

The Educational Weekly.

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MANY a schoolroom doubtless is at the present moment being renovated in anticipation of the close of the vacation. It may seem a matter altogether outside the duties of the master to supervise or give any instructions in regard to such renovation. This is a mistake. It is the master who, together with the pupils, knows best what are the causes of comfort and discomfort in the fitting up of a schoolroom. And since the pupil has no say in the matter, it devolves upon the master to make suggestions and to see that such suggestions—with the consent of the proper authorities—are carried out. When the hours spent in the schoolroom are counted, it will be found that a very large part of the life of a child is spent within its walls. And this part too at a most important period, when growth is rapid, and when susceptibility to noxious influences is acute. Granting this and granting the intimate relation between bodily and mental vigor, the healthiness of the schoolroom will also be granted to be an absolute necessity. This cannot be attained without the care and skill of those who know best what is required and what is to be avoided. And those who know best are the masters. Some of us forget that tuition is not the whole of our duties. During the hours that a child is under our authority his body equally with his mind should be an object for our consideration. Indeed we may say that until the former is properly cared for nothing can be done towards the development of the latter. This we forget. Accustomed ourselves to ill ventilated rooms, unwholesome atmospheres, uncomfortable seats, poorly lighted buildings, and such like, we forget that these things have a very appreciably depressing effect upon the young. Their nerves, unconsciously to themselves, are easily affected by unhealthy surroundings; the general system suffers; the mental powers flag. These influences are evitable, and if so it lies within someone's province to avoid them.

Amongst the lesser of these deleterious surroundings of the schoolroom, it has frequently struck us that the presence of a large amount of floating chalk dust in the atmosphere of those rooms in which much use is made of the blackboard, is one to which we might very properly turn our attention. It is a minor evil, and one, perhaps, that tends to discomfort only, not disease. Chalk in itself is innocuous, and the small amount that finds itself into the lungs is no doubt harmless. It is an evil, the results of which we should find it difficult to obviate. All we can do at present is to call attention to its

presence, and leave it to others to devise means for its eradication.

ONE by one the barriers which obstruct the efforts of women to secure educational advantages equal to those enjoyed by men and to have a fair field and no favor in the various employments for which they are especially suited, are being removed. The day was in Ontario when attendance at a high school was the exclusive privilege of the boys; no girls were admitted. That has gone, and people have long wondered that such a barbarous restriction could have been enforced in a civilized community in the beginning of the nineteenth century. Bigotry and prejudice die hard, and the battle for the right of the weak has always been a long one. Gradually the different educational institutions of this country have opened their doors to women, until this year we have had the pleasure of seeing five young ladies graduating with high honors from the Provincial University. Within the last few days another step forward has been taken. A young lady, one of these five graduates, has asked for and received from the Education Department a certificate of eligibility as head master of any high school or collegiate institute in the Province. The fair applicant for this document was Miss May B. Bald, B.A., of Welland. Not only is this the first time that a lady has received a head master's certificate, but it is also the first time that application has been made by a member of the fair sex for it. We congratulate Miss Bald on the distinguished position which she has attained in the teaching profession, the highest yet reached by a woman in Ontario.

THE New York *School Journal*, in a recent issue, deals in its spicy manner with a subject to which we have lately devoted a large amount of space. "Some ignorant teachers," it says, "are still asking 'is there a Science of Education?' 'Where is it?' 'How can I learn it?' It is not in books at present that it can be found," it continues, "but in children themselves. Every recorded case of individual experience of school life and school treatment is of value. Impressions of character and the results of various modes of dealing with its different kinds should be written down. These, collected and classified, constitute a part of this great science. Every child is a study better than a book. The science of education lies in the schoolroom, in the house, in the street, wherever children meet and laugh, act and talk with the freedom of childhood."

This is the true "science of education." The child, its mind and character, its varying moods, its myriad temperaments, its

acute sensibilities, its love of pleasure, and its not less love of knowledge when this is properly presented to it—all these are subjects which teachers should study. Not books only. As goes on the *School Journal*, "Teachers have studied the science of books in order to learn how to teach, when, the fact is, no man or woman ever learned how to teach from a book. The child teaches a real teacher more than he teaches the child. He watches its unfolding powers with the real interest of a naturalist, and with the zeal of a botanist he classifies his human plants and learns their different modes of growth. This one flourishes in a dry soil, that one needs a moist one; this one must have a prop, for its nature is to twine, that one grows slowly, but compactly and firmly, like a young oak. The scientist in the schoolroom is always on the alert for a new human plant, and he is wonderfully delighted when he discovers how to classify it. The plodding follower of his nose only goes where he is told, and knows only to do as he is commanded."

One grand advantage to be derived from studying the child itself is, not only as we recently pointed out, that the individuality of the child will be preserved, but—and this is the true antecedent of this preservation—that the teacher will be enabled to deal with each child according to the peculiarities of that child. But until the teacher conscientiously resolves to study carefully each and every child under his control this is impossible. This cannot be too strongly enforced. Books are so much more easily studied that the teacher, unwittingly perhaps, resorts only to them. As continues the *Journal*, "He once in a while rushes into a musty old bookstore in search of a 'Science of Education,' and is wonderfully disappointed when he can't buy it. He wastes pen and ink and paper and valuable postage stamps in corresponding with learned men in search of it, and at last comes to the sage conclusion that it is nowhere to be found. He follows his nose in his fruitless search, except when it points to his pupils, for he never dreams of studying childhood as Darwin studied the species of the *genus homo*, and Gray and Wood the flora of North America. A child is to him a mere machine, to be set going under a set impulse, which generally is the 'everlasting must.' He knows no more how to play on the human instrument, than a Russian peasant on a grand piano. Yet all the while, this stupid follower of his nose, wonders where the 'Science of Education' can be found. He'll die without a glimpse; yet all the while it is right before him. Poor soul!"