

The Canada School Journal.

VOL. IX.

TORONTO, MAY, 1884.

No. 5.

The Canada School Journal

IS PUBLISHED THE FIRST OF EACH MONTH AT

FRONT STREET WEST, TORONTO, ONT., CAN.

Subscription \$1.00 per year, payable in advance.

Address—W. J. GAGE & CO., Toronto.

CANADA SCHOOL JOURNAL HAS RECEIVED

An Honorable Mention at Paris Exhibition, 1878.

Recommended by the Minister of Education for Ontario.

Recommended by the Council of Public Instruction, Quebec.

Recommended by Chief Superintendent of Education, New Brunswick.

Recommended by Chief Superintendent of Education, Nova Scotia.

Recommended by Chief Superintendent of Education, British Columbia.

Recommended by Chief Superintendent of Education, Manitoba.

The Publishers frequently receive letters from their friends complaining of the non-receipt of the JOURNAL. In explanation they would state, as subscriptions are necessarily payable in advance, the mailing clerks have instructions to discontinue the paper when a subscription expires. The clerks are, of course, unable to make any distinction in a list containing names from all parts of the United States and Canada.

OUR NORMAL SCHOOLS.

The Minister's Report supplies the usual statistics of these institutions, and the special Report of the Director gives some additional information about their internal economy. It is unnecessary to remark that educational work cannot be estimated by the cord and that quality far more than quantity is the main thing worthy of attention. The large number of teachers attending these schools is, however, some slight guarantee that in several departments valuable work is accomplished, and that the country is on a whole getting a fair return for its outlay. Though their progress has been slow, and not at all commensurate with the general advancement throughout the high schools of the province during the last decade, they have lately taken some onward steps. It is noticeable that for the last two years we have heard fewer complaints from ex-students that their time is frittered away in laboriously doing nothing, and the Ottawa school is at last reported fairly efficient. The indications are that this is only the beginning of a thorough reformation, and that shortly they will command the respect accorded to the Toronto school in its early years under the energy and contagious enthusiasm of men like Robertson, Ormiston, and Sangster.

Sweeping criticism is out of place where such large staffs of instructors are involved. It is somewhat difficult to speak plainly and point out conspicuous failures, even where such failures have been publicly notorious for many years, and the Director has chosen the more agreeable alternative of calling attention to the excellent work done by master workmen. Students soon catch the fire and zeal of real masters, and though their praises should never be written in any public

Report, they are embalmed in the hearts and memories of each succeeding class of students, whose generous appreciation of real help is always equal to their scorn and contempt for a mere succedaneum.

Perhaps it is even worth the money wasted on *one* unmitigated sham, to have at the very heart of our system a sort of educational beacon for the instruction and warning of novices about to enter a noble profession. The Greeks were not generally supposed to have been lacking in acuteness, yet they sometimes introduced an intoxicated slave into the presence of their children to produce in them a disgust for inebriety. On the same principle of contrast, the lack of training, scholarship, and teaching power, the evils of *ill-tempered scolding, perpetual nagging, coarse manners, and unsympathy*, may be deeply impressed by a peculiar kind of object lesson. Experimental methods of teaching are greatly valued in these days, and if students are made to experience in their own persons some of the worst educational calamities, we may naturally suppose they will go to the fields of labor with an abiding distaste for the evils to which they have for a little while been subjected, and will be extremely cautious how they inflict similar wrongs on those committed to their own care. A single blot sometimes shows off the effect of a fine picture, and a lengthened probation to stupidity may be at bottom founded on a sound and subtle philosophy of education. Foreign educationists do not seem to have discovered this shadow which heightens the general effect of our system. Perhaps it would be difficult to persuade the French and the Germans, after what they have heard of us, that we keep an expensive model of imperfection for the sake of getting our young teachers to press on to perfection.

Turning to brighter things, we find the most marked improvements in Music, Drawing and Methods. The cheery influence of song is surely making its way into our schools, and a great majority of our Normal students go away anxious to introduce it into their schools. Some who could not draw a straight line return to their school-rooms, set their pupils to work at designing new patterns and thus give happy and varied employment, furnishing recreation and imparting practical skill along with taste and refinement. Practical Chemistry is well taught in many a public school, and the young pupil led successfully into the path of experimental science while he is at the same time interested and amused. *Our Normal Schools are growing better and not worse, and on the whole deserve generous support and kindly criticism.* Every lover of education heartily wishes them good speed in their noble work. They ought to be multiplied in number, increased in power, thoroughly equipped and fully prepared for the great mission that lies before them during the closing years of the century. Superannuated incompetence could better be accommodated with housing at some other public institution.