

TEACHING AS A LEARNED PROFESSION.

BY THE EDITOR.

Teaching is to be classed among the learned professions—divinity, medicine, and law. For all callings and professions begin with instruction. No denomination of Christians attempts to induct men into the ministry of the Gospel without study. No doctor of medicine can be found, unless a quack, without a good education. And no man dare enter the courts of law, without learning the great principles of justice.

But teaching is at the foundation of these learned professions. And, it were well were it made a life work and a profession. Mere teaching school as a make-shift for money, and then going to other callings, is beneath the profession of instructors.

Already, collegiate instructors, are making a life work of teaching. Some such, like the venerable John McLean, of Princeton, are *emeritus* Presidents and Professors, still honored by trustees, alumni and students.

In Germany, the old parish teacher is endowed with a Government pension, on retiring, at sixty years, from the school room. And will not America, a republican nation, do as well by her worn out worthies? A graduated pension for ten, twenty, or thirty years continuous teaching would be a blessed crown for civil service. For, give me the school-masters and the schoolmistresses of our land, and I will give the world a nation of educated freemen, worthy of the best republic the world ever saw.

Teaching, then, is at the bottom of all the learned professions. And all callings in life are dependent upon instruction for intelligence and cultivation of mind adequate to business of all sorts in society. The laboring classes must have teaching, or be left to be hewers of wood and drawers of water all their days. By adequate instruction, all the arts of life may be pursued with success. The United States of

America have their national schools, from public lands, in the several States. It is no longer considered assuming for a farmer to be educated in all the schools. So also the mechanic must be taught in his honorable calling, or always be a mere underling. We say honorable pursuit. Why not so? The Lord Jesus—the Savior of the world—the absolute Creator of all the worlds—was a machanic on this earth—a “carpenter’s Son!” He wrought with his father at that trade, till thirty years of age, when He became the Teacher of the world—the greatest Teacher ever on this globe. For as a Jew, he had learned a trade, as it was the practice of the Jews or Hebrews to give all their sons a trade. Nay, their daughters were taught fine, skilled needle work and all domestic arts, as the Hebrew Scriptures show. They learned how to dye all kinds of colors. They spun wool and flax, holding the distiff in their hands, working willingly with their hands. But, now that spinning jennies and power looms have set aside the little and big wheel and loom of the household, making these mere ornamental relics of the hall or the garret, women have become restive, and want to go to Congress, and become politicians and want to vote—many of them better qualified, or as well qualified as their brothers, husbands and fathers for higher office. Well, let them go to Congress, old style, horse and pillion, husband and wife on the same horse, or hobby.

But to return from this digression. What use, it may be asked, is it to teach boys and men, girls and women, everything? To fit them to live in a world of labor and artifice. Why teach languages, mathematics, chemistry, astronomy, what not of science and study? Why not let them read dime novels and stories and romances? Because life is real, life is earnest, and should be skilled in labor and work. God will hold the family, the school, the academy, the college, the university, the school of theology, medicine and law, responsible for the higher culture of men and women for the grand duties of life. Only contrast slavish labor, illiterate work, with free and educated industry. A lady from the Southern States, that had of necessity to teach

ignorant slaves, taught her fellow missionaries in India how to make butter, extemporizing a churn and directing Indian servants. From one example, learn all. True men and women are not to live in the moon, nor plant and sow in the moon, but it is very well to be taught the changes of the moon and where to find the north star in a night travel or voyage. And it is well to learn enough of chemistry to color trinkets or old dress goods—at least enough to take out vegetable stains from linen, even if the mantua-maker or laundry-man has superseded domestic labor. So likewise, of all things, vegetable, animal, and mineral in the kingdoms of nature, not to be ignorant of the world we live in, nor to degenerate from the first man and woman, who gave names before God to all created things.

Indeed, it were well if the folks of this age of improvement, as it is called, were disposed as teachers and taught “to intermeddle with all wisdom,” like Peter the Great, of Russia, who went into a shipyard in Holland and learned from masters of the art how to build ships, before he built a Russian navy; and put himself under his own general, refusing to be promoted as a common soldier till he merited it, and so went up all grades to generalissimo of his own imperial army. And, at least, without intruding on the province of the sex, boys and men might well be taught to sow on a button and mend a rent, or darn a stocking rather than paste on court plaster to prevent showing a hole in a stocking.

And now, of *teaching as a learned profession*, this is the sum. Men and women, when young, should be taught, as the Greeks were, “those things which, when grown to years, would be useful in life.” We would not say, that men and women should be so taught as to be experts in all trades and professions, but should learn the principles of all labor and handicraft, like a learned judge in Maine, who was so attentive to the farrier’s shoeing of his horse for many years, as to be taken for a blacksmith.

Teaching, therefore, is a necessary honorable, God-like profession, and among the most learned professions.

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