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## The Canada School Journal

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CANADA SCHOOL JOURNAL HAS RECEIVED

*An Honorable Mention at Paris Exhibition, 1878.  
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The Publishers frequently receive letters from their friends complaining of the non-receipt of the JOURNAL. In explanation they would state, as subscriptions are necessarily payable in advance, the mailing clerks have instructions to discontinue the paper when a subscription expires. The clerks are, of course, unable to make any distinction in a list containing names from all parts of the United States and Canada.

### MR. INSPECTOR MARLING AND MATHEMATICS.

We publish with pleasure Mr. Inspector Marling's letter in reply to our critique. We had certainly no intention of misrepresenting his views. Others have drawn the same inference from his report that we did. During the past two months it has been frequently referred to as an attack on the Mathematical teaching in our High Schools. We are glad, then, that Mr. Marling has put himself right in this respect with the public.

Notwithstanding the explanations contained in his letter, we still find difficulties with the paragraph in his report to which we referred. He says "it is not uncommon to find fully five-eighths of the school time, to say nothing of home study, taken up with these subjects." The five-eighths give this the appearance of precision and accuracy. And yet we have before us three time-tables of what may be considered representative High Schools, and in them we find no such time allotted to Mathematics. We would like to see some more time-tables. Besides, we usually find *one* mathematical to *one* classical and *one* English master in our High Schools. Are we to suppose that the mathematical master does more work than the other two?

Mr. Marling's second complaint is that the said five-eighths are taken up "especially with the solution of problems, useful enough, no doubt, as exercises of the pupil's ingenuity, but of small educational value otherwise." Then we must infer that problems which *do not* exercise the pupil's ingenuity are of large educational value. Not being an authority ourselves on Mathematical or Mental Science, we prefer John Stuart Mill's opinion to our own, and we are sure Mr. Marling will heartily agree with us in this, and readily pardon us for again quoting that philosopher. Mr. Mill says that, "in all mathematical tuition deserving the name, the *inventive* powers which in their highest degree constitute mathematical genius, are called forth and fostered in teaching mathematics to the

merest tyro," and he assigns a real value only to that class of problems which, "according to the degree of their difficulty, requires nearly every possible grade of *ingenuity*."

And now with regard to Mr. Marling's indignant parent and her "sums." We, too, have heard a great deal of the same kind of talk, not only from indignant mothers, but from far more indignant fathers. We have tried to get at the "true inwardness" of this grievance, and, like Archimides of old, we have found it. In the good old days, when Mr. Marling and we were school boys, the home lessons consisted of the intellectual "*hic, hæc, hoc*." Then youngsters were not inquisitive, and consequently parents had to answer no puzzling questions. But in these degenerate days teachers give problems which require more or less thinking on the part of the children, who in order to save themselves from that disagreeable operation apply to the parents, who in their estimation know everything. The mother is too busy putting baby to sleep, and refers them to the father, who is only reading the newspaper; he looks at the problem for some time, tries to recollect the rule, infers that it does not come under any, and is therefore nonsense, and the teacher must be a fool, and that our whole system of education is simply "sublime and transcendental bosh." All such have our hearty sympathy. We have been afflicted in the same way, and as Bob gets older matters will probably get worse. We hope something will be done.

With respect to the problems in vogue to which Mr. Marling refers, they are, to a great extent, the products of the best intellects connected with the Universities of Europe and America, and are presented to our pupils in the most attractive form; and we have the assurance of those best qualified to judge in such matters, that the results are in the highest degree satisfactory. We have no doubt, however, that injudicious teachers err grievously in giving long and intricate "sums" to be worked out at home, and Mr. Marling has our sincere thanks for calling attention to it. But the injudicious teacher will soon only be met with in the past tense. The mathematical teaching in our Collegiate Institutes and High Schools is now so excellent that ere long we will have a class of teachers who will not be guilty of any such wickedness as that to which Mr. Marling refers.

From Mr. Marling's well-known love for classical literature, and from his *supposed* indifference to mathematical studies, he will naturally be made the recipient of all the grievances of the mathematically halt, lame, and blind. Indeed, if any one chooses to open a cave of Adullam, it will not long want occupants, but we are sure Mr. Marling has no desire to be the captain of such a band. We will follow Mr. Marling's example in closing with a Latin quotation from his old friend Sallust, and he will be adding another to his many services in the cause of education if he will urge on his aggrieved friends its careful study: "*Ubi de magna virtute et gloria bonorum memores, quæ sibi quisque facilia factu putat, æquo animo accipit; supra ea, veluti ficta, pro falsis ducit.*"