

The Educational Weekly.

TORONTO, DECEMBER 17, 1885.

LAST week in commenting upon the Waterloo resolutions we remarked that the remedy for a too easy entrance into the teaching profession is properly to be found not in a heavy prohibitory money tariff, but in the gradual raising of the standard required for entrance. We do not mean that more subjects or harder papers be set for examination, but that the reading of the papers be done with more care, the percentages for passing be increased, and that more attention be paid to those qualifications which are the outcome of culture and character. Whatever may be the additional expense it may be thought best, as a protective measure, to impose upon the candidate for entrance, let that expense be incurred in the preparation of the candidate, and not in payment of a fee to be put into the provincial treasury, to go—no one knows where. Let attendance at a high school for a certain time be obligatory, if that be thought best, but let no one be debarred from becoming a teacher by mere lack of money. The imposition of a large entrance fee would doubtless decrease the number of entrants, but the decrement would not be made up of those who were least qualified as to natural gifts and character, but of those whose parents would be unable to pay the fee.

IN speaking of the various uses to which Friday afternoons can be put we omitted to mention one which is as important as any—in senior classes more important than some others. The programme of studies for public schools very properly calls for instruction in regard to the "Municipal Institutions of Ontario and the Federal form of the Dominion Government." But no text-book is prescribed in this subject, and the matter is perhaps wisely left to the discretion of the teacher. Instruction in this subject is one of the most necessary elements of a sound education; and the more informed our pupils become in regard to all that pertains to local, provincial and general government, the institution and growth of law, the administration of justice, the imposition of taxes, the raising of revenues, the expenditure of public moneys, the duties of trustees, of councillors, of legislators, and of all public officers, and the general obligations under which the citizen lies to the state, and the rights which he can claim from the state in return—the more informed in these matters our pupils become, the better will they be fitted for citizenship when they be. e entitled to it, as by mere lapse of time they will.

THE difficulty of using a text-book in this subject lies in the fact that it is essential

that pupils early learn to recognize that law and order, authority and obedience, protection and liberty, are not mere abstract or far-away things in which they have no concern, or of which they have no knowledge. For the well-being and discipline of their own conduct they must soon learn these fundamental facts—that society exists only by the mutual concessions of its members, each giving up some of his own liberty for the general good; that authority comes not from outside of society, but from within it, that it is delegated to a few only in trust for the benefit of the many; and that for the general good of all each must contribute according to his means. That these fundamental facts of civil government shall be understood by the very young, and be illustrated in the general government of the school, is essential to the well-being of the school, and must be illustrated by it whether the teacher and pupils are conscious of it or not. But if pupils see that that which secures law and order, and harmonious working and the general good, in their own little community, is precisely that which secures good government and order in the greater society of which they, and their teacher, and their parents, are only small parts, then will their conduct, their striving to do well and to live blamelessly towards the institutions and laws of the school, and towards each other, be more rational and more productive of good results. We are not forgetting that a school differs from society in the fact that its members are in a state of pupilage, and so are not entirely free agents; and that the teacher, and the parents as well, must act to some extent as arbitrary autocrats. But it is equally true that so far as pupils are made self-governing and law-respecting, from reason and principle and a conviction of the utility of government and order, then so far is their development towards good citizenship accomplished, and *no farther*.

THE very youngest classes, then, are not too young to begin with in instruction in civil government; not, of course, in direct and formal instruction, nor in the full application of the conditions of civil liberty, entire free agency and the choice or election of rulers—that would be absurd; but in the inculcation and illustration of such principles, as that order is necessary to social happiness, *i. e.*, happiness of the members of the school; that disorder, being an infringement of the rights of the society, *i. e.*, of the school, must be checked, *i. e.*, punished; that the wishes of the minority must give way to the wishes of the majority, but that the majority must act in accordance with justice, and so on. Then the conditions upon which happiness in the family is based must also be pointed out:

the industry of the father, his forethought, his superior knowledge and experience, his love, and hence his claim to authority; the love and tenderness of the mother, her solicitude for her children, her faithfulness, her unwearying care and anxiety for the best welfare of the whole household, and hence her claim to love and tender care in return; the necessity of mutual forbearance, of mutual consideration, and of mutual helpfulness, on the part of all the members of the family, even the tiniest children; all these and all the other conditions of domestic happiness, and grounds of filial affection and obedience, should be talked about, and be illustrated by, and be brought to bear upon, the conduct and government of the schoolroom.

THEN in the older classes the knowledge of the value and necessity of law and order and authority, gained from experience in the schoolroom, should be made use of to secure the understanding of the value of these same things in society; and in short each—the school and society—should be made to illustrate the other. Then the organization of the simplest complete society within the experience of the pupils should be studied. If a ball-club or a debating-society exists in the school, its constitution, the obligations of its individual members, the authority of its officers, whence that authority is derived, what punishments are inflicted for breaking rules, why these punishments are necessary, etc., should all be discussed, since they make an excellent basis for the understanding of other organizations more remote from experience. Then, in rural districts, the boundaries of the school section should be mapped out, and the names of the residents, if possible, be written down; then the constitution of the government of the section, the mode of election of the trustees, their authority when elected, and their responsibility to the electors, the ownership of the school grounds and schoolhouse, the raising of money for the payment of the teacher and other expenses, the responsibility of the teacher to the trustees, to the ratepayers and to the children, the rights of majorities and minorities as may be exemplified in annual meetings and meetings of the trustees, and all other things relating to the administration of the government of the section, should be taken up, be discussed, and be made the matter, not of talk or lecture by the teacher, but of conversation, of scientific elucidation and investigation by both teacher and pupils together. If the school is in a village, or town, or city, the difficulty is somewhat increased, as the municipal government is a little more complex, and a little farther removed from the experience of the pupils, but the method of studying it is precisely the same.