

pecially by young and badly trained teachers, to embrace in their *curriculum* a vast variety of subjects. The result of this system generally being to confuse the mind of the child, and to prevent his ever knowing anything really well. Let a child be taught any one or two subjects thoroughly, so that he may feel an interest in them, and he can scarcely fail to desire to increase his knowledge of those subjects; and will then be led to seek to know more of the other subjects that may present themselves to him in the course of his reading. Few of our readers will, we are sure, dissent from the following.

"Few subjects well taught, rather than many ill taught, ought to be the maxim of the schoolmaster. I know objections are sometimes made that too much is attempted in many of our schools, and this may be true where what is attempted is ill-taught; but I am convinced the present generation will have to lament the little which can be done under existing difficulties, rather than the over-much; and I can see no objection myself to useful secular instruction to any extent, bearing upon their occupations, having a tendency to make them skilled labourers in their respective trades, and calculated to advance their social well-being."

Much has been said of late years respecting the kind and amount of training a man should have to fit him for the office of schoolmaster; and not a few have been found, who have thought that the rising race were being too highly trained. We have always thought, that to train men too highly for the important work of the elementary teacher was an impossibility; and we are still of this opinion. Perfectly possible, nay, very easy is it for young men to be injudiciously trained: and we fear that much of what is called training in some of our colleges, is a mere system of cramming, calculated only to send out a set of conceited young men, filled with the idea that they know more than any one else, because they happen to be versed in the elements of algebra, and read in a few common place books of science. These by their vain-glorious display of their ignorant puppyism, cause persons who only look at the surface to say that the schoolmaster is being made too learned. This, however, only arises from their knowledge being superficial and scanty: let them drink deeply of the well of knowledge, and the draught will invigorate them and fit them for a due performance of their work. On this subject we have the following well-timed remarks:

"How important, then, is the office of school teacher, and that they who undertake it should possess the requisite qualifications for the faithful discharge of the duties of it. I know it is said that many of us aim at too high a standard in our schoolmasters and schoolmistresses as regards mental acquirements. There cannot, however, be a greater fallacy than to suppose that the schoolmaster, whose knowledge is limited to the bare rudiments of those subjects which he is absolutely required to teach, can be as efficient a teacher as the one who has some knowledge of a more extended kind—for instance, of geometry and the elements of physical science—and who knows how to apply this knowledge to the things of every-day life. He cannot illustrate what he is teaching, or interest children in the same way in which the well-qualified teacher can."

"We continually see observations, in speeches at public meetings, intended to ridicule this. They speak of boys able to give the grammar of a sentence, that they can do propositions in Euclid; but that they cannot do other things of a homely kind, which they will enumerate."

"I saw a report, a short time ago, of a meeting at Bridgenorth, where the speaker said, speaking of Quatt school, that he had no doubt many of them could solve a problem in Euclid, and travel over the Asses' Bridge, yet he doubted 'if any of them could tell at what angle a furrow should be laid to expose the greatest surface to the action of the harrows or the ameliorating effects of the winter frost.'

"This is no easy problem, although it is one which admits of an exact solution; yet the boy who had learned something of geometry would be much more likely to think of it when he was ploughing than the boy who had not—would be more likely to reflect on the various data which would lead to a correct judgment, the aspect of the field he was ploughing, whether it turns towards the sun or from it; and yet the speaker was intending to ridicule the knowledge which would enable the ploughboy to do the very thing he wished him to do."

"Observations of this kind give false impressions of what is even attempted in our schools; and I much doubt whether there are ten boys in the county of Shropshire—even in all the four counties of Salop, Hereford, Worcester, and Gloucester—at the class of schools to which allusion was made, who could solve a problem in Euclid, or travel over the Asses' Bridge, which many of them were supposed by the speaker to be able to do."

Again, we venture to give a quotation respecting the standard of attainment in our schools.

"But without aiming at any very high standard of acquirement, if our school system is to be in any degree effective, we should, I think, all agree that even under existing circumstances, and making allowance for the difficulties which at present beset us, a fair proportion—say two-thirds or three-fourths—of the children ought, at the ages of ten or eleven, when they leave school and their labour becomes mar-

ketable, to have a knowledge of Scripture, be able to read simple narratives with tolerable ease and fluency, so as to interest a hearer; to have such a knowledge of the common rules of arithmetic, and of weights and measures, as to be able to apply it to every-day life; to write a legible hand, and to spell tolerably well in writing from dictation; and to have some knowledge of the geography of their own country."

"Education below this standard is of little or no use in after life, and soon after leaving school is soon forgotten. It is a common complaint that many of our school children, in a few years after they have left, are scarcely able to read. This may arise from the want of a night-school; and one thing which often leads to it is the ignorance of the parents at home, who take little or no interest in their children: but the primary cause is, the imperfect instruction they have had at school."

"But simple as the above test is, few of our schools will come out well if fairly tried by it; and I advise the teachers present to try their schools once or twice in the quarter by this standard:—Collect the children according to age; those from nine to eleven, those from eleven and upwards. Examine them carefully, and you will find the proportion who can bear this test much lower than it ought to be; and when you apply this rule to all the children in a parish belonging to the labouring classes, those who are up to the standard will not exceed, if they equal, one-third of the whole."

Much more of a highly interesting nature is to be found in this little work, especially as to the way in which the secular teaching in a school may be brought to bear upon the teaching of religion; and in another part, on the importance at the present time of preparing the popular mind, through our elementary schools, for the introduction of the decimal coinage. But our space forbids us to make further quotations; and we conclude by commending to our readers the work which has led to those remarks, and at the same time, earnestly inviting them to a serious consideration of the subject "EFFECTIVE PRIMARY INSTRUCTION."—*The English School and the Teacher.*

#### EARL OF CARLISLE'S ADVICE TO TEACHERS.

Lord Carlisle was present yesterday week, at the half-yearly examination of teachers in training at the National Schools in Marlborough-street, Dublin. At the close of the proceedings, his Excellency addressed the assembled teachers in a brief but graceful speech, in the course of which he offered this practical suggestion:—"I am happy to see among you who now sit before me, as well as among those who are gathered behind me, members of different religious persuasions. Now, I trust I should be the very last person to call upon you to undervalue the importance of your different religious convictions; but I think you will yourselves have been able to ascertain during your sojourn here how much good and worth there may be among the members of different persuasions; and you will have derived no better lesson here if in your future lives you inculcate those results of your own happy experience upon those who will be placed under your charge. Inculcate upon them the love of learning, for that is your especial mission as schoolmasters; inculcate upon them the love of God, for that is your foremost duty as Christian men; and, as a branch, a main branch of that love, and the measure of your own experience here, inculcate upon them the love of one another, and may the blessing of the Almighty be always with you."

#### Miscellaneous.

##### FIRST GRIEF.

[The following poem was written by James Hedderwick, a Scottish poet but little known in this country. Who, that ever lost a brother or sister, could read these lines without a falter in the voice and a tear in the eye?]

They tell me, first and early love  
Outlives all after-dreams:  
But the memory of a first great grief  
To me more lasting seems.

The grief that marks our dawning youth,  
To memory ever clings;  
And o'er the path of future years  
A lengthened shadow flings.

Oh! oft my mind recalls the hour,  
When to my father's home,  
Death came, an uninvited guest,  
From his dwelling in the tomb.

I had not seen his face before,—  
I shuddered at the sight;  
And I shudder yet to think upon  
The anguish of that night!