

the teacher who has a keen sense of humor, and knows how to appeal occasionally to that sense in his pupils, has a means of sharpening the intellectual faculties which is wanting in the man who cannot see a joke. We have known a professor to read to a class of students a serio-comic paragraph from the work of a professional humorist, full of cleverly veiled but palpable and astounding contradictions, exaggerations, and other absurdities, only to find at the close that few of his hearers had detected anything extraordinary in the passage. It was, of course, written in a solemn style and read with grave voice and manner. Try the experiment. Or, if you choose, give fair warning, and ask your pupils to note and point out the witticisms, and you will be astonished at the results. An occasional exercise of this kind, as a wit sharpener, will be found a good intellectual tonic in the class-room.

A SHORT article in the *Toronto Mail* a week or two since dwelt suggestively on the excellent educational effect indirectly wrought by the tasteful and picturesque arrangement and decoration of the Toronto Normal School grounds. This influence will be felt by and through every teacher of the least taste or aesthetic susceptibility who visits the institution. An old teacher declared that the Normal school grounds would, before many years, tell on the school grounds of every village, town, and section in Ontario. Up to a few years ago the play-ground and the land adjoining a rural schoolhouse were almost so many graveyards, the impression made on the wayfarer being of the most dismal and uninviting character. A change has lately come over the spirit of trustees and teachers, many of the school grounds being now during the summer months models of neatness. How is it with the surroundings of your school, gentle reader? Has your influence as a missionary of the gospel of taste made itself felt on the School Board and the community, and does it bear fruit in neat and attractive school grounds, which are perennially exerting their refining influence upon both children and parents?

THE following circular has been sent by the Education Department to head masters of High Schools and Collegiate Institutes:—According to paragraph 5 of the Regulations respecting authorized text-books for use in Public and High Schools, (circular 14) it is provided that "All text-books prescribed or required for senior matriculation or for the examinations for the first year in any of the Universities of Ontario may be used in such Forms as take up senior matriculation work." As the senior and junior matriculation classes are generally combined, the same text-books are usually necessary. The Department, therefore, desires it to be understood that the liberty allowed by said paragraph in the case of text-books required for senior matriculation shall hereafter be allowed for junior matriculation with honors. The rule as to the use of unauthorized text-books in

every other subject, class, and form, shall remain as at present. In order that all reasonable facility should be granted to deserving pupils to proceed with the course prescribed for 2nd Class Certificates, Head Masters may allow those who obtained an aggregate of 600 marks at the recent examination on 3rd Class work, (even if they failed in the minimum marks required in each subject), to proceed with the work prescribed for 2nd Class Certificate. All candidates who wrote for 2nd Class and failed may go on with their 2nd Class course.

SOME of the teachers in the employ of the London (Eng.) School Board bitterly complain of the religious teaching they are compelled to give. The *Christian World* says:

"The Board employs inspectors of its own, and these gentlemen are just now making themselves particularly busy in dropping in at schools unexpectedly, with the object of detecting teachers who are not carrying out to order the instructions as to religious teaching. In certain of the schools, we are told, there is just now quite a panic among the teachers, as, rightly or wrongly, the impression has got abroad that the least infringement of the Board's injunctions will lead to dismissal. The teachers complain that they were not trained in order to give religious instruction, and that if the Board's requirements are carried out, all their private time must be occupied in Bible study."

It may seem at first thought that the teachers ought to be better acquainted with their Bibles, but from the sample given of the amount of work required from Standard IV, in which the pupils are about ten years old, it is clear that the teachers have good reason to complain. Even a bare enumeration of the topics prescribed would occupy too much space, and it would seem that if the whole of the work were done there could not be time for much else. The *Christian World* pronounces the requirements "absurdly extravagant," even for willing teachers, as well it may, and adds that "to force unwilling men and women to teach all this, and to hold a rod over their heads while they teach, is intolerable and a folly that directly defeats its own object."

Educational Thought.

Is it not an abominable waste of the time and strength of children to put them to doing in a difficult way, never used in real life, something they will be able to do in an easy way a year or two later? To introduce artificial hardness into the course of training that any human being has to follow is an unpardonable educational sin. There is hardness enough in this world without manufacturing any, particularly for children. On careful search through all the years of the Public School programmes now in use, many places will be found where time might be saved and strain lessened by abandoning the effort to obtain an exaggerated and wholly unnatural accuracy of work. It is one of the worst defects of examinations that they set an artificial value upon accuracy of attainment.—*President Eliot in Atlantic Monthly.*

WHAT do you learn from "Paradise Lost?" Nothing at all. What do you learn from a cookery book? Something new, something that you did not know before, in every paragraph. But would you therefore put the wretched cookery book on a higher level of estimation than the divine poem?

What you owe to Milton is not any *knowledge*, of which a million separate items are but a million of advancing steps on the same earthly level; what you owe is *power*, that is, exercise and expansion to your own latent capacity of sympathy with the infinite, where every pulse and each separate influx is a step upward—a step ascending as upon a Jacob's ladder from earth to mysterious altitudes above the earth. All the steps of knowledge, from first to last carry you further on the same plane, but could never raise you one foot above your ancient level of earth; whereas the very *first* step in power is a flight, is an ascending into another element where earth is forgotten.—*De Quincey.*

THERE is a certain service rendered to religion by science which cannot be passed by. I refer to the fact that science of itself is unable to solve any of the great problems which most interest men, and which form the substance of religion. It is a profound remark of Novalis that "Nature is a kind of illuminated table of the contents of the spirit." The solution, the full explanation of things, cannot be found in this "table of contents" but in the spirit. Science describes only processes, never beginning, nor end, nor why, nor how. It is, as Novalis says, a picture; it cannot explain itself nor anything in it. This self-demonstrated limitation of science is of service to religion, by deepening its sense of responsibility as the real teacher of mankind. Science is of immense help in the search after truth; it opens paths, it smooths the way, it prescribes methods, it arranges facts; but truth itself—the truth of God, of man, of duty, of destiny—this still remains in the hands of religion, and always will remain there.—*Rev. Dr. T. T. Munger, in Forum for September.*

FEW adult minds retain accurately considerable masses of isolated facts, and it is commonly observed that minds which are good at that are seldom the best minds. Why do we try to make children do what we do not try to do ourselves? Instead of mastering one subject before going to another, it is almost invariably wise to go on to a superior subject before the inferior has been mastered,—mastery being a very rare thing. On the mastery theory, how much new reading or thinking should we adults do? Instead of reviewing arithmetic, study algebra; for algebra will illustrate arithmetic, and supply many examples of arithmetical processes. Instead of re-reading a familiar story, read a new one; it will be vastly more interesting, and the common words will all recur,—the common words being by far the most valuable ones. Instead of reviewing the physical geography of North America, study South America. There, too, the pupils will find mountain chains, water-sheds, high plateaux, broad plains, great streams, and isothermal lines. The really profitable time to review a subject is not when we have just finished it, but when we have used it in studying other subjects, and have seen its relations to other subjects, and what it is good for.—*President Eliot in Atlantic Monthly.*

THERE is nothing like a masterpiece of literature on which to sharpen the wits of a dull boy or girl. One of the best School Principals I have ever met, once said to me, "If I had a stupid pupil whom I wished to brighten up, I would do nothing during the first six months but entertain him with interesting reading." People who try to develop reason in a child before developing imagination, begin at the wrong end. A child must imagine a thing before he can reason about it. The child who has had his powers of imagination opened up through *Pilgrim's Progress* is much better fitted to attack "Longitude and Time" or "Relative Pronouns," than the boy who has been kept stupidly at work committing text to memory or reducing common fractions to circulating decimals. The dullest boy in mathematics that I ever knew, the boy who declared he was tired of life because there was so much arithmetic in it, and persistently read Burns and Shakespeare, soon mastered arithmetic when it became necessary in order that he might accept a position as teacher in a High School. People will always learn arithmetic as fast as necessity compels them if they know how to read. I wish I might reverse the order and say that a child brought up on cube and square roots thereby attained the power to master the great thoughts which lie in poetry and science.—*Mary E. Burt.*