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DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF TEACHERS.

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There were 205 applicants for license at the last termal examination of the N. B. Normal school: 0 for grammar school; 9 for first-class; 104 for second, and 83 for third.

The result of the entrance examinations at the Normal school was as follows: Of the 122 who stood examination, 66 passed successfully, 39 were admitted conditionally, and 21 were rejected; 68 were admitted by certificate or license, making the total number enrolled for the term 160.

A WRITER in the Sackville Post criticises the action of a local school board, in selecting a stranger to fill a position, to the exclusion of local teachers of excellent ability. We are not informed of the circumstances of the case, and are not in a position, therefore, to give any opinion. One sentence, if the correspondent is correct in his assumption, is deserving of the attention of thoughtful persons who are interested in our educational progress:

\* \* \* The crying evil is the lack of age and experience found in the teaching staff of to-day. The greatest interest, the one most vital to the permanent progress of our people, is at this time largely committed to boys and girls, the great majority of whom have not the most remote idea of teaching over four or five years, the young gentlemen being largely aspirants for the clerical, legal or medical professions, or civil list promotion, and yet these are chosen in preference to men who have devoted years to the work, whose experience alone is worth more than all the unearned recommendations that these come armed with.

**IMPORTANT TO SCHOOL TEACHERS.**—The legality of keeping a child in school after regular hours for not learning his lessons was tested in an English law court recently, when the mother of a little boy had the head master of the school he attended before the court. The judge, in giving his decision, said that the master had no authority to impose upon the children the duty of studying at home, and that he, therefore, had no right to detain him, and he also said that in his opinion the detention amounted to an assault. As the plaintiff in the case did not wish to press it, the master was discharged on paying costs. Canadian teachers can take the lesson from—*Graphic Mercury.*

We think Truro teachers should take notice and govern themselves accordingly. Another matter is the whipping of children. We think the teacher exceeds his or her authority and breaks the law when they undertake to whip a child. When they cannot teach them without whipping them, they should send them home to their parents instead.—*Truro Sun.*

Such comments as the above are of doubtful propriety, and harm is liable to be done instead of good by their publication. Frequent and injudicious keeping in after hours is demoralizing to a school, and the same is true, to a greater degree, of frequent resort to corporal punishment. The teacher who is able to govern without resorting to either, except on very rare occasions, has grappled

with and solved a great educational problem. But such power comes from nature, tact, experience. To expect that these are possessed by all teachers to the degree that shall enable them to govern without resort to force is perhaps to expect too much. We have faith that we are gradually approaching that happy era when all cruel and barbarous punishments will have been abolished in our schools, and when love and tact will be the governing powers. But society will have to advance in this respect before such a state of things can exist. In the meantime, gentlemen of the quill, let your ardor for reform be tempered with moderation and wisdom. Such paragraphs as the above do much to weaken the authority of the teacher and raise disaffection and revolt. Sensible parents would much rather have a little wholesome severity exercised in the school-room than that their children should be turned out of school with the prospect of having their prospects in life marred. Let us aim rather to lead to a better state of things by enforcing the precepts of obedience, and respect to authority, than by injudicious reflections recommending what may be productive of injury and discontent.

### WRITTEN EXAMINATIONS.

The value of written examinations in schools depends altogether upon the object in view. If they are designed to point out to the teacher where he has failed in being explicit and thorough in his teaching, and to show him that the student has thoroughly mastered the subjects taught, the end gained is a very important one. Writing upon a subject throws the pupil upon his own resources, gives him facility in expressing his thoughts, gives him encouragement and self-reliance, if, as we have before said, the teaching has been explicit and thorough.

But the teacher is the one most benefited by these written examinations after all. Going carefully over the papers before him, he is weighing the effectiveness of his own teaching at the same time that he is testing the effect of it upon the minds of his scholars. If the result is satisfactory he is encouraged, and can with confidence lead his pupils into higher paths of knowledge. But too often these results are not satisfactory. They are even discouraging. The teacher finds that listlessness and dullness, his inveterate foes, have not been overcome. It is wrong to indulge in fault-finding at such results, unless the fault be placed on the proper shoulders. If the teacher has judgment and common sense he will not waste the time in regrets and disgust over the mental torpor, or defects in the previous training of his pupils, but he will see that his duty to himself and to them requires that he exert himself afresh to overcome those defects which this examination test brings to light.

There is no subject of common-school routine that has been more perverted in the hands of injudicious persons than the written examination. Teachers who do not recognize its educational value have abused it. Writers who make up their minds from viewing one side of a case, have condemned it as barbarous, and as an instrument of torture to the rising generation. Perhaps it is so to a certain extent.

Teachers use up their working power

in hours of exhausting labor over examination papers; pupils have been tortured also in racking their brains to discover the answers to senseless catch questions. But those who would do away with written examinations in the school have nothing to propose as a substitute by which a student's scholarship and progress can be correctly tested. They would abolish what some may abuse but which others make one of the most valuable class exercises. By it pupils may be trained to think clearly and intelligently, to condense and make as precise as possible their information on a given subject, and to exhibit to others the amount of exact knowledge they may have acquired. The one who is chiefly interested in observing this growth of knowledge is the teacher, for the reasons above stated.

But how can results be secured without subtracting too much from the working power of the teacher? By making occasionally the examination of written papers a class exercise. The writer has adopted this plan, at intervals, for many years, and his own experience and that of others who have adopted the same plan, convinces him that it is one of the best exercises that can be adopted. This would, of course, be possible only with students in advanced grades. Papers may be exchanged and examined by the pupils, the teacher directing the award in each case. Thus a question may be looked at from all points of view, and many interesting facts in connection with it brought out, eliminating from the replies, whatever may be trivial, incorrect, or foreign to the subject. Both teacher and pupil are benefited by this process of looking at and examining a question from many points of view, and the judgment is trained in deciding what is valuable or trivial in the answers. The process is in the highest degree educational, and may be resorted to with advantage at intervals, say of one month, for purposes of instruction merely. When the student comes to the test of an examination at the end of the term, when other examiners, not stricter, though, than his fellow pupils, are to estimate his papers, he will welcome the test, conscious that his knowledge, his power of precise expression, and readiness, have been improved in the training he has had in making written examinations a part of class work.

THE London school board is true to British traditions; it refuses, by a vote of thirty to fifteen, to abolish flogging in the schools, but it decides that the power shall be restricted to the headmasters, who are told, in addition, that the more thoroughly qualified and skillful a teacher is, the less necessary will it be for him to resort to corporal punishment. The idea that flogging breaks the average boy's spirit, or humiliates him in such a degree as to injure him, is a modern American nabby-pabby notion. Boys, as a general rule, take a flogging as they take any other punishment brought upon them by their sins, as a sort of purgation, the pain of which they should bear manfully. They take their licking as they would pay a debt, without a sense of shame or disgrace except that which is caused by the offence.

PROFESSOR GOLDWIN SMITH, it is reported, will shortly return to England from Canada and take up his residence at Oxford.

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