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MR. ROBERTSON'S letter (to be found on page 733) ought, perhaps, to be briefly alluded to.

Mr. Robertson's letter touches upon a variety of topics—the meaning of the word "allegory;" critics; Canadian textbooks; "sticking to the text" in examination papers; the shortness of human life when compared with the mass of details of no value whatever that may be raked together about an author's life; the selection of sub-examiners.

First as to his criticism of "A. M.'s" paper on "The Golden Scales." Mr. Robertson gives no reasons for his criticisms, he merely expresses his opinions as a critic, and he adds:—"I care not a fig for the opinions of any critic, . . . I care for his reasons." Mr. Robertson will

recognize that this is a dangerous weapon for a critic to use.

What grounds Mr. Robertson may have for thinking "The Golden Scales" not an allegory we know not. It would only be some very technical and narrow definition that could exclude it from the general idea of an allegory. Addison certainly introduces not a little non-allegorical and real matter into this paper from the *Spectator*, but is "The Golden Scales" to be on this account considered not an allegory? Mr. Robertson "cannot recall a single piece of Addison's that belongs to this figure"—allegory. Has he forgotten "The Vision of Mirza;" or does this also belong to some other figure? Although Mr. Robertson cares not a fig for the opinions of any critic, yet we may venture to ask him to read the article on Addison in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* where he will find him praised as an allegorical writer.

It is easy, however, to criticize examination papers. We shall merely say that, despite Mr. Robertson's objections, the EDUCATIONAL WEEKLY is glad to be "A. M.'s" staunch defender.

As to the opinions expressed on the other numerous topics, we have nothing to say.

THE *Montreal Witness*, in an article on "Practical Training," says:—As the school system has grown year by year more complex and, instead of the old way of calling up the children class by class, half a dozen teachers are engaged to cram knowledge at high pressure into their fagged and bursting brains, one factor has not been adequately appreciated, namely, that young people are not healthily capable of carrying on the intense mental work which our schools properly demand of them for more than three or four hours in a day. We have all known schools where five or six hours of intense attention were demanded at school and work was given to do at home requiring three or four more. True, there has been some reduction of these hours, but this has only increased

the anxiety to intensify the work of the hours that remain, and the experiments at introducing drawing, gymnastics and military drill into the course have largely failed through there being added as extras. In old times the drawing was given half an hour after the six hours of school drudgery. Nothing whatever is gained by this. Experiment will show that the taking of an hour off the daily school work now in vogue, and the applying of it to some practical operation with the hands, will not diminish at all the amount of intellectual acquirement, but will rather brighten the powers that are required for the mental operations. . . . To our educational system we naturally turn for the roundness of training, which cannot be had in the shop. But we find that this, too, is limited or almost limited to the culture of a single set of faculties, namely, those of the understanding. While the observing and the operative powers are not trained, an intellectual stature is reached which unfits the lad to accept the position of the apprentice fag, or of the *lifelong machine tender*; and so the civilized world is full of half-pay clerks, and what the French paradoxically call knights of industry, men who have to live by their wits. So well is this understood by the parents of children who look forward to mechanical employments that they withdraw them from school before they get too *learned for their calling*. This is all wrong, and is palpably the fault of an educational system which does not adapt itself rapidly enough to the requirements of the age.

THE *Mail*, in the political platform which it submits to the country in view of the approaching provincial elections, advocates "reform of the Education Department; abolition of the political headship; return to government by a permanent General Superintendent wholly unconnected with machine politics; abolition of the Nelson and other publishing monopolies; and free competition in school books."