

THE EDUCATIONAL PLATFORM.

When politicians desire to produce a change which they claim will effect an improvement in the physical well-being of the people, they state with clearness the objects at which they aim. They fix a platform and organize all who agree to it on that platform. This platform must announce practicable desires and views, or nothing will result. In this world, things do not right themselves; those who compose the educational party must agree upon certain principles and disseminate them; must write and speak upon them; have campaign documents written to show their importance, and finally never cease discussion until victory is reached. Consider the following:

1. That only those persons who have demonstrated by experience their ability shall be employed as teachers. REMARKS.—That is, the present plan of judging whether a person has the power to teach, by the scholarship he may have, is radically wrong, always has been and always will be. How a successful experience shall be gained is the business of normal and training schools. But an experience must be gained, and a successful one, too. The teacher is allowed in the school room for the benefit of the children solely.

2. That when a teacher has been appointed to a place, he shall have a guarantee of permanence. REMARKS.—The present plan of changing teachers at the end of each year, if not each session, grows out of the fact, mainly, that inexperienced persons are employed—the parents naturally are tired of the experimenting, and so are the scholars; besides that, there is far too much dictation by meddling parents and politicians. What other laborers are so kicked about? Not the clerks nor the kitchen girls. It is plain that some body of persons besides the “trustees” should have a word to say on this question. To put a man in the school in the winter and a woman in the summer, is another phase of this ridiculous business. This movableness is the sure means of driving away good teachers and keeping those who have little spirit and dignity. Away with it!

3. Superintendents of schools must be men or women who have had at least five years of successful experience as teachers and possess a state certificate, or diploma from a normal school or college. REMARKS.—When these persons are appointed on account of their fitness, dignity will be given to the whole business. Put in a seven-by-nine superintendent because he is a Democrat or Republican who cannot get any other office, and all the schools suffer, and the whole cause suffers. Yet this is constantly done. The case is a rare exception where these officers are not chosen by political influence; if they are good men it is accidental. A rascally state of things for the nineteenth century!

4. That the normal schools, where the science and art of education can be learned, should be increased to an extent sufficient to supply all of the schools of the State with teachers. REMARKS.—The connection of high schools or academic departments with normal schools, while once necessary, is now needed no longer. Let those who want to teach prepare themselves on the subjects which they will be required to teach, so that they can give their time to study the Art and Science of Teaching. Normal schools should be increased. New York State needs twenty-five such schools, and it could carry them on with \$250,000. It now spends \$160,000 on eight. Three or four men would manage such a school splendidly if the Academic Departments were cut off. There is no objection to these existing in the same building for the use of the locality. What is wanted is that each normal school shall furnish us with teachers, not with those who have been drilled on arithmetic, geography, etc. Other schools can do that as well or even better. Our schools must get up higher if they intend to do the good they might do.

5. The teachers must receive a fair salary, to be paid in monthly instalments. REMARKS.—The value the people set on education is measured by what they pay their teacher—all long-winded talks and snuffing to the contrary notwithstanding. Teachers are now meanly paid. Trinity Church pays its head gardener \$2,500—the head teacher of its schools \$2,000! No country can prosper that under-values and under-pays its teachers. It would aid very much to compare the amounts paid per scholar, and hence these should be reported. In other words, one town pays \$12 per scholar per annum, another \$24. Why this difference? A quotation of rates will assist many a stingy district to know how much it can afford to pay.

6. There must be ability and performance in all the offices from the State Superintendent down. REMARKS.—One official hardly becomes acquainted with his duties before another intrigues for his place. Hence there is no persistent nor long-continued effort. All is in a state of change. It resembles the child's planting a seed and digging it up in a few days to see if it has grown!

7. The teachers and friends of education must each and all take hold of the work of organizing the educational party of the country and direct its movements. REMARKS.—There are a million of adult persons who are interested in the welfare of our public schools. But many never have moved an atom to help forward education. They will rail because they get no larger salaries, but they will do absolutely nothing to increase that public sentiment that regulates salaries. The teachers should at once begin to wake up from their Rip Van Winkle sleep, and begin to act.—*N. Y. School Journal*.

DEVELOPING A TASTE FOR ENGLISH LITERATURE.

Oliver Optic is to many a lad a greater man than Scott or Dickens, and Beadle's Dime Novels will be eagerly read by him, while Shakespeare, Homer, Milton, Dante, and Macaulay are resting, unmolested and dusty, upon the library shelf. There was a time when love of reading in a child might be regarded as a hopeful sign of intellectual capacity. When books were few and costly; when very few of them were in any way intended for children in particular; when there were no children's papers or magazines, a child that was inclined to reading was compelled, perforce, to grapple with something which was considered worthy of mature thought. In reading, the mind was, of necessity, lifted somewhat beyond a childish range of elevation; and so, while many were repelled, some from pure affection, became, as a matter of course, thinkers and reasoners.

But at the present time it is not safe to say that a love of reading is a hopeful sign, or a proof of a promising intellect. One must know what is read and how, before speaking with anything like approval of a craving appetite for printed matter.

In general, as people read more, they profit less. There are hundreds who take their daily novel almost as the toper does his drams, and almost as ruinously. There are others to whom the daily paper, even of the best kind, is a positive injury, because of its excessive demand upon their time.

Our schools have done very much to create this appetite for reading. Are they doing what they ought to direct their pupils to healthful food for satisfying it? Are they in a position to do more without letting slip some of those things which the public seem now to demand? If they can do this work, how?

All agree that it is desirable to do so. All admit that a school education ought to impart to its recipient something of taste to incline him to good reading, judgment in selecting books, ability to appreciate and enjoy them, and knowledge of the art of using them. All admit that books are a most important factor in that