

Educational Weekly

VOL. III.

THURSDAY, APRIL 1ST, 1886.

Number 65.

The Educational Weekly.

Edited by T. ARNOLD HAULTAIN, M.A.

TERMS: Two Dollars per annum. Clubs of three, \$5.00. Clubs of five at \$1.60 each, or the five for \$8.00. Clubs of twenty at \$1.50 each, or the twenty for \$30.00.

New subscriptions may begin at any time during the year.

Payment, when sent by mail, should be made by post-office order or registered letter. Money sent in unregistered letters will be at the risk of the senders.

The date at the right of the name on the address label shows to what date the subscription is paid. The change of this date to a later one is receipt for remittance.

Subscribers desiring their papers discontinued are requested to give the publishers timely notification.

In ordering a change of address, or the discontinuance of the paper, the name of the post-office to which the paper is sent should always be given.

Rates of advertising will be sent on application.

Business communications and communications intended for the Editor should be on separate papers.

PUBLISHED BY

THE GRIP PRINTING AND PUBLISHING CO.,
TORONTO, CANADA.

JAMES V. WRIGHT, General Manager.

C. FRASER, Business Manager Educational Weekly Dept.

TORONTO, APRIL 1, 1886.

THE *Popular Science Monthly* for April contains, in an article upon the "Blair Bill," some remarks so pointed and pithy that no apologies are necessary for giving them a place in these columns. It is writing on the influence of politics upon education, and proceeds: "Another exemplification of the influence of politics upon education is seen in the 'Blair Bill,' which proposes that Congress shall make a gift of seventy-seven million dollars, to be divided among the States of the Union to help them maintain their schools. The success of the bill, as we write, is said to be uncertain; but, whether it pass or not, it has had so extensive a backing as to well illustrate the sort of influence which politicians would bring to bear upon edu-

cation. The tendency to make education a charity, and to bring school-houses into the same category with poor-houses, is sufficiently strong; but this measure, by an audacious stretch of constitutional power, would give the stamp of nationality to the charity policy. The scheme proceeds upon the peculiarly American assumption that anything can be done with money, and that the Central Government has only to scatter millions enough and all the people will be educated. But the assumption is false: there are things which no amount of money can do, while the evils of its lavish distribution are not only palpable and certain, but may result in the absolute defeat of the object intended. That the distribution of this seventy-seven million largess among the States would be profoundly injurious to the interests of popular education does not admit of a doubt; and the American Congress would have to make the experiment but once more to paralyze and destroy the existing common-school system of the country. For, by the results of all experience and the very necessity of things, those who expect to be helped will depend upon help, and put forth less effort to help themselves. Whatever lessens the interest taken by parents and citizens in the working and character of the schools, whatever tends to diminish their direct responsibility in regard to them, and to weaken the sense of obligation to make sacrifices for the instruction of the young, strikes a demoralizing and deadly blow at the springs and incentives of all educational improvement. Our people have yet to learn that one of the highest benefits of a popular educational system is in training parents and citizens to the efficient discharge of their social duties, and a national policy which undermines these obligations cannot be too strongly reprobated."

"No intelligent person," the *Popular Science Monthly* precedes these remarks by saying, "will deny that the general subject of education is one of great complexity and difficulty, and that to control it wisely and improve its practical methods

is a task requiring much ability, long and profound devotion to its fundamental questions, and a wide and varied experience in educational work. But very few men can be found combining the rare qualifications needed in a State Superintendent of Education; at the very best these qualifications can only be secured in a partial degree, but this makes it all the more necessary that no effort shall be spared to secure the best talent available for so responsible a trust. It is needless to say that this desirable object is impossible under the political régime into which our popular education has now passed. The superintendency of schools of the State of New York has become a foot-ball of partisan faction among the politicians of the New York Legislature. The former Superintendent resigned some weeks ago, to take a more profitable office; and the temporary incumbent of the place will vacate the office in April, to be succeeded by whomsoever the Legislature appoints. A crowd of applicants of all sorts are after the place, lobbying and intriguing in Albany by all the means that are necessary to secure 'success' in the scramble for a desirable position. That a competent man will be appointed under these circumstances is virtually impossible, for no thoroughly competent and self-respecting man would enter the lists of competition under these circumstances. The appointee will win because he or his friends can beat all competition in the questionable arts by which politicians are influenced, and the result will be legitimate—a natural outcome of the system by which the instruction of the young has been brought under political and therefore, of course, under partisan control."

It is very pleasant to see such bold assertions so well expressed by one of the best of the greater American periodicals. That they recognize their deficiencies and are not afraid to hit straight from the shoulder argues well for the removal of the shortcomings of which the *Popular Science Monthly* complains.