

way the teacher not only avoids what may otherwise become a serious tax upon time, and interruption to lessons, but helps the pupil to form a habit of self-reliance and patient research, which is of great value.

MR. CARSTAIRS' valuable literature paper is lengthy, and occupies more space than we usually think it well to accord to one article, but we have thought better, in view of the approaching examinations, not to divide or curtail it. The class exercise we are obliged to leave over.

THE London, Guelph, and Niagara Conferences of the Methodist Church have pronounced in favor of the scheme of College Federation. The opposition is, however, very vigorous, and it does not augur well for the final success of the movement that some of the other denominations which were at first favorable, seem either to have disapproved of the modifications made in the original outline, or to have become tired of waiting, and have taken action looking to the independent development of their own institutions.

WE call attention to the letter of Mr. Boyle in respect to the arrangements for a preliminary meeting to organize a Teachers' Union for the Province. It is to be hoped the attendance at that meeting will be large and representative of the energy and intelligence of the profession in Ontario. There will, no doubt, be difficulties to overcome in the establishment and working of such a union, not the least of which will be the "magnificent distances" which separate some portions of the Province from others. But the game is well worth the candle, and it will be for the teachers to prove themselves in downright earnest by meeting and overcoming all obstacles and forming a union on a basis worthy of themselves and their profession.

THE NEW SCHOOL HISTORY.

THE "Public School History of England and Canada," "authorized by the Education Department of Ontario," is a primer of some 200 pages, of which about 140 are devoted to England, and the remaining 60 to Canada. The mechanical work has been well done by the Copp, Clark Co., of Toronto. The paper and letter-press are good, the binding neat and substantial, and the general aspect of the book, though its make-up is still too suggestive of school-room pains and penalties, is less uninviting than that of most of its unpopular class. Of the way in which the editors, Mr. G. Mercer Adam and W. J. Robertson, B.A., LL.B., have done their work, little need be said. They had a hard task set them, and the result must, in fairness, be taken as the product of the Departmental system, not of the men, whose duty was simply to make a book to order. The limitations were such as would have baulked the genius of the most talented historian, and though neither of these gentlemen, so far as we know, lays any claim to special aptitude for historical writing, the forte of the one being in literary, that of the other in mathematical pursuits, yet we dare say the work might not have been done much

better, under those limitations, by a Knight or a Freeman. When a book is made to order and fitted to dimensions, the chief architect, not the builders, must be held responsible for the results.

We have not as yet found time to examine the book closely throughout, and may refer to it again when we have done so. But, as we have often had occasion to say, the whole mechanical system of book-making now in use by the Department is utterly bad, and it would be a marvel to find it bringing forth good fruits. As well expect to gather figs from thistles. We have already gone far enough in our examination to find that the book before us is no exception to the general rule.

In the first place, the book is nondescript in character. It is neither fish nor flesh—neither a note book for teachers, nor a history for students. If it is assumed that the teacher is master of the subject, and is to guide the pupil and supply him with all that is really valuable in the subject-matter and philosophy of history, the book is unnecessary. A simple note book of a few pages is all that is required. If, on the other hand, it cannot be assumed that the average teacher is a sound historian, and the pupil must rely largely upon the text-book for all these essentials, then this primer is worse than useless. Its dryness is, of necessity, appalling. It is utterly devoid of the human interest which is the charm of all history. It cannot bring before the reader any personality. It cannot refer any event to its natural or historical cause. It cannot set forth the customs, manners, or ideas of any class, or any epoch. It cannot discuss principles of action, follow events to their issues, or trace them backward to their sources. It is a valley of skeletons, and the bones are, as before said, very dry.

If illustration of what seems so obvious is necessary, we must defer it mainly to future issues. We can take space here only to give two or three which have presented themselves as we open the book, almost at random. One of the most important events of modern British history is the Crimean war. Whether England's part in that war was justifiable or necessary is, to say the least, a vexed and dubious question. But this most important matter of England's moral responsibility is here settled for the pupil *ex cathedra*, in these few words:

"The cause of the war was the quarrel of the Russian Emperor Nicholas with the Sultan of Turkey, because the latter refused him the protectorate of the Greek Christians in his European dominions. But Nicholas's real object was the dismemberment of Turkey. To this England would not consent, and, for the security of Europe, she declared war against Russia."

The subtle distinction between "the cause of the war" and "Nicholas's real object" may, possibly, be very obvious to bright Canadian boys and girls, but surely the motive assigned for England's interference in the quarrel is, to say the least, a very inadequate account of the way in which British statesmen allowed themselves to be caught in the meshes of the diplomatic entanglement.

For the guidance, it may be supposed, of teacher and pupil, questions have been inserted at the end of each chapter. These, we are told, are not intended to be exhaustive, but surely it is but reasonable to expect to find material for the answers in the text. Fancy the bewilderment of the poor