

*Apropos* to the Friday afternoon exercises it occurs to us that a very profitable afternoon, at least for High Schools and the more advanced classes in the Public Schools, might be given at the commencement of the new year to a review of the great historical occurrences of 1885. Wide awake teachers, no doubt, make more or less use of the newspapers and other journals in the schools, and strive to awaken an intelligent interest in the minds of their pupils in what is going on in the great world. There is no more potent factor in education. Such a practice formed in youth helps greatly to make intelligent, broad-minded men and women. We trust that the brief glance taken in the first page of the JOURNAL each week is found helpful in this respect, though it is necessarily too brief to be more than merely suggestive of incidents and topics.

The ever-recurring question of foul passages in the English classics prescribed for the University courses is again raised in the correspondence of the daily *Mail*. Some of the writers are particularly hard upon Mr. Houston who is largely responsible for the selections recently made. The fact is, however, as Mr. Houston shows, that the new selections are in this respect neither worse nor better than those which have been prescribed for years past. The difficulty is in the authors themselves, and can only be shunned by shunning the richest treasures of English literature. 'Tis true, 'tis pity, and pity 'tis 'tis true" that the best writers, Shakespeare, for instance, are the worst tainted with this vice of past centuries. There is always, of course, the alternative of expurgation. As a matter of fact we suppose no professor would think of having the objectionable passages read in the lecture room. The only question that remains, assuming that to discard all the splendid monuments of genius which are tainted with impurities is not to be thought of, is whether it is better to have the expurgations made in the texts themselves, or by the professors or examiners. Opinions differ on this point, although most will probably agree that the safer and more unobjectionable course is to have the impure matter strained out of the school editions. As a rule this may be done without impairing the unity or the beauty of the best productions.

#### TO OUR PATRONS.

The beginning of a new year is a fitting time to review the past and lay plans for the future. Those who are engaged in any kind of public work must be sadly unwise if they cannot draw some profitable lessons from each year's experience, and make the work of each succeeding cycle at least a little better than that of the preceding one. The opportunities for such progress may naturally be supposed to be especially marked in the case of new enterprises. A public journal, for instance, must have been exceptionally well conducted during the first year of its existence, or else its managers must be singularly unreceptive of new ideas, if it cannot render better service to its patrons in its second than in its first volume. The publishers of the CANADA SCHOOL JOURNAL hope not to be enrolled amongst such dullards.

As stated in our Christmas number the JOURNAL has been successful beyond expectation during the first year of its publication as a weekly. This statement is based not only upon financial results but also upon the verdict of the great majority of those readers who have favored us with their opinions of our efforts. It was but the other day that an experienced educator in the United States, whose position and qualifications are such that he could, without breach of modesty, claim to be a judge of such matters, wrote us that we had made the SCHOOL JOURNAL "equal to the very best papers of its class." In view of the wide scope and variety of its contents, prepared and contributed specially for its columns, or culled freely from the fruitful field of educational literature, we venture to believe that no intelligent teacher can have read it carefully without gathering every week some useful information, some suggestion of an improved method, or some helpful hint. One thing at least we can say for ourselves truthfully and without egotism. Looking back a score or more of years to the time when, without experience, we were trying our prentice hand in training the young idea, and recalling our inevitable shortcomings, blunders, and gropings in the dark after better methods of teaching and government, we are sure that the weekly visits of such a paper as the JOURNAL, would have been a veritable godsend both to us and to our pupils.

But we have received unfavorable as well as favorable criticism, though the former has been comparatively rare. We are equally grateful for the one as for the other. In fact while the praise is certainly more grateful to one's self-esteem, the fault-finding is often more profitable to those anxious to improve. Unfavorable criticism of an honest and friendly character is so rare in these days, and usually costs the writer so much more than unqualified praise would have done, that we really ought to receive it with the deeper thankfulness. The JOURNAL at least welcomes it, for while it is not always possible to acknowledge its force or justice, or to explain the conditions which deprive it of weight, it is often helpful and stimulating. He was a wise man who shut his ears to the flattery of his friends but wished to be always told what his enemies said of him. In the same spirit, that is in order that we may know our weak points and strengthen them, we invite candid even though hostile criticism from every quarter.

With regard to the few, and we fear they are too few, who have pointed out to us what they thought to be mistakes or shortcomings in the past, we may say that we have carefully weighed their views and profited by them so far as we were convinced of their soundness. But our critics will of course understand how futile it would be for the conductors of a paper to attempt to modify it in accordance with every suggestion made, or opinion offered. That which one correspondent regards as a defect is often praised by another as a chief merit. Some, for instance, think it a mistake to devote a page or two of each number to brief notices of matters of current history, or to miscellaneous literary notes and extracts. Others find these departments among the most interesting and profitable. The one class assume that the readers of the JOURNAL generally have access to the daily newspapers and keep themselves posted on literary and scientific topics by reading journals and