

T H E

JOURNAL OF EDUCATION.

FOR THE PROVINCE OF NOVA SCOTIA.

WE have been informed that the Examination for the Gilchrist Scholarship will begin on Tuesday, 21st July, at 2 o'clock P. M., in the Assembly Room, Province Building.

ERRATA.—*Journal of Education* for May, Provincial Grant, Colchester Co., read James Paton, Grade C., \$45.00. Shelburne Co., E. M. Rand, 39½ days, \$46.37; Robert Colquhoun, 100 days, \$49.60; Ebenezer Crowell, 98½ days, \$36.62; George G. Wadsworth, 121 days, \$45.00

INSPECTORS are specially requested to distribute only such B. Returns as they have received during the present Term. The arrangement of the tables differs from the return of last year. In filling up the A. abstract, each Inspector will be careful to include only those Border Sections whose schools are subject to his inspection.

LETTER FROM THE VERY REV. JAMES ROSS, D. D.,
EXAMINER IN DEPARTMENT OF TEACHING, SCHOOL MANAGEMENT, &c.

BEFORE proceeding to offer any remarks upon the examination papers submitted to my inspection at the commencement of the current half year, I wish to make one preliminary observation. It is just possible that some of the applicants for school licenses look upon the examiners as stern and unfeeling, having little or no sympathy with them in their difficulties and anxieties. If any of them entertain such an opinion, I beg to assure them it is unfounded and incorrect. I am often at a loss to account for the deep interest which I feel in the unknown writers of the papers under consideration. I find myself strangely in sympathy with them, participating in their anxieties, excitements and perplexities, and almost wish I could have been beside them to give them a hint which might have assisted them in tiding over a difficulty. It always affords me pleasure to assign high numbers to papers which deserve them; and in many cases it is not a little painful to be compelled, by a sense of duty, to award only a small amount of merit, and thus disappoint the expectations, and, it may be, wound the feelings of the applicant. A little reflection is sufficient to convince candidates that undue leniency on our part would be injurious to teachers as a class as well as to the public service. To them it is a matter of the very first importance that the character of the profession be not only sustained but elevated. That elevation can be obtained only by excluding from the profession those who are not duly qualified.

The results of the last examination afford, in my opinion, pleasing evidence of decided progress. They indicate a healthy and vigorous condition of our educational system. Much has been accomplished, but there is still room for great improvement.

The beneficial effects of the Normal School are very plainly indicated by the papers which I have examined. Many of them afforded unmistakable evidence that the writer had been a pupil of the training establishment. The evidences were most striking in the departments of teaching and school management. True, I do not know the writer, and consequently do not know the antecedents of the writer of any of these papers, yet the internal evidence of attendance at the Normal School is so clear that in many cases not a doubt of the fact remains on my mind.

The greatest defects were found in the department of book-keeping. Many applicants failed to hand in any exercises on this subject; and of those submitted a large proportion were comparatively of a low order.

In judging of the penmanship, and even of the spelling and composition, allowance must be made for the anxiety, excitement,

and flurry of the occasion. Many of the papers submitted by the lady applicants were models of neatness and accuracy. It would be well for some of the male candidates to remember that slovenliness and carelessness detract seriously from the merits of an exercise, and that the lowness of their numbers may be ascribed to these causes to a greater extent than they imagine.

Viewing the papers *en masse*, the defect which obtruded itself most painfully, because most frequently, upon my notice, was the vagueness of the answers, particularly in the departments of teaching and school management. The candidate did not seize upon the exact idea to which the question or exercise required attention. It may have been, and in many cases doubtless was the effect of hurry and excitement. Solomon said long ago, "He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him." It is scarcely less foolish, and certainly not any more creditable, to attempt to write on any subject before thoroughly understanding it. The consequence of a failure to seize the precise point of the question in a dissertation upon some collateral subject, which, however excellent in itself, counts for little or nothing in summing up the results. The candidate is required to define *method*. Instead of a definition we are furnished with a disquisition more or less elaborate on the importance of order and regularity. Again, he or she is asked to state briefly and tersely the importance of cleanliness and tidiness. We are informed that cleanliness is next to godliness, and frequently a solemn promise is added that if ever placed in charge of a school, no child, with unwashed hands or uncombed hair, shall be permitted to occupy a place even on the lowest form. Now, the object of the exercise evidently is to afford the applicant an opportunity to exhibit his acquaintance with the end to be obtained, the fitness of the means to the attainment of the end, and its relative power or value as an element in the physical, intellectual, moral and emotional training of the pupil. Permit me, therefore, to recommend future applicants to devote a short time to the study of the question before they begin to write. Let them ask themselves, what is the precise meaning and aim of the exercise. They will find it afterwards comparatively easy to answer, and they will find also that time has been gained, not lost.

If these remarks should be received with favour by those for whose benefit they are especially designed, I will probably furnish you with a few in addition at the close of the next examination, while all the impressions are fresh and the incidents still vividly imprinted on the memory.

Dalhousie College, Halifax.

JAMES ROSS.

TEACHING.

A GOOD deal has been said, first and last, about the claims of teaching as a profession. Many deny that it has any just claims to the rank of a profession. We do not propose to enter upon a lengthy discussion of the question, but to present, in brief, some considerations which seem to have a direct bearing upon it, and which may not be without profit to teachers generally. And in the first place we may ask, What are the essential conditions and requirements of a profession,—any profession? We answer—1. It must have a noble aim, 2. Its operations must not be merely mechanical, but scientific in their character; 3. It must require on the part of its members a learned general education; 4. Its nature must be such as to render special preparation necessary to success; 5. It should have provided a common authority competent to decide upon the qualifications of those who apply to become members; 6. There must be some common bond of union and mutual recognition of claims to membership.

Now, let us apply these tests to teaching.

1. Teaching aims to instruct, develop, and train the various