

of the garden to the other would have acted much more wisely if he had ordered him to pluck up the weeds and otherwise improve the surroundings. As Swett in the *Pennsylvania School Journal* says:—

"A teacher who keeps young pupils at work, term after term, upon complex or puzzling problems in mental arithmetic, repeating long-drawn-out formulas in logical analysis, including statement, solution, and conclusion, before they have acquired readiness and accuracy in addition and multiplication, is only making them wheel stones. A country teacher who neglects 'the four rules' and 'the tables' in order to train big boys upon a normal-school analytical demonstration of the reason for inverting the divisor in divisions of fractions is wheeling stones; and if, added to this, he requires alligation, exchange, and progression, he is wheeling glacial boulders.

Now, all this superfluous, and in many cases useless, mental drudgery should cease, and the energies of teachers be directed to the task of imparting such a knowledge of numbers as would be of service in ordinary business pursuits.

In the same way the study of geography should be reformed. We cannot, of course, dispense with a good general knowledge of the world—the resources, climate, and productions of different countries, the important rivers, mountains, physical features, &c., but then why be so microscopic in our map geography? Who cares about the names of every little hamlet in France, every cape on the coast of China, or every island in the Mediterranean? Why burden the memory with bald names, which in a few weeks it repudiates, and which, if retained, would add but little to the mental equipment of the scholar? Why not be rational, and give the people in conjunction with the name of the place such facts of an historical or topographical character as furnish the only reasons why the name should be remembered? We certainly require to teach fewer names of places and more of the facts from which the places derive their importance.

Another consideration interwoven throughout this curriculum of essentials, or rather forming its substratum, should be the constant effort to quicken the mental activities of the pupil, to train him in habits of observation, to rouse his curiosity, to strengthen his judgment, and to cultivate his tact.

Having once entered the vestibule of the great temple of learning, he should have such an attractive view of its vast interior presented to him that he would gladly seize every opportunity to proceed farther, and, if fortune failed to favour him with the adventitious aid of an advanced teacher, he would, by his own unaided powers, explore every recess, and worship at every shrine which a refined intelligence had erected for the devotees of literature, science, and art. The next consideration in forming a Public School curriculum is simplicity. No greater mistake can be committed than to attempt too much. We must admit the child's power of absorption and assimilation is limited. The moment we exceed the range of that power all labour is wasted. Besides, the object of the Public School is not to teach many things, but to give the power and desire to learn many things. The first principles of a science may be easy and simple enough to an adult, but to a child they may be meaningless. Would it not be better then to exercise his powers within their natural range, than to perplex him with definitions, which to him are but a mere jargon of words? There is ample room within the area of essential subjects for the effort of which the child is susceptible, and to attempt more is to vitiate all. Let it not be supposed, however, that I object to such oral lessons in botany, natural history, and kindred subjects as appeal objectively to the child's mind. On the contrary, I value such lessons very highly. The boy learns largely from the world of nature around him. To aid him in his investigations, to stimulate his desire for more information, or to classify and systematise his knowledge would certainly be of great advantage to him. What I protest against is text-book science, or technical science for the school-room—a course of science entirely unscientific in its mode of presentation and utterly valueless as an educational force.

And this lead me to the next point—The Public Schools curriculum should be progressive. It should step by step keep pace with the increasing capacity of the pupil. Nothing is more irksome than to pore over lessons already mastered. Each day's work should be a new discovery, each lesson should be a fresh tableau. Just as fast as his powers develop so should heavier demands be made upon his energies. And here I might say that no absolute rule can be laid down as to the exact age at which certain studies should be undertaken. The judicious teacher must decide according to the capacity of each pupil, and no curriculum however wisely framed can render him much assistance. But progressiveness involves another idea. The Public School is part of a system, which so far as it goes ought to be complete in itself, but should also lead up to the next step in the great starway of learning. Immediately above it is the High School, where work of a higher grade is done. And although we must not forget that we promote a greater number into active life than we do into the High School, still if the continuity of the system is to be preserved this step must not be overlooked. True, the pupil on this higher plane labors, perhaps, with a different object in view, but even there we should not lose sight of those practical subjects which, when rightly considered, are the most valuable educating forces that can be employed.

Lastly, a Public School curriculum necessarily includes the agency of a loving, thinking, intelligent teacher. Nowhere is the law of Biogenesis more fully vindicated than in the school-room.

Omne vivum ex vivo—no life without antecedent life. We may frame a curriculum as perfect in its mechanism as one of West's chronometers—we may equip our school-room till there is nothing more to be desired—we may lay down rules which for their wisdom would be commended by a Solomon, but if we cannot place in the school-house a teacher properly endowed the results will be disappointing. Whether we ask him whether the curriculum is simple or complex, progressive or retrogressive, unless the teacher understands his work it is all the same. From him and through him must first come that life germ which is to be the beginning of a new creation to the child. By him doubts are to be dispelled, difficulties removed, and the mental sky so illuminated that the world round the pupil can be read as in the light of day. Is there a beauty in literature, then he points it out. Are there sermons in stones? He preaches them. Books in the running brooks? He reads them. Whatever of goodness and purity and inspiration there is in life, he imparts. Vitalizing with his own intellectual fervor every mind, he rouses dormant energies, encourages honest efforts, and stimulates into activity forces which leave their impress upon society when he has passed away.

A VOTE OF THANKS.

Mr. David Fotheringham moved, seconded by Mr. MacMurchy, that the Association express its high appreciation of the address, and tender a hearty vote of thanks to the President for having delivered it. This resolution was put by the Secretary and was carried amid loud applause.

The President acknowledged the vote in a few words. He expressed great gratification at the success which had attended this meeting. He had not known a meeting which was better attended or at which the discussions were more earnest and interesting. He explained that the next part of the programme would be the hearing of reports from delegates of the various county Associations. In the course of a brief discussion upon the work of these Associations, he stated that in New York there was a staff of twelve men who did little if anything else than visit the counties and instruct the teachers in the latest and most advanced thought in connection with education. In some of the other States the same work was done in different ways. He had hoped to have two men to place upon the road to visit the several Associations for this purpose. He did not desire to interfere with the work of the Associations, for he understood that these organizations must be allowed to do their own work. But by this system he hoped to assist the teachers in their work without clashing with the Association. Reports were then read from a number of the counties. Mr. D. G. Murphy spoke for West Middlesex, in which Association there were 120 teachers. His report showed a good state of affairs to exist. Mr. Sinclair, of East Lambton, representing 98 teachers, and Mr. Baird, West Huron, also reported. Mr. Powell, of Bruce, stated among other things that there was a lack of interest among the young teachers. His Association contained 80 teachers. Mr. Chadwick, of Perth, representing from 150 to 200 teachers, stated that the Perth Association had no membership fees. One of the main difficulties was the indifference of many of the teachers to the literature of the profession. He thought there should be some scheme for putting the *School Journal* into the hands of all the teachers. Mr. Payne, of Algoma, began the reading of his report, but as it was long, and had evidently been prepared with great care, the reading of it was postponed to a future occasion. Mr. Fotheringham reported for York that the Association, numbering 80 teachers in attendance, was in a flourishing condition. Mr. F. O. Steele spoke on behalf of the North Simcoe Association of 50 members, Mr. F. H. Smith for Wentworth with 115 members, Mr. McLae for the 40 members of the Waterloo Association, Mr. Henstridge for the Frontenac Association of 140 members, and Mr. Clapp for the North Wellington Association of 103 members.

The hearing of reports for other counties was postponed. Written reports will be handed in to the secretary by the several delegates.

[As we wish to give a full report of the Convention, we reserve the remainder till next issue.—*Editor.*]

If a father wishes to give his son a legacy that will endure while life exists, let him send him to an institution where he can obtain a practical education, and he will have the satisfaction of knowing that he has given him what is better than houses, lands, and farms, or even gold or silver. These things may take wings and suddenly fly away; but this knowledge will last while life and reason exist.—*Horace Mann.*

The teacher's work is principally directive, and he should avoid giving decisions with the air of authority, for the good to the pupils comes from the thoughts elicited, rather than from the conclusions stated.—*Johannot.*