

THE VIRGINIA TEACHER

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I

THE TEACHER AND HIS WORK

The State Normal School is an institution hardly surpassed in importance by any other institution maintained by the public, save perhaps the elementary schools; and the latter can never be efficient without the former. Appreciating as fully as I do the importance of such an institution to the state, and as interested as I have been for many years in the training of teachers, it would be difficult for me to attempt to speak on such an occasion as this* on any other theme than one relating to the profession of teaching. Moreover, since the commencement speaker is expected to address himself primarily to the candidates for graduation, and since these young women are about to go out into the work of teaching, the theme which I shall use appears to me to be not inappropriate.

The profession of teaching is the most ancient and honorable of all professions. In primitive times the priest-teacher was looked upon as being more than human. The highest Grecian civilization was represented by the philosophers, Plato, Aristotle, Socrates—all of whom were teachers. In Rome the teachers were paid from the imperial treasury, and by royal edict they enjoyed many of the privileges of the senatorial class, being exempt from military service and from taxation, and even made sacred in their persons like royalty itself. The Christian era was inaugurated with the advent of the Great Teacher, who came speaking as one with authority and drew all men under his tutelage. During the dark ages, when the lamp of learning flickered and almost went out, the profession of teaching fell from its high estate, and we find the great reformer, Luther, exhorting the people to recognize the importance of the teacher to the state. "Where were your supply of preachers, lawyers, and physicians, if the arts of grammar and rhetoric had no existence?" he asks, for,

said he, "These are the fountain out of which they all flow. I tell you, in a word, that a diligent, devoted school teacher, preceptor, or any person, no matter what his title, who faithfully trains and teaches boys, can never receive an adequate reward, and no money is sufficient to pay the debt you owe him; so, too, said the pagan Aristotle I am convinced that, next to preaching, this is the most useful, and greatly the best, labor in all the world, and, in fact, I am sometimes in doubt which of the positions is the more honorable."

The great aims of teaching give importance to the work of the teacher. The teacher is called upon to be the chief agent in the solution of the greatest problem of life, since only education can solve the problem of the relation of the individual to society. Education is, on the one hand, the process of the development of the individual; while, on the other hand, it is the process of the development of and the perpetuation of society.

Just as education is the best means for securing to the individual his personal rights and the maximum development of his powers, so it is the best means for preparation of the individual for successful participation in the economic, political, and social activities of life. It is not only the chief means for individual betterment, but it is also the best means for social betterment. He who looks upon education as merely giving the individual the elements of learning and developing in him certain skills has not grasped the significance of the educational process. This is altogether too restricted a view. It is the function of education to assist the individual to be something for himself, yes, but more, *to do something for others.*

The pre-requisite for good citizenship is educated citizenship. The fathers of the American nation, particularly Washington, Jefferson, and Madison—all Virginians—saw clearly the immense social and political importance of education among the masses of the people. The teacher is the most important official of the state, because no greater service can be performed for the state than

*Commencement of the State Normal School, at Harrisonburg, June 6, 1922.

the development in every individual of such traits of character, such social habits, such patriotic motives, such sympathetic feelings, as will make of him a loyal, upright, and productive member of society, and enable him to readily adjust himself to new social conditions as they arise.

The problem of the teacher is to take the knowledge of the ages and to incorporate it into the life of the pupil, using those methods which scientific research has determined upon as most effective, guided by sympathy for the pupil on the one hand, and by goodwill for society on the other, which two essentials should have been produced by the teacher's own training and experience. It is the teacher's task to use the materials and processes of the school in such a manner as to develop character in the pupil. It is to do this year after year, with every individual coming under his care and influence. This is no mean problem; this is no ignoble task. Indeed, the magnitude of the problem, and the nobility of the task, lift the office of the teacher to the topmost peak in the social organization.

The first point, then, to which I would direct your attention, is that the profession of teaching is ancient and honorable; the aims of teaching give great significance to the work; and the task of the teacher is essential to the welfare and indeed to the perpetuation of the state. This should be sufficient to make us all proud of the fact that we are teachers, or are going to become teachers, and we should go forth to our work with joy and enthusiasm.

However, while joy and enthusiasm count for much toward the success of any undertaking, this is not all that is needful. Now, I trust that your experience in this institution has discovered to you the secret of success in life. Do not be misled by exceptions which we sometimes meet. I heard not long ago a big man tell of an experience he had in Europe some time after the world war. He met a soldier who was decorated with medals and ribbons from one shoulder to the other. He said to himself, "Now, there is really a distinguished man." So he went up to the soldier and said, "Sir, do you mind telling me why you have received all these wonderful medals and things?" The soldier replied, "I will tell you with great pleasure. You see this large medal

here on my left? Well, I got that by mistake, and I have all the others because I got that one first." Many people have, no doubt, obtained honor and fame in this manner; but it would be altogether unsafe and indeed foolish for you to hope to get thru life by bluffing and taking chances. Rather, listen to the sane advice of that great military leader, who was called from the desk of the teacher, in an academy in France, to the battlefield to lead the armies of the world, Marshal Foch, who, when asked for a message to the young men of America, replied: "Tell them that he who hesitates is lost, that he who moves forward wins The way to move forward is by patience, by earnest endeavor, by diligent study, by tireless work. Plan your battle of life in advance. Map out every detail of what you want to accomplish, and then follow your program. No man who has been successful in life can be counted lucky. His success has been due to his own effort. Success is work, and work is success. The two are inseparable. And take as your motto the quotation from Racine, 'I fear God, and have no other fear.' " May I not second what this great French soldier has said, namely, that hard, patient, continuous work, and courage, are the chief elements for success in the teaching profession.

Some of you, no doubt, think that success is dependent upon opportunity, and that is to some extent true, but unless we are prepared when opportunity comes there is little chance for reaching success. So far as the teaching profession is concerned there are abundant opportunities on every hand for the young man or young woman trained for the work. It is only necessary that one be observant and take advantage of his opportunities as he finds them, and they may be found in every community, every day.

Opportunities need not be sought far away. We frequently overlook them because they lie so near at hand. The important thing is to take advantage of and make the most of the opportunities which are nearest us. As the late President Graham, of the University of North Carolina, so beautifully expressed it: "The road that leads by *my own door* is the road that leads to the end of the world; and the wonderful thing is that for *me* it is the *only* road that leads to the end of the world." Some of you may

be called to serve in your own home communities. These may be small communities, and the field of service may appear to you to be quite restricted and unpromising; but despise not the small task, and remember that the faithful performance of a small task frequently leads to greater opportunities for service.

Thirty-five centuries ago a young Israelite was tending the flocks of sheep of his father-in-law, as they grazed among the sun-kissed hills of Midian. As he went about his duties he beheld a bush burning as with fire, yet not consumed, and he turned aside to see. And because he turned aside to see, the Lord God, Jehovah himself, spoke to him, and commissioned him to deliver his people from bondage, the greatest work to which any man had been called in the history of the world. And Moses, remembering that he was an humble shepherd, remembering that he was even a fugitive from justice charged with murder, demurred, and said unto the Lord, "Who am I, that I should go and do this great thing? Behold, they will not believe me, nor will they hearken unto my voice." And the Lord said unto him, "What is that in thine hand?" And he said, "A rod." And the Lord said unto Moses, "Thou shalt take this rod in thine hand, wherewith thou shalt do these mighty things." And as we follow the stirring drama we see Miriam with her timbrel in her hand, and all the women going after her with timbrels in their hands, shouting forth a great chorus:

"Sing ye to the Lord, for he hath
triumphed gloriously;
The horse and his rider hath he
thrown into the sea."

And thus, thru the instrumentality of a poor shepherd youth with his crook, the Lord led a great people out of captivity and into the land of promise.

A year, or a few years, ago, as you young women went about your various ways, your attention was in one way attracted or another to the opportunities offered at this great normal school. You turned aside to see. And because you turned aside to see, a great call has come to you, and the equipment to respond to that call has been supplied to you. If you have fully sensed the

meaning of your education in this training school for service, you should know that this call has come to you from the Lord, in just as real a sense as it came to Moses of old. If you have realized the responsibility which has fallen to you, I have no doubt you have felt like that humble shepherd, and have said, "Who am I, that I should go and do this great thing?" And the question comes to you tonight, just as really as it did to Moses 3,500 years ago, "What is that in thine hand?" And it is answered in precisely the same way, "Thou shalt take that which is in thine hand, wherewith thou shalt do these mighty things." The diplomas which are handed to you tonight are symbols of the power and ability which have come to you from your work here in this institution. If you will only put this power and this ability at the disposal of your Master, for whatever service He may have for you, you too will accomplish wonderful things. Such is being done by hundreds and thousands of men and women who have gone forth from our educational institutions, and such is altogether possible for you.

The only hope which we teachers have for securing the recognition to which we are entitled lies in making ourselves an indispensable part of the community in which we live and work. The old-time schoolmaster was unquestionably a success in the work he undertook to do. He had few of the material helps which we now have. He taught usually in a cheerless, uncomfortable schoolhouse, with crude furniture, few books and appliances. The science and art of education had not been developed, in a scientific manner, as the outcome of educational psychology. He was altogether innocent of lesson plans and of books on methods of teaching. Yet he was an excellent schoolmaster, and he served his day and generation efficiently and well, going to his eternal reward with his name and work left as an imperishable monument to his memory. What made him great, and what made him beloved of his people, was the fact that he was a recognized leader among his people whom he served. He was a life-long student, he led an exemplary life, he was consecrated to his work, and he looked upon it as his *life-work*. His school was the most important institution in the community, and he was the most important citizen.

The best advice which I can give to you young women who are now going out from this splendidly efficient institution, with the finest equipment that can be obtained for the important service to which you are called, is the same advice which I doubt not has been given to you from the time you entered here even to the present day, namely, do everything in your power to become a leader in your community. Take an active part in everything that makes for the good of that community. Wherever you may abide, endeavor to be

"A life in civic action warm,
A soul on higher mission sent."

At times it may seem to you that your part is small. You may be impatient to do great things. At times it may seem to you that you are weak and altogether unequal to the task that you would like to perform. You will, no doubt, find "Main Streets" in every community into which your duty may call you. You may be thoroughly imbued with the desire to reform the conditions which you find. Be comforted by the fact that the greatest teachers have been reformers. There is no reason to believe that our hands are less free than were the hands of Martin Luther or of Rousseau. I am inclined to think that we could not possibly meet with as great obstacles as did Pestalozzi. When we sometimes feel appalled and overwhelmed at the tasks before us, is it not probable that this is because we have not a clear vision and a strong heart? Joan of Arc was a poor peasant girl, yet she led an army to victory; and altho her own life was sacrificed, she is among the Immortals. Many great things have been achieved by women, and now that political justice has come to them many greater things will be accomplished by them. Many great things have been achieved by teachers. Is there real reason for feeling that you cannot achieve great things?

You young women who are daughters of Virginia, and of the South, embody, I am sure, the highest ideals of Virginia and of the South. The nation needs these ideals in its life. It is looking to you to preserve them, and to pass them on until they shall influence the life of the entire nation. The hope of preserving the best in American life rests with the Southern people today more than at any time in history. The race for wealth,

the overcrowding of cities, the flood of immigration, the resulting strife between capital and labor, lowered standards of living, and lowered ideals of conduct, following from the military victory of the North in the Civil War, and intensified by the recent World War, have brought the North and West to a condition that must be of grave concern to serious-minded American citizens. Prosperity truly has its perils as well as poverty. The North and West have become largely European. The South is now the only truly American nation. The South *has* led, the South *may yet* lead. Let us, therefore, hold tenaciously to our ideals, regardless of consequences to ourselves.

By way of emphasizing the point I am trying to impress upon you, may I be permitted to direct your attention to a great exemplar of Southern ideals and Southern courage? A decade ago the people of the North became very much alarmed because of the social turmoil. At this critical time came forth a great Southerner. He had been born in Virginia, in the modest home of a preacher, in the beautiful little city of Staunton; he had played as a boy among the red hills of Georgia and upon the parched soil of South Carolina; he had attended college in North Carolina and law school in Virginia; he had gone North and there had learned Northern ways and Northern habits of thought, never losing his Southern ideals. He had come forth out of the bitter struggles of reconstruction in the South, he had been a deep student of history and government; he knew the ways of the past, and he understood the underlying currents of human action. He was a leader among men, just that type of leader that the nation, and, as it proved later, that the world also, needed, if the tides of death and devastation were to be stemmed. Men and nations rallied to him. He accomplished much, both at home and abroad, far more than may be recited here, indeed far more than will be generally known until the record of history is written long after he is dead. He offered balm for the wounded and bleeding world; he offered salvation for the dying nations of the earth; he pointed the way out of chaos and of destruction, out of hatred and strife, to a new *world-nation*, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men and all nations, both strong and weak, are entitled to justice, to life, liberty, and the pur-

suit of happiness. Like John on the Isle of Patmos, he saw with clear vision that

"one far-off divine event,
To which the whole creation moves."

He pointed the way to a parliament of nations, to a brotherhood of man, by which the world might "have a new birth of freedom," ensuring for all time "that government of the people, by the people, and for the people, shall not perish from the earth." And poor, stricken, starving Europe was half ready to receive his message, and soon would have completely accepted it. But—he came unto his own, and his own received him not!

Because he had vast vision of world scope, his enemies, and even his erstwhile friends in some cases, called him an unpractical dreamer, forgetting that all of the really great things of life originate in the minds of dreamers. Because he, like all philosophers and deep thinkers who are seeking solutions for serious problems (for example like our own beloved Southern chieftain, General Lee), found it necessary to keep often to himself, away from the handshaking and garrulous multitude, men vilified him as arrogant and obstinate. Because he had come from the South, and from the teacher's desk, he was pilloried by sectional hatred and partisan jealousy, and denounced to the rabble in terms which they could understand.

Signs are not wanting, to the student of current events, of social statistics, and of political science, that another day will dawn, that another leader of a similar type must come, and that he must necessarily come from the South. It may be a generation, but what is a generation in the life of a nation! If it be a generation, it may fall to your lot, my young teacher friends, to train such a leader. What an opportunity lies ahead of you! What an important task is yours! Virginia looks to you; the South looks to you; America looks to you!

What may be expected for duty faithfully performed? Well, surely the teacher has his reward, altho it may not be the kind of reward that most people think about—money. Unfortunately the temporal world judges the individual largely by his earning capacity. We are accustomed to measuring the values of things in dollars and cents. To most people this is the only known medium in which comparisons may be made. Yet we

know full well that life does not consist in the abundance of worldly goods which one possesses.

As a rule society has failed to give proper recognition to its obligation to maintain education on a liberal basis in order that it may be most effective. It should, by more generous support, remove the teaching profession from those competitive conditions which have a tendency to reduce its efficiency to the lowest standards rather than to raise it to the highest standards.

Despite the fact that it gives but little to the teacher, and that grudgingly, the world exacts much of the teacher. It is expected that the teacher shall be possessed of all of the knowledge of the heavens above, of the earth beneath, and of the waters under the earth. It is expected that he shall be as wise as a serpent, yet as harmless as a dove. It is expected that, with the wisdom of Solomon and the beauty of the Queen of Sheba, shall be combined the meekness of Moses, the piety of Aaron, and the ability to live on a small mess of pottage.

Because teaching is not spectacular, because a certain degree of dignity must always be maintained, and because it has been generally considered unbecoming for teachers to be aggressive, people as a rule have a very restricted perspective of the importance of the teaching profession. At an institution which I have every reason to respect and honor, I am told that a large number of the instructors receive not more than \$2,000 a year, yet at one foot-ball game at that institution last fall the receipts were more than \$125,000. It is well-known that at a number of institutions the athletic coaches for a few months' work receive more than the president of the institution for the entire year, and two or three times as much as the professors. Athletic games are good things, they are worthy of our support and encouragement, so long as they are kept clean; but should they be permitted to cause us to lose our sense of proportion to such a degree as I have just indicated? After all, the intellectual aims of the college are those for which it was primarily established and is maintained, and anything which shifts our chief focus from these true aims becomes a menace to the educational establishment.

It is quite obvious to anyone who is at all familiar with the facts, that the reward

of teaching is not found in the money compensation of teachers. Nor is the true reward of the teacher fame and popularity. Fame is an evanescent thing. Like the swift-flying meteor, the fast-flying cloud, popularity is here one moment, and the next moment it is gone forever. Socrates, the great teacher of the ancient civilization, was sought by hundreds, his footsteps thru the streets of Athens were followed by philosophers and sages, while youth crowded about him to catch the wisdom which flowed from his lips. Yet the cup of hemlock was soon his potion. The greatest Teacher of all the ages was so pressed by the throng that he had to step into a boat and seek quiet on the blue waters of the Galilean sea. One day the thousands sought the loaves and fishes from His hand; one day the halt, the maimed, the blind, pressed upon Him that they might merely touch the hem of His garment for the healing of their infirmities; one day they acclaimed Him king and strewed palms in His way; the next they pressed a crown of thorns upon His brow, and spat upon Him, and led Him away to Calvary. And that great teacher and leader of our own day, to whom I have already referred; to whom nations of people were looking for rescue from misery and death; to whom the pale, drawn faces of thousands of mothers were turned, and to whom their gaunt arms were outstretched for bread to preserve their offspring from starvation; whose name was lisped in the prayers of little children all over the terror-stricken world—one day the undisputed leader of two hemispheres, the next immolated on the infamous altar of political partisanship.

During the storms of war, when the enemy was at the gates, when men's souls were being tried, and death and destruction stalked thru the blood-soaked fields of Europe, we turned with hope to the college-trained man and woman, we put them at the helm of state and at the head of our numerous and varied national agencies, from the presidency down. Shall we, when peace has come, forget those to whom we turned in times of stress? Is it not significant that the national political parties in 1912 and again in 1916 nominated college men for the presidency, while in 1920 both great parties dropped dangerously near to mediocrity, and the best recognition that could be obtained

for college men was the two nominations for the *vice*-presidency?

"God of the nations, spare us yet,
Lest we forget, lest we forget"

that great agency, education, thru which Thou hast made and preserved us a nation!

The rewards of teaching, and of leadership, and of public service, lie not in wealth nor in fame. They are found in "an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, that fadeth not away." They are the outcome of every life of unselfish service, which altho it may not be recognized by men, at the time, will almost certainly ultimately come into its own. When the tumult and the shouting of war have died; when the captains and the kings of hate, and of greed, and of oppression, have departed; when the thunderbolts of strife have spent themselves; when the jazz of frivolity and sensuality, the flapperism of carelessness and selfishness, have died away; when men and women return to normal thinking and acting; then will come the true reward of the public servant. God grant that you, my young friends, and all of us who have entered upon this high calling of teaching may have the courage, and the fortitude, and the wholesome philosophy of life, which will enable us to go on our way rejoicing, in the great opportunities which we have had for service, despite the obstacles which may arise in the pathway before us, despite the indifference and the scorn of men, in the full faith that

"If with honest-hearted
Love for God and man,
Day by day He finds us
Doing what we can;
He who giv'st the seed-time
Will give large increase,
Crown the head with blessings,
Fill the heart with peace."

With all that the teacher must be and do, he but plants the vineyard from which another shall gather the fruits. His consolation is that, in his toiling, rejoicing, and sorrowing, he is building to make the way easier for those who are to follow after him, and in so doing he is laying up for himself treasures that neither moth nor rust can corrupt and that no thief can take away. He

must keep the faith and do his work to the end.

An old man, going a lone highway,
Came at the evening, cold and gray,
To a chasm, vast and deep and wide.
The old man crossed in the twilight dim;
The sullen stream had no fear for him;
But he turned, when safe on the other side,
And built a bridge to span the tide.

"Old man," said a fellow-pilgrim near,
"You are wasting your strength with build-
ing here;

You never again will pass this way;
You've *crossed* the chasm deep and wide,
Why build you this bridge at evening-tide?"

The builder lifted his old gray head.
"Good friend, in the path I have come," he
said,

"There followeth after me today
A *youth* whose feet must pass this way.
He, too, must cross in the twilight dim;
This chasm, which has been as naught to me,
To that fair-haired youth may a pit-fall be;
Good friend, I am building this bridge for
him."

We must think nobly of our work. We must recognize in it infinite possibilities. Education is a constant force. If rightly directed its results are certain. Let us then not grow weary in the way, but let us work on, in the face of misunderstanding and discouragements, if need be, in the faith that the time will come when we shall be amply justified.

"And then," in the words of that great Southerner, the great Virginian, that greatest save one of the presidents of this great nation of ours, "and then trust your guides, imperfect as they are, and some day, when we are all dead, men will come and point at the distant upland with a great shout of joy and triumph and thank God that there were men who undertook to lead in the struggle. What difference does it make if we ourselves do not reach the uplands? We have given our lives to the enterprise. The world is made happier and humankind better because we have lived."

JULIAN A. BURRUSS

Due attention to the inside of books, and due contempt for the outside, is the proper relation between a man of sense and his books.—Lord Chesterfield.

II

TENTATIVE NORMS FOR A SIM- PLIFIED RATIONAL LEARNING TEST FOR CHILDREN EIGHT, NINE, AND TEN YEARS OF AGE

A real knowledge of the native abilities of the child in his early school years is a vital educational necessity, a great aid to the teacher as well as an inestimable benefit to the child. The possibilities of such knowledge have been greatly increased of late, thanks to the development of intelligence tests. Group tests are now available, and in the main are so easy to administer that every teacher can, with a little preparatory practice at home, get a fair rating of her pupils herself even if the services of a school psychologist are not available. Special cases, the very dull and the very bright children as well as those showing any other atypical traits, should be tested individually with some good revision of the Binet tests, such as the Stanford Revision. These matters appear very simple to the psychologist, especially the administration of the group test, but practically there are obstacles great enough yet to prevent the use of tests by most teachers. Most of the teachers do not realize the great benefits obtained from a little time devoted to tests for practical purposes. Moreover, they have fallen into a routine that prevents them from indulging in any sort of experimentation, even for the benefit of exceptional children. The slight cost of test materials and the general lack of training in the administration and use of the Binet tests are obstacles to the universal adoption of means now available to the better trained teachers.

It is also true that however useful the standard intelligence tests are in practical educational work, there are traits of importance to success in school that they do not measure. We are consequently keeping up the search for new factors, or for factors not yet measurable, in the hope that in time the various influences and traits making for success in school and in life may be determined for any individual in the early part of his education and thereby controlled for his good.

One of the tests that we have been using in the Jesup Psychological Laboratory to