent, the supplementary aid of the school teacher is hailed with the keenest appreciation, and prized as a partnership for all good ends. The tremendous influence of the school teacher even where the parents are of the best is often scarcely suspected. Mrs. Mary A. Livermore lately told of her little grandchild coming to her with a question. listening to her answer, and then gravely saying ; “well Grandmamma, I will ask Miss Brown tomorrow if what you say is true.” Miss Brown was a little eighteen year-old teacher in a primary school. Thus, blending with parental influence where that is good, struggling to cancel it where it is evil, the work of the school teacher is a primal influence in directing life and moulding character whether for service in the commonwealth or in the kingdom of God. The colleges, the professional schools, the multiplied callings which engage the life of men, must all wait for material till the public school teacher has had his day, and will find their possibilities conditioned and defined by the work the teacher has done. His work is foundation work, and settles what the super-structure may be. It is the bending of the sapling which no later influences can ever wholly reverse. It is the generating of tendencies which will persist through all subsequent experience. If the responsibility is great, equally great is the honor of a primacy like this.

In thus hinting at the dignity and nobleness of the teacher’s calling, I am well aware, Mr. Chairman, that I am only echoing that which you have been insisting upon ever since these young people entered your school. I congratulate them that they live in a time