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MORAL DRILL IN SCHOOL.\*

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IN approaching the question of providing for religious instruction in school our discussions must no more run away from the fundamental principles which commend or condemn any element of school work than if we were discussing the introduction of any other of the many subjects which so many well-intentioned or ill-advised people would like to see inserted on the ordinary school curriculum. Last year at Sherbrooke, this association had up for consideration the question of agriculture as a school study, and some of you may remember that I there enunciated the principle that in the proposed introduction of any new subject or educational process, the true function of the school, the well-defined trend of all *legitimate* school-work should never be lost sight of. And as an emphatic corroboration of the wisdom of your acceptance of this as a first principle, I may encourage you by saying that at the late National Convention of Teachers at Buffalo, that principle was not only enunciated but adhered to throughout the proceedings, much to the enforced diffidence of the fad-dists, if any of these marvellous peo-

ple happened to be present. Those who took part in the discussions of that great meeting seemed to have in their mind more what ought not to form a part of school work than what might form a part of school work; and scant courtesy was given to any suggestion which, by any chance, seemed to run away from what we are all agreed upon as the true function of the school, namely, the development of the whole being of a boy or girl to the point of being able to take charge of himself or herself when called upon to assume the responsibilities of life on entering upon any phase of labor, or in entering upon the stages of the after self-education.

I think that we, the members of this association, may also take some credit to ourselves that our discussions have not to any serious extent run away from this first principle. We have come to be suspicious of the apples of Sodom that the opportunist is ever ready to offer us for the sake of a little vainglory in the shape of innovations of the Volapuk or Herbartian kind; and here I have to publicly thank the teachers of my inspectorate for the spirit of co-operation they have always shown in adopting any plan for the improvement of their schools, when once they have

\* An address delivered at the Convention of Teachers lately held in Montreal.