

ened in torpid and degraded spirits. The teacher, like the physician and the preacher, must be able to "minister to a mind diseased." Were his sole aim the training of the intellect, he would still need to remember that intellect is never alone, but sends its roots down into the heart, that underlying soil of sentiment which needs to be stirred and enriched by a wise tillage ere the better fruits of thought can be made to grow. Especially in the moral and religious sentiments will we find influence to quicken and guide, which we shall seek elsewhere in vain. Other impulses, however innocent or useful, are, after all, but fitful and partial; it is *duty* alone that sways the soul as a sovereign, administering a wise and just authority to every part of our nature; from her sanctuary alone come the great elements of beauty and strength which make up the true culture and render the character well rounded and complete.

"Stern Lawgiver! yet thou dost wear
The Godhead's most benignant grace;
Nor know we anything so fair
As is the smile upon thy face:
Flowers laugh before thee on their beds,
And fragrance in thy footing treads;
Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong;
And the most ancient heavens, through Thee, are fresh and strong."

During the delivery of his admirable and eloquent address, the Rev. Doctor was frequently interrupted by repeated laughter and applause. On the motion of Mr. Dixon, a hearty vote of thanks was awarded to the President for his eloquent address.

3. ANNUAL CONVENTION OF THE ONTARIO TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION.

The ninth annual convention of the Teachers of Ontario commenced its sittings on the 3rd ult., in the theatre of the Normal School buildings. The chair was occupied by the President of the Association, the Rev. Dr. Nelles, of Victoria College, and prayer having been said by the President, he thanked the Association for the honour they had done him in appointing him to the position he occupied. No doubt they were all thoroughly prepared to discuss the many important questions on their paper. There were some of them very important and some of them rather complex, but a question well put was half answered, and he hoped it would be the case in the course of their meeting. He then introduced Mr. Hodgins, Deputy Superintendent of Education for Ontario.

Mr. Hodgins said it afforded him very great pleasure to see the President in his present position, as he had long regarded him one of his oldest friends, and also on account of his well-known fitness to fill the position which he now occupied. He regretted the absence of the respected Chief Superintendent of Education, the Rev. Dr. Ryerson, who was at present absent from the city. On his behalf, however, he (Mr. Hodgins) welcomed the teachers for the first time to the Normal School buildings, in which to hold their meetings during the convention. Although the museum was not then in the best order he would take pleasure in throwing it open to the members on the following day. He then referred to the great advantage to be derived from such conventions, when important matters could be discussed by practical men. For if the discussions were carried on intelligently, no doubt the very best results would accrue. As an illustration, he dwelt upon the importance of having a thorough elucidation of the principles of school discipline. This lay at the root of the success of their system of teaching; and though it had been largely treated by many erudite and eminent men, it was probable that more good would result from their meeting and discussing the matter eye to eye, and it would be of more use than any mere theories. He said, in conclusion, that the possession of genuine religious principles on the part of the teacher was the true basis of school discipline.

SHOULD THE SCHOOL AGE BE SIX YEARS?

The first subject propounded for discussion was:—Is it desirable that the minimum school age should be six instead of five? Mr. King opened the discussion. He said, "the time at my disposal will only allow of my referring to one or two of the principal reasons why such a change is desirable. A primary reason is, that injurious mental and physical effects accrue to such young children from a too early application to study, connected with too long a period of confinement in school. A secondary reason is found in the economical or pecuniary advantage arising from fixing the age as proposed. The conclusions arrived at have been induced by extended personal observation and inquiry, the testimony of many excellent and experienced teachers, and the expressed opinions of able and eminent medical men. With reference to the first of these reasons, I conceive education to be the instruction or guidance of the mind. It may arrive at maturity, but instruction civilizes it. The mind depends for its action upon the brain. The brain is a wonderfully

complex organ, extremely delicate, very liable to disease, and easily injured. This is true in regard to the fully developed brain; much more delicate, and liable to injury and disease, is the brain of the growing child. The brain, in addition to the function of thought, supplies nervous energy to the various organs engaged in the processes of digestion, assimilation, and nutrition. With injury of the brain, not only do the physical functions suffer, but likewise the nervous system itself. Thousands of young minds are stunted, and permanently dwarfed, by too early application to study. Task the mind during the earlier years, and you will not expose the child to a greater risk of a disordered brain, not only it may be lay the foundation for a morbid excitability of brain, that may one day end in insanity, but you debilitate its bodily powers, and by so doing, to all intents and purposes, the mind will eventually be a loser in its powers and capacity. Why, sir, just fancy—indeed I need not say fancy, for it is a matter of fact, that may be perceived almost any day by visiting the primary departments of our city, town and village schools—a class consisting of a number ranging between 75 and 130, of whom, perhaps, not a dozen exceed seven years of age, and 2-5ths of whom in all probability have not reached their sixth year, huddled together on long benches, in too many cases so high that the children's feet do not touch the floor, the weight of their extremities causing curvature of the bones, compression of the vital organs by the inclining posture, kept in silence by the look, promise, threat, or rod of the teacher, prevented from inhaling sufficient, good, pure air by too long and quiet confinement. What holds good in regard to these schools, holds true in regard to rural schools, save in numbers. What would the members of this Association say in favour of the continuance of such a system if compelled during our deliberations to be seated in a similar posture. But it should be borne in mind that the power of endurance in adults is at least three or four times as great as that of such children. Again, my impression is that a child entering school at the age of seven years will, in nine cases out of ten, when at the age of ten years exceed in its ability to learn, and in the knowledge it has obtained, that of a child naturally of the same temperament and physical power which began school at the age of 5. The plea, loss of time, must, I think, be considered without good foundation. In regard to the second reason, or the economical view, though not in possession of authorized statistics to aid me, I think an approximation sufficiently near for all practical purposes may be obtained. In the Waterloo Central School, with an attendance last year of 410, there were admitted 25, the age of each was just 5 years, and 30 who had not yet attained their 6th year, or 55 in a total of 410 under six years of age, a little more than one-eighth of the whole. I think it will not exceed the bounds of probability to suppose one-tenth of the pupils attending the common schools in Ontario are less than 6 years of age. In 1867, the total number of pupils was over 400,000, then 1-10th of this or 40,000 children were attending school that year under six years of age. In the great majority of cases there is no doubt but that parents send them to get rid of taking care of them, while many think that their little darlings, which exhibit such precociousness, should be supplied as fast as possible with mental food from the intellectual repository. In either case, the course is highly injudicious. But allowing 80 such pupils to a teacher, it will require the employment of 500 teachers, the class room and furnishings for 500 such classes, placing all the expenses at the low sum of \$400 per class, and we obtain \$200,000, and this with an arithmetical ratio of increase which will give, without the proposed enactment, double that number and twice the expense; or, in other words, adding annually about 40,000 immature minds to the list of those that have already been subjected to that dwarfing, stunting influence. In conclusion, if it be true that by fixing the age of admission at six instead of five, no real loss of time in the instruction of the child results, but rather a fuller development of the faculties, a stronger mind, a more perfect child, and at the same time a large decrease in the annual expenditure for school purposes. If these are facts—which I believe them to be—then I say this Association would be fully justified in taking steps to induce the Legislature to incorporate the change in the proposed Act." Mr. Dixon thanked the essayist, but did not agree with him altogether. True, bad houses and bad teachers might have a bad effect on children attending school of five or six years; but these bad effects were not essentially necessary, and could easily be avoided. He would go for sending children to school at four years of age, provided the Pestalozian system were followed a little more. It was a fact that many children, if they did not go to school early, would receive no education at all, and he deprecated the idea of measuring every educational matter by mere pecuniary considerations. Mr. McCallum was inclined to agree with the essayist in the present circumstances of the schools. They were not fitted in any way for children of five or six years of age; but if the schools were constructed and their system adapted to the necessities