

VI. Correspondence with the Journal.

1. TEACHING GERMAN IN OUR SCHOOLS.

To the Editor of the Journal of Education.

DEAR SIR,—The event of a few things which have transpired in this neighbourhood relating to School matters, has induced me to place in the columns of your *Journal* a short item of the facts that have occurred, together with my opinion upon them. It appears that some years ago a deputation from this locality and the neighbouring Townships went in person to the Chief Superintendent of Education, Dr. Ryerson, in order to obtain from him the privilege of having German taught in those schools where the great mass of the pupils were Germans. This privilege the Dr. readily granted, adding the provision, however, that they were not to discard the English, but teach it equally with the other. Now this they have abused, so far as the sequel of this letter shall tell. I may state at the beginning that it is not my intention here to discuss the advantages or disadvantages of any language, but in order to do justice to the respective parts which effect education, I will start out with the premise that all the languages as spoken by the different elements that form Ontario are in every respect equal. If so, then should not each one have just right to claim a like privilege and support. We know that this Province is principally made up of the four elements, Irish, Scotch, English and Germans, who will in course of time become amalgamated, so that they will be as one. Now, which of those four predominates I will not venture to say, but I can safely state that either the Irish or Scotch form a greater percentage of the population of Ontario than the Germans do. If, therefore, this latter element petition for the privilege of having German taught in their schools, a thing which is certainly just and honourable in itself, have the Irish and Scotch not equal right to request that the respective languages be taught in the Public Schools, when the great mass of the pupils are of Irish or Scotch descent? And it is a fact well-known to all that there are many Townships in the Province that are almost exclusively composed of either of these two latter elements. Yet though they love their mother language, and discourse in it by the fireside and in the street, they never dream of introducing it into the Public Schools as the Germans have, to the detriment of the English. I willingly concede that where there is a section entirely German, it is but just that they should be granted the privilege of having their language taught in their school, though still it is a favour which the Irish and Scotch have equal right to claim. But there is one thing just in it, that should they suffer from it they are themselves both the accusers and the accused, and are duped by their own ignorance. But to bring the matter to an issue, it is herein where the abuse lies. In many sections, as it is very natural to expect, the ratepayers are composed of Irish, Scotch and Germans, the latter, however, having just majority enough to retain two German Trustees in office. These, as a matter of course, employ a German teacher, who in eleven cases out of twelve is not capable of teaching even the rudiments of the English language. For how can it be expected that a teacher, who cannot himself pronounce the English language correctly, or who does not know the value of a word, can impart to his pupils a proper pronunciation, or convey to their minds the real worth of a word. Yet so far are they clouded with ignorance and prejudice that they will discard the best English educated teacher in order to obtain a German one who knows neither the English nor German language, and very often holds but a permit that may entitle him to draw the Government money. The consequence is that the system, if allowed to continue, will so far prove an injury to the English speaking population. And it will in time be useless for their children to attend at all. In fact, at present in many sections the question is being mooted of separation from the Germans, in order that children may not grow up ignorant, and lose that facility of acquiring knowledge which the educational system of Canada amply holds forth in every other respect. It is a pity if a Bismarck is permitted to disturb the peace of Prussia, that young Bismarck should also arise here and create disturbances in our Canadian homes. Hoping, therefore, that you will consider the question well, as it is one of vital importance to this neighbourhood and many others, and trusting that you will pardon me for having trespassed so long in the columns of your *Journal*,

I remain as a lover of peace, harmony and education,
Feb. 1874.

A RATEPAYER OF CULROSS.

2. PRAYER IN SCHOOL.

To the Editor of the Journal of Education.

SIR.—The article published in the *Journal* for February, under the above title, has induced me to express the following views of that subject in opposition to those of Mr. Ireland. The idea meant

to be conveyed in the first part of said article appears to me to be so abstruse, that I leave it to be discussed by those who can better comprehend it. The writer's objection to prayer at *stated times* appears to me to be unfounded, for we are taught in scripture, both by precept and example, to do so; nor do I see it more difficult to pray at the hours in question, than at the commencement and close of each day, or to regularly ask a blessing at meal times. Surely if we are in that frame of mind inculcated by the divine command, to "pray without ceasing," we will not find it difficult to ask from our hearts the blessing on our doings and the forgiveness of our sins, which are expressed in those prayers suggested by the Council of Public Instruction.

With respect to the writer's expression "Business Prayers," which I think savors more of blasphemy than of wit, I would say that the necessity for prayer and our Saviour's command to watch and pray, should make it an important part of our business as Christians, and that if we regard it as business in any other light, it ceases to be prayer at all; and we do so contrary to the intention of those who practice or those who proposed the commencing and closing our school exercises with prayer.

Your correspondent says that, "to tell a man what to say and when to say that what to God, needs only to be mentioned to become ridiculous." Now this is as applicable to public Sabbath service and to regular family worship, as to the recommended opening and closing exercises in our schools, for if on such occasions we use a liturgy we are told thereby what to say, which is equally the case if we follow the words dictated by one leading extemporaneously in prayer, for we are then supposed to pray as he dictates, without even knowing previously what we are about to pray for, and, moreover, we must hold these services at stated times, over which in most cases we have no control. In either case we are told "what to say," and "when to say that what."

It is to be regretted that he does not take a more extensive view of the passages quoted from the Lord's Prayer, when he says that "'Give us this day our daily bread' would be absurd after we have got it." Now if we have to regard these words with logical exactness, we may understand the word 'day' to mean that period of 24 hours commencing with the present, but should we not remember that Christ has said "I am the Bread of Life," and "I am the Bread which came down from heaven," and surely if we are born of God, we will daily desire to feed on Him in our hearts by faith with thanksgiving.

No "old grudge" should prevent us using the passage "forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us," for Christ tells us to forgive even till "seventy times seven," and even if the fear of God did not constrain us, surely the love of Christ should compel us to obey.

In conclusion I would say that the latter part of the article, as a discourse upon the practicability of opening and closing our school exercises with prayer, strikes wide of the mark, and dangerously near a criticism on the dictation of our Lord. I would further remark that without a forgiving spirit, and a heart touched with the love of Christ, we cannot mould as we should the characters of the children daily looking to us for example, and unconsciously imbibing our very nature, nor can we hope for success in our mission and calling as teachers, without regular fervent prayer.

W. H. C.

Hanover, March 20th, 1874.

[We entirely dissent from Mr. Ireland's views in this matter.—
Ed. J. of E.]

VII. Papers on Agriculture and Natural History.

1. PROGRESSIVE AGRICULTURE.

No doubt every farmer desires to be known as an intelligent and progressive tiller of the soil; but in order to merit that appellation there must be intelligent planning and judicious management. A manufacturer who does not keep up with the times is left high and dry, while some useful competitor catches the flood that leads on to fortune. The only way to bring about successful results is to endeavour to develop increased production by increased fertility, and that increased production and increased fertility are to be brought about by the enterprising farmer exercising a liberal expenditure of labour and capital. The farmer, as compared with the thriving merchant or manufacturer, is in a most unenviable position, and his capital, scattered over his fruitful fields, is by his successor carefully reaped, and thus other men enter into the sweets and rewards of labour and capital. The present and future tendency of agriculture is, and must be still more, one of progression and increased development. The advance in the price of labour, the multiplied use of expensive machinery, the indispensable use of high priced fertilizers, the increased consumption of feeding cakes, the high price of