

THESIS.

Subject, Intellectual Qualifications
of Public School Teachers.

Name, Shannon J. Thompson.

The teacher of the public school should have a well disciplined mind. The character of his instruction is determined more by the mental power of the teacher than by his knowledge. Every day brings to the test the originality of the mind. If he lacks inventive power then his work will be mechanical, and of that routine character which deadens life.

It has been asserted, and I think truthfully, that teachers read less concerning their professional work, than any other class of people. There must be something wrong when this is the case. The teacher's work is so important that no one can afford to rest with what he knows or what he is, but should try to im-

prove with each day. Artisans, mechanics, and farmers, men who work with wood and stone and soil, support their journals. A farmer who does not read an agricultural ^{paper} is the exception rather than the rule. Why should not a teacher, who works on far more costly material profit by the experience of his fellow teachers? As conventions and institutes are at best only occasional, the educational journal remains the best method for exchanging ideas. There are many occupying high positions today who denounce all the literature of the profession as a heap of trash, rather than becoming an aid to the practical teacher. These teachers are a clog on the wheels of progress, a dark cloud hiding the light of modern skill and advancement.

Works on psychology, methods and principles of training, educational periodicals, and public discussions, must all bear their part in fully equipping the modern teacher for intelligent work in the profession.

The teacher's knowledge must be varied rather than along any particular line of study. The demands of elementary instruction cover the whole field of knowledge. Art, language, mathematics, physics, history, psychology, and child study all touch the line of the pupils early training. The teacher whose knowledge covers but one department of instruction is unfitted for the teaching profession. He will necessarily give to one kind of knowledge at the expense of other kinds equally valuable. This

will tend to give a one sided culture to the pupils under his control.

A teacher needs the enjoyment and enlightenment that comes from a knowledge of good literature. It is the business of the teacher to get as close to the children as possible, in sympathy with them, and the best way to do this is to read and enjoy books that interest children. A teacher must be able to select such literature as best suits the grades of pupils he is teaching. If he is not able to do this he is not in sympathy with the children and ought not to be in the school room. Great truths can only be imbibed when the mind is in a childlike condition; and it is a great truth well brought out by Chancellor Upson that great minds

keep themselves in this childlike condition of openness to truth. How many teachers have pursued no study since they took the position they hold today? They may read newspapers and magazines, but so do those who are not teachers. The real teacher must always be a student. The teaching spirit, and the teachable spirit, and the inquiring or learning spirit are all one.

A teacher must understand analytically, and in detail, all the branches of knowledge that he is expected to teach, their relation to each other, and their relative value as factors in education, art, and science; and he must have a clear conception of the fundamental laws of culture and instruction

and be able to evolve from them the current method of awakening and stimulating the energies of pupils and directing them into proper channels of thought and activity so that they may produce the best results in adult life. Narrow indeed must be the thoughts and the study of him who goes not beyond the dry and beaten path of the text-book and school literature. Text books are but mere guide posts pointing the way to inexperienced teachers, but giving little knowledge of the wood, the field, the country through which he passes.

The teacher should know the state of health, the physical defects, the tendency to sickness or physical weakness, that he may know how to promote his comfort and

health or how to guard against the
ills of personal injury. Teachers need
to know how to ventilate the school
room. In the ordinary district school
there is small reason to complain
because of a lack of fresh air. Here
is the danger that too much of the
vital fluid is supplied, and the ques-
is how best to regulate and control
it. Draughts are more to be feared
than the possible chance of vitiated
air. The observing teacher will
quickly ascertain the faults and
virtues of her school home, and set
about to remedy the one and em-
phasize the other. Our public school
system lies at the foundation, in many
respects, of our national life; the
noble and self sacrificing army
of teachers is laying broad and

deep the foundations of national ⁽⁸⁾
greatness; but we must be on the
alert lest in our efforts to educate
the coming generation, we handicap
it by physical injury, which shall
retard the progress our schools are
designed to promote.

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