

some children whose parents are able to pay for them at other institutions." We can probably find even in Canada men who are *fully* equal to their English brethren in their readiness to crush educational interests under the plea of "extravagance," but the day has fortunately passed on this side of the Atlantic when an intelligent man would dare to claim that the Public Schools were only for the education of the children of the poor. Let us hope that the day is not far distant when the Public School system of England will be patronized by the rich as well as the poor. The Bishop of Manchester, in his opening address before the Social Science Congress, pointed out this defect in the English system; and an agitation has already set in in favor of Government interference and support in regard to middle class education. The present Government is not likely to take any action in the matter, however, as Lord George Hamilton lately, in a public address, held that "the Government should educate the children of no parents who were rich enough to pay for them."

—As the result of numerous memorials sent to the British Education Department by School Boards, a society called the English Spelling Reform Association has been formed. Its objects are to advocate the *general principle* of reform and to collect information, but not to promote any special system. Among many eminent members may be mentioned the Bishop of Exeter, Prof. Max Muller, Dr. Abbott, Mr. Lowe, Mr. Mundella, Sir Charles Reed, and Professors Sayce and Smith.

—The sixth annual report of the Scotch Education Department has lately been issued. The average attendance in Government schools in Scotland during the year was 377,250. The report shows progress in every department. The average Government grant per scholar has advanced from 15s. 8½d. to 16s. 9d., and that for the current year is estimated at 17s. 9d.

—The Science and Art Department in England has adopted a new method for checking the number of poorly trained candidates who try the Elementary School Drawing Examinations. A fine of one penny is to be inflicted for every exercise marked "Failure." The sum is not large, but the principle will admit of extension.

—We have to thank Mr. W. S. Howell, teacher, Sombra, for his kind suggestions in regard to publishing sets of Uniform Promotion Examination papers as models for the guidance of teachers and others in examining their pupils. We will publish from time to time the papers set in some of the counties.

Mr. Wm. Cassidy, holding a first-class Provincial certificate, grade A, has been appointed head master of the Palace-street school, Toronto.

Contributions and Correspondence.

GRAMMAR—WHEN SHOULD IT BE COMMENCED? &c.

BY WM. CROCKET, A.M., PRINCIPAL OF PROVINCIAL NORMAL SCHOOL, NEW BRUNSWICK.

Grammar is one of those subjects which we are inclined to bring before pupils at too early an age. The interest which we ourselves take in the subject, and the seeming progress which our pupils make, leave no doubt in our minds as to its suitability at any stage. We are, moreover, under the impression that a knowledge of grammar is essentially necessary to enable our pupils to speak correctly.

Our own interest in the subject no doubt reflects itself in our pupils, and we make ourselves believe that matters are as plain to them as to us. Under this belief we skim the surface of the subject, imagining that if they can define the parts of speech asked for and give examples, all is understood. This may be done and is often done correctly, and yet gross misapprehension underlies it all. It is not only possible, but in nine cases out of ten highly probable, that pupils who have mastered, or rather been supposed to master, the parts of speech, have no proper conception even of a noun. Were they asked if they had ever seen, felt or heard a noun, they would regard the question as absurd, or they would name some animal which they had seen, touched and heard. Such misconceptions are the inevitable result of commencing the subject prematurely. Grammar is in its very nature an abstract subject, and does not admit of concrete illustrations. An adjective is not a quality, nor is a noun a man, but they are the names of conceptions; and until the pupil is able to dissociate the conception from the thing itself—in other words, to think of the word book without associating it with the thing book—he is unable to enter upon the study of grammar. He may enter upon the study of arithmetic at any stage, for the subject admits of visible illustration, but grammar is a new departure for him—his mind is appealed to, not through his senses as hitherto, but is thrown as it were upon itself. The age at which the pupil, then, should begin grammar will depend upon the age at which he is capable of abstract thinking. With the mass of pupils this power does not manifest itself before the age of nine or ten. Commenced at this age and properly treated, the subject will not only be freed from misconception, but may now be used as a means to develop and strengthen the dawning power.

(To be continued.)

ELEMENTS OF OUR EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS.

BY DR. HODGINS, DEPUTY MINISTER OF EDUCATION.

There are certain conditions essential to the success of our educational system, which, in discussing the question, cannot be overlooked or ignored.

It is not my purpose, however, to enter into the general question, but merely to point out in how far we have been able, more or less satisfactorily, to comply with these "conditions," in whole or in part, in putting into operation our own educational system.

The "elements" of success—or rather the principles essential to success—which must take a practical shape in a system of education are in the main as follows:—

1. Free Schools—with the complement of some efficient means of enforcing "compulsory attendance."
2. Suitable School Houses (constructed with the necessary "modern improvements"), with sufficient grounds, etc.