

The Teacher ² of his Work.

63

begin

The work of the teacher with historic man. In India he gathered the boys about him in the shade of trees or under sheds, and, with a discipline enforced by the application of cold water and the rod, instructed them in accordance ^{with} the requirements of the caste to which they belonged.

Among the Israelites the early instructors were the parents; and, until the time of Christ, the pedagogue was unknown; but, with the establishment of schools in the year 67, began one of the brightest educational systems; and the teachers, styled "the true guardians of the city", were expected to possess the highest virtues, and were respected above all other persons.

The highest early education and noblest early teachers were found in Hell and Rome. The training due to the work of Lycurgus, although not fitted to develop the whole man, gave to Sparta her invincible warriors, and to Greece many victories on the battle-field. In Athens, in the age of Pericles, when every man could "steer the ship of state", we find the first symmetrical training of body, intellect and morals. This was the Golden age of Greece; and we attribute it to the work of her warriors and statesmen.

We read the history of Greece and find page about Draco, Solon, Pericles, Aristides, Miltiades, and Themistocles, and feel that it was they alone who brought the nation to that prosperous stage. They, indeed, did rule the state, and led the armies to victory; but back of their achievements was the work of a class of men who taught them their principles and habits, who, by their patient unrewarded toil, gave to the people the sentiment and energy, which gave to Greece her glory. Socrates, and

Aristotle have not received the appellation of hero or even benefactor, but their work not only did its part in giving victory to Greece, but is yet a treasure for the whole world.

So, through all history we read of the deeds of heroes in the battle field and ^{of} champions in the senate; but, of that still nobler class, that silent human force which, in shaping the character of both great and ^{new} common man, does most to determine the destiny of a nation, we scarcely read a line.

At present, in Germany and many other European countries, the Educational system are national; and the work of the pedagogue, although compensated very meagerly financially, is a comparatively reliable occupation, but in

America lack of uniformity and sufficient governmental control makes the pay and stability of the teacher's employment to depend entirely ^{upon} the feeling of the locality in which he is working. He can engage his services only for a few months, his employment is unsteady, and his success depends almost entirely on his ability to please influential factions. His home is temporary and chance for investment so very slight that ^{he has} no incentive to accumulate property; so year after year passes by and finds him so much the older and deeper in his well worn niche of dissatisfaction. His discouragements do not end here; but, despite his necessary charity ^{and} his great work for little gain, he is almost entirely without public sympathy. Wealth being the popular standard of man's worth, his empty purse leaves him out of consideration. He is said to follow his occupation because lacking energy or taste for engaging in an industrial or business life. His entreaties for reform and improvement are often unheeded as simply a part of his business. His wages, although scarcely a maintenance ration, are said to be too high for the time expended; and, instead of a natural tendency to increase, it requires a constant effort to keep them from falling.

I believe that important causes, other than the lack of National uniformity, for these discouraging conditions, come first from the feeling that the teacher, like the minister, should be content with a meager portion of this world's goods, being satisfied, perhaps, ^{with} a chance for recompense in the hereafter; second, from an inefficient popular interest in educational work; third, too low a standard for teachers; and above all, a deficiency in the teachers themselves.

The first cause may never be remedied entirely, but the indications are certainly for a betterment in that direction. The second cause has been growing less for a long time. People are beginning to realize that talent counts; that they must educate or fall behind, that there must be better school laws, greater uniformity in the work, and more thorough teachers. The third has been one of the greatest drawbacks to the advancement of the earnest teacher. Under past requirements in most localities the country is crowded with those who are totally unfit to enter so important an occupation. Great competition keeps wages at the rate for which only the poorest can afford to teach; lack of preparation brings lack of success, and respect for the occupation is lowered.

by the failure of unfitted teachers. One of the most fatal defects of modern education comes from placing the guidance of one of the most important factors of society, the children, in the hands of those who have not yet learned to guide and control themselves. Our Oriental fathers said "He who learns of a young master is like a man who eats green grapes and drinks wine fresh from the press; but he who has a master of mature years is like a man who eats ^{and delicious} ripe grapes and drinks old wine." Our teachers are too young, and it must also be admitted that, like persons of other occupations, many lack the qualities which are most esteemed in mankind.

The teacher should be a true, broad minded, cultured man. His work is of the highest type. Offering himself as the director of the most susceptible part of human nature, he should have inculcated within himself those principles and habits which we wish to see developed in our future men and women. Temperate, charitable, unselfish, honest, and energetic, he should be able to lead the youthful mind by the bright reflections from his own character. The architect and engineer labour with wood, stone and metals that ^{they} may convert these materials into the use and

Convenience of man; the farmer cultivates the plants to provide for his physical sustenance; the manufacturer converts the raw materials into useful articles, and the merchant brings them within our reach. All of these are noble callings: but how much more important the work of him who cultivates, prunes, and guides a plant which has a physical, intellectual, and moral work here, and an eternal life beyond. He indeed has a responsible duty who undertakes to guide the human mind.

The teacher's influence in society, then, must be a wonderful influence. He it is, who, as much as the parents, determines whether gambling halls, grogshops, public balls, and disreputable theaters, or churches, schools, literary societies and respectable social gatherings shall be frequented by the young people of the land. Whether indolence and wasteful habits shall make an unprogressive, worthless people, or energetic intelligent work shall bring prosperous, happy homes.

As government is largely the outgrowth of society, the teacher's influence on society must be followed by an almost equal influence on government. The sentiment that decides who shall make our laws and what they shall be, is almost entirely the product of that silent influence

which comes from home and school.

The teacher's voice does not resound in the legislative halls; his small capital cannot control the dishonest legislator's vote; but he can largely control the sentiment, the vote and the laws of the future government. The true teacher is an honest politician; one who studies the questions as they are and endeavour to stamp upon his pupils those ideas and principles of true government which will make of them such citizens as our country needs.

Every person has his peculiar niche in this life; and if the lot befalls some to lead armies to victory, or to make legislative halls tremble with their eloquence, we should not feel that they alone are great, but also they who taught them to be so. Then the true pedagogue, whose every act is for the improvement of mankind should stand first among those whom the world hold great; for he it is who, without just recompense in fame or gold, leads mankind to higher and more intelligent thoughts and acts, to more useful lives, to nobler achievements.

His outlook is growing brighter. Increased interest in education by the masses ~~brings~~ brings an increased sympathy for his work.

Increasing uniformity points to the time when state and national management will give to school work a greater stability; the introduction of industrial training is widening the scope of the teacher's work and bringing it into sympathy with all classes of society; and the rapid improvement in teachers will give to the pedagogue a greater prestige. His occupation may never be as lucrative as that of some other persons, but it will, and should be recognized as one of the noblest callings of mankind.

A. H. Chaffee.