

HINTS ON THE BEST MODES OF CONDUCTING RECITATIONS IN SCHOOLS.—Among the most important requisites for success in teaching, is the faculty of conducting recitations in such a manner, as to give an interest to every recitation, render profitable each lesson, lead the young student to investigate, to express his thoughts with ease and freedom, and think for himself. Many teachers during recitations, confine themselves too much to the text-book, and their pupils answer in the fewest words possible, in fragmentary sentences, and often with a low voice and indistinct utterance. In this way they do great injustice to themselves, as well as to their teacher. This manner of reciting is not always owing to ignorance of their lessons, though it has this appearance. Every recitation should be conducted in such a manner as to create in the pupil an interest in his school, an enthusiasm in his studies, a bringing out of the powers of thought, a readiness and clearness of expression, and a freshness and energy of mind. So minute is the questioning, oftentimes, by which a monosyllable or two is *pumped* from the pupil, that it would seem, that any one who had never seen the lesson, if he possessed a moderate share of shrewdness, might *guess* at the answer. Hence the teacher is made far more prominent in recitation, than the pupil, and at examinations, instead of showing how well he has taught them to use their wings in exploring the surrounding atmosphere, he only shows how well he himself can cut the air, with the whole nest of them on his back. In this way, too, one of the great ends of education is defeated. Children are not sent to school, or ought not to be, to get them out of the way, or to keep them out of mischief, but to be educated. But a child who studies diligently, and has acquired all that is written in the several text-books used in the school, is only half educated, if he has not been taught the art of reciting what he has learned, and to prize the time spent in a well-conducted recitation, as the most valuable part of school hours. Many of the best teachers never use a text book at recitation at all; their object being to teach by lecture. This is the system adopted at the Model School, Toronto, with great success.

We maintain, that teachers cannot be thoroughly furnished to their work who fail in conducting recitations in an instructive and interesting manner. Scholars should be made to understand principles, and taught to state them clearly. One great object of a recitation should be to accustom scholars to tell what they know, and to express their thoughts in a concise, clear, and happy manner.

No teacher should, at his recitation, confine himself to any set of printed or written questions, but he should draw out the minds of his pupils by questions of his own, proposed at the time. This will accustom them to think for themselves, to investigate subjects suggested by their lessons, and will lead them to go to other sources besides their text-books, for facts and principles on the subjects of their lessons. Thus will they form that wise and improving habit of reading by topics, of studying by subjects. This useful habit when once formed, they will carry with them through life, and it will be of incalculable value in accustoming them to seek for clear ideas, and a thorough knowledge of every subject which interests them, or which they have occasion to investigate.

Every teacher is liable to slide into a set and formal way of conducting the exercises of his school, and prone to adopt certain fixed methods and set plans, in reference to instruction and government. Now the teacher who would faithfully meet the responsibilities of his station, who would excel in his office, who would rouse the energies of his pupils, must resist this tendency. He must, indeed, avoid sudden innovations and fitful changes, and indulge with caution a disposition to make experiments in new methods of instruction. Still, on the other hand, let him guard against settling down into a rigid uniformity, and a dull, technical mannerism, as to his methods of teaching.

The teacher should ever strive to possess enthusiasm and freshness of feeling, a love for his employment, and a noble desire to guide his pupils in the way of intellectual and moral improvement. Avoiding a mechanical formality, and a dull adherence to old methods of imparting instruction, he should seek to inspire his scholars with new enthusiasm, to impart freshness and interest to his instructions, and give to his school a pleasing air of intellectual light and vigour. He should connect with his instructions, as far as possible, what is interesting and attractive, so that associations formed in the minds of his pupils, will leave them in love with the subjects of investigations, and subsequently and frequently bring them back to the pursuits of science with readiness and alacrity.

Educational Intelligence.

CANADA.

Items.—A School "Teachers' Association" has been formed in the county of Welland "for the purpose of improving, and also instituting uniformity in the system of public instruction in said county."—A "Teachers' Institute" has been formed in the County of Oxford.—The *Montreal Canadian* states that M. le Cure de la Pointe de Levi, assisted by a number of his parishioners, has in view the erection of a college on the heights opposite the city. The object of this institution will be to give a good commercial education: the only languages taught will be French and English, and the course of studies will extend to five years.—At the Michaelmas term of McGill College, honours were assigned as follows to students in the Faculty of Arts:—*Second Year Students*, first honours, Charles E. Bockus, Wm. G. Stetlem—equal; *First Year Students*, first honours, James Bowman, second honours, Thomas R. Browne.—From a statement at a recent meeting of the Church University Board, it appears that the whole amount of subscriptions is £44,135 17s. 6d. Of this, £7,362 15s. is made up of subscriptions in land in Upper Canada. There are further donations of land, consisting of 5,391 acres, "not valued," but taken at the usual estimation of £1 per acre." They are set down at £5391.—The educational lectures delivered by the local superintendents of Brockville, Drummond, Cornwall, Galt, and Guelph, have nearly all been published. They evince much zeal and ability on the part of the lecturers.—Dr. Craigie, ex-trustee, Hamilton, in a letter to the Board of Trustees, exhibits in a striking manner the very great expenses incurred in sustaining six isolated Common Schools, educating 400 or 500 pupils, in that city, while one or two schools capable of affording superior education to 1000 pupils might be substituted at even a less cost. The subject is so important that we give an extract from the letter on our 25th page, and earnestly invite the attention of City and Town Boards to it.—The Superintendent of Williamsburgh, in a letter to a local paper, earnestly calls upon Teachers to consider the importance of qualifying themselves better for the duties of their profession, and not permit themselves to be the only remaining impediment to the efficient working and progress of our popular school system. Part of Mr. Ross's letter will be found on page 21.—An intelligent American travelling in Upper Canada thus remarks in regard to our common schools:—"I find the common cause of education to be generally advancing, at least in the feelings and efforts of the people, although not in every part as decided as could be desired. It is generally believed that your present school law is well calculated to improve the condition of the schools it carried out by judicious trustees. I discover a good deal of indecision on the part of trustees, in the exercise of their functions, lest some of their neighbours should be displeased with them. It affords me, however, peculiar pleasure to witness the high appreciation of education and intelligence exhibited by some whose own early advantages were not of the best description. I hope a large number of teachers will soon be sent from the Normal School to meet the demand which exists for them. I can assure you nothing would be more gratifying to my feelings than to see the schools of Canada outrun those of any other country."—The Palermo Grammar school has been removed to Galt. We hope the Trustees of the common school in the former place will now unite to make its independent organization more effective and beneficial than ever.—J. Willson, Esq., M.P.P., recently presented a petition to the Middlesex county Council from the Board of Grammar school trustees, soliciting aid from the Council to the amount of £200, for the purpose of erecting a new Grammar-School House in this town, on the five acres reserved for that purpose, and at the disposal of the county council. He remarked that the success that had hitherto attended this school was deserving of every encouragement, and that it was absolutely necessary to maintain its high character. He also stated that the Principal of the School had offered to give three years' rent of the present building as a subscription towards the erection, which, with £200 from the Government, £200 from the school funds, and the £200 which he trusted the council would grant, would make up over £600, amply sufficient for the object contemplated. The matter was at length deferred and a Committee of five, was appointed to examine and report upon all matters connected with the schools of the county.—A meeting has been called by the Sheriff of the county of Prince Edward to raise a fund for the erection of a grammar school-house at Picton.

London Central School.—A meeting of the School Trustees was held on Tuesday last, the 12th Dec. when the whole of the Teachers of the Union School were reappointed for the ensuing year. For the Female department, Misses Haigh and M'Elroy, at salaries of £70 each, and Miss Cameron at £50—and for the Male department, Messrs. Wilson and Murtagh have been retained at £100 each.—The Board of Trustees have since decided to engage a head-master, at a salary of £250 per annum.