

THE attention of those interested is specially invited to Mr. Houston's letter in another column.

THE glad Christmas time is near at hand. It is a good time to forget the mistakes and shortcomings of the past, and to take anew to the heart the gospel of progress and hope. May all our readers be enabled to enter fully into the spirit of the season, and enjoy both the sacred memories and the blessed hopes with which this best of all anniversaries is fraught. A merry Christmas—it is only the pure heart, the clear conscience and the right purpose which can make our hearts truly merry—A merry Christmas to you all!

A SUBSCRIBER in Nova Scotia writes to ask for information and suggestions in reference to promotion examinations. We give this week among our Examination Questions some specimens of the questions set at recent promotion examinations. We do not know to what to refer our subscriber for the fuller information he seeks. We presume he wishes to know the opinions of practical teachers who have tried the system as to its workings and results. The question is frequently discussed at the Teachers' Associations. Perhaps some teacher who has paid attention to the matter would kindly give us the *pros* and *cons* in a short article or two. Many readers of the JOURNAL would no doubt be interested.

TEACHERS of large ungraded schools are often sorely puzzled to know how to keep the younger children employed, or rather amused, during the long school hours. It is absurd to expect children of six or eight years to study five or six hours a day, or even half that time; and cruel to try to force them to do so. On the other hand, unemployed brains are sure to make disorder and mischief. One of the most useful devices is a box of letters, such as can be procured for a few cents, for the game of word making, or even manufactured out of thick paper or card board. Most children, with a little guidance, will find a fruitful source of amusement in combining the letters into words and short sentences, and will thus really be learning to spell and compose while amusing themselves. This is only one of many similar methods which the skilful teacher will adopt to keep the active little minds pleasantly and profitably busy.

IN his report to the Minister of Education for 1887, Inspector Tilley spoke favorably of a system of management that is said to have been used for some years in the Port Hope Public Schools, with excellent results. The chief feature of the plan is that the Principal is relieved from all class teaching, and thus enabled to give his whole time to supervising the work of teaching in all the rooms of the school. The idea seems a good one for all the larger schools. It is clearly impossible for the Principal, who has to spend most of the day in teaching classes, to know very much about the kind of work done

in the other class-rooms. Principal Garvin, of the Woodstock Public Schools, recently recommended the method to the Woodstock Board, but we have not heard whether his recommendation was adopted. Some of the advantages of the method are thus described by Inspector Tilley:—

"Under this system uniformity in methods of teaching can be secured in all the divisions, the Principal can give his individual attention to Model School work during the term, and the senior division is spared the confusion which necessarily results from a change of teachers each second half-year."

DR. JOHNSON is credited with having said, "I would rather have the rod to be the general terror to children, to make them learn, than tell a child, 'if you do this or that, you will be more esteemed than your brothers or sisters,'" and to have argued the point as follows:—"The rod produces an effect which terminates in itself. A child is afraid of being whipped, and gets his task, and there's an end on't; whereas by exciting emulation and comparisons of superiority, you lay the foundation of lasting mischief—you make brothers and sisters hate each other." The gruff old philosopher may have been right or wrong in his preference of one bad motive force to another. It does not seem to have occurred to him, or in fact many in his time, that there might be a more excellent way than either, one free from the moral objections of both methods. Is it a modern discovery that a thirst for knowledge is innate in a healthy mind, and that the child who is properly treated in early years will take to study as naturally and eagerly as to tempting fruit or athletic games? Have all our readers made the discovery for themselves?

THERE is something almost pathetic, as well as encouraging, in the accounts which appeared in the Montreal papers a few weeks since of the overwhelming rush of men and boys of the laboring classes in that city to the night schools. These crowds exceeded in numbers the most sanguine expectations of the promoters of the schools, and their cleanly appearance and respectful bearing, and their eagerness to gain admittance, were most encouraging. The Montreal *Star* well observed:

"Better than all is the evident moral motive which inspires these people. Without really knowing it, perhaps, they seek, as Descartes has said, to 'learn what is true, in order to do what is right.' At all events, the movement is good, and one of the very best signs of the times. A thirst for knowledge is prompted by the hope of a higher, broader, deeper, more perfect life. Its gratification is as natural as any other human want, and since that gratification tends to make better workmen and better citizens, it elevates the general tone of the populace, and is, therefore, of the highest utility."

The movement is a noble one and should be promoted until every man and woman who will, shall have constantly before them the open door to some efficient evening school. No class of persons can do more than teachers to forward this movement.

## Educational Thought.

IT is a mistake for the teacher to try to drown the noise of his pupils by making a greater noise himself.—*Inspector Hughes.*

THE secret of real teaching is to teach pupils how to depend upon themselves. When you have taught a child to have confidence in its own ability you have put a useful weapon in its hands for future warfare. Too much explanation is certain to make the pupil helpless and lazy. We do not undervalue judicious explanation; that is essential and productive of excellent results; but we do condemn the habit some teachers have of doing a large share of the pupil's work for him through mistaken kindness or a wrong idea of what constitutes teaching.—*Wisconsin Journal.*

THE grand doctrine of "every man for sale, in the name of the prophet, *figs*," will at all times fall rather flat on youthful ears. Is he to sit and toil day by day, and let the sun shine upon hill and dale, and he not see it? and let it gleam along the rivers, and glance in and out of the forest trees with scattered joyousness, and he not see it? Is he to miss the freshness of the air, the games, and the thousand and one delights that pass glittering through the kaleidoscope of the boy mind, so fertile in fancy, so free? And all for what? On the chance, forsooth, that by and by, if he is lucky, he may fetch a high price in the world's auction room. Is he to strain, and strive, and use time, and energy, and brain, and starve his ravening for free enjoyment, and activity, and fun, only to put himself up to the highest bidder, and value his life by what other people think of it, and not by what it is worth to himself? This will not do. A thousand reasons, and tens of thousands of excuses, any one of them convincing to a mind so ready to be convinced, bid him answer boldly, "no;" and "no" he does answer in practice, a final, invincible "no." Education, if it is to be a prevailing power, must be something which the auctioneer's hammer cannot fix the value of, something that the highest bidder cannot buy, a gain in the man himself. The auctioneer's view will never command the hearts and lives of the young. "In the name of the prophet—*figs*—" is not a war-cry to stir the idle pulse, or give the coward nerve, even though the price be great, and the *figs*, the sweetness of Paradise. They are far off, very far off, to the boy, and the cry is as a voice in a dream, distant and dim. The present is tempting, all cannot win, and high wages are not life. "*Figs*" have little charm for the eager foot standing on life's bright threshold with an untried world in front. A better spell must be found to conjure with than this.—*Thring.*

THERE is another spell, which many conjure with, and its power over some cannot be denied. It is a louder and fiercer cry, but not more true; though true, high feelings are often marshalled under it; and there is a noble side of human nature of which this parody of truth takes advantage, and reaps the benefit. The appeal to success, prizes and prize-winning, bids fair to be the watchword of the day. But what does this do for the majority, for the non-competing crowd; who nevertheless do not politely die off, and make room; and cannot through modern squeamishness, be killed off, and buried? There they are, and there they insist on remaining. The character of the appeal is noteworthy \* \* \* In what respect morally does the strong arm differ from the strong head? Both are mere instruments of a power behind both that uses them. And what is a nation doing which calmly stands up and says, "We will only regard in our schools the breeding of the strong head; and we will give all our honor and power to the wielders of strength!" "Glory to the strong. Boys, whet your tusks, rush, tend, tear, win, make yourselves a name, be great." This is but the Vandal over again, and a swineherd's call. The worship of force, no doubt, is an idolatry of a more stirring kind than the greed for market price, but only the more deadly on this account. Glory to the strong on the reverse side of the shield is oppression to the weak. The weak are pushed into a corner, and neglected; their natural tendency to shrink from labor is educated into despair by their being constantly reminded, directly or indirectly, that their labor is no good.—*Thring.*