

EDUCATIONAL JOURNAL

OF WESTERN CANADA.

VOL. IV.

WINNIPEG, AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER, 1902.

No. 5.

Contributions.

The JOURNAL is not responsible for opinions of contributors.
Replies to contributions will be welcome.

SOME DEFECTS IN OUR EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM.

By W. A. MCINTYRE, WINNIPEG.

An educational system is a broader term than a school system. A defect does not necessarily imply that there are faults. Therefore let no one imagine that I am about to criticize our school system. There is room for criticism without doubt, but there are adverse critics in plenty. I have a wider question to consider at the present time.

If we consider with Herbert Spencer that education should prepare for complete living, and then consider the various agencies that consciously or unconsciously assist in the preparation of life for its duties and responsibilities, and further consider that the preparation is given not only during the years of school life, but before the child comes to school and after he leaves school, we begin to understand what a wide field must be reviewed in order to find out the defects in our system and to suggest means for overcoming them.

The first and most lasting education is given in the family. There are formed the habits and tastes of a life time. The first defect in our educational system is that parents are not adequately prepared for the discharge of the duties that devolve upon them. They are unacquainted with the physical and mental requirements of childhood, and have no adequate conception of the laws that govern the unfolding of being. This is only a general statement and does not apply to all cases. Yet it will be granted that the keen intuitions of the most sympathetic mother are not always a sure guide in the upbringing of her little family. Definite scientific knowledge is not only helpful but at times absolutely necessary. Nor can this knowledge be given in early years. It would have no meaning at that time. Though the education of early years gives the best indirect preparation for fatherhood and motherhood, it can not give that direct preparation which is so absolutely necessary, if a family is to have intelligence, morality and spirituality fostered in its members. Apart from the *mothers' meetings* held in the cities, we have no systematic organization for the training of parents for their responsibilities. Nor is it necessary to have public gatherings that the best results might be achieved. What was accomplished by Pestalozzi's *Leonard and Gertrude* would be accomplished in these days of much reading by the free dissemination of such works as William J. Forbush's *The Boy Problem*, Elizabeth Scovill's *The Care of Children*, Paterson du Bois' *The Point of Contact*, and other works of this kind, together with information as to the best occupations, reading and games for children. As it is now, the education of children is too carelessly conducted. It would be wrong to reduce all lives to the same routine, and nothing of that nature is contemplated, but it is equally wrong to