

The Educational Journal

CONSOLIDATING

"The Educational Weekly" and "The Canada School Journal."

Subscription, \$1.50 a year
in Advance.

TORONTO, JULY 15, 1896.

Vol. X
No. 7

Editorial Notes.

As will be seen, we have again departed freely from the usual routine in this closing number of the school year, in order to give as much variety and freshness as possible during the days sacred to rest and recreation. We shall, however, come down to business, the special business for which the paper exists, in September. Look out for some new and important features and announcements then. We may add just here that the book-premium plan, which has been adopted with so much success during the last six months, will be continued. Look out for some specially good offers after the holidays.

NOTWITHSTANDING that, as has been said, we have departed widely from our usual make-up in this number, we wish to call the attention of teachers to one specially valuable feature of it. The Entrance and Public School Leaving Department will be found to contain, as promised, all the question papers set for the candidates in those departments at the recent Departmental Examinations. Very many teachers will, we are sure, be very glad to have these given so promptly, and in so compact a form. Every teacher should take especial pains to preserve this number, so as to have these at hand for reference throughout the coming year. Hitherto we have been frequently asked for these question papers during the year, when we were unable to supply them. Here they are, in orderly arrangement, and all within the two covers of this one number.

OUR subscribers and other friends will please remember that THE JOURNAL is not published during August. With this number, therefore, we make our retiring bow and enter upon our brief vacation. In so doing we wish to thank our patrons most heartily for their generous support and their many kind words of approval during the past and previous years, and to solicit the continuance of their favors dur-

ing the new year upon which we shall enter the first of September. They may rest assured that the minds of all connected with the production and management of the paper are full of projects and purposes for its improvement, along the same lines which have made it so acceptable to practical teachers in the past. Nor shall we be found to be old fogies so far as the adoption of any new and valuable features, adapted to render it still more acceptable and helpful in the future, are concerned. Continue to supply us liberally with the sinews of war, by prompt renewals of subscriptions, and then "come down" on us if we fail to keep our promises.

EVERY teacher who has to do with language-work of any grade should make a special study of punctuation. The judicious use of commas and semi-colons has much to do with making clear, or the opposite, the meaning which the writer wishes to convey. True, there is no authoritative or infallible law governing the use of these marks. In fact, the usage of the best writers differs widely, some using the various marks much more freely than others. There is at present a tendency, which is, on the whole, healthy, though it often carries writers and printers too far, to reduce the number of marks used within the smallest possible limits. All that is needed, in ordinary cases, is to know the proper force and use of each mark, and to punctuate always according to sense, that is, to aim simply at making the meaning as plain as possible. In case of doubt it is usually better to "give conscience the benefit of the doubt," and use no mark. Too few is generally better than too many.

THEY err greatly who think that the insertion of punctuation marks in writing is simply a mechanical process, and that it is, therefore, a waste of time, educational-ly, to have the pupil pay much attention to the matter. On the contrary, we regard it as a valuable educational exercise. It compels the pupil to think, to

analyze, to strive to master the exact meaning, and the finer shades of meaning in the sentences, whether original or selected. The *London Printing News* recently gave the following amusing illustration, which it ascribes to a German paper, though it seems to have what the boys call a "chestnutty" flavor, of the effect of a careless use of commas in a bit of description. The illustration is worth quoting, and may be worth keeping for occasional use in the class-room: "Next to him Prince Bismarck walked in on his head, the well-known military cap on his feet, large, but well-polished top boots on his forehead, a dark cloud in his hand, the inevitable walking cane in his eye, a menacing glance in gloomy silence."

OUR readers will, we are sure, read with a good deal of interest the graphic sketch of the mode of establishing a school in Kansas a few years ago, which we reprint from the *New York Independent*. The building and outfit seem to have been remarkably primitive, yet it is quite within the bounds of possibility that a future President of the United States may have come from such a school. By the way, are there not among the older readers of this paper some who could, out of the storehouses of their own memories, bring forth personal observations and experiences that would be equally quaint and interesting to hundreds who are now doing their work in costly and well-appointed educational palaces? Some of us may have taught, some may have been taught, if not within walls and under roofs of prairie sod, at least within log walls, with very primitive furnishings. Most of us, probably, know something from experience, observation, or tradition of the "little red schoolhouse," now so famous on the other side of the boundary as the symbol or emblem of a love of education which is no less characteristic of Canadians than of Americans. Who will send us a few Canadian sketches of the pioneer methods of laying educational foundations?