

THE
EDUCATIONAL RECORD

OF THE
PROVINCE OF QUEBEC.

No. 2.

FEBRUARY, 1888.

VOL. VIII.

Articles: Original and Selected.

PRACTICAL TEACHING.

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(To be continued.)

The title of this paper may possibly recall to the minds of my hearers that famous definition of Mr. Squeers, when he was initiating Nicholas Nickleby into the method of teaching in vogue at Dotheboys Hall:—

“We go upon the practical mode of teaching, Nickleby; the regular education system. C l e a n, clean, verb active, to make bright, to scour. W i n, win, d e r, der, winder, a casement. When the boy knows this out of book, he goes and does it. It is just the same principle as the use of the globes. . . . B o t, bot, t i n, tin, n e y, ney, bottinney, noun substantive, a knowledge of plants. When he has learned that bottinney means a knowledge of plants, he goes and knows 'em. That's our system, Nickleby: what do you think of it?”

It must be confessed, that in dismissing his boys to clean windows and weed the garden, our co-labourer of notorious memory carried the principle of practical teaching a little too far; but, sir, I am inclined to maintain, that although his practice cannot be defended, there was yet a strong element of truth in his theory. For what is the aim of true teaching? Is it simply to cram the scholar's mind with the contents of certain text-books? Or are we not all agreed, rather, that our object should be to develop his various powers in such way as best to serve him in after-life?