

## "DON'T."

BY HENRY C. WHITE, UTAH.

The position of a teacher is an honorable one. It is also a responsible calling, for to the care of the educators are entrusted hundreds of immortal "buds of promise" whose destiny extends throughout eternity, and none but God can rightly estimate the influence a teacher has in moulding their ductile minds, their thirst for knowledge and their soaring fancies. A teacher, unless he strictly confines himself to the routine work of the school room, must be more than an instructor; he must be a guide as well as a friend, to whom every confiding child looks up as to a copy to model after. Where else, except in the clerical profession, will you find so much power, so much responsibility? It might well make a conscientious young man upon the threshold of his career hesitate to adopt such a profession. In ancient Greece, men who had original ideas, and possessed the courage to avow them, generally had a place and a following of young men who hung upon every word that they uttered as on that of an oracle, and readily adopted the views of their leaders. These were called teachers, and the theories they founded were called schools. The names of the best among these teachers will occur to you: Socrates, Plato, Xenophon, Aristotle, and others. In our own day and generation, Ralph Waldo Emerson was such a teacher. But in the present day, a teacher's work is circumscribed within the limits of the school-room, though there is no reason to doubt that his influence over the minds of his pupils is as potent as ever, possessing, as he does, much more knowledge than did the Greek philosophers of old, by the progress of centuries. The responsibility is, at the same time, the glory of the profession, and an earnest, religiously-minded young man, would gladly take it up as a holy calling. However, before entering the profession, a man should decide whether he is fit, as a Christian, to be the guide of children in the pathway that leads to life eternal. If he entertains no faith in Bible religion, is not even an orthodox Christian, never observes the outward forms of religion; such a teacher cannot expect to impress his pupils with any deep respect for the religion of their fathers. He may be as much on his guard as he will, but still his ideas will come out in his actions, in chance remarks, or in other unconscious ways. Even though the teaching of religion be forbidden, his life as shown in daily communication with his class will imperfectly

mould theirs. Such a man ought not to enter the profession, out of deference to the universal respect for the worship of God. This is one view of the case. For this reason, don't be a teacher. Many young men take a too rose-colored view of the work of a teacher. They imagine that it is all plain sailing in

smooth waters. They forget that, like the great world in which we live, a class is made up of all sorts of children, some with dull minds that task much of a teacher's patience, time and attention, some with an obstinate disposition that requires much tact and energy to manage, and others with a spirit for mischief which needs curbing, or for idleness, which needs correcting; all of whom must be scolded, dragged along or pushed forward, a work that makes a strain on his nervous energy. To govern a class of little "humans," as Carlyle expresses it, gifted with an abundance of animal spirits and a tendency to respect no will but their own, is no easy task, and it is sometimes difficult to find the golden mean between the extremes of indulgent kindness on one hand and strict duty on the other. An inexperienced person is liable to make mistakes in one case or the other, so that, before he knows it, he is in trouble about the discipline of the school-room, from which, a bad start having been made, he will find it hard to recover for a long time.

A sturdy laborer at his daily toil, with none to trouble or make afraid, is happier by far, as he sits under his own vine and fig-tree with his wife and frolicsome children around him in the calm of an evening, or at the fireside during the winter twilight. By the exercise of his physical powers during the day, a good night's rest is assured him, and no harrowing cares cloud his brow at night in the midst of his family circle.

The mental worry and anxiety incurred by the work in the school-room during the day, banishes nature's sweet restorer from the teacher's weary eyelids—hence rises that modern curse "Insomnia," which is the common bane of brain-workers

and which has inflicted untold suffering upon countless victims, bringing some into the mad-house, some into a premature grave, or others into committing suicide, a notable example of which occurred at the Hartford Institution two or three years ago. By the unfortunate death of Prof. Storrs, the profession lost one of its chief ornaments—a scholar and an enthusiast. His sudden taking off serves to point the moral which has been referred to, and to adorn a tale of hard work which has been described in this paper. Therefore, if you value your serenity, don't seek to be a teacher.

As nothing in this world is without its compensation, the position of a teacher has some advantages that are eagerly sought after. The long summer vacation gives an opportunity for rest to the tired brain worker, who gladly seeks the cool mountains, the breezy seashore or the quiet country air in pursuit of health or pleasure. Others there are who seek to augment their store of knowledge by a course of travel. An enterprising New York tourist's agency has made a specialty of teachers' excursions to Europe at astonishingly low prices, in

which a very interesting itinerary over the most important places and scenes memorable for literary, historical or other associations is made, "personally conducted," or by guides hired by the company at each stopping place. The success of these excursions for the benefit of the school teachers proves the need felt by them generally of a change of scene and air. There has been talk of pensioning the faithful teachers who have grown old in the service. It is a move in the right direction, and will, no doubt, be fully carried out one of these days; for it goes without saying that, in proportion to work done, the teachers as a class are the most poorly paid body of workers in the world. While engaged in the pursuit of their profession, they are unable to enter other fields of business as a means of adding to their slender income, and in other cases, they are forbidden to engage in side occupations. As a variety

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Mr. Davidson said that the next monument that the deaf would be called upon to erect, would be to the memory of the man who first secured the same recognition and the same compensation for deaf teachers as their hearing co-laborers receive.

Mr. Smith knew of one school which, from the time of its establishment twenty-five years ago, has shown no discrimination between the deaf and hearing teachers in the matter of

salary, or in any other respect. That school was the Minnesota School for the Deaf.

Mr. Elwell, Pa., could not say the same of his school. There the deaf teachers are not remunerated on the same scale as the hearing teachers.

Mr. Greener, O., was glad to hear such a good report from Minnesota. In the Ohio Institution the same principle was followed. There are different departments, but a deaf teacher in any department receives equal compensation with a hearing teacher in the same department.

Mr. Dougherty, Mo., said that Mr. White had made several good points in the paper. But the deaf should not be in too great a hurry about adopting Mr. White's advice not to be teachers. A deaf teacher can do much. He can help the pupils more, because he understands them better than a hearing teacher. Pursuits such as mechanical engineering, civil

engineering, architecture, etc., are open to the deaf. But they must expect to begin low and work their way up. Most colleges require a two years' course in any of these special branches. Teaching is a noble profession. Many of the best teachers of the deaf are deaf themselves. "Don't be a teacher if you can possibly help it," is easily said ; but it is harder to put it into practice.

Mr. Ziegler, Pa., did not agree with Mr. White in some respects. He regarded the aptitude for teaching as a gift of God. If one can teach successfully, let him become a teacher. If he can not, then let him turn to something else. There are plenty of other trades and professions. If more money is wanted, don't be a teacher. Go into some other business. He was pleased to hear that the deaf teachers received full consideration in the Minnesota School. In Pennsylvania they were paid lower salaries. This was the result of an old custom, originating in the belief that the deaf could not do as efficient work as the hearing. If a deaf teacher complains of a low salary, let him go somewhere else.

Mr. White moved that the discussion end. Mr. McMaster seconded the motion, and it passed.

3

On motion of Mr. Bailey, seconded by Mr. Weeks, the convention adjourned until nine o'clock the following morning.

NOTE: on p. 64 of the 3<sup>rd</sup> NAD Convention Proceeding for motions on various papers and issues-  
By Mr. Veditz: -

Resolved, That the attention of the Faculty of the National Deaf-Mute College be respectfully called to the subject of a technical department in the college for instruction in special branches of industry, as suggested by Mr. Henry C. White in his paper entitled "Don't," and that their favorable consideration of the subject be solicited.