

steady every-day industry and attention of the pupil, they are undoubtedly of great advantage. It is simply carrying out in the school the principle which obtains through life. We all work for prizes. It may be that the particular prize which is sought after and daily struggled for may differ, in the case of different men. But all who are not mere useless drones have a prize which they keep steadily in view, and to which, with plodding labour, they daily aspire to. It furnishes the incentive to exertion, and when attained constitutes its sweetest reward. And as the great object of any educational system must be to fit boys and girls for the duties of men and women, the earlier this spirit of emulation is implanted in their minds the better. The prize at school furnishes the incentive in many cases to that exertion which ultimately becomes a part of the scholar's very nature, the habit of his every-day life, and fits him all the more for the performance of the more practical and severer duties of life's great battle. Many a lad has been impelled to exertion by the prospect of the distinction which the prize confers, who would, without that motive, remain inert and careless in his studies; and the habit acquired in the hard work of the term will become to him the capital for future usefulness and proficiency.

"But how to distribute the prizes so as to secure this object is the practical question for discussion in connection with this subject. To be useful, it must, as we have said, have reference not merely to what may be the accidental success on examination day, but to the entire every-day conduct and studious proficiency of the term; and it may even be questioned whether, with that object well attained, the examination as a test of merit, and a basis for the distribution of the prizes, might not with advantage be dispensed with altogether. This subject, we are glad to know, has occupied the earnest thought of the indefatigable head of the Educational Department; and the suggestion which is contained in a recent circular, that the use of merit cards would accomplish this object, is well worthy the attention of School Trustees. These cards are divided into four classes, one, ten, fifty and one hundred merit cards, and the mode of distribution is as follows:—"The one merit cards should be given daily or weekly, at the discretion of the teacher, to pupils who excel in punctuality, good conduct, diligence, or perfect recitation. Ten of the single merit cards entitle the holder to a ten merit card; five of the ten merit cards to a fifty merit card; and two of the fifty merit cards to a hundred merit card. If given daily no pupil should be entitled to a certificate or prize at the quarterly examination who had not received at least fifty merits of all classes; if given weekly, from fifteen to twenty should be the minimum number of merits of all classes, which would entitle the holder to a certificate or prize at the end of the quarter. The value of the prize should in all cases be proportioned to the number or class of merit cards of all kinds received during the quarter.

"We learn that this system is practically that which is adopted in the schools of this city. These merit cards are distributed, somewhat upon the principle laid down in the above extract, and at the end of the term, twelve scholars from each division, who have attained the greatest number of them, and by that fact may be presumed to be the most deserving, are selected for examination. On the result of that examination depends the distribution of prizes. But we would suggest to the Trustees that on this an improvement might perhaps be made. The value of a prize does not consist so much in the mere money worth of it, as in the distinction which it confers. The danger of the examination as a test is, that even with the care taken to select only such as during the previous months have shown the greatest proficiency, is that still the scholars of really greatest merit may be omitted altogether, simply from constitutional inability to acquit himself well at a competitive examination. It seems to us that the boys who have by their general good conduct and industry, entitled themselves to the privilege of appearing before the examiners, should all receive some practical recognition; and the certificates prepared by the department, which are exceedingly neat, afford a good mode of granting such recognition. These certificates would be

prized as highly by the recipient of them as if they were of far greater intrinsic value. They would be to them the mark of distinction, showing that their labour had not been in vain, and spurring them on to renewed diligence for the future. Altogether, the subject is one of very great importance, and is well worthy the consideration of such conventions as those proposed to be held."

As regards the compulsory education of vagrant children, our contemporary, the *Upper Canada Journal of Education*, says:

"One subject which had lately commanded a very great deal of consideration, both from the Government and from the people, was the question as to the course to be adopted in reference to children who were entirely neglected by their parents. The word 'compulsory' he knew had not the most agreeable sound in the ears of many individuals. It was thought by some to be an interference with personal liberty and parental right. But the proposal was founded on public expediency and the principles of justice between man and man. The system was carried out with greater rigour in Switzerland, which was even a more democratic country than the United States, than in any other part of Europe or America. The Swiss felt that the general education of the people was so essential to the maintenance of their liberty, that they looked upon that man as an enemy to the country, and as liable to the penal laws of the Canton in which he lived, who did not educate his children. The same regulation existed in some of the Eastern States. The principle on which compulsory education was founded was this: The ratepayer justly said, — 'If the State compels me to pay taxes for the education of all the youth in the State, I have a right to demand of the State in return that it shall see that all the youth are educated.' If the parent were so inhuman as to deny the child the education which was so necessary for the proper discharge of its future duties, the community had a right to step in between the unnatural parent and the defenceless child, to secure to the child its inherent rights. Many had thought that he did not go far enough in this matter. They thought that Parliament should legislate directly upon the subject, and make it penal to neglect the sending of children to school. But his opinion was that as each municipality provided the means of education, so should each municipality have the right to deal with the subject. It was proper, however, to remark that it was not intended to require the parent to send his child to the public Protestant or Roman Catholic school. All that was essential was that the child must be educated, and the education might take place at home, with the mother as the instructor, as was the case with the celebrated John Wesley and his brothers and sisters, who received their early education from their mother. It was asked, how the plan was to be carried out. He replied that he left it to each municipal council to say how it was to be done. If in townships a by-law were passed declaring that the parent who did not send his children, from seven to twelve years of age, to any school for four months in the year, such parent should pay a double rate-bill, and they might depend upon it, the neglect to take advantage of the school system would only prevail in solitary instances. In other cases, it had been suggested that it would be well if Municipal Councils were invested with the power of punishing parents, unable to pay fine, by compelling them to work upon the roads. The punishment would act as a sort of pillory, by which they would be held up to public scorn and opprobrium, and thus they might be compelled to do their duty when they could not be got at in any other way. It had also been suggested that this law should apply to the parents of children between seven and twelve or seven and fifteen years of age. All agreed that four months in the year ought to be the minimum time for which a child between those ages ought to be sent to school."

The results secured by the Conventions are thus summed up by the *Leader*:

"The amendments proposed to the School law were chiefly these:—1. To modify the constitution and duties of County