

EDITORIAL NOTES.

PUBLIC OPINION.

"I wish my boy to cypher," says a parent. Why this request? Doubtless, because the parent has been taught by the experience of life that number, and the knowledge of how to use number, meets him everywhere in the affairs of daily life. Man must speak in order to have intercourse with his fellows; therefore, language must be attended to from the very beginning of school life, yea, even from the very beginning of childhood. A discussion, tending to little profit, is that discussion which seeks to determine whether language or number first comes to the consciousness of a child. Sufficient for us to say that both language and number are absolutely necessary for the ordinary business of life. The evidence is forthcoming day by day in the requests of parents, "I want my boy to write a decent letter," "My boy must cipher." The too great Scholastic needs of the people are summed up, directly and indirectly, in this sentence.

The millions of Canada, and other countries, as well, do not know anything, and if possible care less, about the interesting speculation, whether the study of Literature or that of Mathematics effects the greater area of the brain surface. This investigation specialists in psychology may take seriously, but, even to the intelligent citizen, this whole subject lies in the broad field of the imagination. To him life is real, life is earnest, and its facts must be dealt with in the ever moving

stream of affairs; therefore, his boy must cypher and he must write a decent letter, and school programmes must be shaped accordingly.

Recently, with a few well meaning persons, no doubt, it has become a sort of habit to decry arithmetic and its educational value, and curiously, grammar also has fallen into disfavour.

A person of a few years standing in age, may, perhaps, be amused and allowed to exclaim, "How are the mighty fallen!" No sooner does he allow his infirmity thus to overcome him than he pulls himself together and recollects life and its multitudinous affairs, and on sober second thought, concludes that those who advocate the early removal of grammar and arithmetic from our schools are kicking against the pricks, the experience of busy men and also the lessons of Psychology. Grammar and arithmetic to be ruled out of the studies of children of 14 years old, or to be got rid of by a majestic wave of the hand, surely this is vain imagining. That arithmetic and grammar cannot be excluded at an early stage from our secondary schools without loss to the pupil is our conviction.

A very important contribution to the psychology of number is made in the book, published by Dr. McLellan, of Toronto, and Dewey, of Chicago, both keen thinkers, and one an expert educationist. *Re Arithmetic*, Dr. W. T. Harris of Washington, Commissioner of Education for United States of America, says:—There is no subject taught that is more dangerous to the pupil in the way of deadening his mind and arresting its development, if bad methods be used. The *mechanical* side of training must be joined to the

"The Psychology of Number." International Educational Series. By James A. McLellan, LL.D., and John Dewey, Ph.D. Cloth. 309 pp. Price \$1.50. New York: D. Appleton & Co.