

which greater aptitude is acquired for the demands which may be made upon them in active service. To neglect such advantages is certainly to close the mind to one important source of information. And the teacher who, from a want of energy or enthu-

siasm fails to embrace such opportunities as these associations afford, should consider whether or not some other sphere of life would not be more congenial to himself and profitable to the public.

THE ART OF QUESTIONING.

BY D. A. MAXWELL, MATHEMATICAL MASTER, STRATHROY HIGH SCHOOL—READ BEFORE THE STRATHROY TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION, AND ALSO THE EAST MIDDLESEX TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION, AND PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

I have undertaken to say a few words to you on the "Art of Questioning." It is a subject of great importance to all who desire to become good teachers; for probably the success and efficiency of our teaching depend more on the skill and judgment with which we propose questions than on any other single circumstance.

Questioning is called an art, inasmuch as it is practical work, and to be learned mainly by *doing* it, not by talking about it. Much patient experience is necessary in this, as in any other art, before proficiency is attained. If, however, this were all, the only advice to be given would be, "Go to your classes, work in them, and learn the art of questioning by *questioning*."

Every art is based on some principle or principles, and as it is the business of every artist to investigate the reasons for the method he adopts, so it will perhaps be worth our while to dwell for a little on the general principles which should be kept in view in questioning.

Questions may be divided according to their use into three classes:—*Preliminary*, *Instructive* and *Examinative*. These have many qualities in common, but are used for different purposes.

Preliminary questions consist of a few pithy, lively interrogations proposed at the

beginning of a recitation. Their nature will be determined best from their uses. They enable the teacher to ascertain the proper point at which to begin instruction; they show what erroneous views may have been formed on the previous lesson; they serve as connecting links between the past instruction and that about to be given; they create between the teacher and the pupil a sympathy which soothes the mind into a proper receptive condition; they gain that attention which is essentially necessary, and they create an appetency for knowledge in the absence of which strength is spent in vain.

Instructive questioning is used to lead the mind to a conception of truth, or in other words to gain knowledge, by the exercise of its own powers. There are two systems employed for this purpose, viz: *Elliptical* and *Socratic*.

In *Elliptical* questioning the teacher reads the greater part of the text, and makes a short pause where he wishes the pupils to insert a particular clause or sentence, e. g., "Europe is bounded on the north by the Arctic Ocean. Arithmetic is the study of numbers." This method cannot be used at all in some subjects, and can scarcely ever be made of much service in training the mind. It may develop PARROTAGE,

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