

of the schools in every way. I believe that if these simple suggestions that I have made were faithfully acted upon they would reduce these changes to the minimum number and counteract in a great measure their evil results. I have referred to written examinations as one of these counteracting remedies, I desire now to point out the great value of written examinations as part of the regular school work. *I regard the absence of these examinations as one of the most serious defects of our district schools.* It seems to me there can be no two opinions about the value of written examinations as a means of education and training. "They not only afford a necessary test of the amount and thoroughness of the work done in a given time," says Dr. McLellan in his late address "they possess a high educative value. Oral examinations are not enough; there must be frequent written examinations if the best results are to be secured. Examinations represent the active use of the faculties as contrasted with that passive use which too often resolves itself into letting things come into one ear and go out at the other. Examinations excite emulation in the active and able; they touch the pride even of those who do not love knowledge much but still do not like to write themselves down absolute blockheads, and the examinations are themselves an exercise in English composition, in the control of thoughts and in the useful employment of knowledge. Examination is education. It is not merely that which goes into the eyes and ears of a student that educates him, it is that which comes out of him. No one knows himself master of a subject until he has reproduced it. In short, written examinations give a thorough mastery of the subject, prevent the student from sinking into an attitude of mere passive receptivity, educate to logical habits of thought and clearness and conciseness of expression." And yet our district schools know nothing of this means of training which the best educationists prize so highly and they would prove very valuable in the small classes of our country schools where the spirit of emulation is not very strong as fresh incentives to study. Apart from their educative value these examinations form a test of the amount and thoroughness of the work done in a given time. The importance of such a test in connection with these schools cannot be over-estimated. We often hear it said that teachers hold a most responsible position, yet it seems to me that teachers of these schools are the most irresponsible class of workers that can be found in the country. Their engagement in a great majority of cases consists merely of a verbal agreement, they are not usually engaged for any period recognized by law. They take charge of a school. No one knows anything of the state of the school or the attainment of the pupils; they carry on their work for four months without any regulations or standard of attainment to guide them; at the close of the term they quietly leave their work. There is no test of work done no test of progress, no taking of stock, no one knows whether the pupils have made fair progress or whether they are in the same position or a worse position than at the beginning of the term, and no one inquires. The teacher, may be, leaves the school never to return, another teacher takes the work at the beginning of the term, and no one inquires. The teacher, may be, leaves the school never to return, another teacher takes the work at the beginning of another term and works on in the same irresponsible manner. Is it not true then that the teachers in district schools hold most responsible positions and yet are practically responsible to no one for the manner in which they discharge their duties. Now a regular series of written examinations introduced at the

close of each term would form a general test of the amount and thoroughness of the work done and the most successful teachers would at once be manifested by the superior results of their work which these written examinations would bring out. In this way credit could be given according to results of teachers' work. And these periodical tests would prove beneficial to the most faithful and conscientious teachers. They require these little stimulating influences the year in and the year out. Such examinations would also furnish the means for comparing the efficiency of schools in different townships and different parts of the same township. The desire to have one's pupils pass a creditable examination as compared with other schools would prove a strong incentive to energetic work on the part of the teacher. And a wider field for competition would be brought before pupils. It may be thought that I have overstated this, case, as there are inspectors who look after the teachers' work. I submit, however, that the present mode of inspection has practically no effect upon the schools. The inspector visits a school for one or two hours during a term. He records his visit in the register kept for that purpose. But if you read between the lines you will find this statement:—"I left the school just I as found it without making any effort to improve it." I maintain that such a plan of inspection has no beneficial influence upon pupil or teacher. I have great faith in the office of School Inspector. I believe that it is by means of these officers that the present unsatisfactory state of our district schools can best be improved. But they must take a broader view of their responsibilities before they can do this. For I feel bound to say that after looking over the past ten years of the history of our district schools I can see no practical results of the present system of inspection. There are many other points in regard to these schools to which I would like to direct the attention of the Convention, but I feel that I have occupied too much of your valuable time already, not more time I am convinced than the subject demands, but more perhaps than I should have given it.

### Pedagogics Abroad.

AN EDUCATIONAL CHAPTER FROM TAINE'S NOTES ON ENGLAND. (1)

Harrow, Eton, Rugby, are among the principal establishments of secondary instruction in England, and correspond nearly to our large lyceums. There are at Eton about eight hundred boys, and five hundred in each of the others, from thirteen to eighteen years of age. But between these schools and our lyceums the difference is enormous, and no other comparison gives greater prominence to the contrast between the two nations. They tell me that I may take Harrow as an example.

This is an independent, private establishment, receiving no aid from the State, originally founded by a legacy, and, consequently provided with a landed estate and an hereditary revenue. Sometimes the revenue of such a property is very large. At Harrow it is small (£1,100). Large or small, it is administered by a body of trustees, who are renewed by election. Here there are six, great lords and proprietors of the neighborhood, who are empowered to make considerable changes, and to appoint the head-master. But the principal part of

(1) Translated from the French by James Harold Wickersham.