

# The Educational Journal.

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## \* Editorial Notes. \*

PLEASE remember that matters of business intended for the Publishers, and communications to the Editor or matter for insertion in the JOURNAL, should always be on separate sheets. Notwithstanding the request in our standing notices, it is not unusual to receive directions about change of address, or orders for books, and questions for Question Drawer, on the same sheet or postal card.

A NEW departure is being taken in Vienna, which may be worthy of imitation, although some pretty strong objections suggest themselves. It is proposed to establish three separate schools for weak-minded children, each to begin with two grades. This will be done to free the other schools of elements which retard their progress, and to give the dullards special treatment, which will benefit them better than the instruction they can get among the brighter boys and girls. Elberfeld, in Rhenish Prussia, opened the first of such special schools for dullards, which has now three classes.

THE following statistics show that public education is making wonderfully rapid strides in Bavaria:

Whilst only ten years ago the schools, school-masters and school children in Bulgaria numbered but 500, 800, and 25,000 respectively, the numbers are now about 2,000, 3,500, 100,000. There are also fifteen gymnasia instead of only two as in the year 1880, two training schools for school-masters, two agricultural schools; and it is anticipated that in a couple of years the first Bulgarian University will be opened at Sofia. The Budget of the Public Instruction is about five millions, whilst the communes are contributing seven millions for the public instruction.

A VERY common mistake of inexperienced teachers, and of many that cannot be called inexperienced, is the making of too many rules. The more the child can be led to become a law unto himself the better for all concerned. It is better for the teacher, for he is so far relieved of the irksome task of enforcing a variety of petty regulations. It is better for the children, whose moral judgments are educated by being constantly called on to pronounce on questions of right and wrong. And it is better for the community, for, while undue restraint in school is pretty sure to re-act in undue license out of school, the habit of self-direction and control formed in school will follow the pupil into the street and the home.

As our readers know, we have little faith in formal religious instruction in the schools, as a

matter of State compulsion. The local option principle, which is, we believe, embodied in the new Manitoba Act, is the right principle. But we do plead for the constant presence and power of the strongest moral influence. The foundation truths are happily, in this country, usually present. They are implanted in the family, the Sabbath school, the Church. What is wanted in the schools is not the teaching of dogmas, but the constant appeal to the right. The pupils should be brought imperceptibly to try every act and thought by the standard of right; to regard the honorable, the true, the pure, the unselfish, as the foundation principles of all that is truly noble in man or woman.

"AGAIN we beseech reporters of educational meetings to tell us what was said. 'A lively discussion,' 'beautiful paper,' 'gems of thought,' 'handled the subject well,' 'was well received,' 'warmly applauded'—all these and many other phrases of similar import—what are they but soul-vexing vacuums? Stripping off all superfluous verbiage, let the reporter with a divine instinct extract the core, and place it before his readers in the smallest possible space."—*Western School Journal*.

The above describes so briefly and well what is wanted in such reports that we beg leave to borrow it, and commend it to those who may, as we trust some of our friends will, be good enough to send us brief reports of the coming Spring conventions. We have had in the past some admirable reports, but there is always a tendency, as none know better by experience than journalistic writers, to lapse into generalities.

WE do not like to dissent in any particular from the opinions of a regular and valued contributor, but "Arnold Alcott" will, we know, excuse us if we take exception to one remark in the article on "Gems," in the Primary Department in this issue. We are aware that many teachers and educators have expressed views similar to that we are about to criticise, but we cannot agree with the opinion that "the fact that a child may not appreciate the full scope of an author's meaning" in a passage committed to memory, is no objection to its memorization. We found one of the great difficulties in our teaching experience to arise from the habit of mind which resulted from reading and memorizing without intelligent comprehension of the meaning of what was read or memorized. We are of the opinion that the habit of searching always for the meaning of what is learned, and refusing to be content without understanding it, is of the very highest value in laying the educational foundations, and that

anything of the nature of parrot-like recitation cannot be too sedulously avoided.

IN the department of "Methods" in this number will be found an excellent paper describing a Language Lesson Course for Classes I. and II., by Mr. Fred. Brownscombe, of Petrolia. It is worth the attention and study of all teachers, and especially of young and inexperienced teachers of these junior classes. Its value is not only in its usefulness as a model, but in its suggestiveness. It can scarcely fail to suggest to the active mind a hundred ways in which the minds of children can be interested and led on to master at once difficulties which often puzzle and perplex for a long time pupils taught by the old methods of definition, rule and example. Directly in line with this paper is also a good exercise by Mr. A. C. Batten, of Newton Robinson. Both these contributors will please accept our thanks. Their papers help to show how much might be done if a larger number of competent teachers would kindly lend their aid to improve the practical departments of the JOURNAL.

WE find the following in the *Public School Journal*, of Mt. Washington, Ohio. We have puzzled over it in vain. The extract referred to was credited, no doubt, to the paper in which we found it. *Recently* is a relative term, but for our practical purpose the date was wholly unimportant. Will our contemporary please explain wherein we have done wrong, and we will gladly make the *honorable amende*. What is meant by "having long since ceased to change." Change is the law of all things sublunary. Surely our critic does not suspect us of having refused to submit to its universal sway. Perhaps the types have put change for "exchange," in the ugly fashion they have of murdering sense. We supposed the *Public School Journal* was on our exchange list. If it has been dropped by any inadvertency we will gladly restore it, as we do not wish to lose the monthly visits of our contemporary. This is the passage referred to:

"The EDUCATIONAL JOURNAL, Toronto, Canada, March 1, 1890, has the following note under the title, 'A Test in Geography.'

"The following questions were recently submitted by Dr. White to the pupils of the A Grade (8th school year) of the Cincinnati schools, not as promotion questions, but as suggestive teaching tests."

"The whole is credited to the *Southwestern Journal of Education*. Perhaps our neighbor had better continue to quote things, and the *Educational Monthly*, both having long since ceased to change. *Recently* is very good indeed, but Dr. White had no connection with the Cincinnati schools during the present year."