

stairs was a door partially closed so as to allow only one person to pass at a time, consequently the upper stairway became densely crowded. A child fell, and was unable to rise owing to the crowding of those behind. The affrighted children came on pell-mell, and soon more than 200 of them were trampled beyond recognition or suffocated in the mass of innocent victims who lay seven or eight deep!

Comment is useless. In the presence of such heartrending grief, criticism is disarmed. Let this sad calamity lead us to exercise unsleeping vigilance over the means of egress from all schools, halls, churches, and other public buildings. Now is the time for alterations and improvements. Once more we repeat the warning. God forbid that our words should again receive awful confirmation by some disaster in a Canadian school!

Trustees frequently build pleasant school-rooms and then place desks and seats over every available square foot of the floor, instead of leaving at least one-half the room free for exercises and evolutions. So deeply seated is this pernicious heresy in the mind of the average trustee that many inspectors are afraid to recommend plans for the large roomy apartments they really wish to see erected, lest some marplot fill them up with desks and thus the last case be worse than the first.

Will the day ever come when the best room and the most skilful teacher in the school will be given to the youngest class?

THE SWING OF THE PENDULUM.

In the course of a few years England has gone from the extreme of having no national system of education to the opposite extreme of a rigid compulsory clause. The disciples of Pestalozzi traversed the distance between having all lessons recited from text-books, and the total abolition of text-books even in highest mathematics. Bell and his followers found that in certain cases monitors could be employed with success, and they attempted to dispense with assistant teachers. In Ontario it was found that in some instances Scripture reading and lessons in morals were opposed, and now we seem to have gradually drifted to the antithesis of no Scripture teaching and no instruction in morals. Once upon a time our examinations were few and easy, lately they have grown both numerous and difficult, so that even the universities themselves are discussing the propriety of a reduction in their number. We lived a long time without entrance and intermediate examinations, afterwards we thought it necessary to hold them every six months. Just at the present time the educational pendulum seems to be making a perceptible swing in the region of elementary reading, oral teaching, and the education of the senses. To follow out to its ultimate consequences the present theory of certain *doctrinaires*, means to send out pupils from our public schools unable to carry on the great life-work of self-instruction by means of books, unaided by some kind preceptor to explain all difficulties.

Let us note, however, that all human progress involves this oscillation between extremes. Walking is only a succession of partial falls. A ship goes faster by tacking than by sailing

straight before the wind. Even the earth itself zig-zags in its orbit. The British constitution and government have been slowly evolved and are still preserved by the alternate triumphs of opposite tendencies. The swing of the pendulum measures off the progress of the race in fashion, politics, science, commerce, as well as in religion and education.

We are glad to note this movement within the educational circle of Canada. The extremes will not follow because the present tendency leads that way. The present impulse will gradually lose its force, and we shall in due season reach the true line along which we are steadily advancing. We may safely humor every educational enthusiast to the top of his bent. His experiments may lead to the greatest results. Time will soon burst theoretical bubbles, but true progress and discovery, though painfully and laboriously achieved, will assuredly stand like the pyramids.

OTTAWA SCHOOL BOARD.

Moved by Mr. Bronson, seconded by Mr. Meadows: That in the opinion of this board it is desirable that there should be added to the text-books authorized for the use of the public schools of Ontario, an elementary work setting forth the evils resulting from the habitual use of intoxicating liquors as a beverage, so that the youth of the country may be fore-warned against such use; that the Secretary be instructed to add, as a circular letter in the terms of this resolution to other school boards in the province, asking their concurrence in this matter, and that he be also instructed to forward a copy of this resolution to the Minister of Education.

TECHNICAL EDUCATION.

A recent publication of the United States Bureau of Education gives a striking synoptic view of the development and progress of industrial education in that great country. In December, 1882, the Senate adopted a resolution directing the Secretary of the Interior to furnish the latest and fullest information in the possession of the Bureau of Education in relation to technical or industrial education in the schools and colleges endowed in whole or in part by the government of the United States, and also in other schools in the country reporting instruction in industry for either men or women. In response to this resolution, and within four months of its adoption, there appeared a short volume of upwards of three hundred pages, embodying with singular clearness and fulness the desired information. Among the many useful publications of the National Bureau of Education, this will deservedly rank among the most useful. Here we have, as it were vocalized, the work that a great nation is carrying on for the practical education of its sons and daughters. We are impressively reminded by the statistics collected from the wide field of thirty-seven different States, of the increasing hold which education, in its relation to industry, is taking of the public mind throughout the western republic, and especially in its most enlightened and progressive portions. Older countries, inheriting historical difficulties, and confronted by severer problems, have naturally led the way as pioneers, and not a few of them have solved some of these dif-