

doubly rewarded for the efforts we will make to sustain the STUDENT in its present degree of excellence.

A PLACE FOR IMPROVEMENT.

Our state has made great and praiseworthy efforts in behalf of its educational interests; yet our country schools have not reached that degree of efficiency which they can and should possess. It is now generally admitted, we believe, that the teacher's profession, in its responsibilities, requirements and importance, ranks among what are called the higher professions. Since this is the case, it stands equally in need of persons who have carefully prepared themselves for the calling, and who intend to follow it for some time.

But this not all. The practical working of our educational interests must be such as to create a demand only for well qualified teachers. It is true of teaching, no less than of other professions, that unless competency is insisted on, its ranks will be largely filled with its distinctive quacks. This is the bane of our common schools to-day. They are also in too unsettled a condition to have a high degree of efficiency.

Quite rarely do we find teachers who intend to make the occupation their life-work. But few, even of those others who are faithful instructors, expect to follow it more than a few years. An idea of inferiority still clings in some degree to the employment; but it accounts only in part for the shortness of a teachers professional life. This is rather because the claims of the calling are neither fully recognized, nor sufficiently encouraged.

It is a well known fact that persons who have made little or no professional preparation are freely employed as teachers. Yet as most of them turn to the calling simply because access to it is so easy, they are, in some degree, excusable. But their great number and the low rates at

which they offer their services, have produced a depression of wages both great and general. Such teachers, owing to their unskillfulness, are often changed, thus causing, on the part of the patrons, a great deal of interference that is indiscriminate and unfair. Then again, the length of a school year is uncertain. In most districts, it is but six months; seldom is it nine or ten months, though it could, without great difficulty, be made in all districts eight or nine months at the least.

Since this is the present condition of our schools, is it much wonder that an uninviting field lies before the one who would become a professional teacher? As the people, and especially the school boards, are largely responsible for this fact, the primary improvement of the schools rests upon them. Competency should indeed be insisted on; yet teachers must receive sufficient compensation. The examination of teachers should be more complete than it is, and conducted mainly to test the candidate's ability to instruct. Quite often the certificate indicates a certain amount of mere knowledge, rather than both that and the ability to impart it well. When a certificate is trustworthy evidence that its bearer can successfully conduct a school, there need be little hesitation about hiring him, and seldom excuse for outsiders to meddle with the affairs of the school.

Fewer changes need then occur, and teachers will thus be largely freed from that bane of the profession, forced migratory habits. By continuing some time in a place, they take more interest in their work, and do it more efficiently.

THE MILITARY DEPARTMENT.

An act of Congress, July 2, 1862, donating to several states and territories for the purpose of establishing colleges, states that "the leading object shall be