

cational journal published by a respectable house.

Third. "He affirms that the solution of problems is of but small educational value." If your readers will take the trouble to read my words in *their connection*, they will see that my reference is to the "problems" that are in vogue amongst us, many of which high authority holds to be unsuitable and injurious for the children to whom they are proposed. The evil is even greater in the Public Schools than in the High Schools. "Can nothing be done," said an indignant mother to me the other day, "to do away with all these sums?"—holding up for my inspection a formidable list of "problems" which her little twelve-year-old was wrestling with at ten o'clock at night. "There's no time for grammar, or history or geography; nothing but sums!" My objection is not to problems (so that Mill does not trouble me at all), but to the excess of them, and to the unsuitable character of many of them for pupils of tender age, and with no special mathematical tastes or aptitudes. I put it to the teachers of Ontario, whether this *problem mania* is not discouraging and disheartening many of their most promising and painstaking scholars, and driving not a few from their schools altogether.

Fourth. You question the correctness of my belief that most of the mathematical teachers, especially University men, are with me in thinking that our school training is getting one-sided. It would be an offence against decency for me to quote confidential conversations with school officers, but I made the statement in full view of my responsibility for it, and on due authority, and you must pardon me for claiming that my opportunities for ascertaining the opinion of teachers are not less than your own. I abide by my belief. In confirmation, I refer you to the resolution on the subject of undue mathematical predominance in the High Schools, adopted at the last meeting of the High School Section of the Ontario Teachers' Association, August 12th, 1880. But, in truth, the fact is too notorious to need confirmation.

Lastly. I am glad to agree with you, as I had done in my report, as to the improvement that has been made of late years in the mathematical teaching of our schools. But when trustees and parents and teachers and pupils unite, as they do, to beg us to do something to lessen the strain that is being put upon the children by the long strings of knotty questions that they take with them to be solved at home, that thrust their English studies to the wall, and too often destroy their usefulness as members of the family circle, it is hard to resist the conviction that

we have in Ontario forgotten that golden rule in education, "*Ne quid nimis.*"

Yours, etc.,

S. ARTHUR MARLING.

ROSEDALE, March 26th.

To such a letter every fair-minded man would think that there could be but one reply—a manly apology for misrepresentation; or, if that heroic effort could not with heart of grace (or greed) be made,—abashed silence. But, as if incapable of feeling the force of such a crushing, though eminently polite, rejoinder, the journal in question essays a reply intended to be witty and wise; but which is only flippant and foolish. The outcry against the place of Mathematics in our schools, to the disadvantage of some and the exclusion of other equally important subjects, is consequent upon, the journal would have its readers believe, wrong methods on the part of teachers, whom in the same breath it vilifies and applauds, and the attempts of heedless children to extort at unseasonable hours a little precarious help from indolent and worried parents! And then follows, as a matter of course, a little more of John Stuart Mill.

Surely if such arguments and conclusions, and the abuse of honoured names, for the purposes of commercial and unlicensed greed; be the outcome of the manufacture and sale of mathematical text books or of "the logic of the common school," then what must be the outlook if matters are to remain in *statu quo*? "But after all the world moves," and our contemporary and its consulting authority in mathematics will learn in time that though *cuiuslibet in arte sua credendum est* the public have had reason to be suspicious of the guides they have hitherto been following in this matter, and in future are going to take counsel in other and less interested quarters.

MIND-READING.

A MR. BISHOP, in London, England, is interesting, and it is said puzzling, many *littérateurs* and men distinguished in mental and physical science, by an exhibition of