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TABLE OF CONTENTS.

The German Method of Teaching Writing and Reading, with suggestions for its introduction into English Schools.....	97	POETRY :	
Teachers and Taught.....	100	The Spirits of the Wind,...	109
SCHOOL EXAMINATIONS :		OFFICIAL NOTICES :	
Close of the Scholastic year at Villa Maria.....	101	Appointments: School Commissioners, Examiners, Municipality limits.....	110
Polytechnic School.....	102	SCIENCE :	
Bishop's College, Lennoxville.....	102	The phenomena of sleep....	110
Berthier Grammar School.....	103	MISCELLANY :	
McGill Normal School.....	104	The Manners of Pupils of Public Schools.....	111
High School closing day... 106		Advertisement.....	111
		Meteorology.....	111

The German Method of Teaching Writing and Reading, with suggestions for its introduction into English Schools.

Paper read by G. C. MAST, Esq., before the College of Preceptors.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies, and Gentlemen,—Allow me, in the first instance, to make a few remarks on the title of my Paper. I beg you clearly to understand that my main object is to place before you a new method of teaching Reading as a substitute for what I consider the very inadequate methods prevalent in this country.

But Reading being, in its first stage, and by the proposed method, inseparably connected with Writing, as will presently be seen, I was compelled, in the title, to link the two terms together.

I call it the German method, not because it is the only one followed in my native country, but because it originated, and is gradually displacing all other methods, there.

An experience of twenty-two years as a teacher in this country having convinced me, however, that the best methods imported from abroad will fail, unless they are judiciously adapted to the varied circumstances of this country, I have endeavoured to work out what I consider sound German principles in regard to the subject, in such

a manner as to produce a natural and intelligent method of teaching elementary Reading and Writing suitable for English schools. The principles upon which it rests are those of the "Lautir method" or "Phonic method," as further developed in the "Schreiblese Unterricht," or "Write and Read" method.

The former is the work of the Bavarian Councillor of Education, Dr. Heurich Stephani, who lived at the beginning of the present century; the latter is ascribed to Dr. Johann Baptist Graser, a countryman and contemporary of Stephani.

According to this "Phonic Write and Read" method, writing and reading are taught simultaneously; the latter, so to say, through the former. Spelling is entirely dispensed with, and the child is taught only the sound or power of the letters, and not their names.

My limited time forbids me to attempt even a short sketch, instructive as it might be at the present moment, of the historical development of the methods of teaching Reading in Germany, so I proceed at once to the main object.

Every wise teacher who has to instruct children coming direct from home, would naturally endeavour to make this transition from home to school as little striking, and as pleasant, as possible.

A little friendly conversation with the children, a few questions, such as "How did you like your breakfast?" or "How did you sleep last night?" would elicit an answer; and this answer would probably afford an opportunity to the teacher to correct the bad pronunciation of some children; and he would thus convey the first instructions in such a manner that the child would really not be aware of being taught at all.

The most simple object, a book, a slate, an article of dress, or a picture that may hang in the school room, may serve as material for these preparatory exercises for the organs of speech and for the ear. Or a piece of poetry, suitable for children, may at once be committed to memory by them, the teacher saying line after line slowly and distinctly, and the pupils repeating after him, both in chorus and singly. Then would follow the analysis of this piece of poetry into words syllables, and sounds. As an example I would propose the following:—