

The School.

Upon the action taken by the supporters of the Victoria University the fate of the college federation movement largely depends. The latest contribution to the discussion is a pamphlet issued by the Rev. E. H. Dewart, D.D., in which the advantages of the federation from the Methodist point of view are set forth very clearly and forcibly. We have read the article with a good deal of interest. No doubt it will have considerable effect upon the thinking of the denomination. To our mind the original scheme has been a good deal marred by the proposed division of the work of teaching between the *University and University College and the consequent degradation of the latter*. At the same time the experiment is probably worth trying even in its modified form and we wish the movement success. Some extracts from Dr. Dewart's able paper will be given next week.

Every one interested, as who is not, in the well being and progress of his fellow-men, will be glad to hear of the success of the noble efforts being put forth by American philanthropists to educate and elevate the freedmen of the South. The work is necessarily a slow and tedious one, and, if we mistake not, an impression prevails in many minds that it is not proving a great success. The impression is happily wrong. The average negro's eagerness to learn and success in learning have been such as to afford the greatest satisfaction and encouragement to those engaged in the good work. Dr. A. G. Haygood, general agent of the "John F. Slater Fund," in a recent address said "If we compare the progress of any other four or five millions of illiterate people in any twenty years of the world's history with the progress of the negroes in this country from 1865 to 1885, we will find that never before did so many ignorant people learn so many useful things so fast."

Before our next issue "Arbor Day" will have come and gone. We hope that teachers and pupils all over the province will enter into the spirit of the movement. Let teachers "talk it up," in the schools. The eager expectancy which is so easily aroused in the young mind by the prospect of a day out of doors, will form an excellent preparation for the work. A little genuine enthusiasm in the teacher will help the thing on wonderfully. We shall be glad to learn the results. A report of a few lines from each teacher, stating the number and kind of trees planted, &c., would be interesting, and would enable them to compare notes, which would not be without effect next year.

The coming of spring makes us in the city long for the fields and groves with their May decorations of wild flowers. In how many of our schools is elementary botany taught? In very few, we fear, seeing it is not in the curriculum. That is, we think, a pity. It is doubtful if there is any other branch which can be made to yield so happy a mixture of pleasure and profit. It is not necessary that much dry book work should be done. But if every teacher had some little knowledge of the subject, what excellent work might be done by enlisting the pupils in

the recreation of collecting and classifying out of the school hours. The results could not fail to be good mentally, æsthetically, morally. The habit of observation would be formed, taste improved, love of the beautiful cultivated, and a source of the purest pleasure opened up to the pupil, which would in many cases be available in all the after life. Even if the teacher has not studied botany, he or she can do an excellent work in the way of teaching the children to observe and love the flowers of the field. This is an education in itself.

There can be no greater mistake than to suppose it possible for the teacher to occupy neutral ground in the school-room in regard to the great questions of morality and religion. It is easy to say he need not, or shall not, give any formal instruction on these subjects. But he is daily, hourly, expressing his views and principles in a language more effective than any speech. If his heart is enlarged with Christian philanthropy, if his motives are pure, his aims lofty, his spirit patient and loving, he is constantly speaking to the hearts and consciences of his pupils in a language which they cannot fail to understand. If he is destitute of all these qualities of mind and heart the best moral maxims and religious sentiments will fall powerless from his lips. The question of moral and religious instruction is not a question of the Bible or of religious exercises in schools, half so much as it is a question of the character and conduct of the living teacher.

Mr. Wild, President of the English Union of Elementary Teachers, in the course of a very interesting and able address at the recent conference at Norwich, giving the result of his observations in the schools of some of the foremost countries on the Continent, said:

"The feeling abroad seems to be that the safest, nay, the only sound guarantee it is possible to have that a real education is being given, is the high character, the thorough training, and the perfect fitness of the teacher; and that the yearly visit of an inspector, and the individual examination of children, are no effective guarantees whatever. The methods of teaching are theoretically perfect; and yet, if I may say it without being condemned as too utterly insular and narrow, it seemed to me that they failed to get all the good out of their excellent *methods and systems that one would expect, because they carried them to excess*. As in matters political they seemed to over-govern, so in this they seemed to check originality and spontaneity."

This danger of over-governing is one that besets every elaborate system of public education. The sooner that Trustees, parents and all concerned come to realize the fact that the best of all guarantees of real educational work are the high character, the thorough training, and the perfect fitness of the teachers, the better.

An educator in the Southern States said in a recent address. "Everybody knows that the average white girl prefers the attentions of the well-dressed youth who sells ribbons at \$25 a month to those of a carpenter, not so well dressed, who can easily earn \$50 a month." The speaker attributed the fact in the South to a recoil from what is esteemed the humiliation of hand work. The sentiment might be explained in a land