

**SCHOOL  
MANAGEMENT,  
PP. 1-269**

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School Management, pp. 1-269 by Alfred Holbrook

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**ALFRED HOLBROOK**

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# SCHOOL MANAGEMENT.

BY

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# LECTURE ON SCHOOL MANAGEMENT.

*Delivered at the Normal Institute, at Lebanon, Ohio,  
July 8, 1868.*

BY ALFRED HOLBROOK.

## LECTURE I.

### QUALIFICATIONS OF TEACHERS.

The lecture this morning is introductory to the course on *School Management*.

I shall first discuss the

#### QUALIFICATIONS OF TEACHERS.

Under this head, I shall illustrate by examples the most important qualification, COMMON SENSE.

It is the popular *dictum* that if a man is fit for nothing else he will resort to teaching for a livelihood. But if he could find any other employment he would never teach. There are of course some exceptions to this popular opinion, and a few persons sensible enough, to esteem the teacher, but I am speaking of the feeling which, Fellow Teachers, sways the multitude, and which too far neutralizes your influence and perverts and debases your power. Do I speak too strongly; when I say, that a large majority, even of intelligent people, think that the Profession of Teaching receives all such persons as have tried other kinds of business and failed, or who are too lazy to work, and yet imagine with a little knowledge of Grammar and Arithmetic, enough to pass through the flint mill of a county examination, they can teach, if afterward

they can only "find a school not taken up?" Yes, teach at some price!

Did you ever feel depressed, Teacher, when you presented yourself before a board of Directors, yes, degraded by the power of this prejudice which characterizes you as a nobody, so that you hardly dared demand decent wages for your services?

This being the state of popular sentiment, I nevertheless wish to show that the true position of the teacher, is one of the highest dignity, and one to which men of pure and earnest ambition can well aspire.

I hesitate not to affirm that the qualification necessary to give success in any calling, *common sense*, is demanded in larger measures in Teaching than in any other profession. Furthermore, I dare assert, that the really successful teacher, male or female, can succeed at any other business for which he or she feels a predilection. He who can succeed according to my standard, *moderately*, in Teaching, can succeed according to the world's standard, *eminently*, in almost any other business, to which he shall feel himself called. You see, I take this popular opinion by the throat, and I intend to hold it there, and am determined to put it down, so far as a firm purpose and a kind Providence will permit.

We, Teachers, will have to work for ourselves and with each other, against this wide-spread error, and the way we will do it, Teachers, is to make ourselves more worthy, more efficient; and then we shall not complain of a want of appreciation, or of low salaries.

I will now proceed to develop a few positions and relations in which teachers more than others require that inestimable article, COMMON SENSE.

The adaptation of means to ends is wisdom. Wisdom is nothing more nor less than common sense. The Teacher above all others requires this power.

*I. Common Sense will indicate itself, by adaptation to circumstances.*

There is no business which at its commencement requires so great versatility of adaptation, as that of the Teacher.



I will give one or two examples, in proof. If a teacher who has been raised in a village, takes a school in the country, and carries his village airs with him, they will certainly militate against his success, and well enough, will it be said by the boys, if not by the girls, "He hasn't common sense."

If, on the other hand, he comes from the country and brings his rusticity with him to the village; his homespun costume, and his awkward manners, if not speedily doffed, will inevitably arouse a spirit of insubordination and contempt, which all the *book knowledge* in the world will neither control nor subdue. But *common sense* may do both, or rather it would have foreseen and forestalled the difficulty. You may say the difficulty is country breeding, but I say country breeding is the best kind of breeding; and the trouble is, want of common sense.

I will go a little further and take a college graduate, as an example. I knew such a one, who went to New Orleans, and won the position of Principal of the High School, with eight or ten able competitors in the race. His qualifications, so far as a knowledge of books was concerned, were superior to any of his antagonists, but in the matter of dress, he showed a niggardly spirit, and a disregard to the demands of his position; so much so, that with other slovenly attire he wore an old glazed-top cap that originally cost about seventy-five cents, and which was so badly dilapidated that his hair projected through the crown. He certainly showed a want of common sense; he hadn't enough of that article to carry on the business of teaching; and he lost his place, as was right and proper, he should.

Again, if a Teacher who has been educated in a High School, attempts to carry out the usages, and the methods in which he was trained, in the management of a common school, failure will be the result, of course.

Again, if you attempt to carry out the particular methods of instruction by which you have been trained here, expecting children of ten, twelve, or fifteen years of age to receive the same benefits you have received, in the same length of time, it will all prove a sad mistake, and will demonstrate

a want of common sense, and such, I think, as can hardly exist in any one before me.

Again, in this school we have no rules; suppose you attempt this plan in almost any other, you might make a failure; and you might have success, if you were witty enough. But in the majority of districts, the most witty—the best teachers would not attempt it. They might aspire to it, but would scarcely be willing to announce such a plan, on opening school, for the first time.

II. *Common Sense will indicate itself, in not overtaking or undertaking scholars by the amount of labor required of them.*

There is particular necessity for the exercise of this qualification, where there is so much to do, and so little time to do it in. Besides this, there are in the same class, say in Geography, those who have studied it for two or three years and those who have studied it only for two or three terms. Here is a difficulty, in so arranging the lessons that the most advanced will not slide into mischief for the want of sufficient study, while the less advanced will be discouraged by the impossibilities demanded of them. It requires not a little contrivance and watchfulness, in other words, active Common Sense to avoid or overcome these difficulties. You may say, "Cut the class into two," I say, "Don't do it." You have only a half hour, out of the six, at the most, to hear this recitation. You will need all of that. There is not time in fifteen, nor in twenty minutes, to interest a class. It requires half an hour at least, to manage a class in Geography with any degree of success. But I shall show, in some future lecture, how Common Sense will overcome this difficulty and many others.

III. *Common Sense will indicate itself, in not permitting the teacher to enact rules which he cannot see carried out.*

Some Directors, who may wish to employ you, will have a long list of written or printed rules for the government of their school, and will expect you to enforce them. I advise you not to promise any such thing. I would say that I would try to govern the school in the spirit of these rules, and to carry them out as well as I was able, but would not be willing to accept such a code, with the expectation that I should en-

force them to the letter. To make the case a little plainer, suppose your Directors impose a rule, among others, prohibiting swearing. Your scholars are scattered over the district, some in town, and some in the country. If you had omniscience itself you could not prevent swearing. It would be utterly vain to try it, especially, if you had a rigid rule against it. Of course I would raise a voice of kindly admonition and earnest remonstrance against it, presenting the evils of indulgence on one side and the advantages of abstinence on the other. I would do almost anything to prevent it, save attempting to enforce a law which would only prove a provocation to the commission of the sin.

I will, after a while, show, how you may lead your scholars by united action of their own, to accomplish what is desired in this direction, without involving yourself in an impossibility or absurdity.

IV. *Common Sense will indicate itself by not imposing study, or confinement in the school room, as a punishment.*

Now, I wouldn't be surprised if there were a dozen or more curly-headed young men present who are ready to say, "I never would have studied at all, if I had not been kept after school and compelled to." The wonder, to my mind is, that they learned anything, with such management working against them. I wish to lay down this general principle that whatever is forced upon us, however good or bad, in itself, will become repulsive, the moment we discover the pressure; and the more stringent the coercion, the more hateful will be the requisition. Suppose you force candy on a child, how long will the child love candy? Let us take another example. Here is a young man who has arrived at the age of maturity, and is beginning to think about making arrangements for life. But his father who still claims authority over him, says, "John, I want you to attend to that business immediately." A certain young lady lives over the way, and John has been considering an alliance, with her for some time. But the father says, "I want you to arrange matters, and push it through. There is no use in dallying any longer. You have wasted time enough. If you can't close up the business before long, I shall help you." What is the result? John, if he has