

Sketch of Mr. Brittain.



The readers of the REVIEW have had many opportunities of becoming acquainted with Mr. John Brittain, teacher of natural science in the New Brunswick Normal school. For years he has labored in season and out of season to stimulate interest in natural science. His influence in this direction has been felt, not only by student teachers of the normal school, but by those who have caught some of his enthusiasm in the classes at the Summer School of Science, at teachers' institutes, from his contributions to the REVIEW, and from his late work, "Teachers' Manual of Nature Lessons." In all these places, and by personal contact with students, Mr. Brittain has never ceased to stimulate as far as he was able, an interest not only in his chosen subject of the natural sciences, but in all methods and means that tend to make students thinkers and workers.

Mr. Brittain was born November 22nd, 1849, on a farm near Sussex, Kings County, New Brunswick. His opportunities for obtaining even a fair common school education were limited, but the earnest student will find ways to supplement such deficiencies. He will deny himself the gratification of many pleasures and luxuries, nay, even necessities of life to gratify the desire for knowledge. He will practise every economy except economy in books. While attending faithfully to all daily duties and tasks, these will be lightened by the prospect of devoting spare moments to his cherished books. Mr. Brittain, if he should write the story of his life, could tell much that would be helpful to students of the pleasures and rewards of self-denial.

Mr. Brittain attended the normal school in St. John in 1867 having taught for a year previous to

that and obtained a second class license, after a term of eleven weeks. He secured a first-class license in 1874, the intervening years being spent in teaching, in which he found himself hampered from insufficient knowledge and the lack of professional training. These deficiencies he diligently endeavored to supplement by private study, although his spare time was largely occupied with other duties. Mr. Brittain taught school at St. Martins for several years before he assumed charge of the superior school at Petitcodiac, which he held for eleven years. It was the successful management of this school that gave Mr. Brittain his reputation of one of the most successful teachers of the province. The thoroughness of his work, and the enthusiasm with which he inspired his students, marked him for promotion; and when the chair of natural science in the normal school became vacant, it was conceded by those who appreciated Mr. Brittain's work that he was the man to fill the position. He was appointed in 1889, and since that time his successful work has fully shown the wisdom of the choice.

Mr. Brittain's love for the natural sciences, his keenness of observation, the correctness of his judgment, and his systematic habits would have made him, with proper training in early life, one of the first naturalists of the day. He has, under circumstances that would have discouraged a less earnest student, laid a good foundation in the natural sciences, and has shown a marked capacity to teach these successfully. He is unsparing in his efforts, and most unselfish of his time and means to secure practical results and stimulate thought. He is an apostle of the "New Education," if that means that the student shall make the most out of himself.

Create an appetite for history rather than satisfy it. How?

1. By outlines and a good general text-book in the hands of the pupils.

2. By having many books of reference, if possible in sets, in the schoolroom.

3. By topical recitations, each topic followed by correction and additions from pupils and teachers.

E. Patterson.

If it were fully understood that the intellectual, spiritual and physical natures are so independent that when one suffers all are affected, then would the necessity for physical development be more apparent. However, we are progressing in the right direction. Rightly directed exercises, made pleasurable by variety, when given in a well-ventilated room, are productive of good results. More time should be allowed for this work, *School Education.*