

masters. Of the day's work he was wont to say, "Let every child have for every minute of his school time something to do and a motive for doing it."

The scholars taught by Lancaster were from amongst the poorer classes of London and his work in consequence received a very great stimulus when King George III gave to it his patronage and that of the royal family at the same time saying, "It is my wish that every poor child in my dominions should be taught to read the Bible."

The recognition of the merits of Lancaster's system by the Sovereign and its adoption by the non-conformist element of the population in England led the prominent members of the established church, clerical and lay, to call upon the Rev. Dr. Bell to organize a similar system of common school education. In consequence schools on the Madras or Bell system were established at several centres about the year 1807, and they soon became wonderfully popular. Bell's system, like that of Lancaster, was a mutual or monitorial method of instruction in which the older scholars were employed to teach the younger. By means of an elaborate system of mechanical drill the rudiments of reading, writing and arithmetic were taught to large numbers at the same time. The results in many instances were surprisingly good. The little monitors were often found to make up in brightness, tractability and energy for lack of experience, and to teach the arts of reading, writing, and computing with surprising success.

Bell regarded a school not merely as a place to which individual pupils should come for guidance from teachers but as an organized community whose members have much to learn from each other. He sought to place his scholars from the first in helpful mutual relations and to make them feel the need of common efforts for the attainment of common ends.

As in the case of Lancaster's schools the materials of teaching were often scanty, comprising in some cases a few leaves torn out of spelling books and pasted on boards, some slates and a desk covered with a layer of dampened sand on which the children wrote with their fingers.

The public were carried away with the novelty of the system. Its interesting exercises and quasi-military discipline possessed a certain fascination which captivated the admiration of the visitor and disarmed criticism. The *Edinburgh Review* in 1810 probably only voiced public sentiment in describing the Madras system as "a beautiful and inestimable discovery, a plan now brought very near to perfection, by which education can be placed within the reach of all classes."

The opinion expressed by the *Edinburgh Review*, it is needless to say, was decidedly *couleur de rose* and the test of time has shown the necessity of training teachers in the art of teaching in order to the attainment of the most enduring and satisfactory results. Dr. Bell's faith in his method however, continued to the last and he bequeathed his fortune of £120,000 for the propagation of his views. At his death in 1832 he was honored with a tomb in Westminster Abbey. His life was written by Southey.

The remarkable success achieved by the schools organized by Bell and Lancaster led to the foundation in the year 1811 of what was known as the "National Society for the education of the poor in the principles of the established Church." Through the instrumentality of this Society a training school for teachers was established at Baldwyn's Gardens, London. Here masters and mistresses were trained in the theory and practice of the Madras system and sent out as fast as qualified to take charge of schools in town or country. The National Society received many benefactions and legacies in addition to some state aid and was in consequence enabled to contribute towards the erection of school houses both in England and in the British Colonies. In conjunction with the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, elementary school books were in many cases furnished by the National Society free of cost, and it is worthy of note that the primary step in the introduction of the Madras system in the Maritime Provinces was the sending out to Halifax early in the year 1814 of a donation of 500 sets of books used in the Madras schools for gratuitous distribution amongst schools in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

For the REVIEW.]

#### "Near to Nature's Heart."

A question which naturally suggests itself to a city teacher at this season of the year, is— "Where shall I spend my summer vacation?" and it is one of no small moment, for on this question largely depends the success of the ensuing term.

How shall I spend it so as to resume my work with renewed physical and mental vigour, with a higher ideal of my vocation, and in sympathy with the poet who said, "Children are poetry?" I would reply, "Near to nature's heart."

Lay aside social and professional (if the word is allowable) conventionalities, get in touch with the heart of nature, "uninjured by inimitable art." Yield yourself to her moods, follow her dictates, and you will feel with Wordsworth, that—

"An impulse from a vernal wood  
May teach you more of man—  
Of moral evil and of good,  
Than all the sages can."