

mental rules, reduction, and most important points in fractions. Mr. Johnston advised great thoroughness in teaching the fundamental rules, as the pupil's success in Arithmetic depended altogether on the thoroughness with which these rules were taught. He said the three objects aimed at should be correctness, neatness, and quickness. He also condemned the use of text-books at first, and if used afterwards, that they should be used with discretion. The aim of the teacher should be to fit the pupils for the duties of after life, and to do this successfully the teacher should be the text-book; the scholars should have plenty of practical questions; they should be required to explain these questions themselves, and thus having a proper understanding of what they are doing, Arithmetic would be a very agreeable and pleasant study. He objected to the practice of requiring the pupil to learn the rule from the book, but said they should understand the principle first, and then they would be able to deduce their own rule from these principles.

Mr. Johnston next proceeded to show his method of teaching Object Lessons. He said in introduction that there is no lack of objects for this kind of instruction. There are plenty of objects around us that make admirable subjects. He then proceeded to give as examples, lessons on Glass, India Rubber, and Water. He said the design should not be to give the pupils a great deal of information and facts by telling them, but that it should be made inductive; that the pupils should be led to discover truths for themselves, by exercising their senses of sight, touch, &c., and thus they would not only be instructed but also educated. He advocated that anything that the pupils can be led on to by a series of questions should not be told them. They might more properly be called developing lessons. After this is done, they should be thoroughly questioned on what they have found out and were told, and then required to write a composition on the subject. In this connection he stated that writing compositions is always a subject of which young pupils have a dread,—that virtue, truth, &c., and other abstract subjects were not fit subjects for composition with young minds, but that when they have such ideas in their heads as they got from an object lesson, it then becomes a pleasure to express them, and not an irksome and disagreeable task.

Mr. Johnston then took up the subject of reading to beginners, from the tablets. He said that reading is only cultivated talking. He referred to the commendable features of the "Look and Say" method, pointing out the errors of the old method, exploding the old idea that it was necessary the child should know all his "A B C's" the first thing, then proceed to spelling, then to reading, thus reversing the natural order. He urged the importance of the child reading with proper emphasis and expression from the very first, and this can only be acquired from imitation; hence the importance of the teacher being a good reader. He also laid great importance on the child, either in primary or more advanced reading, having a proper understanding of the passage advised, and that teachers question their classes to see if they understand themselves.

In connection with reading, Mr. Johnston gave some useful hints on spelling, dictation, meanings of words, in connection with the context and recitations.

Mr. Johnston then proceeded to take up the subject of grammar to a primary class. In this subject, also, he advised the discarding of books altogether at first. A great man once said, "Grammar was the first subject commenced and the last ended," but this arose from the improper mode of teaching it. By making free use of the black-board, and teaching in the proper manner, grammar, considered by those never properly taught an abstruse and dull subject, can be made the most delightful and profitable of any of the English branches. He then proceeded to show his method of teaching beginners and advanced classes and elucidated the methods of teaching the different subjects. He thus showed himself to be a lively and energetic teacher, and a thorough and practical educator.

Mr. Johnston's efforts in this direction cannot be too highly estimated. Until he got charge of the schools, it was impossible to get a convention started in this county. The institute in Belleville was established shortly after he came into the office, and has continued ever since to hold regular meetings, and has been the means of establishing a uniformity of system of teaching, and has also, in a particular manner, been a source of great advantage and improvement to our young teachers. Through his untiring zeal in connection with his duties as Inspector, and the working of these conventions, he has succeeded in elevating the standard of the schools of South Hastings, to a point second to none in the Province.

At the close, the teachers tendered to Mr. Johnston a hearty vote of thanks for the benefits resulting from the meeting.

The convention then dispersed, each one feeling highly benefited and pleased with the manner in which the day was passed.

V. Local School Administration, etc.

1. SKETCH OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN THE NEW CITY OF ST. CATHARINES.

Within the last quarter of a century the school interests of St. Catharines have grown at a rapid rate. On the 1st July, 1848, a special meeting of the Board of Trustees was held to consider the propriety of closing the schools, in consequence of the Board of Police refusing to levy a tax to defray the expenses of keeping them open. The sum required was only £230—\$920—and the number of children then attending the schools was the insignificant number of 836. [This year our school expenditure is estimated at \$14,500, and the attendance of pupils is fixed at 2,600.] The Board of Trustees, before whom the momentous question of closing the schools came up for discussion in 1848, was composed of Messrs. E. S. Adams (Chairman) Lyman Parsons, Gershon Wright, A. K. Boomer, S. Haight, and A. S. St. John. After fully discussing the situation these gentlemen resolved that "in order that the Common Schools of the town may be kept open during the whole year, the Trustees humbly suggest the propriety of again transferring said schools to the District Council, in order that rate-bills may be levied and the collection enforced under the School Act."—At a meeting held by the Board of Police, March 1, 1849, it was decided on motion of Mr. Foley, seconded by Mr. Burns, that "the Board of Police take the Common Schools of the town under their control." At an adjourned meeting, the following gentlemen were appointed Trustees: Messrs. H. Mittleberger, Wm. Atkinson, Jacob Hainer, R. A. Clark, P. Marren, and S. L. St. John. The Board continued to control the schools until the Town Council was elected. Up to 1853, the schools gave very little signs of liberality in their management. In this year, the Trustees, having no school-houses in their own right, were obliged to hire buildings for the purpose as best they could. The names of the Trustees at this period were Jas. R. Benson (Chairman), A. Donaldson, the "learned cobbler," S. S. Junkin, F. Connor, and John Copeland; H. Slate, Secretary.

In the above-named year, two brick school-houses were erected at a cost of \$4,000, not including furniture, and named respectively St. Thomas and St. George's Ward Schools.

Mr. Wm. McClure, a somewhat eccentric character, a graduate from Toronto University, who was also preparing himself for the medical profession, was employed as Head Master of St. Thomas' Ward School, with Mr. James Wilson and Miss Johnson as assistants.

Mr. W. Monaghan, an energetic and successful teacher, who was likewise preparing for the profession of medicine, was employed as Head Master of St. George's Ward School, with Mr. Henry Egbert and Miss Seaman as assistants.

The Trustees considered they had made a gigantic stride in the march of progress, and everybody said "it was a wonder."

In 1855, Mr. McClure, having completed his medical studies, resigned the principalship of St. George's Ward School, on the 30th September, and went to London, C. W., to practise his profession, where, in a very short time, in experimenting with some medicine, he poisoned himself.—*Requiescat in pace.*

On the 1st October, 1855, Mr. R. McClelland was appointed to the principalship of St. Thomas' Ward School, which position he held until the opening of the Central School, in April, 1872.

During that period the following gentlemen held the position of principal, in succession, in St. George's Ward School; W. F. Monaghan, John Connor, Rev. J. McPatrick, W. Ball, a graduate of Toronto University and now County Inspector of Welland, Charles Bannister, a talented and highly gifted young man, since deceased, and Mr. J. B. Somerset, Inspector of Public Schools for the County of Lincoln. It may here be stated that on the appointment of Mr. Somerset to the Inspectorship in 1871, Mr. O. F. Wilkins was temporarily employed to supply his place until the opening of the Central School.

As the population of the town increased, the school accommodation became too limited, and the Ward Schools were enlarged, and an additional assistant was employed in each.

The following gentlemen acted as Local Superintendents, in their order, from 1855 to the appointment of the present incumbent, Dr. Comfort: Rev. Robert Robinson, Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church; Rev. R. F. Burns, then Pastor of the Canada Presbyterian Church; Rev. T. T. Roberts, Minister of the Episcopal Church; and Dr. Cooney, a venerable superannuated minister of the Wesleyan body, and who has since passed away.

No further stride was made until the advent to power of Dr. Comfort. On his coming into office he saw at once that the crowded state of the schools demanded further accommodation.