

EDUCATIONAL.

Permanent Tenure of Office for Teachers—Current Public Opinion on Educational Topics.

TENURE OF OFFICE OF TEACHERS.

The most important reform in school administration that is now demanded in this country is a more stable tenure of office for teachers. Nothing but a permanent tenure of office during efficiency and good behavior will secure the services for life of the men and women best able to improve our children in head and heart. Security in office is essential to procuring the best talent for teaching. The duties are so laborious and the compensation so small that the ablest men must have at least the poor boon of security in the faithful discharge of their duty if they are to be turned to a life-work in the schools.

In building up her splendid public school system, Prussia started out with this doctrine, as a fundamental principle. There the tenure is for life, provided efficient service is rendered. Indeed, the Prussian law has long since expressly prohibited the appointment of any regular teacher for a determinate period. The result is a noble set of men in schools, of whom Horace Mann wrote:

"As a body of men their character is more enviable than that of any of the three so-called 'professions.'"

In Saxony, while the cities are allowed to elect teachers from properly presented and certificated candidates, a teacher can be removed only with the concurrence of the governmental authority, after governmental examination.

So in Bavaria. Every safeguard is employed to prevent the appointment of unworthy teachers, and a proper probationary period is required; but, when the teacher is once confirmed in his place, he is secure so long as he does his duty. Says an eminent authority:

"The precarious tenure has not been found necessary in any other enlightened country on the face of the globe; and, in our own country, the annual election is unknown in universities, colleges, and higher educational institutions, generally, outside of the public school; so that this odious annual election has no place in the civilized world except the public schools of the United States."

Now I submit that the facts just stated make it highly probable that we are wrong in this country. Where the public-school problem has been studied longer and with better results than with us, it is likely that the treatment of teachers in this respect is preferable to our own. It is certainly for the interest of European governments to obtain the best teachers at the lowest price, and a stable tenure of office is there universally regarded as one of the first conditions.

PUBLIC OPINION.

Some wide-awake, observant children, ready at the age of five or six to look at anything but books, will catch the idea of spelling by sound, while their eyes wander. Probably it would be better not to give them this idea early, but hold them closely to learning one or two words at a time by sight perfectly, so as to be able to recognize them instantly. A good perception of form ought to help in learning to read and spell.—*Student.*

The teacher who will succeed must not fall into the error of dealing with his school as if it were simply an aggregation of little people, each like the other, and all of whom may be taught and developed in the same general manner. A school is a community of individuals, no two of whom are alike, and no two of whom can be most successfully taught, governed, or developed in exactly the same way.—*West Virginia School Journal.*

What children require to be taught more than anything else is, to spell correctly, to read intelligently, to write a good, plain hand, and to know arithmetic, grammar, and geography. If children can be taught these thoroughly, even if they get no more schooling, they will do well; and if they possess average intelligence, combined with perseverance and a desire for knowledge, they will be able to improve themselves as they go through life. What they need first is a solid foundation to build upon.—*Salem Gazette.*

When the teacher is easily provoked and falls to scolding to remedy existing evils, it may be set down at once that she knows little of the doctrine of discipline. It is the delight of a certain class of boys to tease the very life out of such a teacher, and we don't say their dispositions are very perverse either. Tell one of these quick, nervous, fun-loving boys to do a thing, and impress its importance with a scowl and a menacing threat, and if he has any snap about him he will do the opposite. The reason is that the request comes as a stern demand—as a "I dare you not to do it."—*Miss. School Journal.*

The best teachers do a work unknown and unseen. Whoever says to a class of boys and girls that which strengthens the weak, improves the ignorant, encourages the down-hearted, gives new hope to the discouraged, softens and cultures the rude and foolish, does a work equal to that which the angels of heaven undertake. The labor may seem to be nothing in the eyes of those who simply look to see the results that business brings forth—houses, land, money, and fame. Yet it is just such work that is urgently needed to vitalize conscience and to infuse noble ideas. A country is rich if it has many such men and women at work—poor, indeed, if it has but few.—*Penn. School Journal.*

It is possible to provide machinery on a great scale, and yet to accomplish little. In the last century it was remarked how little good came of the rich endowments of our universities and how they

were surpassed by much poorer universities in other countries. Machinery thrown away! In this century we have tried machinery of a different kind. Have we always had success? We set up the examination system; we extended it over the whole country; and what do we think of the result? Is this machine so decidedly better than the other? I think a few persons will say so. Emulation turns out to be a rude and coarse motive, competition proves to be an exhausting, unhealthy process. It is complained that those who have been trained under this system imbibe low views of culture; that this sort of education has disappointed results and can scarcely be called liberal.—*J. R. Seeley, in Nineteenth Century.*

Growing Vines For Window Cultivation.

Growing vines are the loveliest of all plants for in-door cultivation, and require the least care. There is an indescribable charm in the vine, with its clinging, tender ways, and soft shadows. Pictures, plaques—in fact everything decorating the wall—are enhanced by the caress of a string of foliage. There are certain varieties of free-growing trailers that thrive excellently if their roots are placed in water. A large-necked bottle or hyacinth glass is useful for this purpose. Put a piece of charcoal in the bottle to keep the water pure; as the water evaporates add more, but never renew it all at once, as the roots in the glass will so be chilled, or perhaps wounded. Where there is not room for pots this is an exceedingly convenient and cleanly way to grow vines. The brackets and pockets of pottery which appear in such great variety in china shops may be filled with water-vines with fine effect. English ivy will grow in water, but so slowly that it is better to keep it in earth, where it will climb in-doors and grow luxuriantly. Periwinkle is another slow grower in water. *Tradescantia* or spider-wort is the fastest runner of all the water-vines. The *T. repens vitata*, *T. aquatica*, *T. zebrina*, and *T. multicolor* are the best for in-door cultivation. Umbrella ferns (*aspidistra cyperus*) thrive well in vases water-filled. Sweet potato vines are ornamental and require but little attention.—*Fannie S. Benson, in Good Housekeeping.*

Mrs. Langtry is busy storing away her wealth in New York. She has gradually been adding to her investments in mortgages in that city until she now holds over \$150,000.

Filial Affection.

Youth (just returned from college)—"Why, father, how shabbily you dress, nowadays! I think it is too bad, you going around in such shabby clothes. It mortifies me, I assure you."

Father—"I can't help it, my dear boy. It has taken all my savings to give you an education and supply you with pocket money, and keep you well dressed at college. I did intend to have got a new suit this spring, but you need a fashionable spring overcoat and spring suit, and the little sum I had put aside for myself must go to fix you out in a style becoming a gentleman. I hope you'll excuse me, John, but I really can't wear any better clothes than I do now."

Youth (with a magnanimous air)—"Why, my dear father, I did not for a moment think you were so hard up as that. Here I have been giving all my cast-offs to the second-hand clothes man for a mere song, and never for a moment thinking that you might need 'em. But that's got to be stopped. We're both about a size, and, in future, you must have my clothes as soon as they become too shabby for me. And, more than that, father, I won't wear them so long as I have been in the habit of doing. I shall get a new suit every few months, and you can wear the old ones before they are scarcely soiled."

Then the father fell upon the youth's neck and kissed and blessed the fate that had given him such a kind and considerate son, and then he ran to the door and shouted to the hired man to bring the lean calf out of the barn and kill it and make a feast, adding "for my son has shown this day that he is anxious to have his old father look respectable."—*Boston Courier.*

Dickens' Affront to the Secretary.

Charles Dickens, when he first visited the United States, in 1842, was received with prodigious attentions. Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore vied with each other in showering adulation upon him, and the doors of the most aristocratic mansions opened wide to receive him. Plays were written and performed in which he and his most prominent characters were personated true to nature. He was overwhelmed with invitations to balls, dinners and receptions, and the highest social honors were showered on him, which he received like a conceited coxcomb, and repaid by writing a slanderous account of his tour. When in Washington he held a daily levee at his hotel, and the Secretary of War, calling to pay his respects, heard him say, while waiting in the ante-room: "My hour for receiving is past." That night, at a reception at the White House, he told his friend, Christopher Hughes, to inform the Secretary that he was then willing to be introduced to him. "Tell him my hour for receiving him is past," was Mr. Spencer's reply.—*Bos. Perley Poore in Boston Budget.*

Colonel Byrne, surgeon in charge of the hospital at the Soldiers' Home in Washington, has extracted from the neck of an old soldier a ball which had been there since the battle of second Bull Run, and was well encysted.

The young king of Siam is a reformer. He punishes all officials who are found guilty of accepting bribes.

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