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School Management and Methods of Teaching.

By Dr. JOYCE.
(Continued).

FURNITURE,—CONSTRUCTION OF DESKS.

The desks are the most important part of the school furniture, for on their construction depends, in a great measure, the children's progress in writing, as well as, to some extent, their comfort and health. Yet it is comparatively rare to find a well-shaped desk in many schools. The reason is plain; they are commonly entrusted to persons who know nothing about their construction. No one can make a desk who is not acquainted with the proper proportions of the different parts; this knowledge every teacher should possess, and in this, as well as in the management of furniture generally, he should be engineer—should be able to give, without hesitation, all necessary directions to the workmen.

Desks are commonly made too high and too much slanted; at a desk made in this way, a child cannot sit comfortably or write well. The part of the desk that is most important to make of the proper height, is that next the children's breasts, which should regulate all the rest. A good standard height for this part is 27 inches.

The slant part should be very nearly level; the whole

amount of the inclination should not be more than an inch and a quarter, which allows for the total height of the desk, 28½ inches. The total height, however, will depend on the inclination, since the edge next the breast should be in every case 27 inches high. If, for example, there be an inclination of 4 inches, the total height will be $27 + 4 = 31$ inches. This part should be not more than 11 inches perpendicularly over the form, which allows for the height of the latter, 16 inches. Breadth of the horizontal part at top, 3 inches; breadth of oblique part, 12 inches; horizontal distance between the desk and its own form, 4 inches; width of form 7 to 9 inches. The whole breadth of the desk, therefore, supposing the form to be 8 inches, is $3 + 12 + 4 + 8 = 27$ inches. In a female or mixed school, the distance between the desk and its form should be not less than 5 inches. (1).

(1) Now, we agree with Dr. Joyce in saying it is rare to find a well-shaped comfortable school desk. As a general rule School Boards, managers, and architects utterly ignore the very existence of the teacher so far as the construction and arrangement of school furniture is concerned. In any of the trades or professions the man who is to run the machine (as our friends over the lines say) is consulted and his ideas, opinions and suggestions listened to, respectfully, if not embodied in the plan,—but the teacher, in the estimation of those mentioned, seems to be a simple sort of noodle who never had an idea beyond the three R's and playing a sort of policeman to the delinquents of the school for a few hours daily. We cannot trust ourselves to dilate on this, but shall simply say teachers have only themselves to blame for the manner in which they are esteemed and treated by the public in general. If they would weed the profession of its moral and social encumbrances and raise the literary and social standing of the body, the profession would soon fare otherwise than at present. After this unintentional digression, we shall return to the desk. We do not agree with Dr. Joyce in the stereotyped 27 inches high in front. Nor do we think the slant or rise of an inch and a quarter enough. If the desks and seats were so constructed that they could be adjusted to the size or height of the pupil by raising and lowering on a slide, and then made firm by the tightening of a small thumb-screw—we believe this practicable, at very little additional expense, with those desks with metal frames—the problem of the child's physical comfort would be solved.

In the absence of this, in large schools in cities and towns where to a certain extent a pretty regular attendance of chil-