

her, with an imperiousness that will take no denial ; and she is always willing to answer to that call, if she may but lighten by a feather-weight the trouble which she sometimes fears may drive her sister to recklessness. Margaret Leonard claims her for a month every summer, and the Bruces for two or three weeks, and thus for a short period of her yearly life she looks unflinchingly upon the mingled mementoes of both Harry and Geoffrey, bravely renewing her pain, and, with it, her resolution.

Joan's mantle has fallen upon her to a certain degree, but not altogether, for such an illness as she has gone through has left its traces behind, and although she has the will, she lacks the strength to be an able successor to her energetic cousin. So she is compelled to lead rather a home life, and consent to be considered "not strong," a considerable trial to one so young and active in her tastes.

Lady Travers is kindness itself. Nothing can be more admirable, she considers, than Dolly's behaviour. She has taken Harry's death in such a perfectly right spirit, dedicating her life to his memory, that she deserves every consideration at home. Besides which, she is genuinely fond of her stepdaughter. She admires in her all the qualities that she lacks herself : her honesty, her truthfulness, her perfect reliability, her sweet sunny temper and love of fun—such a contrast, she is obliged to confess, to Lou, with all Sir Augustus's dulness allied to well-meaning tactlessness, which makes Rose—grown so irritable now—say she would rather have any one with her than Lou.

It is a glorious morning in October, a really beautiful autumnal morning, when the sky is clear and blue, the air fresh and frosty, and the sun shines down bright and strong on the changing foliage of the red, brown, and golden trees—such a morning as makes Dolly feel glad when she looks out of window, and yet gives her an aching sense of pain afterwards. For it has been a dull, rainy September, and this is

the first really fine day, the very beauty of which, whilst filling her with gladness, gives her a mysterious thrill of pain, such as is often the accompaniment to the sight of the beautiful, an undefined vague longing for yet more, speaking of what lies beyond.

But she has not much time for these unprofitable musings. She has promised Joan to drive over and lunch at Rushbury, and finish a drawing she is making of little Alice, the youngest child and her father's darling. Old Lady Rushbury's health is fast failing ; the children, spite of governesses and nurses, are too much for her ; and, when she can be spared from Orminster, Joan Travers spends most of her time with her old friend, where it is difficult to say who make the most of her, the children or their grandmother. And she has no hesitation in going, for by no word or sign has Lord Rushbury ever renewed his suit. He seems to have accepted his fate with gentle resignation, putting his whole heart and soul into his absorbing hobby, the collection of such valuable books, MSS., pictures, china, and plate as have made his great gallery famous, and annoying Joan by the quiet indifference with which he fulfils all his most obvious duties.

This time she is come to spend a short three weeks with her friends, and has found herself looking forward beforehand to the time with a keenness which has provoked her more than she cares to own. She and her cousin have become fast friends. Harry's grave has opened out to Dolly the hearts of all her Travers' relations ; an unspoken anger at Sir Augustus' conduct has stirred up their warmest sympathy for his daughter, and made her a favourite with them all.

To-day, then, is to see the last touches put to the likeness of Alice's baby-face, and the good-byes spoken between the two girls, for Joan is returning to Orminster before the end of the week.

END OF CHAPTER THE THIRTY-SEVENTH.

THE TRAINING AND WORK OF THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLMASTER.



THE education of the people has in these days come to be rightly considered as a question of paramount national importance. The Elementary Education Act of 1870, which it may be that posterity will after all account the greatest legislative achievement of the Parliament that passed it, has familiarised every town, district, and remote hamlet of our land with at least the bodily presence of the schoolmaster. To-day this gentleman is ubiquitous. Yet his training, his work, and his prospects are still the subjects of strangely-mistaken notions, we fear, in many minds. In the following paper we desire to set his career fully forth in the uncoloured light of facts.

Time was when the elementary schoolmaster was not a very learned person. He taught the "three

R's," and scarcely himself went beyond them. We have changed all that. The term "Elementary" receives now a very wide latitude of interpretation indeed, and the primary teacher is as vastly superior in attainments to his predecessor of bygone generations as is the railway locomotive of 1881 to the tentative efforts of Stephenson.

Very many of the most successful present-day schoolmasters may be said to develop naturally. A proved aptitude brings them into the profession. This is the way of it :—

James Brown (for example) has distinguished himself in the classes of the National School, Warbury, for diligence and acuteness. He seems to possess tact and teaching power as well ; and the master lightens his own and his assistants' toil by putting him in charge of some of the younger boys, occasionally, as temporary monitor. Step the first.

The trust is not abused. Experience begets a liking on the lad's side also, and he becomes ambitious to find himself on the regular school staff. His master is pleased at the idea, and his parents raise no objection. Hence, James Brown's services are brought in due course to the notice of both the Government Inspector and the School Managers. They approve his candidature, and he becomes a stipendiary monitor. Step the second.

Age permitting, which must not be less than fourteen completed years, the lad applies to be duly bound as pupil-teacher. He has to be examined and passed by the Inspector (who is, upon most points, the school dictator), and must produce testimonials as to health, personal character, and fairly favourable home surroundings. All this is small trouble to James Brown. He passes each successive ordeal triumphantly, and is formally apprenticed for five years.

Annual examinations of increasing rigour and importance follow; and, in the case of our friend J. B., are won through.

The rate of remuneration during this probationary period is to be regulated, in the precise words of the code, by "the discretion of the parties, having in view the local rate of wages and the advantages of the school as a place wherein to learn the business of a teacher." In the vast majority of cases it is very small.

Emerging from his engagement with a clean bill of health, physical, intellectual, and moral, the traditional three courses are open to the embryo schoolmaster. Circumstances permitting, he can enter a training college—which is far and away the best plan. He may commence at once, either under tutors or by self-instruction, to work up for the Governmental certificate examination. Or, he may accept a situation, within certain well-defined limits, as assistant-master. Let us deal with the first and last of these possibilities at more length; the second speaks for itself.

The gates of the training colleges subsidised by Government grants are kept by what is known as the Scholarship Examination. A fifth-year pupil-teacher who wishes to sit it, communicates his desire to the authorities of the particular college he intends—if successful—to enter. These authorities make arrangements purely on their own responsibility. If he is an early applicant, room will perhaps be found for the candidate to undergo his trial within their own walls. Should exigencies of space forbid this, he may sit at some officially arranged local centre. This examination takes place annually, on the first Wednesday after the 2nd of July. It is a wide one, covering the whole ground of the subjects previously required in the career of the pupil-teacher. Papers are set in Arithmetic, in Euclid, Algebra, and Mensuration, in Geography and History, Grammar, Dictation, and Penmanship, Music, School-management, and Languages (optional), and, for girls, in Domestic Economy, &c.

Those who pass are placed in three categories and numbered, in order of merit. The several colleges naturally fill up their vacancies from those students

who stand highest on the list. As year by year there is an immense preponderance of supply over demand, it follows that very many nominally successful aspirants are left out in the cold; some to wait twelve months, and then sit again; some to fall into one or other of the two classes we mentioned besides. Amongst the chief training institutions something very like rivalry exists as to which of their number shall obtain the "top man," *i.e.*, the candidate who heads the official list. The term "Queen's Scholar" is scarcely a misnomer, for H.M.'s Treasury places to the credit of a college, a grant of £100 for every master, and of £70 for every mistress who properly completes the term of two years' training thereat.

This fact hampers the after-movements of a college-taught master in a rather important way too. It closes against him choice posts in the Civil Service, for which he might be inclined to fit himself, *until he shall have refunded to the Government the amount expended on his behalf*. Needless to say, not always a condition easy to fulfil.

Training colleges do not simply work on theory. To each is attached a practising school, wherein the students teach in turns, and show to their superiors the stuff they are made of.

In the colleges, again, there are two examinations: one at the end of the first year, and one, for certificates, at the end of the second.

A candidate placed in the third class at the scholarship competition is in no case eligible that year for admission into college. He may decide to contest the matter again the next summer in hopes of a better result; or he may fall definitely into the ranks of the assistants, with whose *status* we have next to deal.

An ex-pupil-teacher, who is not in a position to pay the college fees and his own personal expenses during training, or who, from some inscrutable cause, shrinks from the discipline, may make the best terms he can with any school managers who require his services. He is considered equal in the school economy to two pupil-teachers. He has need of the Inspector's sanction, and also of certificates of good conduct from his managers and head-master. He will, of course, utilise his spare time by working up for his final, or certificate examination; and in due season, together with his contemporaries from the colleges, and from private study, will sit it.

The climax of these long years of arduous preparation is now at hand. And here, to the outsider—still more to the interested schoolmaster—seems to exist a little injustice to the college-trained competitor. The latter stands or falls by the papers of the second year—very much more difficult ones than those of the first. The self-tutored assistant can take which set he pleases. As a matter of fact (natural selection) he usually chooses the easiest. A person who has neither been articulated as a pupil-teacher, nor passed through college, may also aim at a certificate, provided he (or she) has served with credit for at least twelve months in some inspected school.

The examination may fairly be called a stiff one. It is extended upon the lines of the scholarship ordeal

in some respects, but is far more exhaustive and thorough. A syllabus of the subjects may be obtained from the Education Department, Whitehall.

Failures from the colleges are so rare as to be practically unknown; but the wide ranks beyond supply every year a moderate percentage. The many times plucked and still sanguine biped is not quite unknown even to these examiners.

Certificates are divided into three classes. Those candidates who nominally pass in the first division receive a parchment of the second, which after ten years of approved service is revised by the Department and exchanged into a first. Certificates of the third class only entitle to the charge of infant and small schools. Certificates are granted, at first, conditionally. That is to say, after winning them by brain-labour, a further delay of two years' (more or less) probation is enforced. Then, if the Inspector has twice reported favourably at the same school, the precious and dearly-bought document duly arrives.

Such is the training of the elementary schoolmaster—the ordinary and simplest training, for in all this we have said not one word of those supplementary examinations, in the five branches required for the full drawing certificate, in sciences, &c., of which only the initiated can guess the entire meaning and burden.

The master's daily toil is quite what one might expect from so extended a novitiate. The tradesman and artisan, who think so often of the teacher as a man of infinite leisure, unhampered mind, permanent buoyancy of spirit, would recoil in dismay from a tithe of his anxiety and long hours of labour.

These are days of frequent "new codes;" and generally each issue of that formidable bundle of red tape brings a longer, more lugubrious groan from the old servant of the Department. His couch has ceased to be a bed of roses. Tedious mornings and afternoons spent in a cheerless apartment, from whose atmosphere the lungs of some hundred or so of healthy boys are every instant draining away the oxygen; extra hours devoted to the instruction of his subordinates (compulsory, according to the regulations); his own work of never-completed preparation; perhaps an evening school in addition. This is the dreary round, year in, year out. Is it any wonder that an aged schoolmaster is a rare phenomenon? that the fell scourge consumption makes sad havoc in the ranks of this profession?

The work of the elementary teacher is complicated in many districts by difficulties and annoyances by law established. In our ponderous educational system there are wheels within wheels. "Half-timers"—to use the technical slang—are one of these sources of trouble.

By the Government rule, a lad fulfilling certain

conditions may attend school half-days, and work in fields or factory for the remainder of his time. For the poorer classes of the community this is an admirable arrangement; and the privilege is made avail of largely. But for the teacher it creates inconvenience. The boys are hard to classify. They cannot be expected to make anything like the same rate of progress as their fellows of full hours. They contract, in too many instances, the idea that the manual labour outside the school-walls is the main thing, and the lessons within mere by-play. Hence, they develop a carelessness, indolence, and sometimes obstinacy, which are as gall and wormwood to a conscientious instructor's soul, and which must perforce be overborne if the school discipline is to be adequately maintained.

A word, in conclusion, with regard to the teacher's prospects. Many, enlisted in the service beyond retreat, would laugh the phrase to scorn, and say that he had none—of any worth. Certainly they cannot be painted just now in very roseate hues. The distinctive mark of the nineteenth century, a stern competition, is set on this calling, as on others. With the founding of school-boards all over the country, there arose a somewhat extensive demand for masters. But, once met, it is not possible that a crisis of such magnitude can recur. The ordinary vacancies must be depended upon. And almost in every school one, two, three, or more pupil-teachers are always in training—a little fact that is significant, and may teach its own moral.

With schoolmistresses the case is somewhat different. Is not the marriage arena open to them? and do they not avail themselves of many a chance to retire with honours?

"A possible pension in old age," do you say? By the present code it is evident that the chance of a pension depends on the applicant having entered the profession before the 9th of May, 1862, and even then it is very small, a total of 270 (amounting to £6,500) only being granted. The Department seems neither to wish nor to expect very old schoolmasters.

An organisation remains to be mentioned that has done, is doing, and may be trusted to do, much towards the improvement of both the teacher's position and prospects. The National Union of Elementary Teachers was founded in 1870, to unite the body together for mutual defence and advantage. It is already, in the truest sense, a power in the land. Its objects, which include provident and annuity funds, an orphanage, &c., are such as commend themselves not only to the interested community, but to outsiders. Heartily we wish God-speed both to it and to every individual teacher.

W. J. L.

