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Editorials.

AGRICULTURE AND BOTANY.

FROM the juxtaposition of the closing part of Inspector Dearness' article, which has run through two preceding numbers, with that of Mr. Stevenson, some of our readers may get the impression that we are giving an undue proportion of space to topics connected with agriculture. We may, therefore, explain that it is by accident that two articles, touching to some extent on the same subject, appear side by side. Nevertheless, we feel sure that both will be read with interest and profit by wide-awake teachers. There can be no doubt, we think, that the subject of agriculture, with related sciences, must very soon have a much larger place in our school programmes than has yet been given to it. The information given in Mr. Dearness' paper, with regard to what is being done in the way of agricultural instruction in the schools of other countries, is suggestive in this direction. Moreover, it is obviously highly desirable that all teachers, especially all teachers in rural schools, should be well informed on such points, and should also have a good practical knowledge of the science and art of farming, if they would preserve the respect of their pupils, and wield a healthful and helpful influence in the right direction, by arousing a deeper interest in the minds of

the children in what is, perhaps, the noblest and most indispensable of all industrial pursuits.

Mr. Stevenson's article is, in many respects, original and suggestive. It abounds in hints that can hardly fail to be of great value to the teacher who will study them thoughtfully, and put them into practice. The paper is a condensation of that read before the Science Section of the Educational Association a few weeks since. By the way, our apologies are due to Mr. Stevenson for having neglected to publish in a previous number the following note, which explains itself:

To the Editor of THE EDUCATIONAL JOURNAL:

DEAR SIR,—In your excellent report of the recent meetings of the Ontario Educational Association, I observe an error of statement regarding the paper I read on "A Wider Botany." What I said was not that botany, as a means of culture, was superior to language and literature, but that it ranked *next* to these subjects in that regard.

A. STEVENSON.

The High School, Arthur.

THE EDUCATIONAL VALUE OF VOCAL MUSIC.

WE frankly confess that we do not know enough about the subject to feel qualified to express an opinion upon the views put forward in the following paragraph, which we clipped some time ago from *The Educational Exchange*. The ideas seem to us somewhat original, and as if there might be "something in them." At any rate they are worth thinking about, especially just now when the proposal to give vocal music a place in the programme of our Public Schools is said to be under consideration:

The importance of vocal music in school training has not been, in the past, adequately appreciated. The want of appreciation is largely due to the unsatisfactory results secured by past efforts, and this fact, in turn, may be attributed to the manner in which instruction in this subject has been conducted. Upon the introduction of vocal music into the school curriculum, one important fact has been generally overlooked, namely, that this subject should be taught for the same general purpose and in the same manner as any other subject in the course. Usually it is set aside as a special topic for special pupils, taught by a special teacher. When it is decided to place music on the programme of the school, trustees and boards of education immediately begin to look around for a musician to give the instruction. That is a fundamental mistake. They should look first for a good teacher, and then let that teacher have an opportunity of learning vocal music, then it will be possible to deal with this subject as with the other subjects in the course. Within the past few years, the experience of the large

Public Schools of the country has demonstrated the superiority of the regular class teacher to the average professional music teacher in securing the best results in vocal music instruction. The subject should be taught, not simply for the purpose of making musicians, it should be taught for the same reason that arithmetic, geometry, and Latin are taught. Mental culture should be the principal aim, and all other aims should be subordinate and incidental. Vocal music is peculiarly adapted for securing a combination of the thought element and executive skill. No other study makes imperative the time element in its relation to thought as does vocal music. In mathematics and Latin habits of thinking may vary as to the time required, but, in vocal music, tone perception and its expression must be instantaneous and practically simultaneous. The problems of life require for their solution the elements of rapid thinking and prompt expression, and by its very nature vocal music tends to secure these desirable results. All other aims secured by school instruction in music, such as the pleasure and satisfaction derived by the pupil himself, or given to others, and the disciplinary influence of this kind of training upon the school, must be treated as incidental, though desirable, results, while the chief object in view must be the preparation of the pupil by the mental discipline derived for the practical activities of life.

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