

DURING the recent meeting of the American Science Association, in this city, Professor Seaman presented the report of a committee that had been appointed to consider the question of chemical instruction in Public schools. The majority of the committee reported in favor of having instruction given in chemistry in the High schools. A minority, however, dissented from this view, holding that the teaching of chemistry in High schools was not practicable. The varieties of individual opinion were also very considerable. Consequently we are for the present left pretty much where we were at the outset.

AN interesting light has been cast upon the vexed Homeric problem by a discovery recently announced in the *London Times*. Mr. Flinders Petrie, who has been exploring in the Fayûm, has discovered a series of alphabetic signs incised on pottery of the Twelfth Dynasty, at Illahûm, and on pottery of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Dynasties, at Tell Gerob. The two sets of characters have this in common that they are neither hieroglyphic nor hieratic. "In a word, they are not Egyptian, but apparently very early Cypriotic, or Greek." This discovery, if confirmed, will prove that the beginnings of the alphabet were already in use 2,000 years before the Christian era. This wonderful pottery is on its way to England, whence, no doubt, we shall hear more about it.

"Its fundamental principle that vivid impression, secured by thorough concentration and imagination, must precede true expression, cannot but appeal to the common sense of every rational inquirer." The above words, which we quote from a testimonial addressed to Mr. Silas S. Neff, Principal of the National School of Elocution and Oratory, by the students who received his instructions at Grimsby Park, this summer, and referring to the "Neff system of expression," undoubtedly "strike the key-note of effective reading and speaking." We should not, indeed, have supposed that a system based on a psychological principle so obvious, could be properly styled "new and original." But these words are probably intended to apply to the peculiar method in which the principle is reduced to practice by Mr. Neff. Be that as it may, no teacher of reading can be too fully persuaded that clear conception and imagination are indispensable to true and effective expression.

"ADVANCED English Schools in Rural Districts," was the suggestive title of a paper read by Mr. J. H. Smith, of Ancaster, at the recent Convention of the Ontario Teachers' Association. We have seen but a meagre account of the contents of the paper, but the idea it embodied seems to us a most sensible and excellent one. Whether it is at present feasible we are scarcely able to judge, but of one thing we are sure. No greater educational boon could be conferred on

the country than would be the securing, by some means, of higher educational advantages for those children who never go beyond the Public schools, that is, we suppose, the great mass of Canadian children. If some means could be devised by which such children, or a large percentage of them, could have another year of schooling, of an unconventional, stimulating sort, as a final preparation for life, the result would be to raise the average of general intelligence as nothing else could, and to give to the great majority a much better preparation for lives, both of usefulness and of happiness, than they now receive.

MUCH attention was attracted by the visit of the Shah of Persia to England, during the past summer. From the conflicting character of the press notices one is at a loss to know whether to regard the Shah as an uncultivated barbarian, or an Eastern gentleman of education and refinement. That the country over which he rules is not in a state of savagery is very apparent from the account of it given by Mr. J. D. Rees, in the *Nineteenth Century*. "Elementary education," says this writer, "is far advanced, and the poor and humble are often fairly well acquainted with and inordinately fond of the works of Saadi and Hafiz;" "politeness is the rule in all classes;" "money is an honorarium and not a payment;" and the peasants are all "able to support large families of daughters." "Add to these pleasing features," says an English exchange, "that life and property are secure, that rents are not excessive, and that even the poor have Persian carpets and rose leaves piled for fragrance, and we have a picture of comfort and happiness that would almost make the average Englishman wish that he were a subject of his dusky majesty."

If such schools as those advocated by Mr. J. H. Smith could be established they should, it seems to us, be differentiated from the common school, in two directions. They should, in our opinion, devote about one-half of the time to the study of English proper. By this we mean not technical grammar, nor rhetorical forms, nor word derivations, nor histories of literature, but to the actual reading of the English classics, both of the present and of earlier days. This would develop intelligence, and in fact nearly all the higher powers of mind in the very best manner, and would at the same time give the boys and girls of the country access to sources of information and of pleasure that would never run dry, and would elevate and enlarge their whole after-lives. The other half of the time should be given to manual training, with direct reference to the industries and activities of future life. Agriculture, and the related arts and sciences, for the boys; cooking, sewing, and the related arts and sciences, for the girls—within the limits of the practicable in both cases, of course—should have the largest places. The scheme may seem visionary, but can any one doubt that one year at such a school might be made worth two or three at the ordinary grind?

Educational Thought.

THE one crowning qualification of the perfect teacher is sympathy—sympathy with young children, with their wants and their ways; without this all other qualifications fail to achieve the highest success.—*Fitch*.

THERE is no danger of loving truth too well, because truth is the one thing needful and comprises all things needful. It comes in by as many channels as we open to its flowing. It feeds the whole inner man and satiates no single sense, but keeps its welcome ever fresh through all, if all are kept as open doors for its in-coming.—*Miss E. E. Kenyon, in Southwestern Journal of Ed.*

SCHOLARS welcome anybody who in the open tournament of science will take his chance, dealing blows and receiving or parrying blows; but the man who does not fight himself, but simply stands by to jeer and sneer when two good knights have been unseated in breaking a lance in the cause of truth, does nothing but mischief, and might, indeed find better and worthier employment.—*Max Müller, in Science of Thought.*

CHILDHOOD and youth are the great sowing time of life; the young are the hope of the world; the boys and girls of the present generation will be the men and women of the next. What, in character, what, in mental, moral, and spiritual structure they are becoming now, that, in the main, they will be found then—true men and women, or pigmies—a strength or a weakness, and festering sore, to the commonwealth.—*Rev. Thomas Law, M.A.*

READING is an educator; whether it is a good or bad educator depends on what you read. Read good literature. The best books are within the reach of the most meagre purse. Your trouble is perhaps not want of money, but want of time. No! We all have time enough to learn if we have wisdom enough to use the fragments of our time.* * * The man who uses his fragments of time has nearly one month more in a year than his neighbor who is wasteful of the precious commodity.—*Irish Advocate.*

THE teacher has recognized his true functions as simply a director of the mental machinery which is, in fact, to do all the work itself; for it is not he, but his pupils, that have to learn, and to learn by the exercise of their own minds. Personal experience is the condition of development, whether of the body, mind, or moral sense. What the child does himself, and loves to do, forms his habit of doing; but the natural educator, by developing his powers and promoting their exercise, also guides him to the formation of right habits. Education can only be gained by doing a little well.—*Joseph Payne.*

"I SHOULD say that morality not only can be taught in our public schools, but is taught, and must be taught. Obedience is the first law of every school,—a necessary condition of its existence, as it is the first and most salutary moral lesson that can be taught a child. Timely silence, punctuality, self-control, regularity, are constantly enforced, till they become fixed habits within the school, and tend strongly to become habits of life. To go a little higher, in what public school are not the obligations of truthfulness, unselfishness, respect, and courtesy taught, at least implicitly, perhaps even so most effectively?"—*William C. Collar.*

IT is often said, it is no matter what a man believes, if he is only sincere. This is true of all minor truths, and false of all truths whose nature it is to fashion a man's life. It will make no difference in a man's harvest whether he thinks turnips have more saccharine matter than potatoes—whether corn is better than wheat. But let the man sincerely believe that seed planted without ploughing is as good as with, that January is as favorable for seed-sowing as April, and that cockle-seed will produce as good a harvest as wheat, and will it make no difference? A child might as well think he could reverse that ponderous marine engine which, night and day, in calm and storm, ploughs its way across the deep, by sincerely taking hold of the paddle-wheel, as a man might think he could reverse the action of the elements by God's moral government through a misguided sincerity. They will roll over such a one, and whelm him in endless ruin.—*H. W. Beecher.*