

eyes and nose discharge freely, the animal swells, and becomes gradually emaciated, till at length violent purging supervenes, and the animal perishes, the whole blood and flesh being unnaturally altered in condition.

(To be continued.)

EDUCATION

An Essay on Common School Education.

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(Continued.)

What should be taught in our Common Schools, and what method of teaching should be pursued, in order that they may most effectually attain the object at which they aim?

While it must be insisted upon, that an enlarged knowledge of many subjects is absolutely necessary to our idea of a well qualified teacher, it by no means follows, that many subjects should enter into the course of study to be pursued in our Common Schools. The youth of the greater number of the pupils, the early age at which they generally leave school, and the course which lies before them in life unite to render this impossible and undesirable.

Reading, writing, spelling, the elements of arithmetic and geography should, with scripture history, and the history of our own and the mother country, form the chief matter of instruction. With regard to grammar opinions may vary. No doubt the experience and observation of the greater number of teachers go to prove, that beyond the mere Orthography, it cannot be taught to very young children with pleasure and success. Definitions may be learned by heart, a certain facility in distinguishing the various part of speech, and their relation to each other, may be acquired, but any clear and appreciative comprehension of a full and elaborate system of analysis, is quite beyond the powers of children generally. Still a limited acquaintance with the principles of our language is better than none, and a knowledge of the text of some respectable grammarian may be of great use to those, who without intending to take a full classical course, yet have the opportunity of continuing in higher institutions of learning, studies of which the course pursued in our Common Schools, ought to be the foundation. It would therefore seem right that the elements of English grammar should be among the subjects taught in our Common Schools.

It does not for various reasons seem wise to include in the course of study more than these branches. As has been before intimated the early age at which the greater number of pupils leave these schools, renders an extended course impossible. In most cases, the higher branches of study could only be pursued at the expense of those which in order and importance come first. No acquirements *beyond* the simple elements of these branches, can make up for the neglect of them, or for a *superficial* knowledge of them. A thorough acquaintance with them, is the only stable foundation for education, whether it is to be pursued in our higher institutions of learning, under the guidance of skilful teachers or amid the influences of a life of business or labor.

Let it not be supposed, that the course of study being confined to these elementary branches, the teachers will find no occasion to avail themselves of their superior attainments in their intercourse with their pupils. The more perfectly that a teacher is acquainted with a subject in all its bearings, the better qualified he must be to teach the simple elements. By drawing upon his own resources, now for an argument, now for an illustration, he may throw around lessons, in themselves dry and uninteresting, a charm which shall assist the memory and quicken the other faculties of his pupils.

With regard to many subjects that do not enter into the course of study, he may present them to his pupils in the only way in which they can be of real value to them. While nothing can be less interesting to children generally, than the elements of science, encumbered, as even the simplest text book must be, with technical terms, a skilful teacher may so present many scientific facts, as alike to interest and instruct. The air of vagueness and mystery which the necessary use of unfamiliar terms throws around the description of natural phenomena, a few clear, simple words can oftentimes dispel, and a child's eyes may be thus opened to see ever unfolding wonders in the world around him. In this way, not only may much valuable truth be imparted, but a taste for natural science may be cultivated, a spirit of investigation encouraged.

The same is true with regard to other departments of knowledge.

By clear, simple, judicious oral instruction, from time to time, a teacher may do more to excite in his young pupils, a love for the study of history than could possibly be done by giving a stated lesson of so many facts, and so many dates to be learned and repeated daily. An interest in general literature—though these may seem large words to use in connection with the tastes of the children of a Common School—a love for reading, and the right kind of reading, may be thus awakened, and a higher mental and moral tone encouraged.

In another way the enlarged knowledge of the teacher may be made a means of advancement to his pupils. There is often an inclination on the part of young people, to consider their attainments satisfactory as a *result*, rather than as a means toward further attainments. This mistake a capable teacher may correct, by giving them, now and then, a glimpse into the vast domain of science, over whose boundaries, even the most learned have not advanced very far. This may be done in a manner, which, while it may rebuke undue self-satisfaction, shall not discourage the learner at the thought of advancing.

While a teacher keeps in mind, that his duty is not merely to impart knowledge to his pupils, but so to impart it, that they may receive it with pleasure, and make it their very own; while he realizes that in doing his uttermost for them, he is only laying the foundation of education, that is to be completed as the years pass on, that he is only—so to speak—putting them in the way of educating themselves, he will not feel, that he need not avail himself of any acquirements beyond the lessons which may form the daily routine, but, on the contrary, that he must use every available means to enlarge his knowledge, to extend and deepen his experience, to keep his sympathies and his conscience awake to the importance of the work in which he is engaged.

With regard to text books—uniformity is desirable and will become possible, as soon as we shall have an entire series of Canadian school-books, as good and as cheap, as those which can now be procured from England and the United States. In a country where so many nationalities are represented, it is not surprising that a great variety of school books should exist. It is an evil that must be patiently borne with, because it cannot speedily be set right. Time is needed, as well as wisdom and enterprise to correct it. Though a circumstance to be regretted, it is by no means so deplorable a matter, but that competent and faithful teachers may do much to obviate the evils which spring from it. But while teachers are not to discourage themselves, or excuse the slow progress of their pupils, by dwelling upon the variety and imperfection of the books which they find in their schools, they whose duty it is to consider the matter and act in it, must be aware, that the sooner that an improved series of school books can be arranged for our Common Schools, and generally introduced into them, the sooner shall these schools be made available in the highest degree for the attainment of the object at which they aim.

As to the *method* of teaching to be adopted in these schools, a thorough discussion of the subject might very well occupy many more pages than can be devoted to it here. Time and space will only permit a brief allusion to certain principles the recognition and practice of which, are absolutely necessary to the successful working of any method of teaching.

Order and regularity in the recurrence of recitations, should be strictly adhered to. If a class are in doubt as to the time they are to be called, or if frequent omissions leave room for a doubt whether they may be called, the chances are very much against a thorough preparation of the lesson on the part of all the members. Regularity is more to be desired than frequency. A lesson regularly recurring twice or thrice a week will be of more value to a class in the course of a term, than a lesson intended to be given every day, but subject to change or omission.

Perfect recitations should uniformly be insisted upon. When the lesson consist of principles enunciated, of rules or definitions, the exact words of the text book should be required. When processes are explained, or facts or illustrations given, the pupil should be encouraged to give the substance of the lesson, in his own language. No lesson should be passed over before it is understood, or until its relation to preceding lessons is made clear to the pupil. Frequent reviews should be insisted on, as greatly assisting the pupils, both in retaining and understanding the lessons.

Distinctness of utterance in recitations should be attended to. Too great rapidity of utterance is a fault, which no degree of correctness in other respects should be permitted to excuse. It is a fault into which young people very naturally fall, and it must be guarded against and corrected at whatever expense of time and trouble. Especially should this be the case, with regard to reading and spelling. Every word in a spelling lesson, clearly and distinctly pronounced by the teacher, should be as clearly and distinctly repeated, at least twice by the pupil, once before, and once after spelling. The matter of a reading lesson ought to be so within the comprehension of the pupils,