

of its development. Pedagogics is dependent on psychology for an understanding of that on which it is to operate.

The leading Normal Schools of the United States have, for some time, made the study of psychology one of the most important of their course. The subject is given to the best educator on the staff. The study of the subject in Normal Schools is regarded as a matter of course, and has produced such good results that it is now proposed to introduce it into the Universities. The proposal originated with Mr. Adams. He says:—

"The most tangible point at which to begin is Harvard College. You should put that grand old institution into direct and immediate communication with the common school system of Massachusetts. How do we unite Harvard with the bar and the pulpit? By post graduate courses; by schools of law and theology. You should secure a post-graduate course, with a professorship of common school education, at Cambridge. Then you will secure your staff, your head minds, to direct your trained line-officers."

Another American educator, referring to the proposal of Mr. Adams, writes as follows:

"The suggestion of Mr. Adams that Harvard University should at once establish a chair of pedagogics was excellent, and would apply to every college in the country. One of the chief hindrances to the growth of correct methods of instruction is the periodical launching of college graduates, utterly untrained in the pedagogic art, into posts of authority as principals of grammar and high schools, to give the law to teachers educated in our best normal seminaries, and qualified by long experience in school work."

There is much force in the above remarks, and we in Ontario are well supplied, in our Provincial University at least, in the matter referred to. The lectures of Professor Young are invaluable to those students who intend being educators of the youth of our country.

It is to be hoped that the Minister of Education may soon be able to introduce into the Normal Schools in Toronto and Ottawa a course of lessons on Psychology for first class students at least. First class men are to become (many, if not all of them) the Inspectors and Model School masters throughout the Province. It is therefore of the highest importance that they should be thoroughly taught the nature of what they have to develop, and the laws that govern its growth.

—We are pleased to be able to give our readers in this number the first of a series of articles by Mr. C. P. Mason, B. A., F. C. P., Fellow of University College, London, author of the English Grammar so well known in Canada. The subject selected by Mr. Mason is a very practical one, and a careful reading of his articles will be sure to do much towards securing greater accuracy in teaching the elementary principles of grammar.

—The Provincial Teachers' Convention for Ontario meets in the Normal School, Toronto, on the 18th of August. A very interesting programme has been prepared, which will be given in the next number of the JOURNAL. All teachers wishing to attend should secure certificates from the Provincial School Inspectors before coming, to enable them to obtain reduced railway fares. These certificates must be presented at the commencement of the journey.

—David Allison, LL.D., enters upon the duties of his new position, as Chief Superintendent of the Schools of Nova Scotia, during the present month. He has our best wishes for his complete success in his new sphere.

Contributions and Correspondence.

CURRENT MISTAKES IN TEACHING ENGLISH GRAMMAR

BY C. F. MASON, ESQ., B.A., F.C.P., AUTHOR OF MASON'S ENGLISH GRAMMAR, &c.

I.

The subject of the following remarks has, unfortunately, no pretensions to the charm of novelty. Most of you have probably been hammering away at English Grammar for years, and some perhaps will have to do so for several years to come. My humble endeavour will be to help such to make their strokes as telling as possible, by showing them where and how effort is commonly wasted. For several years past I have had a good deal to do with the examination of pupils in schools, and candidates who have not long left school, more particularly in the department of English Grammar, in which subject many thousands of sets of answers have, from first to last, come under my scrutiny; and, considering how important a part examinations play in our modern system, (whether they are to be looked upon as a great good, or as a necessary evil,) I thought that it would not be uninteresting to those who, to a greater or less extent, are engaged in preparing pupils for the ordeal, if I gave them some of the results of my experience, by setting before them the kind of mistakes which candidates most commonly make, and the way in which they come to make them. In doing this I shall not be able to avoid criticising a good deal that is very commonly taught, and showing that the unfortunate bunglers have not merely gone astray, but have been led astray by what they have been made to learn.

I need hardly say that the teaching of English Grammar is something widely different from the teaching of, say, Latin or French Grammar—at least, to Canadian boys. In Latin, and even in French, (as far as the verbs are concerned,) you have to get your pupils to commit to memory a great apparatus of inflections, rules for forming genders, rules for various concords, rules for the cases to be put after prepositions, &c. All this is material of a very concrete character, and, though troublesome to master, does not, in the first instance, call for much beyond observation, comparison, and memory. English Grammar is quite different. We have hardly any inflections; a mistake about the agreement of an adjective with a noun is impossible, as adjectives do not mark gender, number, or case; and, as regards such inflections and concords as we have, the learners know them already. You never really have to *teach* a boy or girl to form the plural of *brother* or *man*, or the past tense of *be* or *go*. In teaching English Grammar you introduce your pupils at once to the most abstract conceptions, the functions of words, the nature of the parts of speech, the import of inflections, the relations of words to one another, and so on. You begin at once a logical training of the most refined character, the main object of which is, or should be, to discipline the faculties in habits of clear and close thinking, and the perception of the relations of ideas one to the other: and so, through the medium of English Grammar, you put, if I may so say, a grammatical soul into that bodily organism of forms and inflections, to which you mainly direct your attention in the grammars of other languages. English Grammar is from the first a system of logical analysis and definition.