

ignorance of "common things," and frequently set about instructing themselves in them long after their education was supposed to be completed. They find to their dismay that the humbler classes are our superiors in these things,—the tradesman, the mechanic, sometimes even the labourer, enjoy the humiliating privilege of instructing them in their several departments, and this not only in what may be called *professional matters*—the mysteries of their respective crafts—but in things of general information which they ought to know, and are ashamed they do not know. It surely would be more fitting that the "educated classes should preserve their position by their practical knowledge and intelligence in matters of every-day life, as well as by that general refinement of taste and intellect which the other grades are not able to appreciate. That many of the topics we have mentioned are *elevating* as well as useful is equally undeniable; we may, of course, separate every fact of natural philosophy, and even of mechanical science, from the common uses to which it may be applied, and contemplate them as parts of the vast machinery of the universe, viewing them in relation to other laws and principles, or as instances of the wondrous power, wisdom, and goodness of the great Creator. Did any one, we would ask, ever meditate upon the law of gravitation, or the constitution of the human body, or the laws of vegetable physiology, without being elevated with a sense of the great and wondrous things which surround him? Other subjects, we grant, elevate—poetry, eloquence, architecture, painting, sculpture; yet it has always appeared to us that nature's lessons have a charm of their own, and address the inward man with greater force than any others. We insist strongly on this view of the subject, because it has been too useful to stigmatize any attempts to introduce these studies into our schools as *utilitarianism*. We deny that they are utilitarian in such a sense as is implied, i. e., to the exclusion of higher qualities; and, as we have already urged, we would seriously warn the friends of classical instruction that they do not relinquish the title "useful" to their enemies.—*English Journal of Education*.

#### HINTS TO LOCAL SCHOOL AUTHORITIES.

It may not be amiss to call the attention of trustees, town superintendents, and all other school officers, to the necessity of a more strict observance of existing laws and forms, and a more rigid attention to the duties devolving upon them. It is a true statement, and as lamentable and inexcusable as it is true, that a considerable portion of the business pertaining to schools is loosely and illegally transacted. Commencing with the school section, it is found in imperfect notices of meetings, unparliamentary and informal proceedings at the meetings, and inefficiency in carrying out the designs of the voters and the demands of the law. It is not an uncommon case to have all the officers elected in an illegal and improper manner. Resolutions too are drawn up in loose and ambiguous language, often leading to almost endless litigation and district quarrels. These things are not brought to light as a general thing only in cases where persons are dissatisfied or unwilling to pay their taxes. The great majority of instances pass off as correct and legal, inasmuch as no one is disposed to take issue upon them.

The same is true of the reports of trustees and local superintendents. Probably not more than half of them are reliable. It is true that there exists an imperative necessity of changing, to some extent, the mode of supervision, (from a township to a county system,) but at the same time it is reasonable to expect a greater degree of accuracy and dispatch from those who now have the matter in charge.

Ere this shall reach its destination, most of the schools for the winter will have commenced. Trustees and teachers should be very particular in regard to their contracts. Have a full and clear understanding as to the price, the time that shall constitute a week or a month, the time of payment, the manner of boarding, and every other particular that might possibly come up in settlement. *This should be in writing*, as required by law, and for which a form is provided. The trustees must provide a book for the teacher, to use in keeping his roll, and the teacher must see that the list is accurately kept, for he is required to verify the same by his oath. Teachers should not delay the time of obtaining their certificates. Negligence on this point may prevent the section from drawing its portion of public money. Trustees should inquire particularly about this matter, and see that teachers do not neglect their duty.

Trustees should bear in mind that their report is due prior to the 15th of January. Devote a little thought to the matter. Read over the law carefully, and compare it with the forms furnished for your use. Obtain from the teacher such facts as he is required by the department to furnish, and then your report can be easily and accurately drawn up. *Let the reports of 1855 be an improvement on the past.* Why should we not improve by experience?

The long evenings of the winter season afford excellent opportunities for reading. Let parents and teachers use their influence in extending the use of the library books. Teachers can do very much by precept and example, towards popularizing the section library.

The schoolroom is the great work-shop for the teacher. Be faithful to the trust reposed in you. Use every means within your reach to

gain information and enlarge your experience. Read carefully the organ of your profession, and digest well the suggestions therein contained. Get out the people, if possible, to visit your schools. Have a gathering some time during the winter, to listen to your examination. Aid your superintendent in getting up school celebrations. Be earnest and zealous in all things intended to advance the best interests of education.

Local Superintendents should commence early in the term to visit schools. One visit at the beginning is worth a dozen at the close. Prepare yourselves to give advice as to the methods of instruction, government, and general management of schools. Counsel, encourage, and arouse teachers to a vigorous performance of their duties. Let them feel that you are with them and for them, in all progressive movements, and let the negligent and ignorant, if such there be, feel that you intend to wake them up. Get the trustees and patrons to visit the schools with you. Would it not be a good plan to call a meeting in each section, on some convenient evening, and lecture on schools and school laws? *Active measures* are required to secure *permanent results*.

Finally, let us be united. Let us undertake the winter campaign, determined to push toward completion the glorious educational system. Let all minor and personal considerations yield to the promotion of the general good. Let us reason together, and while we aim to retain all the good we now have, may we be able to prune the system of its defects, and add substantially to its present proportions.—*New York Teacher*, Dec. 1854.

#### AN EVENTFUL LIFE.

(From the London Times.)

We yesterday recorded the decease of an Oxford divine who had maintained an immediate and personal connexion with that University for upwards of eighty years. But it may prove, we think, both amusing and instructive if we place before the public the means of reflecting for a few moments on the scenes which such a life embraced, and on the links which it supplied between the present and the past. Dr. Routh, late President of Magdalen College, was born in the reign of King George II., before the beginning of the Seven Year's War, before India was conquered by Clive, or Canada by Wolfe, before the United States ever dreamt of independence, and before Pitt had impressed the greatness of his own character on the policy of Britain. The life of this college student comprehended three great epochs—three periods of prodigious importance to the interests of humanity and the history of the world. Martin Routh saw the last years of the old state of society which introduced the political deluge, he saw the deluge itself, the great French Revolution, with all its catastrophes of thrones and opinions; and he lived to see the more silent but not less striking changes, which forty years of peace engendered. Young Routh entered the University of Oxford while the next successor of Louis XIV. was still upon the throne of France, and while Poland was still an independent State of its own. On the very week of his admission, London had been thrown into a state of ferment by a reply made by the Lord Mayor Beckford to King George III.; John Wilkes was at the same moment the talk of the whole country, and the letters of "Junius" then appearing were in everybody's mouth. When the American War broke out, Mr. Routh was already a graduate of two years' standing, and he must have partaken in discussions about Cornwallis and Burgoyne, Bunker's-Hill and Saratoga, as naturally as we now talk of Balaklava, and the Alma. As he read week after week the accounts from Sebastopol, he might have compared them in his own memory, or for the edification of his friends, with the accounts from Gibraltar, for when the events of that famous siege occurred he was a Master of Arts, a Fellow of his College, and a frequenter of the coffee-houses which in those days were the centres of political discussion. He was already, when Mr. Pitt became Minister, engaged in the duties of College office, and before Edmund Burke opened the impeachment of Warren Hastings, Mr. Routh was a resident of considerable standing, having been in the University for sixteen years.

#### SCHOOL BOY POLITENESS.

On the last night of the Vermont Legislative session, while the school bill was under discussion, a member complained that school-boys had lost their politeness. Mr. Bartlett, of Lydon, replied, "I acknowledge the truth of the gentlemen's remarks. I was once forced to take off my cap to every passer-by. Now, no boy uncovers his head. A few years since I was riding through Orleans County in a sleigh, and overtook a boy who had attained the age of nine years. He stepped out of the road to let me pass. There he stood upon the crust, erect, bold, and aspiring. He did not prepare to doff his beaver—not he. Said I, 'my lad, you should always take off your hat to a gentleman.' But no; and I passed on. The insolence of boys has been on the increase since the colonial days of Washington and Jefferson. It may or may not be the fault of our system—but such is the fact.