



JOURNAL OF EDUCATION.

Volume VI.

Montreal (Lower Canada) June and July, 1862.

Nos. 6 and 7.

SUMMARY.—**EDUCATION:** Object Teaching; by Chas. Dickens.—Botany in the Common Schools, by Dr. Thomas Hill.—Night Schools.—Graduation in Teaching and Training, by Inspector Bruce (Continued).—**POETRY:** An Hour at the Old Play-Ground; by Henry Monford.—**OFFICIAL NOTICES:** Appointments—School Commissioners.—Erection of School Municipalities.—Diplomas Granted: by the Normal Schools and Boards of Examiners.—Donations to the Library of the Department.—Situations Wanted.—Notice to Parties corresponding with the Department.—**EDITORIAL:** Teachers' Conferences.—Annual Convocation of Bishops' College, Lennoxville, and Inauguration of the new Grammar School Building.—The Governor General's Visit to the Normal Schools, Montreal.—The Visit to Villa Maria.—Conferences of the Teachers' Associations in connection with the Jacques Cartier and Laval Normal Schools.—Distribution of Prizes, etc., to the Pupils of the McGill High School; and to the Junior Department of Bishops' College.—**MONTHLY SUMMARY:** Educational, Scientific, and Miscellaneous Intelligence.—**ADVERTISEMENTS.**

EDUCATION.

OBJECT TEACHING.

BY CHAS. DICKENS.

It is but a stone's throw from the High Court of Chancery—High, as we say also of venison or pheasant, when it gets in very bad odor—to the London Mechanics' Institute in Southampton Buildings. After a ramble among lawyers in their wigs and gowns, and a good choke in the thick atmosphere of chancery itself, we stepped in at once, one day not long ago, among a multitude of children in pinafores and jackets. There they were, one or two hundred strong, taking their time from a teacher, clapping their hands and singing "Winter is coming," and a great many more songs. They suggested much better ideas of harmony than the argument of our learned brother, whom we had left speaking on the question, whether money bequeathed to be distributed in equal shares to John and Mary Wilson and James Brown—John and Mary being man and wife—was to be divided into two parts or into three.

The children, when we went among them, were just passing from one class into another, and met in the great lecture room to sing together while they were about it. Some filed in, and some filed out; some were on the floor, some in the gallery; all seemed to be happy enough, except one urchin at the extreme corner of a gallery. He displayed an open copy book before him to the public gaze, by way of penance for transgressions in the writing lesson, but he looked by no means hopelessly dejected.

There are three hundred and fifty children in attendance on this school, which is conducted by five teachers. The children here, we were informed, are classed in the first instance according to their ages in three divisions, the first taking in those under eight years old; the second, those between eight and eleven; the third, children older than eleven. These form, in fact, three ages of youth. It is found most convenient to teach children classed upon this principle, and to keep the elder and the younger boys from

mutual action on each other, because it would be impossible to provide for such a school so many teachers as could exercise very minute supervision. In each of these three divisions, the children are subdivided for the purpose of instruction into two classes—the quick and the slow—which receive lessons suited to their respective capacities. It is obvious that, without punishment, five teachers could not preserve discipline among three hundred and fifty boys; and therefore, though it is but seldom used, a cane is kept on the establishment.

The children having clapped and sung together, sang their way out of the great room, in file, while others began streaming in. We were invited to an Object Lesson, and marched off (not venturing to sing our way into a class room), where we took our seat among the pupils, whose age varied between eight years and eleven. The teacher was before us. We were all attention. "Hands down." We did it. "Hands on knees." Beautifully simultaneous. Very good. The lesson began.

"I have something in my pocket," said our teacher, "which I am always glad to have there." We were old enough and worldly enough to know what he meant; but boys aspire to fill their pockets with so many things that, according to their minds, the something in the teacher's pocket might be string, apple, knife, brass button, top, hardbake, stick of firewood for boat, crumbs, squirt, gunpowder, marbles, slate pencil, pea-shooter, brad-awl, or perhaps small canon. They attempted no rash guess, therefore, at that stage of the problem. "Boys also," our teacher continued, "like to have it, though when it gets into a boy's pocket, I believe that it is often said to bum a hole there." Instantly twenty out-stretched hands indicated an idea demanding utterance in twenty heads. "If you please sir, I know what it is." "What is it?" "A piece of coal."

You draw your reasoning, my boy, from a part only of the information given to you, founding your view of things on the last words that sounded in your ears. We laughed at you, cheerfully; but when we see the same thing done in the world daily by your elders, we do not always find it laughing matter.

"This little thing in my pocket," the teacher continued, "has not much power by itself, but when many of the same kind come together, they can do great deeds. A number of them have assembled lately to build handsome monuments to a great man, whose name you all ought to know, who made the penny loaf bigger than it used to be—do you know what great man that was?" Minds were out, answers were ready, but they ran pretty exclusively in favor of Prince Albert and the Duke of Wellington. "I am sure," says the teacher, "you must have heard who made all the loaves larger without altering the price, think again—who was it?" A confident voice hazarded the suggestion that it was "Guy Fawkes," and half-a-dozen voices cried "Guy Fawkes." There are always some to follow the absurdest lead, if it be taken confidently, in the great as in the little world.

"Guy Fawkes! nonsense, do you mean him to be carried about in your heads all through November and December?" More