

EDITORIAL NOTES.

We ask our readers to pay special attention to an article we have taken this month from the *Forum* on "The Teaching of the Mechanical Arts." The article is by Professor Thomas Davidson.

DR. J. A. McLELLAN is to visit Europe this year, primarily for the benefit of his health but also for the purpose of seeing what work is being done in the schools of the mother countries of the Canadian people. While taking this trip the Director of the Teachers' Institutes for Ontario will send letters to this magazine on various topics bearing upon education, and the progress which is made in Great Britain and on the Continent of Europe. We regard this as a valuable feature in THE MONTHLY for the coming year.

INDICTMENT.

FOR months past Mr. Auberon Herbert has been preparing an elaborate indictment of competitive examinations. He has also devoted considerable time and trouble to getting signatures to his complaint and protest. The result has verified the experience of many others in similar cases. The following are the counts in the indictment: 1. "The dangerous mental pressure and misdirection of energies and aims, which are to be found in nearly all parts of our present educational system." 2. "Under it, all education tends to be of the same type, since boys from all schools of the same grade meet in the same competition, and all teaching tends to direct towards the winning of the same prizes." As an axiom is here put the important

statement: "It cannot be too often repeated that uniformity means arrest of growth and consequent decay; diversity means life, growth, and adaptation without." 3. The preponderating influence of examinations destroys the best teaching. Under it the teacher loses his own intelligent self-direction; for "he cannot devote his powers to such parts of a subject as are most real to himself . . . as he is constantly controlled by the sense of the coming examination, in which, of course, he wishes his pupils to succeed." The effect on the scholar is stated in the words following: The pupil allows himself to be mechanically ground for the sake of success; his mental sympathies become bounded by the narrowest horizon. "What will pass in his examination becomes his ruling thought." 4. In working for passing an examination, the tendency is to "strengthen the rote-faculties to the neglect of the rational faculties; the rapid forgetfulness of knowledge acquired; the cultivation of a quick superficiality and power of skimming a subject; the consequent incapacity of understanding original work; the desire to appear to know rather than to know; the forming of judgment on great matters where judgment should come later; the conventional treatment of a subject and loss of spontaneity; the dependence upon highly-skilled guidance; the belief in routines and formulated answers: the beating-out of small quantities of gold-leaf to cover great expanses; the diffusion of energies over many subjects for the sake of marks, and the mental disinclination which supervenes to undertake work which is not of a directly remunerative character, after the excite-