

"But here's a parchment, with the seal of Cæsar,  
I found it in his closet; 'tis his WILL."

The last three words are full of effect, in strongest contrast with the preceding by their very emphasis. Every ear must catch those important words, and all that follows must be given with distinctness, fervor, and point.

"Let but the commons | hear this testament,  
(Which pardon me I do not mean to read;)"

This line must be read with an air of affected earnestness, as if he did not mean to read it, and which he does read afterwards with the best effect for his purposes.

"And they would go | and kiss dead Cæsar's wounds,  
And dip their napkins | in his sacred blood;  
Yea, beg a HAIR of him | for memory,  
And, dying, mention it within their wills,  
Bequeathing it as a rich legacy | unto their issue."

The last three lines must be delivered slowly and with dignified and impressive effect, to enhance the importance of the will and to awaken the deepest interest in its contents.

But the remainder of the oration is so splendid in its eloquence and impassioned force, and in the skill of consummate oratory, that its review will justify another article.

## BLACKBOARDS.

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Every school nowadays has one or more blackboards. It were waste of time at this late date to dwell on their usefulness, to demonstrate their capacity for multiplying the teacher's effective power. But there are blackboards and blackboards. My own experience, and the observations I have made in various schools, lead me to the conclusion that much benefit is lost by the very common neglect of a few particulars which in some way get entirely overlooked. I shall touch on a few of these points, and mention some of the practical remedies which I have found to be satisfactory on actual trial by myself and others. If any of these hints prove useful to some younger brother in the profession I shall be gratified, though I am not so sanguine as to hope that any of the veterans in our noble army will see fit to adopt any of the simple improvements suggested.

I. *Position.* The board should be placed in front of the class. This seems patent enough; yet go into many of the largest and best school buildings in this province, and it does not seem so simple after all; for in many central schools, collegiate institutes, etc., we find fine large blackboards placed at the sides or the rear, while near the teacher's desk is an insignificant apology, a mere remnant of a board, the only one easily visible by the school, and the only one conveniently and quickly available by the teacher. This of course is a direct discouragement to the use of this valuable aid. The fundamental error is in the seating of the room, and may generally be corrected at a very small expense. The seats in an ordinary class room, say 20x30, 18x24, or similar dimensions, ought to face the long wall, not the short one. The blackboard privileges thus secured far outweigh in my opinion any slight disadvantages (and I know of none) which might possibly be incurred. All the pupils are brought nearer the teacher and nearer the board, and the convenience and efficiency are so much increased that I have never known any one wish to go back to the old arrangement after trying the one indicated. The room is often greatly improved by the change as regards light, by facing the pupils to the east or the north, and thus avoiding the bright glare which is so fruitful a source of shortsightedness in our schools. It is a further advan-

tage to a *live* teacher to have his own desk placed at one corner, so as to leave the whole face of the board entirely unencumbered. To a piece of torpidity which hibernates perennially in its chair and hears lessons, this would of course be a great annoyance, since the machine might be put to the inconvenience of standing on its feet, and even walking about occasionally.

The board should be placed within two feet of the floor, and extend to the height of seven or eight feet from the floor. In many schools the whole of the blackboards are between three and four feet from the floor. The consequence is that a majority of the pupils are unable to use more than a foot or two of the lower edge. I have seen several large and expensive schools with every blackboard three feet six inches from the floor. In some of the junior classes, where the accommodation is most particularly required, only one or two pupils in the class could reach the board so as to use more than a few inches at the bottom. I know a \$10,000 ward school in which not 5 per cent. of the pupils could reach the boards, though these are sufficiently numerous, and otherwise judiciously placed. One easy remedy is to place a narrow platform, 2 or 2½ feet high, under such boards. The better way is to have the board extended down. The fundamental error seems to be the educational heresy that the blackboards are all made for the teacher's use, whereas experience proves that there is no more efficient means of teaching classics, mathematics, science, almost anything in fact, than by sending a whole class to the board at once to do the same exercise, then getting them to point out each other's mistakes, and to receive the benefits of all the corrections; thus not only saving the time of the class and the labor of the teacher, but actually accomplishing more in a few minutes than could be done in hours by the individual method. Every school should, if possible, have accommodation for all the pupils at the blackboards simultaneously. No class will go to sleep over such exercises. To most pupils they afford great pleasure.

II. *Use.* The blackboard as commonly used is injurious to the health, especially to that of the teacher. I have often wondered how this has escaped the authors of books on teaching. We have abundant warning as to the unhealthful effect of stone-cutting, needle-grinding, grain-shovelling, etc., but I have never read a line or heard a sentence of caution as regards blackboards. I have watched teachers of infant classes, masters of public and high schools, tutors and professors in college, teaching their classes or lecturing to their students chalk in hand, speaking continually amid a dense cloud of floating chalk-dust, which at every breath passed directly to the delicate lung cells. What wonder that asthma is almost universal among aged teachers? Can the prevalence of consumption, bronchitis, &c., be considered remarkable among those who are breathing chalk-dust so constantly? The ordinary plaster of Paris crayons greatly aggravate the evil. To one engaged in teaching arithmetic or mathematics several hours a day, the consequences are inevitable. The prevalent mistake lies in the supposition that water applied to a blackboard will spoil it, whereas a good board is greatly benefitted by being well washed every day. If large slabs of slate could be secured, such as are used in some of the schools of Germany and of the United States, the dust nuisance would be avoided. It may be greatly abated by the careful use of the sponge. I have for ten years past constantly used a large sponge, or a ball of woollen cloth, which does not require wetting more than once, or at most twice a day. A very few drops sprinkled skillfully over the surface are sufficient to keep the dust down. No time is lost waiting for the board to dry, for one end is generally ready for use by the time the brush has reached the other. There is no reason in the nature of things for constantly inhaling this deadly dust, and suffering the consequences. If the damp sponge is kept at hand, the face of the