

his essay. He thought at such a meeting as many subjects should be introduced into an essay as possible. But the fact was his essay contained only two great subjects, vocal culture and intellectual reading. A gentleman had remarked that some people's voices could not be trained to modulation. This, experience proved to be absurd. He urged teachers to practice the lessons elocutionally before coming to school, just as they prepare themselves in other matters. Some thought it absurd to teach gesticulation in school. So did he, for action of all kinds came naturally to every man who had his mind in action and his voice in command,

#### BEST METHOD OF TEACHING HISTORY.

Mr. Miller opened the discussion, and in doing so remarked that he did not attach a very great importance to history—not so much as he did to reading or arithmetic for instance. He began his boys in history when they have got into the fourth book. He deprecated the idea of cramming children with too many dates. They should begin with leading dates and leading events in the first course, on going over the history the second time they can cluster round these leading dates and events, others of a less important character, he argued that the history of each nation should be studied separately. There was a great want for a good general history. They had nothing but the “old National History” which, though it was very good in some respects, was not quite the thing. He maintained that if Colliers “Great Events” were introduced into their schools they had all they wanted in general history. The English history of the same author was excellent. He had great difficulty in teaching Canadian history. Mr. Hodgins’ history was the authorized history at present, and it was a good work provided a great pile of statistics were required, which he did not think was required. He had adopted the practice of taking notes of history and of making the lessons interesting to the pupils, because if the subject were not made interesting it might not be attempted at all. He used mythology and biography, in order to throw a charm around the subject, and monthly examination and continuous supervision would be found of infinite value. He thought morality was not taught sufficiently in the schools. The teachers should pick out the principal characters in history, point out their virtues and their vices and lay them clearly before the school. By this method, the children would be taught to avoid that which was bad and practice that which was good. Mr. McGann coincided with the remarks of the last speaker. Mr. Platt, of Prince Edward, did not use textbooks at all, and would begin with children in the second reading book. Of course, to teach history without books required thorough preparation. He would endeavour to make everything he spoke of as interesting as possible. With the older children he would use notes as a means to fix the various facts and dates. Mr. Tamblyn did not think notes were of much use. His method with the elder children was to take some general subject, as the Reformation, and throw it out to some scholar. If he failed to answer, he put a narrower question, being on some detail of the subject, and cultivated the spirit of emulation amongst his pupils, by finding out who could tell most on each subject. On a day on each week he had a writing lesson on the history they had gone over during the week. This served two purposes: it made a capital exercise in Grammar, and served to fix what they had received. Mr. Treadgold would give dates first, and then cluster round these the facts connected with them. In touching any reign he would select a few great events, and then in revision go more into detail. Geography should be taught simultaneously with history; for in fact the latter could not be intelligently taught without the former. History, he found to be one of the best studies for cultivating emulation amongst children, and various interesting schemes could be put in operation to secure this. Mr. Husband taught history by placing lessons on the black-board, and then reviewed it at the end of the week. Mr. Archibald thought general history, as at present written, was perfectly useless. He thought it would be better to teach the leading facts in history instead of reverting to the wars of nations. It would require a very cultivated mind to understand history thoroughly. It was only now indeed what the manners and customs of the people of the 12th and 13th century were before at all understood. Mr. McCallum would begin with the history of their own country, proceed to that of England, and then go on to general history. He agreed with what had been said about geography and biography, for these were the two eyes of history. He thought the study of history a most valuable one; and there was something grand in living again with the noble old Romans and their valiant forefathers by means of history. Mr. Husband remarked that the subject had a direct and important bearing on the language of their country.

WHAT MEANS CAN BE ADOPTED TO INDUCE PUPILS TO PURSUE A PROPER COURSE OF READING AFTER LEAVING SCHOOL.

Mr. D. Ormiston opened the discussion and said that one great

idea they should endeavour to impress upon their pupils was that school study was merely preparatory to something larger and broader. They should endeavour to make everything interesting to them; make quotations as frequently as possible in order to arouse their curiosity; and at times read good extracts indicating whence they were taken, that they might search for themselves. For the purpose of attaining the end in view, night schools should be instituted in every possible locality; and he believed the trustees had the power to use funds for sustaining evening schools. They should also keep up as much as possible a friendly intercourse with their pupils who have left school, and encourage them to pursue their studies. They should urge upon parents to supply their children with a plentiful supply of mental *pabulum*, and the productions of the press were now so plentiful and so cheap, that this could be done even amongst the poorest of the people. It was a fine exercise for a boy to read to his mother by the fireside when the day's work was over.

#### MR. BARKER, DELEGATE FROM NEW YORK.

Mr. Barker, the American delegate, having been introduced to the meeting, said he was well acquainted with Teachers' Institutes in New York. Respecting them, the first question was, were they needed? The first Institute in New York was founded in 1843. In 1847, the teachers asked the State Assembly for a grant for the support of their Institute. The Assembly was perfectly thunder-struck at the request. They could not see how teachers needed any more information. But teachers required professional training as much as the doctor or the lawyer. These institutes were founded to teach systems, not science. A grant was made in 1847, and every county could get \$60 if they guaranteed an attendance of 30 students for a year. The Institutes had grown, and last year \$17,300 was granted to 61 Institutes, which were attended by 10,730 students. These Institutes effected a purpose which the Normal School could not undertake. He did not deem these Institutes were founded for the riding of hobbies; but, in New York State Institutes, there were a good many hobby-riders. One rode the geographical hobby, another the grammatical hobby, and another the arithmetical hobby. The object of Institutes, he thought, was to give uniformity to teaching; and in New York they were, when in convention, somewhat of model schools, and were, as a rule, presided over by men of large experience, the whole under the charge of the State Superintendent, who presented his bill to the Government, who footed it. In reply to a question, Mr. Barker said it was not binding on teachers to attend, but they could do so if they chose. In reply to other queries, the speaker said the School Commissioners were elected every three years; there was a hundred of them, but by no means were they universally intelligent. The Commissioners were desirous that teachers should attend, but the Trustees were not generally so. There were some of the Trustees rather penurious; he hoped this was not the case in Canada. The \$17,800 was expended in paying the men who superintended the Institute, who had \$100 for two weeks. The teachers board themselves during the meeting; but they had boarding generally at a cheap rate. The conductor used his own discretion in what subjects should be dealt with. He had conducted Institutes, and the way he did was to take a set of school books with him, and show the teacher how to use these books. After a reply to some other questions, Mr. Barker concluded amid loud applause. Mr. Lewis then read “Horatius at the Bridge,” in magnificent style, and illustrated the fact that he was no mere theoretical elocutionist, but a master of the art. He was followed by Mr. Barker, who read the “Old-fashioned Choir,” and “The Deacon's one-horse Chaise,” in an excellent manner. Mr. Scarlett moved that the thanks of the convention be tendered to Mr. Barker for his very lucid exposition of teacher's institutes.

#### REPORT ON THE COMMITTEE ON PRIZES.

Mr. Millar gave in a report from the Prize Committee. The committee recommended the judicious giving of prizes, and that they should be given according to merit. Mr. Alexander enquired what was meant by the term “judicious.” Mr. Millar said the Chief Superintendent had said in a late report that the prize system is beneficial if carried out properly. Mr. Alexander was not satisfied with this definition. Mr. Millar said the “Prize system” was a fundamental principle of every-day life, and if it was correct in the case of men, it must be correct in the case of children. All their Universities had their scholarships and their honours, and these undoubtedly stirred to active labour. In 1867, prizes were distributed to 1647; last year these had been increased by 106. A benefit incidental to their prize system was the fact that they were instrumental in diffusing wholesome literature into houses where no such books would otherwise be. This would create a taste for reading. If, however, the giving of prizes created discontent, they had better give it up. His plan was as follows: In his half-yearly