

THE feat of Miss Ramsay, who took such unprecedentedly high honors in classics at Cambridge, seems to have shaken the time-honored traditions of the English schools in more respects than one. Six months ago the idea that four years' study of Greek could produce a senior classic at Cambridge would have been scouted by almost every headmaster and classical professor in England. But Miss Ramsay's great success challenged attention to the fact, amongst others, that she began to study Greek in 1883. Most of Miss Ramsay's competitors will have been twelve or fourteen years in doing less than she has accomplished in four. The more conservative may perhaps claim that the exception but proves the rule, but many are drawing the inference that four years of study of Latin or Greek, with matured and cultivated powers, are worth more than thrice the number devoted to memorizing and mechanical drill, before the intellect is sufficiently developed to grasp either the philosophy of the language or the meaning of the writers.

WE have often been asked by teachers and students to publish complete or model answers to such and such questions set by the Departmental examiners from time to time. For obvious reasons we have declined to do so. We have no means of knowing that the answer we might deem satisfactory would be so considered by the examiner, and we have no wish to usurp his prerogatives. We are glad, however, to announce that, by the courtesy of the Minister of Education, we are able to promise something better. We have obtained permission to copy for publication some of the best answers made by successful candidates at the recent examinations. These answers, made, as it were, under actual fire, and stamped with the approval of the examiners, may be safely taken as indicating what is expected and desired of examinees. Some few weeks may yet elapse before the necessary copies can be made, but we shall take the earliest opportunity of placing before our subscribers, in this practical way, information which cannot fail to be of great value to both teachers and students.

A LIVELY controversy has been going on for some time in one of the Toronto dailies with regard to the merits or demerits of a certain authorized text-book. Into that controversy we do not propose to enter. But in looking over the various attacks and rejoinders, it has occurred to us that a great step towards agreement would have been gained could a preliminary decision have been made as to the proper aim and use of a text-book. Is its primary purpose to aid the pupil, or to guide the teacher? Should it aim at being exhaustive, so far as the requirements of the class for the time being are concerned, or merely suggestive? Should it be constructed more with a view to making it a repository of information, or an instrument of

mental discipline? Possibly it might be found that no one answer can be given to these and related questions, that much depends upon the nature of the subject. But it is pretty clear that some preliminary understanding upon such points is essential to any profitable discussion of the kind referred to.

FROM announcements made elsewhere in these columns it will be seen that we are still studying to make the EDUCATIONAL JOURNAL more and more valuable to its patrons. We mean that it shall be simply indispensable to Canadian teachers, and a power for good in the educational sphere. We mean that it shall be the best medium for the diffusion of the soundest views, and the introduction of the most approved methods in Public School, High School and College. To these ends we once more solicit the co-operation of all who are engaged in the grand work of public education, and all who have at heart the best interests of the young. We specially desire the aid of teachers of culture and experience in making our practical departments more thoroughly adapted to the wants of the profession. Short papers on practical subjects, samples of school-room methods, model lessons, etc., are always welcome. Let not those who are specially successful in teaching special subjects, in conducting classes, or in general school management, hide their light under a bushel. Help your less-experienced or less-successful brethren and sisters. Several have kindly promised us practical contributions. Please send them forward.

WE hear continually complaints of the lack of thoroughness in the schools. Parents, business men, and, above all, inexperienced examiners, discover that the average child of twelve or fourteen is ignorant of a thousand things with which it seems to them every schoolboy or girl should be familiar, and they at once begin to cry out against the superficiality of the schools, the cramming system, etc. There are no doubt faults enough in both teachers and systems. We have no wish to be blind to these or to conceal them. On the contrary we regard it as an important part of the mission of an educational paper to hold up to the light whatever is open to criticism and capable of improvement. But we are persuaded that much of this universal fault-finding is unreasonable. It is unjust to both teachers and pupils. We are apt to forget how slow a process education is. We forget through what long years of experience we have gained our familiarity with those principles and processes which now seem so simple that we fancy a child should know them almost by intuition. If it is hard to put ourselves in the place of our neighbor of equal age and experience, it is vastly harder to put ourselves in the place of the boy or girl in the teens. But we must learn to do so before we can be just to our children or to their teachers.

WATSON GRIFFIN, the author of the new Canadian novel, "Twok," puts into the mouth of one of his hobbyists a new and, so far as we know, original method of solving the orthographical perplexities of the student of English. "The doctor" thus sets forth his system:—

"Now some fools want to change the spelling of the word to make it accord with the pronunciation. They would spoil all our best libraries and compel us to buy everything new for the sake of making spelling accord with pronunciation. They would make us forget all the old derivations, and so destroy half our understanding of the language, and then, after going to the expense of printing all the old books over with the new spelling, and teaching everybody a new system, they would have to begin all over again, for the pronunciation of words is always changing. Now, what I propose is this: Instead of changing the spelling of words to suit the pronunciation, I would change the pronunciation to make it accord with the spelling. . . . It would probably be necessary to change the spelling of a few words in the first place, but once establish a system of pronunciation and our language would remain the same for ages, except that we would always be adding new names to represent new discoveries. If the system I propose were adopted, we would still have the advantage of knowing the derivations of words, and our old authors would not be mutilated; while instead of children wasting time in learning to spell, they would only have to read, and how much reading they would be able to do with the time at their disposal!"

APROPOS to the complaint of lack of thoroughness referred to in another paragraph, we do not believe the remedy is to be found in the direction in which most critics are apt to look for it, viz., in keeping the children longer employed upon what are deemed elementary and fundamental subjects, or cutting down the public school curriculum so as to confine it almost exclusively to such subjects. The mistake is no doubt often made of pushing the child beyond his depth. But we believe the opposite error is quite as common. Nothing is more discouraging or hopeless than to confine the child-month after month and term after term in the treadmill of certain lessons in such subjects as Reading, or Arithmetic, or Geography. The tendency of such tiresome repetitions is to render what we call dull pupils heartless and hopeless. What teacher of experience cannot recall cases in which the happiest results have followed from allowing an unsuccessful pupil to lay aside for a time the old subjects which he had failed to master, and to take up something entirely new. A few months study of Algebra or Geometry will often throw a flood of light upon difficulties in Arithmetic which before seemed incomprehensible. Even a slight acquaintance with Latin will sometimes give to minds of a certain class a grasp of the principles of English Grammar that could hardly have been gained by years of study of English text-books. The wise teacher will never keep any pupil, dull or bright, treading in a narrow and monotonous circle until he becomes disgusted with all study.