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* Editorial Notes. *

THROUGH the wise liberality of some patriotic Canadian who prefers to do good in secret, a Committee of the Protestant Teachers' Convention, of Quebec is enabled to offer a series of three prizes, amounting to \$2,500, as an incentive to the production of a satisfactory text-book of Canadian History. The conception is a good one and the prizes are sufficiently liberal, it may be hoped, to call forth the best efforts of our most competent historians. The committee which has the matter in hand says that the object is to have a text-book of Canadian History written which will give every Province such recognition as shall unite the interests of all Canadians and conduce toward the creation of oneness of patriotic sentiment, the aim being to have the text authorized for use throughout the Dominion.

"I HAVE now an experience of some forty years as student, teacher and examiner; and it forces on me a profound conviction that our modern education is hardening into a narrow and debasing mill. Education is over-driven, over-systematized, monotonous, mechanical. . . . The round of endless examinations reduces education to a professional cram, where the repetition of given formulas passes for knowledge, and where the accurate memory of some teacher's 'tips' takes the place of thought. Education ought to be the art of using the mind and of arranging knowledge; it is becoming the art of swallowing pellets of special information. The professor mashes up a kind of mental 'pemican,' which he rams into the learner's gullet. When the pupil vomits up these pellets it is called 'passing the examination with honors.'"

The above passage from an article by Mr.

Frederic Harrison, in a recent number of the *Forum*, contains material for a good deal of profitable thinking. There is some reason to hope that some of the gloomiest parts of his description are less true of Canadian than of English methods, and that the tendency of Canadian Education is to become more flexible instead of to harden more and more. So far as teachers and teaching are concerned, advancement is being made, whatever may be said of the Departmental rules and regulations. Many of our teachers are wide awake, impatient of old routine, on the alert for new methods and longing for fuller Educational freedom. Even in England the New Code is undoubtedly less inimical to good teaching than the old. But in Canada, as in England, the iron hand of the examination system still rests heavily upon the schools and colleges, and often sadly retards and cramps true educational work.

WE recently had an opportunity to spend an afternoon in the Manual Training Department of Woodstock college. We came away strongly confirmed in our previous opinion that manual training, properly conducted, is of great educational as well as great practical value. The work in this department does not, we find, consist of a series of experiments, more or less awkward and blundering, in the use of the tools. The lessons are thoroughly systematic and based on sound pedagogical principles. The pupil's first step, rigidly insisted upon in every case from the very outset, is to get a clear conception of what he wants to accomplish. He must make an accurate representation of the thing he proposes to make, on blackboard or paper, carefully drawn to scale, and work from that as a model. In every instance the principle of the thing must be grasped and mastered before any attempt is made to produce the thing itself. In a word, the workmanship must be intelligent and scientific. "One thing is clear," said a friend who accompanied us, and made a close study of the whole system, "when a boy who has taken this course devotes himself to any mechanical occupation, he will be sure to become foreman in a short time." Another conclusion impressed itself upon us with equal force, viz., that the boy who gets the training of the perceptive and con-

structive faculties which such a course gives, will go to his more strictly intellectual studies with such a quickening of that class of mental powers as will make him a clearer, stronger and more accurate student in every department of college work.

IF other schools in the large cities would follow the example of one of the London board schools of which a contemporary tells us, the children of the slums could no longer be spoken of as belonging to the ranks of the "great unwashed." A simple but ingenious method has been devised by which the dirtiest of boys can be washed very expeditiously and efficiently. Each boy stands upright in a small box, from the sides of which numerous sprays of warm water play upon all parts of his body. Three minutes are allowed him for thoroughly soaping himself, the sprays of water closely following the soap. At the end of that time he steps forth to rub himself with the usual coarse, dry towels. In this way it is found that each scholar in a school of 300 boys can have a thorough cleansing once a week. Altogether there is reported to be a marked improvement of late in the cleanliness of the school children, at least as regards their persons. It is regretted that the same process cannot be applied to their clothing, which brings a very discouraging element into the school problem. Yet the new sense of comfort and dawning respectability imparted by the feeling of cleanliness of person will pretty surely react in the matter of clothing. Not many boys will long continue to don their filthy garments after their ablutions without a sense of revulsion which must beget some effort at improvement. But the practical question suggested for Canadian teachers in city and country is, To what extent does personal cleanliness characterize Canadian school children of both sexes? Facts and incidents occasionally come to our knowledge which seem to indicate that the daily or even weekly bath is by no means so universal as it should be. The clothes may generally be well enough, but what about the bodies? Teachers can do much, not only for the health and comfort, but even for the moral well-being of their pupils by inculcating judiciously the truth that frequent bathing of the whole body is essential both to health and respectability.