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TABLE OF CONTENTS.

Teaching as a fine art.....	97	Preparatory School--Ad-	
Phonography.....	101	dresses of the Rev. Dr.	
EDITORIAL :		Wilkes and Mr. S. E.	
Death of Honorable Judge		Dawson	116
Sanborn	102	Royal Arthur and Prince	
Death of Rev. Dr. Nicolls..	102	Albert Schools.....	119
"Provincial Exhibition" ..	102	Berthier Academy	119
Derham's Analytic Gram-		Shawville Academy, Co.	
matical Chart of the Eng-		Ottawa	119
lish Language.....	103	University Intelligence	
Appointment	103	Donations to McGill Col-	
The Time Globe.....	103	lege	121
EDUCATIONAL :		Obituary : Notice of the late	
Annual Closing Exercises of		Judge Sanborn.....	121
Compton Ladies' College	104	The late Dr. Nicolls.....	122
Annual convocation of Bish-		MISCELLANEOUS :	
op's College.....	106	Tact--Weight and Health	
List of Degrees Conferred		--Cucumber eaters beware	
of Prizes	107	--Croup--Higher education	
Speeches of the Superint-		of women--The transcript	
endent and of Mr. Justice		--Origin of family names--	
Ramsay	108	Popular science--Don't worry	
McGill Normal School--		about yourself--A wail	
Principals Report -- Ad-		from an intemperate man--	
dresses of Principal Daw-		Old acquaintance--Virtu-	
son and Honorable Jas.		ous energy--Origin of the	
Ferrier--List of Diplomas		military salute--Printing	
awarded	112	before the flood--The happy	
McGill Model School--Ad-		despatch--Old and new ties	
dresses of Princ. Hicks		--King Alfred's cakes--How	
and Hon. Jas. Ferrier... 115		our bodies lose heat.....	123
Quebec High School..... 115		Advertisements.....	127
Montreal High School and		Meteorology	128

Teaching as a Fine Art.

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Teaching falls so nearly universally to the lot of civilized man or woman at some period of life, that we are all inconsiderate enough to set it down among the easiest and most artless of all pursuits--"not more difficult than for a blackbird 'tis to whistle." It is not only the first thought of an impecunious student during or immediately after his college course--one who, by his habits of study and cultivated taste and stock of information, is more or less fitted for the work--but it is the resource of the country lass who would add a few flounces to her dress or a few ribbons to her bonnet, or would help papa to pay the balance due on her new

piano. And, while there is a large amount of true teaching ability developed under these circumstances which would otherwise remained hidden, and while there is many a hero or heroine battling with adverse fortune behind the rustic school-house desk, educating himself or herself for severer tasks sometimes in the highest and broadest spheres of humanity; nevertheless as a whole, the education of their pupils, the work as teachers and their contribution to the advancement of their profession, can, at the best, be spoken of with hesitancy, and, for the most part, constitute a mass of rawness, incompetency, lukewarmness, and carelessness, relieved only by a mechanical attention to drill that brings disrepute upon our profession, and is a heavy clog to its progress. Among the many thousand persons engaged in the profession of teaching, in high places or in low, how few there are who, I will not say, make, but who care to make a reputation for excellence as teachers! how few are ambitious to excel in the line of their profession! how many crave a reputation only as a means of getting on in the world! to how many the whole affair is matter of irksome drudgery, to be got rid of the moment an opportunity offers! Only about one per cent. of the entire number find their way to the annual gathering where the professional spirit is cultivated and means of progress are discussed. The affection, the zeal, the enthusiasm, the *esprit de corps*, which the profession deserves, are shared in by comparatively few.

But, if it is so largely disparaged by multitudes as not to be treated as an established and honourable pursuit for a life-time, but as a mere temporary makeshift for earning a living, let it be our object at this time not only to indicate its character as a profession, but to set it in a still higher position. Let us inquire whether there is not an intrinsic worthiness in the work of the teacher which allies it with the highest forms of human activity, and which demands and justifies the consecration of the highest powers to its achievement. Limiting the teacher's field of activity primarily to the intellect of his pupils, and not concerning ourselves at present with the physical or the moral sides of his nature, we yet claim for the true teacher the position of an artist, and we wish to contemplate teaching as a Fine Art.

The Fine Arts are those methods by which a lofty imagination skilfully embodies its conception in sensible