

minds from the blackboard exercises of the teacher. If these are unworthy of imitation, it takes more time to efface the confirmed impression, than to make a correct one if none were fixed by the inexorable force of habit. Precisely here is where the trouble begins, and it is marvellous how very bad the blackboard writing of teachers throughout Ontario has become. Could we place samples of it on exhibition, they would rebuke much of the boasting we hear about the training of teachers. "What is worth doing is worth doing well," answers well enough the objections made to giving writing more prominence at the examinations for teachers' certificates. It cannot be too strongly impressed that neatness and excellence should be the aim of every instructor. A dinner prepared with the same care copy books are written, or teachers' work for pupils put on the board, would—to use a vulgar term—be a sorry mess. While thus placing the blame on the teacher, we admit he is led to believe by his examinations that writing is of little account. Further, we may palliate the charge by saying the high schools give little heed to writing—in fact, many pupils leave the high schools worse writers than when they entered them. The county model schools have not time, were they able and willing, to make good writers. The normal schools do not attempt in a skilful and methodical manner to send out teachers, in this department, creditable to them and the province. Thus far, we have not heard of the examiners asking a student to give a lesson in writing during the final examination. Strange to say, chemistry, a subject not taught in one school out of a hundred, is exalted to almost, if not, a "plucking" subject, while writing, which is supposed to be taught in every school, seems unnoticed. The teachers would be exceptions, were they to resist such influences and become examples worthy of imitation, when by a long course of training they were led to infer writing was of little value, and almost beneath the notice of a person claiming mental power.

To find fault is unpleasant, though necessary in the interests of the profession and the schools. Besides finding fault, we think the means of removing it are apparent, and, from what has been said, must have suggested themselves to the reader. We must have teachers trained to believe writing is not an unimportant subject, but, on the other hand, of great value in the concerns of life, and, certainly, a leading one in the cultivation of the idea of beauty and grace in form. They should not only believe, but know, that neat and logical answers indicate the measure of the culture their pupils are receiving; if good, it will be available in work of any other kind, whether mental or physical. To this end, all blackboard exercises should, in every sense of the word, be models. For the teacher to be able to do and not to do is fatal to the children's progress; hence, he who can write well and does not do it, inflicts a lasting injury on the junior classes. To secure teachers, let writing be placed on an equality with arithmetic for examinational purposes, then will it receive attention in all the schools. In fact, it is doubtful if writing should not be made a test at the threshold of the teaching profession, for we are of the opinion few who resolutely apply themselves for a few months would fail in attaining success.

There should also be some standard adopted, so that instruction might be symmetrical in all the schools. What is more perplexing to a child than with every change of teacher a change in the formation of letters? Towards this standard or model all teachers could direct their efforts; then, as in other subjects, children would be at home with any teacher in the province. Of course, the originality bug-a-boo will meet us in this advocacy, but it applies with as much effect to reading, singing, drill, and other subjects, as to writing. The advantages of all teachers pursuing the same method are so obvious that they need not be seriously discussed. The supposition

is common that placing a good head-line before the pupil and having him practise copying it will in time make a good writer. Experience shows the contrary to be nearer the truth. The head-line seems far beyond the pupil's reach, especially when the teacher's writing is much inferior to it. As for practice, it frequently occurs that pupils get worse instead of better. There must be effort or improvement will not follow. The last line of the copy being generally worse than the first teaches the important lesson that practice will as likely make a bad writer as a good one. We have known schools in which every error was detected and discussed with board illustrations consequently only a few words were written at one lesson yet these schools were noted for good writing. Again; we urge that teachers should give more thought to this subject, and that in the high, model, and normal schools special stress should be laid on writing.—*J. S. Carson, Inspector of Schools, Middlesex.*

GLEANINGS FROM ADOLF DIESTERWEG'S WRITINGS.

No book can take the place of the teacher's spirit; therefore all writers on education require of the teacher that he use their books with discernment, and that he make such judicious modifications as the peculiar requirements of his school and his pupils demand. In order to fit the teacher better for this important duty, I demand a careful preparation for each lesson, a close attention during the hours of instruction, and the registering of the experience so gained during the lesson in a book kept for this purpose. In the pursuit of such a course the teacher will obtain acuteness of intellect which will enable him to dispose of all text-books or to write his own adapted to his designs. That the teacher may be able to follow the lesson when given to the class with eager attention, he must not avail himself of a text-book during the hours of instruction. The teacher shall not teach from the book, but free from his heart without mechanical aid. The proper text-book for the pupil is the thinking-spirit of the teacher, who, by his intimate knowledge of the subject taught, will give to each individual pupil suitable mind-food—milk to one, and a more solid nourishment to another. To use a simile, the teacher must understand the *culinary science*. The material of which the food is compounded is everywhere the same, and is given to the teacher. But its proper composition, according to individual appetites and powers of digestion, is the teacher's office. No other being can accomplish this for him. A good manual will give him the necessary indigitations, but these are, at the best, adaptable to ordinary circumstances only as they everywhere prevail; they cannot take the place of one's own meditations, much less do they make the latter superfluous.

It denotes a slavish dependence of the teacher when he must have recourse to books during the hours of instruction. He cannot bestow his full attention upon the pupils, and a free and happy development of the child cannot be expected; no, the mind of the pupil is pressed into the narrow compass of a strait-jacket when the teacher confines himself to the limits of the book. Hence away with books from the hands of the teacher whenever this can be done, and away with the teacher who cannot liberate himself from this habit.

Teachers of the high schools, imitate the primary teachers! Emancipate yourselves from books! Instead of looking into the book, look in the pupils' faces and observe their doings. It is sometimes hardly to be believed what mischievousness pupils perform under the very eyes of the teacher during the hours of instruction.—*New England Journal of Education*