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Editorial

Lessons from Outside

Two notable conventions have been held in Winnipeg during the month of November. The first was the annual convention of the Manitoba Sunday School Association and the second the Social and Moral Reform Congress.

The Sunday School Convention was remarkable, chiefly from the presence of Dr. Soares, of the University of Chicago. His message consisted of the presentation of a complete outline to guide those who are attempting to direct religious education. It is interesting to note that in everything he recognized the necessity of adapting matter and method to the needs of the pupil. Most day school teachers will appreciate this in relation to the teaching of lessons. It will be a new thought to most to apply it to worship, to singing, to giving, to service and to living. And yet the principle applies all around.

Day School teachers have much to learn from this. Indeed, most of them recognize the principle in its application to teaching and government in a general way, but it has yet to find recognition in multitudes of minor matters such as receiving pupils in the morning, coming into school, posture in class, devotional exercises, selection of songs, choice of pictures and the like.

It will be a good thing for all teachers to grasp another principle enunciated by Dr. Soares—namely, that adult life is entirely different in its thinking and its manifestations from child life, but is at the same time a natural evolution from it. A child who enters into the spirit of story-telling will naturally

enter into the spirit of history later on, but it does not follow from this that children should study history which as to thought and expression is suitable only to adults. How illogical we are at times may be understood from reading the text-book now used in schools—perhaps, however, just as suitable a text as most. Imagine a boy of ten reading something like this:

"It is a great pity Charles was not worthy of all the adoration showered upon him by the people, but he cared for nothing except his own amusement. If he had wished for innocent enjoyment, that would have been a different matter, but he was shameless and immoral in his pleasures. He surrounded himself with the most profligate companions. Anyone looking on would have thought the whole court gloried in being as wicked as possible."

Now this is not important as an historical fact. It is not a thing in which a child mind takes interest. It gives rise to no living picture. And the language is beyond the comprehension of nine out of ten. We require in history a book in which child interests are prominent and in which the language is simple without being stilted. To be specific; there is nothing to be gained by asking little children to study religious and political struggles, but they will be deeply interested in reading about men and about social conditions. It is about time we gave up talking about getting a suitable text in history for little children. If there is one to be had let us get it. We need not worry about the texts for older pupils since they may be found in abundance. But