

what under the despised "humble teaching" had been thoroughly acquired, that educational theorists would listen to the practical educator's protest against being required to erect the superstructure before he had securely laid the foundation. To many a teacher the authoritative announcement that the fundamental subjects of reading, writing and arithmetic, were henceforth to be regarded as of primary importance, came as a great and well appreciated relief, though it was unfortunately accompanied by other regulations and arrangements which could not command his assent. There may be a danger of making teaching too mechanical, of doing too little to cultivate the mind and enlarge the child's mental vision, but the danger of slurring over what is elementary and essential in order to reach more speedily than is prudent to the higher attainments, requires, in this age of general haste, to be still more carefully guarded against.

But we must not suppose that all has been done when we have placed under due restriction the subjects to be taught. This indeed is after all but the smallest part of the matter. The principal must be carried out in the teaching of these, and of all subjects. And here, too, the same temptations exist, and the same caution is needed. The simplest elements need the most careful teaching, the most minute points require a larger share of attention. For to a learner the first steps are always the most difficult, and having failed thoroughly to master them, makes further progress unreal, and often impossible. Rapidity here is sure to defeat its own purpose. Slow, careful, steady progress, frequent repetitions, constant testing, long continued practice are more than ever essential. Do we always provide for this? Do we not rather weary of going over again and again what is so well-known, so simple to us, but with which nothing else can make the learner familiar, and set him free to proceed without leaving an unconquered enemy in his rear? Is it not a fact, for example, that all our series of "School Reading Books" provide far less elementary than advanced reading? the size of the book increasing with the difficulty, as if a child in the fifth standard wanted more practice than one in the First or Second? And in the same way our "Copy-Books" pass over the elementary formations, a fault which seems on the increase rather than otherwise, as a "New Series" recently issued devotes but a single book of twenty-four copies to all the elements and the small letters of the alphabet. It cannot be unnecessary then, to urge teachers to consider the paramount importance of teaching very patiently and thoroughly the primary elements of any subject of instruction.

Among the measures necessary to ensure that adaptation of the instruction given to the capacities and requirements of each of its recipients, which is essential to the pupil's real and steady progress, that of periodical and frequent examinations of every scholar individually ranks as the most important. No school in which this means of checking undue haste, and correcting too unfavourable assumptions as to the work done, is not provided for, can hope to be successful. Such examinations should be searching, frequent and systematic. Everything done should be thus reviewed, tested, and when necessary, supplemented. Nothing has been taught till it has been received, and it is better to find out the weak points, whether arising from defects in the teacher, or the scholar, at an early period, than to leave the Inspector's Examination or the scholar's after-course to bring them to light. This thorough enquiry into the work done may easily be shown to be no less essential than the importation of new knowledge, and the time spent in it should not be regarded as so much deducted from the business of teaching, but as so much devoted to securing the *reality*, as opposed to what might have been only the appearance of progress. In addition to their value in this respect we may also suggest that such examinations, properly conducted, will prepare the school for those examinations at which the "results" have a pecuniary value. For children never do that well to which they are not accustomed, and it becomes therefore very important to make them perfectly familiar with the scene of an examination. On this account, if for no other, it would be well if clergymen and school-managers generally could be prevailed upon to assist the teacher, on some of these occasions, in the discharge of this part of his duties, and so, by making strange examiners no unusual items in the children's experience, prevent that nervous feeling which sometimes seriously impairs the "results" on which the income of the schools so much depends. But whether such help can be obtained or not, every teacher who tests the matter fairly, will soon be convinced that frequent examinations into every child's attainments on all the subjects in which he has received instruction, the results of which are made use of as incentives to renewed efforts on the part of both learners and teachers, and serve also as a guide in the classification of the school, and in the selection and arrangement of the subjects for future instruction, are far too valuable to be dispensed with.—*English papers for the School master.*

## 2. ERRORS IN THE SCHOOL ROOM.

"To err is human." It is to be expected that some errors will be found in every school. Burke says, "He censures God, who quarrels with the imperfections of men." While it is human to err it is man's prerogative to improve, to investigate, to reflect upon his own errors and to take measures to avoid them. In correcting our errors the first step is to find what errors we commit; the next, to decide upon the means of avoiding them. From conversation with school officers and examination of school reports, we have learned some of the prominent errors of the school room. We herewith present a list that we have compiled, to enable teachers to examine their own operations and avoid all common errors.

1. Want of good order is the error most frequently mentioned.
2. Teachers generally talk too much. In some schools the teacher talks more than half the time. Teachers might just as reasonably attempt to eat for their pupils as to think for them, study for them, or recite for them.
3. Teachers waste time at recitation in asking questions. Some teachers ask long questions and receive short answers—often "yes," or "no." A teacher's questions should be few and short; the scholar's answer should be full and correct, and, as a general rule, nine times as long as the question.
4. There are too many "Is it's." The teacher describes something, or answers a question, and then says "Is it?" "Is it" could very profitably be banished from the school room.
5. Scholars help each other too much, and they get too much aid from the teacher. Three-fourths of all the help which scholars receive from their teacher or school-mates is an absolute damage to them.
5. All scolding, threatening and harshness are errors.
7. Time is wasted in coming to order at morning, recess and noon.
8. Time is lost for want of promptness in coming to, and in going from class, in reciting and beginning to study after a class.
9. Pupils sometimes study in an improper manner.
10. Too many studies, and improper studies.
11. Too many hours spent in recitation, too few in study.
12. Reviews are neglected.
13. Injurious position of body, lack of ventilation.
14. Want of life and interest.
15. Want of object in each exercise.—*Normal.*

## 3. COMPOSITION AND RHETORIC.

There is no doubt that the practice of writing out passages from good authors is very beneficial as a means of improvement in composition. The frequent reading of such works as are distinguished for purity of style as well as brevity and force of expression is recommended. Macaulay's "Essays," for instance, if constantly read, must tend to improve the style of composition. In both speaking and writing it is certain that, to express one's ideas clearly and well in as few words as possible, is a great perfection. A literary man, whose valuable works are well-known to the world, says that after writing an article he carefully revises it, striking out every unnecessary word, and even substituting a word of two syllables for one of three, or of one for two, wherever it can be done without interfering with the sense and full force of the sentence.

## VII. Papers on the Profession of Teaching.

### 1. IS TEACHING A DESIRABLE PROFESSION?

Many influences help to determine the choice of occupation. A person must live from his labors; then come thoughts of wealth, influence, power, ease, fame, pleasure, duty, &c.

In many of these respects a teacher's life is a desirable one. A teacher, though seldom largely paid for his services, can generally obtain a fair salary. A young man can enter the teacher's profession earlier in life and at less expense than he can other professions. The young physician or attorney ordinarily waits years before his business will give him a support. These professions seem to be more than full. But a young teacher can find immediate employment. Good teachers are in constant demand. In all parts of the country there are more good situations than there are good teachers to fill them. There are commonly several applicants for every good situation, but often some or all the applicants are unfit for the place.

1. Teaching gives one many opportunities to do good. No member of society can be more useful than the teacher. He exerts a direct influence upon the happiness of all the children, and through them, of all the families in the community. He can in a measure, whatever the sources of unhappiness, render the childhood of his pupils bright, sunny and joyous.