



THE JOURNAL OF EDUCATION

Devoted to Education, Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Volume XXII.

Quebec, Province of Quebec, January, 1878.

No. 1.

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The Experiences of a Self-trained Teacher, drawn from a Professional Career of Twenty-five years.

Paper read by DR. J. N. LANGLEY, before the College of Preceptors.

Whatever of autobiographic detail may be contained in the following paper will be strictly subordinate to the more important purpose of bringing before my fellow teachers and the public the great and pressing need that exists for wise, careful, broad-minded training for our work as teachers.

I should much have preferred to have taken the experiences of any other human being than myself, could I only be assured of as complete a knowledge of the facts of the case. If my premises are necessarily drawn from the everlasting Ego, it is not to these premises, but to the conclusions deducible from them, that the primary importance is to be ascribed.

However, I will make an effort to avoid the obtrusion of the Ego upon your notice by one word more than is absolutely necessary for the sake of these conclusions which affect us all alike, but which, in my belief, affect far more closely the public around and beyond us. My single aim is, to contribute my tiny stream to swell the tidal wave of public opinion, which must sooner or later bear this question of trained teachers into the haven of

success. For how does this matter stand at the present moment? So far as I am able to judge, the adhesion of the greater part of those within the profession—for whose adhesion we should care the most—is already gained. The head-masters of our large public and grammar schools have already expressed their sense of this pressing need, in a circular drawn up some two years ago, and most largely signed.

The question has been put in every imaginable form and shape before the great bulk of middle-class teachers, and invariably the principle is assented to with most cordial unanimity.

But the public generally, and what is far more ominous, that more select and cultivated portion of the public who are really interested in education, apart from its political and ecclesiastical surroundings, do *not* believe in the necessity of any such preliminary training. I may refer to the *Spectator* as a case in point. This paper, if any, may fairly be cited as a true representative of the wider and more liberal culture of the nation, and yet on several occasions it has taken the opportunity of doubting the wisdom or the necessity of any special training whatever, beyond a thorough knowledge of the subjects to be taught, and a real sympathy with young life.

The great fear which underlies this denial of what we affirm to be a pressing necessity is, that by training we mean compressing into a narrow, fixed, mechanical groove all the living energy and force which good teaching so specially demands. Probably this fear is somewhat intensified by a belief that the teaching of our trained and certificated elementary teachers is somewhat narrow and mechanical. I am not quite sure that such an opinion is well-founded; and even if it were, I should most seriously doubt its application to the question in hand. Assuming, however, its truth, I think that result may be far more fairly attributed to the almost endless codes and revisions of codes, and rules, and restrictions, and regulations, and resolutions, by which these teachers are hemmed in and surrounded on all sides, than to the training they have received.

But if this fear as to the result of training is a well-founded one, I believe most of us would at once go over to the opposition benches. Better, far better, to have