

twenty years old. But fortunately, for Mr. Demers, he had given his attention to subjects which are eternal and immutable of their nature, and the only book which he published, his "*Institutiones Philosophicæ*," will remain as one of the best and most complete treatises on logic, metaphysics and ethics. (1)

(1) *Institutiones Philosophicæ ad usum studiosæ juventutis*—Quebeci—ex typis T. Cary et Socii, 1835, 393 pages, 80.

(To be continued in our next.)

PIERRE J. O. CHAUVEAU.

THE EVILS OF IRREGULARITY OF ATTENDANCE AND TARDINESS AT SCHOOL AND THE REMEDY.

By Geo. B. Kimball.

It would be the extreme of folly to suppose that in one short essay any writer could enumerate all the above-named evils; and, in fact, hardly the greater part; and much more, that he could portray them in all their various forms and phases and magnitudes; and consider fully the endless chain of cause and effect which they form in their connection with and dependence upon each other. Therefore, with this thought in mind, I shall not aspire to that, which, while desirable, is at the same time so evidently impossible; but I shall endeavor to regard economy and profit, by presenting to the reader the most practical view which my limits will allow. This subject may be considered under three general heads, viz:

1. The Evils of Irregularity of Attendance;
2. The Evils of Tardiness;
3. The Remedy or Remedies.

According to this arrangement, we are to consider:

Firstly, The Evils of Irregularity of Attendance at School.

These might be variously classified; but, owing to their close connection and mutual dependence, it would seem proper to consider them somewhat in their consecutive order. And as we enter this broad field and begin to cast about for a place to begin to enumerate, we discover, that,

1. The lessons recited in the absence of a scholar are for the present, lost to him, which is a serious evil; since he not only loses (at least for the present) so much of the knowledge of the science he is studying; but he is thereby deprived of a key to unlock the principles of succeeding lessons; for, in any good method of instruction, each succeeding illustration or demonstration is drawn from, or based upon, principles previously developed. But more, he not only suffers the loss above stated; but he has missed the teacher's explanations, without which, he may spend many hours of fruitless toil in time to come, if alone, he should attempt to regain what he has lost.

2. Again: with all scholars, their lessons, to be remembered, must be repeated, and the principles therein contained practically and immediately applied; therefore, in their absence they will, in part, forget those lessons just examined, and must in commencing again spend much time in reviewing before they can advance. And yet how many in our country schools in particular, attend school no more than three months in the year, and that too very irregularly. The evils resulting from this state of things are incalculable, as the writer with too many others can testify, from experience both as scholars and teachers. Coming into this State at an early age, when schools were 'few and far between', all his school days for several years subsequent to that time were spent in reviewing; so that at the age of sixteen he was no more advanced in his studies than at the age of ten. And, after careful observation, I am of the opinion that, particularly in our country schools, full three-fourths of the time is spent in reviewing before advancing; and this is mainly owing to the long vacations, and irregularity of attendance. And so prevalent is this evil, that term after term the scholar passes over the same beaten track, and in each succeeding term, reaches a point but little if any in advance of that previously reached. This seems to be a matter of necessity; but, at the same time, it is a great evil. On finding himself unable to proceed successfully without passing through this oft-repeated, tiresome, painful process, the child feels at once dispirited and unambitious, and, as the result, finds at the close of school that he has accomplished but little that he might and would otherwise have done, had it not been for what seems to him to be his cruel fate. The magnitude and results of this complicated evil I will not attempt to show, but will leave for

the intelligent reader to imagine; adding, however, that scholars subject to such influences will most likely grow up with a meagre education, and go out into the world for ever to regret and suffer the consequences of their early loss.

3. Another evil arising more particularly from the temporary absence of a scholar is the delay and loss of time to his classmates during the succeeding recitation or recitations, occasioned by the extra efforts required by the teacher in explaining to him the principles involved in those lessons recited in his absence. No scholar who is laudably ambitious, and duly sensible of the value of his time, can thus have his recitations intruded upon, without feeling wronged thereby; and where the injustice is often inflicted, the feeling may grow to resentment, and perhaps to animosity. The true scholar believes with Dr. Franklin, that 'time is money'; and consequently he who infringes upon his time is as really, if not as fully, guilty as the one who by fraud or otherwise wrests from him his property.

4. But, in a classified school, it is some times necessary to apply the maxim 'better one suffer than many', to this particular case, and thus the delinquent is compelled to fall back into other classes not so far advanced. The evil resulting from this is many times very great, though not so extensive, perhaps, as the one last named; for few scholars can thus be compelled to turn back to those whom they look upon as their inferiors in attainments, if not in natural ability, without the loss of that eager interest, tireless energy, and emulation, so essential to good scholarship. Hence their lessons become a dull task; their school hours a heavy burden; and they themselves, indolent, vicious, and reckless sources of bitter disappointment to their doating parents and confiding friends. Thus, owing to the tendency of the mind to the contemplation of evil, if not under suitable restraint, we see from the observation just made, that the school, in consequence of preëxisting evils, may become the very hot-bed of habits which will develop themselves in a flood of blighting, burning and damning evils for time to come.

5. The loss of relish, energy, ambition, etc., included in the general expression, loss of interest, is of too great magnitude to admit of the mere passing glance given it above; especially as the evil may arise not only from the embarrassing circumstances surrounding the irregular attendant when at school, but more particularly from the want of interest, in the parent, from which both the delinquency and loss of interest of the scholar may arise. It must be a remarkable child, indeed, that feels more interest in its own improvement than its parent does. We admit there may be such; but they must be few. Hence, as a general rule, where the parent places such a moderate estimate upon the child's improvement as to allow any ordinary occurrence to detain him at home, the child (who, if young, is governed more by precept and example than by reason) will conclude that education is of little worth, and that all efforts to obtain it are of little importance. Therefore, when he goes to school, it is a matter of necessity, or for sport and mischief, and without those incitements so necessary to success.

6. Again: as every teacher knows, the lack of interest among a few of the pupils, if not removed, will lead to the same lack in others; or, at least, this will be the natural tendency; for children, like men, though in a greater degree, are sympathetic beings, and are the means of mutual help or hindrance. We see the working of this principle in the various relations of life. And the inexperienced teacher knows very well that in a great degree his success will be in proportion to the amount of emulation existing among the scholars. Thus, the loss of interest among a few, may under unfavorable circumstances destroy the character if not the existence of a school; and all this, as I have shown, may result from irregularity of attendance.

7. From the concluding remarks in the preceding paragraph, this appears to be a proper place to refer to another class of evils, viz: those relating more particularly to the teacher. But, for want of room, we will not speak of his unrequited anxiety, forbearance and toil; his disappointments, mortification, and many times mental anguish in consequence of the delinquency of his pupils; but of only one thing, viz: the injury of his reputation. How many teachers have commenced their schools, high in hope, and from the causes described above, have been defeated in their efforts, and then, branded with such epithets as 'stupid', 'unambitious', 'tactless', and every way unfit for the calling, have gone forth with an injured if not a ruined reputation. The experienced teacher might, perhaps, know how to counteract the influences leading to such a result; but the beginner can not always do it.

8. Another serious evil resulting from irregularity of attendance is instability. There can be no doubt that incitement to study to-day, to the accumulation of wealth to-morrow, and to amusement, etc., next day, will, under unfavorable circumstances, produce in