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## ✻ Editorial Notes. ✻

PROFESSOR NETTLESHIP, a distinguished English educator, says in a recent volume: "To say nothing of such writers as Hood and Dickens, English literature is singularly rich in good works of fiction. Could not two hours a week in elementary schools be spared, say from the analysis of sentences, or the geography of Siberia, for the reading aloud by the masters to their classes, of writers like Hood and Dickens?" The suggestion is a good one. Happily the "Friday afternoon" arrangement in our schools gives a good opportunity for carrying it out. We hope a part of the time is thus utilized by many of our teachers. There is no good reason, however, why the reading should be confined to novels. There is a wealth of the best literature which, if well read, could be made equally interesting to children. The tastes thus formed would in many cases elevate the whole future lives of the children.

WE have had occasion more than once to observe that the brilliant specialist is not, as a matter of course, the best teacher. A writer in the last number of *The Week* has some good observations upon this point. He is of opinion that "Canadian Universities do not suffer so much from lack of scholarship in their professors as from lack of those qualities which fit men to impart instruction in a clear and methodical manner. There is ground for the opinion that in the selection of a professor greater anxiety is often displayed in securing a 'double first,' or a senior wrangler, than one who, though of less brilliant parts, may

from his habits of thought and general bent of mind, far outstrip his more brilliant rival, so far as a power to train the minds of students or create a thirst for knowledge is concerned." We are glad to see that some, at least, are beginning to realize that teaching power is one of the first qualifications to be looked for in a teacher.

AN animated discussion took place at a late meeting of the Toronto High School Board, on a motion for the abolition of prizes. It was truthfully urged by the supporters of the motion, that prizes are a premium on natural ability rather than on industry, and that they foster the system of cramming, which is one of the worst enemies of true education. The point was also well taken—it is indeed but a corollary of the prize-giving system—that the introduction of competitive written examinations is most hurtful. The motion did not carry, but the debate is one of the signs of the times. The end of prize-giving on the basis of the results of competitive written examinations is drawing near. In the course of the discussion, Mr. William Houston, M.A., who is a member of the Board, stated that the Jarvis Street Collegiate Institute is the only school of the kind in the Province which keeps up the system of giving prizes. If this is correct—and the authority is reliable—the country is farther advanced in the reform than we had supposed.

THE tendency towards the establishment of private schools in the United States, is shown by statistics to be strong and growing. Referring to the many teachers in the High schools who feel their limitations and long for more freedom in teaching, the *N. Y. School Journal* says:—"As a practical point, it is well worth the thought of teachers who wish to be independent, whether they might not better open their own schools. Very few well managed private schools fail." The time is not yet, we fear, ripe for a very large development of the private school system in Canada, but it is coming. Many a born teacher in both Public and High schools chafes, we have no doubt, under the restrictions and limitations by which he is fettered (we do not say these are unnecessary), and could do much better work if free to carry out his or her own ideas and methods. Private schools are helpers, not rivals of the State schools. Many of the latter would be much the better for the presence and competition of good voluntary schools.

THERE is sound philosophy in the following paragraph which we clip from the report of an address delivered by Prof. F. M. Roof, before the Alabama Educational Association:—

"The oft-repeated, but never answered question, 'What can be done with the bad boy?' may yet find a solution in this (industrial) Educational work. The bad boy, the fidgety, mischievous, incorrigible terror that cannot sit still or let any one else who is near him, that tries the soul of his teacher as thoroughly as that of his mother's slipper;" (execrable pun!) "this is the boy who glories in industrial work, and brings up the best results. Give him something to do, no matter what; he can do almost anything but sit still. Turn him and his jack-knife loose, and this happy combination, with a little direction, will introduce manual training into the Public school faster than two of your good, sleepy boys can carry it out. He is only bad because he is full of misdirected energy. As Dr. Woodward has aptly said, 'He has no natural appetite to destroy; he destroys because he cannot create. He can destroy without being taught how; but how to build, how to construct, how to create, he does not know; then he requires instruction, training, and they yield the greater pleasures.'"

WE are glad to learn from a circular sent out by Mr. J. J. Kelso, who is well and favorably known in Toronto by reason of his practical interest in charitable and humane enterprises, that the formation of a Boys and Girls' Aid Society in this city is contemplated. The work of these Societies is to rescue homeless, neglected or abused children, and receive juvenile offenders (by legal commitment, or otherwise), who are in danger of being sent to prison; to provide for such until suitable homes or employment and guardianship are found for them, and to continue a systematic oversight of their condition and treatment; to maintain a day school, a sewing school, reading rooms, library, baths, and a class in music. Lodging and board are furnished at a nominal charge to working boys and girls who are without homes in the city. We wish such a movement every success. There is just now a tendency in certain scientific quarters to lay, as we think, undue stress on the influence of heredity in determining the character and life history. Inherited characteristics and tendencies are real and often potent forces to be overcome, but we have great faith in the power of training, if only commenced at a sufficiently early age. The work of child-saving is not only the noblest of philanthropies, it is also one in which the harvest of good results from seed sown is largest and surest.