

THE CANADA
EDUCATIONAL MONTHLY
AND SCHOOL MAGAZINE.

MAY-JUNE, 1885.

THE FIRST DAY.

BY JOHN DEARNESS, INSPECTOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS, MIDDLESEX.

"We may our ends by our beginnings know."—*Denham*.

"A bad ending follows a bad beginning."
—*Euripides*.

"MR. B. how is my friend R. getting along?" "I have no doubt," replied the person asked, "that Mr. R. is a very good teacher, but he did not start right in our school. All the children seem to be against him, so I fear he will not do much good there. Perhaps when the larger pupils leave in the spring he may manage better."

Could it be true that a teacher who had hitherto succeeded well, and had given general satisfaction, is now reputed a failure and simply because he "did not *start right*?"

Further inquiry verified Mr. B.'s report. By an ill-considered word and act on the first day the teacher had incurred the implacable opposition of two or three of the larger boys, and they were able to keep rife a spirit of insubordination until two of them were expelled. After their expulsion, the teacher gradually regained the control and sympathy that had marked his former school. If, in

teaching a "bad ending" does not always "follow a bad beginning," yet it frequently happens that a wrong step at the start takes months to recover. Even adults are apt to be influenced for a considerable time of a new acquaintanceship by that instinctive judgment made almost at first sight. (The *almost* may be left out.) The first impression takes a strong hold on a child's mind. If that impression is an agreeable one the teacher has made a confidant and a friend.*

To secure such a result is worthy of the most careful study on the part of the teacher. Appearance, manner, every word and action will be closely scrutinized. Sympathy or prejudice helps to fill out the measure, and by the time the pupils return to their homes, every one of them is ready with no uncertain answer to the inevitable question: "How do you like the new teacher?" That the verdict—and it is generally unanimous—may be favourable should be

* Read "Unruly Pupils" in Kellogg's School Management.