

and especially those of Ontario, where the system is even more rigid and minute, and the tendency to uniformity and centralization much greater? It is to be hoped, however, that the crisis of the examination fever is past with us. Certainly a marked improvement is of late observable in the character of the papers being set, from those of the University downward, and the question whether the educational process shall aim at instruction or development, depends more upon the kind of those papers than upon anything else.

Does University Confederation as projected in Ontario mean competition or amalgamation? Would the realization of the project give us a generous rivalry between a number of living colleges, each doing the work of the common university in its own way, or would it simply give us a congeries of Theological halls, utilizing the University and its Colleges for non-theological training? The chief interest of the friends of University education, and of the public, centres in the answer to this query. If the former of each of the above alternatives is correct, the scheme is worth working and sacrificing for? If the latter, its sphere is too narrow to make it of much interest to the general public. Some of its advocates seem to have the one idea in mind, some the other. The fact is that there is no one of the colleges which does not need to come into living contact with others in order to shake its management, faculty and students out of their self complacent jog, and its courses and methods out of their narrow and deep-worn ruts. We hope it is not hereby to say that we believe Toronto University needs the shock as much as any of the "one-horse" colleges, and would profit at least equally by it. The tendency to measure themselves by themselves is often even more pronounced and more mischievous with large institutions than with smaller ones. We hope Confederation means real, downright, earnest competition, of college with college, professor with professor, method with method.

It was well said by a prominent member of the Ontario Legislature in a recent debate that a thing to be strongly deprecated is this constant tinkering of our school law. Any one who will run back in thought over the history of our school legislation for the last six or eight years will appreciate the force of the remark. There has been a constant succession of changes not all in the direction of improvement. The minds of trustees, teachers and all others interested, have been kept in a state of uncertainty and unrest, which is very unfavourable to the best discharge of their duties. Not only is it true that change is not always progress, but all experience teaches that in every sphere of active life it is not always wise to resort to change the moment a little defect is discovered, or a possible improvement suggested. It is often better to wait for a favourable moment to remedy a fault than to create general disturbance by seeking to apply a remedy too promptly. We are no advocates of a *laissez faire* policy. Constant improvement should be the aim in every department of public life and work. But it is safer to make haste slowly, to wait until evidence of serious defect has accumulated under the best of all tests, that of experience, than to keep up a series of experimental

changes which are liable to prove worse failures than the methods they are used to supplant. Numerous illustrations will suggest themselves to our readers, ranging all the way down from the creation of a Minister of Education to the origination of the "reader difficulty," and the one-book system.

In the last number of *Education*, Dr. J. D. Anderson makes some good points in regard to the æsthetic in schools. He insists that the teacher can and should, by precept and example, cultivate the love of the beautiful. Every live teacher must have observed the influence of attractive surroundings and the opposite upon the average pupil. Who does not know how much easier it is to preserve order and decorum in a well-finished and well-furnished school-room than in one which is gloomy, dusty and disordered. The rough, ugly desk or window-sill seem to challenge the ready knife or pencil, and will be covered with hieroglyphics, while those neatly finished and polished are left comparatively unmarred. It is the old tumble-down rookery, not the handsome residence, which, when left unoccupied, becomes the target for snow-balls and stones. These well observed facts are full of suggestions for the thoughtful teacher. Children instinctively appreciate neatness and beauty, and the teacher who can skilfully work upon this feeling will find himself in possession of a new element of moral power. Children of both the larger and the smaller growth are more self-respecting and less liable to do a mean or vicious thing when they are conscious of being clean in person and tidy in dress, than when ragged and begrimed. Thus the teacher who cultivates the love for neatness, order and beauty, till it becomes a fixed habit in the child, is not only strengthening his own influence, and doing a present good, but is opening up a new source of pleasure, and erecting a barrier against temptation for all the future life of his pupil.

SUPERANNUATION.

Teachers in Ontario who have been for years contributors, on compulsion, to the Superannuation Fund, are no doubt watching with interest the change of policy proposed in the Bill now before the Legislature. So far as we can gather from inspection of the Bill the changes effected by the new and amended clauses may be briefly described as follows:

I. As annual payments are henceforth to be received only from those who have already contributed to the fund, the superannuation scheme is evidently to be discontinued so far as those who may henceforth enter the profession are concerned.

II. Payment to the fund is no longer compulsory.

III. Those who may elect to continue their contributions must henceforth pay \$8 per annum, instead of four.

IV. The rate of pension to the superannuated is to be fixed instead of being left indefinite as hitherto, six dollars per annum for every year of contribution being the rate named in the Bill.

V. Any teacher resuming his profession after superannuation and continuing to draw from the fund, forfeits all further claim on it.