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Table of Contents.

PAGE.	PAGE.
EDITORIAL NOTES..... 65	She Could and She Couldn't..... 74
ENGLISH—	Four Mottoes..... 74
Examination Questions on Shakespeare's "Julius Caesar"..... 68	PRIMARY DEPARTMENT—
Of Boldness—Bacon— High School Reader p. 53..... 68	From Different Stand- points, Two pictures from Life..... 74
Correspondence..... 69	Last Days..... 75
EDITORIALS—	A True Story..... 75
To Our Friends and Patrons..... 70	A Bit of Ethics..... 75
To Those Whom It May Concern..... 70	Pansies..... 75
The Vacation..... 71	When Old Jack Died..... 75
SPECIAL PAPERS—	A Surprise..... 75
British Premiers..... 72	CURRENT HISTORY—
A Talk Over Tea..... 72	Hawaii..... 76
A Fundamental Truth..... 72	HINTS AND HELPS—
SCIENCE—	Not so Easy as it Looked..... 76
Educational Department, Ontario Annual Examinations, 1893..... 73	Talking..... 76
Physiology and Temperance..... 73	What They Thought..... 77
Examinations in Botany..... 74	SCHOOL-ROOM METHODS—
FRIDAY AFTERNOON—	Lessons to Develop the First Ideas of Figures..... 77
That Little Girl..... 74	Primary Spelling Lesson..... 78
	Joe's Sum..... 78
	CORRESPONDENCE—
	A Pertinent Question..... 78
	QUESTION DRAWER..... 78
	LITERARY NOTES..... 78

Editorial Notes.

At the Convention of the University of Toronto, held on the 14th inst., the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws was conferred upon His Excellency, Lord Aberdeen, Governor-General of Canada; His Honor George A. Kirkpatrick, Lieut.-Governor of Ontario; Hon. George W. Ross, Minister of Education; Wm. Mulock, Esq., M.A., M.P., Vice-Chancellor of the University; James Loudon, Esq., M.A., President of the University; and Dr. Patton, President of the College of New Jersey, Princeton, U.S. Lord Aberdeen made a happy speech, dwelling particularly upon the necessity of cultivating, through the medium of institutions of this kind, "a comprehensive, tolerant, and sympathetic spirit." The hint is not inappropriate just now in Canada.

At the meeting of the South York Teachers' Institute, which was held two or three weeks since at East Toronto village, an interesting discussion was had on the subject of "Home-work." We had intended to give a resume of some of the speeches made, but find that we have left ourselves no space to do so in this number. The discussion developed a good deal of difference both of opinion and of practice amongst the teachers present. Many doubt the wisdom and necessity of home-work, except for the more advanced pupils. Capt. C. W. Allen, editor of the *Recorder*, who was present, made an excellent address, in which he spoke from the view-point of the parent and tax-payer. But of the whole subject, more anon.

In two or three instances, the secretaries, or other friends, have sent us brief and appropriate reports of the proceedings at the institutes which have recently been held. We should have been glad to publish these, but as we had received no similar reports from other institutes, we have not done so, lest we might seem to be making invidious distinctions. Some years ago we were accustomed to publish tolerably full reports of the proceedings of all the institutes, or at least as many of them as favored us with material. As they became more frequent and their sessions more full of important discussions, we found it impossible to continue to do this, without crowding out matter of more general interest to our subscribers. This is, however, we think, the other extreme, and we intend to try, during the next school year, to obtain and publish very brief summaries of the proceedings at each meeting.

WE do not believe that in order to make the school-work pleasant to the pupil everything must be made easy. The healthy child likes a sugar-plum occasionally, but does not want all his food sugar-coated. It is not the easy play that is most attractive to the robust boy. He spurns it, and chooses that which calls forth all his power. He delights in the consciousness of physical power. So too, there is a joy in the severest mental effort, if it be but rightly directed and successful. Every true teacher must have watched with keen satisfaction the play of the child-mind as shadowed on the countenance. He delights to mark the clouded face, the wrinkled brow, the down-cast eye, while the struggle for the mastery of some uncomprehended sentence or problem is going on, and to see these quickly give place to the flushed cheek, the shining forehead, and the flashing eye, which tell of victory achieved. One aim of the wise teacher will be to develop this sense of power in the child. He will seek not so much to remove obstacles out of the way as to teach the young thinker how to meet and overcome them.

WE give on another page a somewhat witty dialogue on the "New Education," by a clever writer in *The Educational Times*, (English.) The critic adopts a

method which is certainly not new with writers of argumentative dialogue, that, viz., of pitting a shrewd and able advocate of the view with which he sympathizes against an opponent who knows just enough about the subject to be able to repeat a few stock phrases, whose meaning and application she fails to understand, and who is so lacking in shrewdness as not to know when she is being laughed at. As a satire on a certain class of persons who sometimes pose as the advocates of ideas which they do not take the trouble to understand, the article is a success. As an attempt to belittle the Kindergarten and the so-called "New Education," it is a conspicuous failure. Its two best points are, perhaps, that the mixing of work and play, instead of being new, is as old at least as the ivory letters and word-building of children in pagan Rome, and that a child's activity cannot properly be called spontaneous when it is encouraged and guided. The latter is simply a bit of verbal criticism. With regard to the former, there is nothing new or unusual in the discovery that the simple fact upon which even the most brilliant inductions have been based may have been before men's minds through all preceding ages. How many myriads of persons had seen such phenomena as the fall of an apple, or the lifting of a kettle-lid by steam, before the laws of gravitation were formulated or the steam-engine invented. It is quite likely that even the ancient Romans were not the first to discover that children learn by means of their playthings, and to put the discovery to some trifling educational use. The fact does not detract in the least from the merits of those who evolved from this simple fact a great educational law, and made it the base of a complete and philosophical system of education—the law that all mental training should be carried on along the lines indicated by the child's spontaneous activities. It is not, perhaps, sufficiently noted that in the earliest stages of mind development there is really no distinction between work and play. Digging with a miniature shovel, or studying out little arithmetical puzzles, is as really play, and as enjoyable, as block-building or straw-plaiting, and may be directed to as good educational results. The fact that the play results in something useful does not destroy, but judiciously used, adds to the child's enjoyment of it.