

## The School.

Supt. S. T. Dutton, in the article in the *Andover Review* to which we have before referred, says:—"Abstract and itinerant gossip about right and wrong in the school room creates a distaste for morality. Moral lessons clothed in concrete form may be given in such a way as to interest and impress the child." That we should say "depends." We scarcely know what is meant by "itinerant gossip, about right and wrong," but we are certain that judicious discussion even of abstract moral questions may be made very serviceable. The great truth that the question of right and wrong is ever and everywhere the first and highest question cannot be too sedulously inculcated. Nor are occasional and brief discussions of questions of abstract morals necessarily dry and uninteresting. Quite the contrary. There is that in the child's mind which responds readily and heartily to such themes when skilfully presented. The young conscience is tender and sensitive. The moral nature of the child readily recognizes that the moral element in actions is the fundamental element. The habit of moral thoughtfulness cannot be too soon put under cultivation.

President Wheeler, in the June number of the "Chautauquan," says that the relative pronoun is opposed by the tendencies prevailing in English syntax, and it will not be long before we shall begin to say "THE RELATIVE PRONOUN MUST GO." If we may judge by the difficulty which young writers and many who are not young seem to find in its use, the banishment of the relative would be a boon not only to amateur "literarians" but to many professionals. There is, probably, no other word in common use in the language which is subject to so frequent and flagrant misuse.

A weighty argument in favour of industrial education in connection with the schools of the future is the influence it will have in killing the lingering, absurd prejudice against manual labour. The penury and misery which are the outcome of this prejudice are incalculable. So long as multitudes of young men and women are to be found who will do and suffer almost anything rather than earn an honest living with their hands, the times will be out of joint for many. In the good time coming when the true dignity of manual labour shall be practically acknowledged there will be a vast decrease in the mass of the world's poverty. Industrial training in the schools will do much to hasten the day.

"The bill for Uniformity of Text-Books has been strangled in the Legislature, and one or two others bid fair to die 'a bornin.'" So says the *School Moderator*, of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Several of the States have tried the "uniformity" legislation and have invariably, we believe, repealed it after a short trial. The leading educators of the Great Republic are emphatic in its condemnation and it is doubtful if such an Act could now be passed in any State Legislature. It was left for Ontario, which boasts of the excellence of its free schools, and its high educational status, to fall back upon this cheap mechanical device—a device which discredits the intelligence of

teachers and school boards, handicaps educational authors and puts a premium on non-progressiveness in school literature.

We note that at one or two of the Teachers' Associations the use of the newspaper in the school-room has been warmly advocated. We have previously expressed our opinion that judiciously used, it might be made very serviceable. Its use would tend to lift history and kindred topics out of the misty past into the living present. It would give to the pupil an idea of reality, of actual relation to the moving world and every-day life, which he seldom gets from books. An article which we republish in another column urges strong objections on the ground of the bad taste, or immoral tendency, of much that appears in the modern newspaper. We do not suppose any teacher would think of putting even unobjectionable papers into the hands of pupils to be read indiscriminately, though no doubt very many of them have free access to the dailies at their homes. The unreliability of much that appears as news, is another almost equally serious difficulty. Half that appears as fact one day is contradicted the next. We hope to see the time when weekly or semi-weekly periodicals of the right stamp will be published specially for use in the schools. Such papers, ably edited, containing carefully prepared and simply written digests of the most important events in history, discoveries in science, contributions to literature; the most important movements in politics, morals, and religion, etc., would be invaluable aids to the teacher, and would supersede much less practical book work."

## A NEW LITERARY VENTURE.

The reading public, especially those who are interested in observing the progress of the healthful reaction in our institutions of learning in the direction of better literary culture, will look with some interest for the forthcoming volume by the students of University College. This work, which is to be published on Convocation Day, is to be made up of selections from articles and contributions that have appeared in the *Varsity*, the literary organ of the students of the College. This paper has improved wonderfully within the last few years and is now a very creditable school journal. The managers are doing wisely in giving the public a taste of its quality, if we may judge from the samples which have been already published from advance sheets.

The cultivation of the power of thought and expression is of the very essence of education. It is astonishing that it should not always have had a foremost place in the curricula of our colleges and universities, but as a matter of fact nothing has been more common in the past than to see young men graduating from the higher institutions who, whatever might be their proficiency in Latin or Mathematics, were utterly unable to write an English essay, respectable in either substance or form. Nor was this to be wondered at. The ability to think clearly and to express thought neatly and accurately, can be gained by the average student only by dint of persistent effort and practice. The increased amount of attention now being given to the study of the English Literature cannot fail to tell very favourably upon the literary ability of the students of the day.