



THE JOURNAL OF EDUCATION

Devoted to Education, Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Volume XIX.

Quebec, Province of Quebec, September & October, 1875.

Nos. 9 & 10.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

On Cramming.....	129	Convention of the Provincial Association of Protestant Teachers.....	148
Address on the Elements of Education.....	134	OBITUARY :	
Boys at Home.....	138	Miss Murray.....	155
Success in Teaching.....	139	EDUCATIONAL :	
Laughing Children.....	140	Education in Ireland.....	155
A Day in the Kindergarten of Fräulein Held, at Nashua, N. H.....	140	Object of Higher Education.....	156
POETRY :		Female Education in Egypt.....	156
Growing Up.....	141	School-Punishments.....	156
OFFICIAL NOTICES :		Schoolrooms.....	156
Appointments—School Commissioners—School Trustees—Erection of School Municipalities.....	141	MISCELLANEOUS :	
Report of the Minister of Public Instruction.....	142	A Boarding School in 1570.....	156
		Care of the Eyes.....	157
		Laughter.....	158
		The Art of Swimming.....	158
		Teachers Wanted.....	159
		Meteorology.....	159

On Cramming.

(Paper read by Professor J. PAYNE before the College of Preceptors.)

It is a great advantage for me, in treating the subject I have chosen for our evening's entertainment, or instruction, as the case may be, that I am not called upon to fight against prejudices or prepossessions. I know, in fact, beforehand, that you all agree with me in a thorough detestation of cramming; and that you will echo back the most vituperative epithets that I may apply to it. The voice of public opinion, of teachers generally, and of the Lecturer, all unanimously pronounce its condemnation.

I have never yet fallen in with a teacher who did not denounce cramming, and declare himself innocent of the crime. Every teacher admits, of course with regret, its existence. He even believes that it is common. He more than suspects that some of his neighbours are guilty of it. "There is Mr.—, for instance, whose name makes such a figure in the examinations—It is all done by cramming!" If, however, we call on Mr.—and charge him with the offence, he indignantly denies it, and hurls back the imputation on our informant. And so with other cases. As this experience is general, we are forced to the theoretical conclusion that cramming is a thing that all teachers professedly hate, but really practise.

This conclusion is, however, no doubt far too sweeping. There are exceptions to every rule, and I flatter myself that my audience this evening is composed of exceptions to this; and I have therefore no hesitation in calling on you to join with me in abusing the *criminal absentees*.

But before we proceed further, it may be as well to enquire what this heinous crime, the mere imputation of which every teacher so earnestly deprecates, really is. What is cramming? Perhaps the Dictionary will help us to answer the question. Let us see. "*Cram, v. a., literally to draw together (according to some, another form of *cramp*), to press or drive in, to ram down, to stuff, to fill to excess; or, in polite slang, to prepare anyone, in a limited time, for passing an examination, by the stuffing in of intellectual food.*" Thus far the Dictionary, which apparently confines the application of the term to a special category. As, however, we know that common usage sets aside this limitation, and designates as cramming all kinds of intellectual feeding which consist of stuffing in, we unhesitatingly accept the most general interpretation. But, having done so, we are no longer surprised that teachers all round vehemently deny their complicity in a transaction which involves the treating of children as Strasburg geese or prize pigs. "Stuff or ram down intellectual food!" Not they, indeed! They leave that to the crammers by profession, who live—and handsomely too—by practising acts of this kind. For themselves, all the world knows that they are educators as well as instructors; and as such, of course, mind-formers, and therefore promoters of natural feeding, not stuffing.

It appears, then, on the whole, that cramming is a crime "abhorred by Gods and men," but that no one—no teacher, that is—owns to being concerned in it. Still, as all writers on education recognize its existence, speak of it as extensively prevalent, and declaim against it, we cannot help believing that some, perhaps many, of those who disown it are really guilty of perpetrating it. Amongst other authors we find Professor D'Arcy Thompson eloquently inveighing against it in all his writings. He illustrates it by quoting his own experience while a pupil at Christ's Hospital, and proves beyond all question that the system pursued throughout the entire course of instruction, at the time he was there, was one of cram