RE-EXAMINATION OF TEACHERS.

RECENTLY, in a discussion on the teaching of English to foreign-born adults from southern Europe, one speaker referred to their unreadiness to express themselves about tangible things, and their readiness to pour forth their ideas on intangible subjects, such as life, death, immortality. In reply to the question whether things that interest us are not to us the tangible ones, the speaker seemed to favor "the things I have done today" as being more tangible than those reaching beyond the environs of this mortal life. This tangible topic brought to mind the attempts of another speaker to induce a girl who worked in a sweat-shop to expatiate on the things she had done during the day, but the poor girl, with her dull routine, less the intangible, could only reiterate her one all-comprehending refrain, "I sewed pants."

The first speaker's ideas of the tangible and the intangible seemed to rest on a sharp distinction between conduct in life and the thoughts about life that lie back of and determine that conduct. There are many who hold similar views regarding the tangible and the intangible in the work of teachers. They count the methods and results among things manifest, things falling within the realm of the judgment of a supervisor or a superintendent. The teacher's scholarship, on the contrary, is classed with things intangible, alien to those conditions that are involved in the making of a judgment by a superintendent or principal. It is because of this remarkable attitude toward the obvious in the work of the teacher, and the pervasive which determines the obvious, that we hear of superintendents who subject those whom they regard as successful teachers to a written examination from time to time in order to determine their mental status. Laughter would greet the person who should suggest giving a written examination to President Eliot of Harvard, to find out whether, with the numberless demands made upon him and his time, he was keeping up to his highest possible

mental level. People would exclaim: "Look at his work! Only a scholarly mind can do such work!"

The kindergartens, the private schools, the colleges, the normal and the technical school, the medical and the law school, the universities—all recognize the relation of scholarship to successful teaching. None of these educational organizations is so dull to the influence of the mental content as to examine the successful teachers within its gates in order to determine whether they should receive an advance in salary. A few years back there appeared an article, based on interviews with college presidents, about college faculties. These interviews brought to light the fact that every college president sees in the faculty of which he is the head, members who are unsatisfactory. In moving about among the students in the colleges, schools, and universities, one soon learns that the students know who are the instructors with something new to offer, and who have struck twelve. Evidently, in the higher institutions, the practice of examining teachers from time to time in order to determine the status of their scholarship is unknown, not because all instructors are keeping abreast of the advance in their subject, but because scholarship, the mental content, is known to be a tangible element in the work of a successful teacher.

In the continued endeavor of the public schools "to better well," there have been introduced at different points, under one guise and another, means for determining that which in the work of teachers is intangible to some superintendents, *i. e.*, the scholarship behind that work. The examination which is supposed to keep teachers up to their highest possible level, or to inform the superintendent of that which is to him imperceptible, strikes at the fundamental positions of modern psychology and educational principles. It rudely separates one's knowledge from that which one can teach intelligently. The two are inseparable. This statement does not impugn the truth of the well-known fact that scholarship does not necessarily make teaching its mode of expression; it affirms that successful teaching is one mode of expression of a valuable mental content.

Recently, in a gathering of teachers, two college presidents

stated emphatically that teachers should be treated as are the workers in all other lines; that, after passing the examination for a certificate to teach, they should be judged on the merits of their work only. The position was well taken; but the invidious distinction implied between teachers and other classes of workers, by the promotional examination plan, is not so serious as is the subtle distinction made between scholarship and power in successful teaching.

The conditions attendant upon the conduct of systems of schools are often perplexing, and the onlooker must recognize the efforts of a superintendent to maintain a high standard of scholarship throughout the corps of which he is the head; and yet, while openly expressing appreciation of the earnestness that struggles for better things, one must regret any indications of the absence of an intellectually sympathetic study of the situation before taking action. Scholarship can never result from cramming for an examination. Neither professional nor cultural studies lend themselves to the method of cram. For many years Colonel Parker went from East to West, from North to South, pointing out the evils of cramming for an examination. All that he urged concerning those evils in the mental life of the child is true in the mental life of the teacher. It is well to organize the work of the schools so that teachers shall feel the influence of a great spirit and know that much remains for them to accomplish. But, on the other hand, the enlarged interests of teachers must be reckoned with. Scholarship should not be counted as dross to be refined at the examiner's desk; it should be known as an impelling force back of the work, and also as part of it. It should not be set up for separate measurement as lying outside of successful teaching. The set examination, given for admission to the schools, is necessary. Further sets of questions are mere makeshifts, usurping the place of that personal acquaintance with the work of teachers which the superintendent should esteem it a duty and a pleasure to have.

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