

The Educational Journal

CONSOLIDATING

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

Subscription, \$1.50 a year
in Advance.

TORONTO, NOVEMBER 16, 1895.

Vol. IX.
No. 13.

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Editorial Notes.

WE are sorry that the Question Drawer has been overlooked until it is too late to procure for this number the information asked for. Will our friends who have questions remaining unanswered pardon the delay? Any questions in regard to which time seems to be an important element will be answered privately in a day or two, provided the inquirer's name and address have been properly given. Those who persist in sending questions without giving us their true names and addresses, thus neglecting our express condition, have no claim on THE JOURNAL for answers.

"A SCHOOL which trains prize-winners, to the neglect of commonplace or even stupid boys, is not doing honest and truthful work." So said Dr. Parkin, the new Principal of Upper Canada College, in his address at the annual distribution of prizes. This almost axiomatic truth may be used as a touchstone by which the conscientious teacher may test his own work. We fear that there is much in our Public School system, or perhaps we should say, rather, in the false estimates which the school boards too often place upon success at Entrance and other ex-

aminations, to tempt teachers to this kind of dishonesty.

WE hesitated for a time in publishing "Jack Starling's" communication, which will be found in another column, not because we do not agree with his views—that makes no difference about the publication of a letter—but because we were (as we still are) unable to see exactly what he is driving at. Does he object to raising the standard of teachers' qualifications because he fears the increased knowledge will injure the teacher's character, or his efficiency as a teacher, or what? He goes on to maintain, seemingly, that a teacher may, after giving his or her best years to teaching, enter some still higher service and wield still wider educational influence. We may grant it, or we may not, but how does it prove that the teacher who intends to make teaching his profession for life is not likely, other things being equal, to do better work than he who is making it a stepping-stone to some other profession? We do not understand the allusions in such expressions as "the present teachers' movement regarding changes designed to raise the salaries," and "wares of such poor value he needs must seek legislation to find a market for them." What does it all mean?

THE Superintendent of Education for the State of Pennsylvania says some good and true things in his annual report; among others the following, which is of universal application:

"Some future historian will record it as the marvel of the ages that, in the closing decade of the nineteenth century, many parents were willing, in the rich Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, to entrust the education of their children into the hands of persons whose services were not considered worth the wages of a common day-laborer. Indeed, one is sometimes tempted to ask: Do the schools exist for the benefit of the children, or do children come into being that there may be schools and school directors, and employment for teachers? If the latter alternative be accepted, it may be right to appoint the daughter of a citizen for

the reason that he is a taxpayer, or a cripple because he has no other means of earning a livelihood, or a fellow who gets periodically intoxicated because, in this way, his relatives can most easily help him and his to bread; but, if the school exists for the child, then teachers ought to be employed and retained solely upon the basis of merit; that is, upon the basis of fitness for, and skill in, the art of instructing and training the young; and all other interests should be subordinated to the interests of the children, for whose sake schools are established and maintained."

"MANKIND," Arthur Helps has somewhere said, "is always in extremes." This tendency of the pendulum which regulates human ideas to swing from one extreme to the other is illustrated by Dr. Rice's argument in a recent number of the *Forum*, against the use of text-books in schools. We do not know exactly how the average Public school teacher in Canada uses the text-book, or to what extent the old practice of memorizing and "reciting" it page by page still survives. Its methods are, we dare say, almost as varied in this respect as the minds of the individual teachers. But we may safely affirm that the old days of non-intelligent *memoriter* work are well-nigh gone. But from slavish and mechanical repetition from text-books to their absolute expulsion from the schools is a far cry. There are, no doubt, certain subjects which can be more effectively taught without than with text-books in the hands of the pupils, provided the teacher is so thoroughly master of the subject in all its bearings that he can be safely trusted to take its place. This proviso, with all due respect to the many among our readers who have such mastery of the subject, is a large one. We have no doubt that arithmetic, and, in fact, mathematics in most of its branches, can be better taught by the competent teacher without than with a text-book. Grammar easily takes its place in the same category. But in all those branches which rest upon a base of ascertained fact, e.g., political and physical geography, history, etc., the text-book will long be indispensable.