

such a fund might be made to tell powerfully on the advancement of the teaching profession. We have previously called attention to the proposal to give every teacher a direct interest in the government grant in proportion to his professional standing. Why should trustees derive the whole benefit of the grant? Why should stagnant mediocrity be on the same footing in the eyes of the Department as progressive talent? If this dead level in the matter of government grants were broken up, the best men would not drift off to easier and better paid professions. Any one who holds a second class grade A certificate to-day, can easily and certainly secure better remuneration for less labor in some other occupation. Either a better system must prevail, or teaching must remain a sort of caravansary in which the flower of our youth stay all night, and sail off by the first boat in the morning.

HISTORY FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

We lately gave a brief discussion of the questions, What History is suitable for our Public Schools? How should the vast subject of History be introduced? Several opinions of eminent authorities were presented, and some correspondence on the subject published. We return once more to the topic to insist on a reconstruction of the programme, and to effect, if possible, a reformation in the method of teaching history to our junior classes. We shall remain true to our own plan and begin with the most recent writers. Let us hear J. G. FITCH, M.A., *Lecturer on Teaching at Cambridge*, and one of Her Majesty's Senior Inspectors of Schools. Here is his evidence dated January, 1881:—"How then should we begin to teach English History? Not certainly by plunging at once into the story of Julius Cæsar and the Druids; nor by giving a number of dates to be learned, to form a framework for pictures we mean to paint. I should first give a short series of lessons either orally, or from a well written reading book, if I could find one, with a view to make some simple and fundamental historical ideas intelligible—a *state*, a *dynasty*, a *monarch*, a *parliament*, *legislation*, the *administration of justice*, *taxes*, *civil and foreign war*. Scholars would thus see what sort of matter history had to do with, and would be prepared to enter on the study with more interest. Then a general notion should be given of the number of centuries over which our history extends. Thus a sort of Time-map divided into nineteen centuries is roughly constructed, on the same principle as . . . the meridian lines of a geographical map. But, as soon as this is done, the task of selection begins. The teacher is by no means bound to follow blindly the course prescribed by the text-book. On the contrary it will be far better to fix upon the most characteristic periods, to cause them to be studied with fulness and exactness, and to reserve the chronicle of the less notable reigns until afterwards. The person who understands these well is, as far as history is concerned, a well-informed man, even though he is unable to repeat in due order the list of sovereigns, and to tell their relationship to each other. . . . It is absurd to find children knowing about the Heptarchy and the Feudal System, and yet

not knowing how our present Parliament is constituted and what are its duties and functions."

Our next witness is JAMES PYLE WICKERSHAM, M.A., formerly Principal of the Pennsylvania State Normal School, State Superintendent of Education, etc. His evidence bears date January 1865, and reads as follows:—"The first historical matter I would place in the hands of children to be read or studied would be what I have denominated Fragments of History. Children commence learning all things by fragments; and, if written in a suitable style, they will read the kind of writings now designated with remarkable avidity. This matter, in the form of voyages, travels, biographical sketches, historical narratives, may be arranged in lessons for reading in schools, it may be studied and recited, or it may be read at home. They can accumulate in this way a vast store of facts before they reach the age of twelve, and before this age they are generally unable to enter upon a more systematic course of study.

I would next require children to study in detail the principal facts in the History of their native land. No one can well do without this knowledge, and to the citizen it seems indispensable. I am well aware that the history of one country cannot be fully understood without some knowledge of the histories of other countries with which it has been connected. But teaching must begin somewhere, and less difficulty will be found in commencing with the history of one's own country than with that of distant countries, or with general history. The reason is that pupils are better acquainted with the events that have transpired in their own country than with those that have transpired in others, and are naturally more anxious to increase their knowledge in respect to the former than in respect to the latter. A knowledge of the history of their own country is about all that can be expected of pupils in our common schools, but pupils in high schools and colleges should study universal history. So far as the laws of history can be inferred from the observed facts it is an empirical science, and must be taught according to the principles of the *Inductive Method*. Methods applicable to all other studies are employed in a higher sense in this. There is no good reason why history should not be as interesting to the young as fiction. Facts of history can be found adapted to pupils of any age, and expressed in forms which render them agreeable to every taste; and the teacher who fails to do his duty in selecting them can offer but a poor excuse."

We adjourn for the present, but intend to invite other witnesses who will place before the jury of educational opinion the necessity of Canadian History for Canadians, and the History of *recent times* as the introduction best suited to the average citizen.

THE HISTORY OF EDUCATION.

A very slight knowledge of mineralogy would have prevented Jacques Cartier from mistaking quartz crystals for diamonds and would have saved him much useless trouble. It is always important to know what has been attempted and what accomplished before we undertake new experiments of our own.