



THE

JOURNAL OF EDUCATION

Devoted to Education, Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Volume XXI.

Quebec, Province of Quebec, December, 1877.

No. 12.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

Milton's Letter of Education..	177	Table of grants for Superior Education	183
Dr. Booth on Spelling Reform	179	MISCELLANY :	
Proceedings Catholic Committee	180	Exercise and Occupation...	192
OFFICIAL NOTICES :		Where Lightning Strikes...	192
Appointments—Commissioners—School Commissioners—School Trustees.....	182	Fingers and their signification	192

Milton's "Letter of Education."

What is education? Some of that large class of men who are always ready to give us the benefit of their greater or lesser ignorance on the subject—a subject on which it is to be presumed we know at least as much as they do—will tell us that the word *education* etymologically means a drawing out, and that our work as teachers is to draw out the faculties of our pupils. If we find any fault with this statement of our work we are looked upon with as much suspicion as if we proposed an amendment to the ten commandments. If it be true that education means the drawing out of the faculties of the pupil it follows that a person whose faculties are well developed must be considered educated. Now there are (and in the past there were more) men of fine perception, strong memory, and sound judgment who have never crossed the threshold of a schoolroom, and who cannot read a word. Still our kind instructors would not call such men educated, although their faculties are well developed. "What," they would say, "call a man educated who does not know a letter?" "Does not *know* a letter!" In that single phrase they show clearly that they do not believe in their own definition. They judge a man's education by what he knows, and therefore when they say "edu-

cation" they mean "instruction." There is no doubt that in the public mind the terms are synonymous; the French, indeed, never describe a man as "well educated," but as "well instructed"—*bien instruit*. When, then, we are told that our work is to draw out the faculties of children let us ask our instructors what they mean, and if, haply, they mean what they say we shall then be prepared to reason with them.

A second class of the oracles on education tell us that our work is to fit our pupils for the parts they will have to fill when they leave school. As it would doubtless be considered frivolous to object that we do not know what those parts will be, let us consider what the statement means. If it mean anything it must mean that we are to teach the future bricklayer how to build a wall, the future carpenter how to make a door, and the future servant how to clean a stove. It would again be considered frivolous to object that we know nothing about building, carpentry, or stove-cleaning, and so we base our objection not upon this all-sufficient reason, but upon our belief that our work is not to fit our pupils to fill any particular part in life, but so to teach them to use their brains, and so to fill their minds with useful knowledge that they will be better able to fill any part than they would otherwise have been. It is for this reason that I object to the teaching of even needlework or cookery in schools. If a girl is to be a seamstress or a cook she will learn such things after leaving school, and why teach them to other girls? A crowd of people will be ready to answer at once, "Because they are so useful, you know." Well, so is a knowledge of washing and ironing, but I am not aware that even the most unpractical advocate of domestic economy has proposed to turn girls' schools into laundries.

A third class of the "advice gratis" people tell us that our work is to teach morality and religion. Dr. Johnson, who may be considered as a representative of