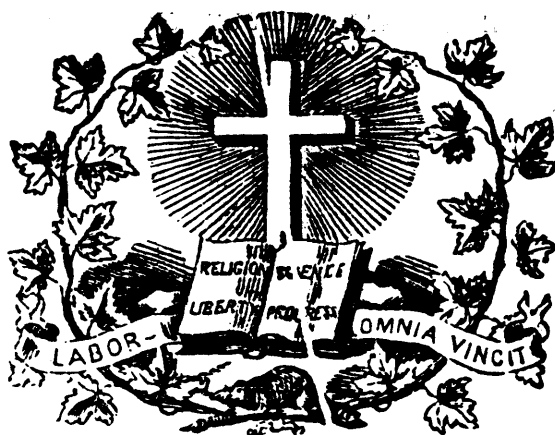




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EDUCATION.

Can Science be Taught in our Day Schools?

The following notes, by A. J., in the *Museum and English Journal of Education*, detailing what may and may not be judiciously attempted, based upon what has and has not been done, might contribute a service to teachers beyond that of the private perusal for which they were written.

I have been asked to give an opinion, founded upon my experience in teaching, as to the length of time necessary to prepare a class for the Government annual examination in science, to

ensure a pass, yet without detriment to the general school studies. My practice has ranged over many years, during which time I have taught the various branches of physical science and natural philosophy, as well as the elements of mental and moral science, and the diverse subjects of mathematics and practical, plane, and solid geometry. I have taught these subjects to classes of youths and adults, and of both sexes, in day schools and in the evening. By common consent, the classes connected with South Kensington, have arranged their terms from Michaelmas to May, which, deducting a month for Christmas and Easter, gives a period of six months, say 180 days; omitting again Wednesdays and Saturdays as broken days, and Sunday being *dies non*, 104 days remain for the arrangement of science lessons. As a daily lesson in science cannot advantageously extend beyond an hour, this is equivalent to 104 hours, a time in which an efficient teacher, supported by the general good discipline of the school, and supplemented, perhaps, by a few extra hours just preceding the examination, could guarantee to convey so much of elementary science as to ensure his class passing with credit, in *two allied branches*. Thus Animal Physiology and Zoology might be taken together, or Animal and Vegetable Physiology, or Structural, Economic, and Systematic Botany, or two divisions of Natural Philosophy. Similarly Geology links itself with mineralogy, and Physical Geography with Astronomy, or with almost anything; and the alliances could be still further carried out.

To do justice to his functions, therefore, the science teacher demands four hours a week, for half the year, from the thirty hours that his pupils usually attend school. The schoolmaster proper, at the same time, has so many subjects pressing upon his attention, with all the weight of prescription, that, apart from science, his great difficulty is already to apportion his weekly thirty hours to the best advantage. Science also puts forward no secondary pretensions to consideration; nor can it be wedged in to fill up a gap. It claims a primary place in the school routine, and its claims are every day more and more recognized as valid. The skilful administration of our schools will be tested and measured ere long, by the way in which science is introduced into their curriculum. That it can be efficiently taught, and that with positive advantage rather than damage to every other subject, is proved by the practice of the most advanced