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**Articles : Original and Selected.**

**A REPORT OF THE PROGRESS OF AN EDUCATIONAL EXPERIMENT.\***

BY H. H. CURTIS, MONTREAL.

*Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen :*

Will you permit me to call your attention to a piece of educational work which has been in progress for a number of years in the public schools of this city in connection with the study of the French language? I refer to the introduction of a method of teaching French which differs so widely from the traditional methods that its adoption, on so considerable a scale, challenges the attention of all persons interested in the movements of practical education, especially in this Province of Quebec, where the peculiar needs of the English-speaking minority in this regard have long claimed a more effectual recognition.

I venture to think, moreover, that a report upon the progress of such an experiment as this will be of no little practical value to those who are directly engaged in French teaching.

According to a familiar saying there are two sides to every question. Are there not four sides to every question? First, there are the pros and the cons. We all find that out, perhaps by bitter experience, before we advance very far on our earthly pilgrimage. Then, as we approach intellectual maturity, we realize, sooner or later,

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\* A paper read at the Teachers' Convention held in Montreal last October.

that there are two other sides to every question, I mean the theoretical side and the practical side, the ideal and its realization. Ideals are larger than their realization. What we would like to see done is one thing, what we are able to accomplish is often quite another.

You have all found this out and you have all realized two important conclusions which follow:—(1) That in passing judgment upon any piece of work accomplished, a generous allowance must be made for failure to reach the highest possible conception. He who has not found that out will have no peace of mind. (2) That no person is competent to give reliable advice on any practical question until he has tested and amended all his theories on the subject. Now I think it may be said that the French teachers of Montreal have fairly qualified, according to this principle, to discuss the application of the Natural Method of teaching French. For nearly eight years we have been steadily at work, testing and amending or adapting or rejecting every principle and every expedient of that method. During all this time, with the exception of a faint expression of our aspirations at the time our experiment was launched, we have consistently maintained a discreet silence. Today we are able to report that in our public schools, corresponding to the elementary and model schools of the Province, we have established a French course, covering five years, which is conducted entirely in French. This course includes conversational practice, reading lessons, dictation, written exercises and a fair amount of grammar, but not a word of translation, and not a syllable of English. In discussing this subject I shall offer you no speculative opinions. I ask you to bear in mind that the method which I shall now proceed to discuss is that by which some five or six thousand pupils are taught daily by upwards of a hundred teachers.

It is not my intention to enter upon a minute description of this method. That is not the object of this paper. Recent graduates of the Normal School and many other teachers are already familiar with it. Moreover, it can only be acquired by practice, and the best preparation for such practice is to hear a number of lessons given by a competent teacher, when with plenty of practice under wise direction the necessary skill will be acquired. It will be quite sufficient for my purpose merely to indicate the es-

sential features of the method and briefly to discuss a few of them.

The oral lesson, which takes the place of vocabularies and the exercises of such a course as Fasquelle's, is the distinctive feature of the method. In this oral work, the pupils learn the meaning and the use of words and sentences, much as an Englishman would do in France by hearing them correctly employed, and then they acquire facility in using these words and sentences by repeating the utterances of the teacher, by answering suitable questions, and later on by describing and relating. When a word or an expression is first introduced, the teacher must contrive to suggest its meaning to the pupils without translating it. This is not so difficult a matter as might be supposed. A very large number of names, either nouns or adjectives, can be taught by simply pointing out the objects or qualities they designate:—Le livre, le crayon, le canif, rouge, noir, blanc. Then you have the elements of a model sentence: Le livre est rouge. Practice in constructing similar sentences follow at once. Putting the question, De quelle couleur est le crayon? You elicit the reply, Le crayon est noir.

Will you please observe that this answer is not a mere repetition? Similar sentences had been used by the teacher as models, and all the material required for this answer had been provided, but the answer itself is a new combination requiring thought. Indeed, the close attention and the precise thinking required in this exercise render it, in my opinion, a most excellent mental gymnastic. Moreover, the pupils are delighted to be able to answer you in French the first day, imagining that in a very short time they will have mastered the French language. That illusion, like many another, is both harmless and in the highest degree encouraging.

Other classes of words are taught similarly:—Prepositions by placing objects in different relations to each other; many verbs and adverbs by means of gesture. Practice in the use of the new forms is given at every stage of progress.

These object lessons may be greatly extended by the use of suitable pictures. This series (showing samples) includes about thirty of the commoner animals, birds, insects, etc. Fruits and vegetables are shown in the same way. These

pictures are of great service in holding the attention of young children. We have about half a dozen larger pictures showing the different rooms of a house and the objects which they contain. A series of lessons on these pictures, introducing not only the names of all the articles represented in the pictures, but everything that is habitually done in connection with them can be made to cover a good portion of a child's daily life. In the classes of the High School, to which the application of the method is now being extended year by year, the character of the oral work is somewhat different.

Learning to read must not be neglected. Our plan is to provide reading lessons based on the oral lessons, and containing no new matter. When pupils have learned the meaning of words and have had a thorough drill in pronouncing them, it only remains for them to see how the words look when they are written. The consonant sounds are practically the same as in English. A little time spent with the teacher in drill on the vowel sounds and on reading practice will enable the pupils to read with more than the usual fluency and correctness.

Learning to spell is also comparatively easy. French spelling is more largely phonetic than English spelling. The vowel sounds do not vary to the same extent. English students are greatly assisted in learning to spell by becoming thoroughly familiar with the sounds of the language. This is done in the course of the oral lessons. New words are usually written on the blackboard. There are exercises in copying in the earlier years, and later on a good deal of writing from dictation. These exercises, supplementing the reading lessons, accustom the eye to the appearance of the written language.

The advocates of the natural method are all supposed to be heretical on the subject of teaching grammar. Some of its earlier exponents went a little too far in their condemnation of rules, but on the other hand I am disposed to think that too much reliance is sometimes placed on the rules of grammar in learning a foreign tongue. Is it not better to lay the stress of the teaching upon practice? Then, when the rules are forgotten, as many of them are sure to be, their application has become a habit and they can be more easily dispensed with.

As a matter of fact, we find no special difficulty in teach-

ing all the grammar that is required in junior classes without making any explanations in English. For a considerable time, at first, we do not introduce any grammatical terms or formulate any rules. The constructions employed at this stage are very simple and if a mistake is made it is promptly corrected.

During the second year of our course, we find that our pupils have progressed sufficiently to enable them to understand simple rules stated in French. From this time, whenever the statement of a rule would be of service, it is introduced and memorized in French, but the systematic arrangement of the grammars is entirely neglected at this early stage. We find that the teaching of grammar presents much less difficulty than we anticipated. The nomenclature is practically the same as in English. The terms: *singulier, pluriel, masculin, féminin, adjectif, verbe, adverbe, préposition, indicatif, présent, imparfait, etc.*, are readily understood without explanation. These terms need not be defined, having the same force in French as in English. All the necessary rules may be stated in very simple language. Take, for example, the rules for forming the plural of nouns, *Règle générale, ajoutez un s au singulier. Les noms en s, x, z ne changent pas au pluriel. Les noms en al changent al en aux. Les noms en au et en eu prennent x au pluriel.* Much attention is given to the conjugation of the verbs which occur in the lessons. On the whole, I am of the opinion that by the end of the fifth year of our course our pupils know as much grammar as they would have learned by the usual methods. They have learned it in French, thus killing two birds with one stone, and they certainly have had a more thorough drill in the application of these rules to the construction of sentences.

Before leaving this part of my subject I would like to point out that the method proceeds on a sound psychological basis. Let us consider the mental process involved in learning a language. Our students have already learned one language, namely, their own. If the word *chair*, for example, is pronounced in their hearing, the idea of a chair immediately arises in their minds and vice versa. In the same way, through the whole range of their experience, every idea is closely linked in their memories with its corresponding name. Now they are to learn a new set of

names for the same ideas and the question arises, Shall the new names be associated directly with the ideas themselves or with the English names? This question divides the two methods. The exponents of the Translation Method say, Let them be associated with the English names. If the pupils wish to express themselves, let them think in English and then translate their utterances into French. On the other hand, the advocates of the natural method maintain that the new names should be associated directly with the conceptions existing in the minds of the pupils, in which case they will not require to go through the hazardous process of thinking in English and translating into French. Now, in order to realize the importance of this difference, it is necessary to recall that it is impossible to speak French until we have got rid of this habit of translating. The two languages differ in their mode of expression. You wish to say, Here is a red apple, and, pressed for time, you hurriedly translate, Ici est une rouge pomme. Your experience may suggest many instances of this kind.

Another of the points of excellence of this method is that the stress of the teaching is placed where it should be, on the sounds of the language. The ear and the tongue are the organs which should be trained rather than the eye. Let pupils learn to read by learning first to speak. Let them learn written composition through oral composition. Many persons learn French so well that they are able to read and understand a French story, but if you take the book from them and tell them the story they will not understand you, nor will they be able to relate it even imperfectly to others. Such a knowledge of French is of unquestionable value, but it is not the kind of knowledge that we most require in this province.

I shall now proceed with a discussion of the conditions under which an oral method may be expected to succeed in public schools. Let us consider the necessary qualifications of the teacher. I do not hesitate to admit that the method is somewhat exacting from this point of view. First of all, the teacher's knowledge of the language must be of the practical kind. Within the limits of the work, which, after all, are narrow enough in junior classes, she must be able to pronounce correctly and to speak with reasonable fluency.

Many of the teachers employed by our Protestant School Board at the time this method was introduced, had studied French by methods which, to say the least, did not lay special stress either on fluency or on correct pronunciation. A considerable number of our teachers voluntarily undertook special studies for the purpose of rendering their knowledge of the subject, already sufficient in extent, available for the practical work which they were called upon to undertake. I mention this circumstance merely for the purpose of saying that this difficulty no longer exists to any great extent. Owing to the great improvements that have been made in recent years in the French course of our Provincial Normal School, the graduates of that institution are now well qualified in this respect to undertake such practical work as I have described in this paper. Here, by the way, is a point which bears upon the question of the extension of the work of the Normal School in the direction of more general professional training. Let this be done by all means, but if it is proposed to sacrifice any part of the excellent literary work now done in the Normal School, let the changes be made gradually and with great caution. I do not hesitate to say that the successful establishment of a French course with oral work as a basis would not have been possible, had it not been for the good work of the Normal School in teaching French as well as in teaching methods. At any rate, if our high schools and academies aspire to undertake the literary work now done in the Normal School, let them speedily follow the example of the Normal School and adopt a method of teaching French better suited to the practical needs of the province.

But a sufficient knowledge of the language is not the only essential qualification of a teacher of French by the natural method. She must also understand the method itself. Now, the few principles involved can all be stated in a few words and will present no difficulty of comprehension. They have been before the profession for many years in the writings of Dr. Sauveur and others. An excellent statement of them with admirable directions for their application, was addressed to the teachers of a primary grade by Dr. Robins, when, as Superintendent of Schools under the Protestant Board of School Commissioners, he introduced the method into the classes of that grade. Those who succeeded Dr. Robins in this work



have been enabled, through the enterprise of the Protestant Board of School Commissioners, to accomplish a more extensive application of the method than had ever been attempted in public schools. Out of this effort several problems arose which had not previously been solved. The question of the selection and arrangement of suitable material for such work will be treated in a subsequent paragraph. The best means of examining pupils taught by an oral method are still under consideration. The management of large classes of young children is necessarily a very different matter from individual teaching, or from the management of small classes of adults. The innumerable devices of the method for explaining the meaning of words without translating them, and for inducing pupils to practise their use might be left to the ingenuity of teachers of experience, but in the case of a large and constantly changing staff, some assistance in this matter has been found convenient for nearly all, and indispensable for many. The most important of all these problems is the training of the teacher.

At first, the School Board found it necessary to provide assistance for its teachers in acquiring the method, but here again the Normal School has come to our relief. Students in training at the Normal School see this work in progress in the Model Schools, where I have no doubt they acquire practice under skilful guidance. At all events I am in a position to testify that recent graduates of the Normal School do possess the necessary technical skill as well as the requisite knowledge of French to enable them to undertake this work in any part of the province. In this respect our position will presently be stronger still. The newly appointed lecturer in French at McGill University is an enthusiastic advocate of the natural method, and conducts his classes at the University entirely in French. So far as the qualification of the teachers is concerned, I see no reason why the method may not forthwith be introduced in the larger schools of the province. In many of these schools, one teacher has charge of the French work of all classes, in which respect they enjoy a decided advantage over the schools of Montreal, where it is not found practicable, except in the High and Senior Schools, to employ specialists in this subject.

In my opinion, the establishment of a definite and

systematic course of instruction is another essential condition of success. In other circumstances, the work is apt to be diffuse and superficial. The work sometimes fails through lack of thoroughness and drill. Adverse criticism has justly found this the weak point of the system. The subject matter of the oral lessons must subsequently be read and studied in order to make the impression definite and lasting.

Now it must be remembered that this is a new field. The method has long been before the public, but it has been employed for the most part by experts in teaching individuals and small classes of adults. The earlier text books, arising out of such experience, provided very little guidance or assistance for the teacher, which fact alone precluded the use of the method in public schools where specialists are not employed and where the *personnel* of the teaching staff is constantly changing. I may not, with propriety, discuss this topic as its importance deserves, but I will permit myself to say that in the more recent text books, of which a considerable number have appeared both in the United States and in Canada, an attempt has been made to meet the conditions that are found in large classes of children. The ideal course for such work has not, in my opinion, been laid down, but so much has been done in that direction that no teacher wishing to introduce the method in such schools as exist in this province will have any difficulty in selecting a fairly satisfactory course of study.

The results that are obtained by this method will be found to differ considerably from those which are reached where translation is the basis of the work. As I have said, stress is laid on the training of the ear and the tongue. Within well defined limits our students learn to understand, to speak, to read and to write. They do not learn the French language; that is the work of a life-time. They, however, become familiar with a good part of the essential language of current speech. In this province their knowledge is likely to increase instead of being forgotten. It is already sufficient to be a source of pleasure and of profit. In a year or two, it will be possible to state more definitely what amount of work can be accomplished during the time at our disposal. The work is proceeding in all classes with satisfactory results, but it is too soon to show our best

possible work. In the meantime, I cannot do better than quote the opinion of the teachers who employ the method in the schools under the control of the Protestant Board of School Commissioners. About a year ago, in anticipation of this paper, I addressed the following questions to the principals of these schools :—

How many of the teachers of French in your school think that the method we employ is better suited to the peculiar needs of the youth of this province and will give more satisfactory results than the methods usually employed in schools ?

Counting out about ten teachers who declined to compare the two methods on the ground of insufficient experience with one or other of them, one hundred and two teachers replied to this question. Of these, ninety-nine expressed their entire approval of the method, many of them in the heartiest manner possible.

To the second question, How many prefer to teach by this method ? and to the third, How many think that the pupils are happier studying French by this method ? Over ninety-five per cent. of those who replied gave affirmative answers.

This testimony will appear the more remarkable if it is remembered that in the teaching profession, as in all others, a considerable number will always be found who, as a rule, prefer the methods to which they have been long accustomed.

I will conclude this paper by stating, in order, some of the facts to which I have been permitted to call your attention :—

1st. A French course, conducted entirely in French and with conversational practice as a basis, has been for sometime in successful operation in the Public Schools of Montreal.

2nd. The method employed claims to be sound in principle and to provide good mental training.

3rd. Over ninety-five per cent of the teachers who employ this method testify that it produces more satisfactory results, than the usual methods, while they themselves and their pupils find the work less irksome.

4th. Recent graduates of the Normal School are qualified to teach French by this method.

5th. In many of the larger schools of the province the

conditions are even more favourable to the adoption of such a method than they are in the schools of Montreal where the French work cannot conveniently be placed in the hands of special teachers.

In view of these facts, and in view of the urgent and increasing public demand for more serviceable results in this branch of study, I do not hesitate to maintain that the question of extending the use of this method is entitled to the consideration of the teaching profession of this province and of all persons who have influence or authority in relation to our course of study.

### Editorial Notes and Comments.

A right happy New Year to all our readers.

—It is with some diffidence that we even venture to hint at a subject which we have so often brought to the attention of our readers without any very tangible results. It is not for want of asking, that the teachers of this province do not avail themselves of the opportunity afforded by the pages of the RECORD, of giving to their fellow teachers the benefit of their experience in the class-room. We are led to broach the matter again by reading the following short editorial note in one of our exchanges: "There are always a number of teachers who have made genuine discoveries in education; they are not always able to describe their methods, however. Such should learn the art of describing the way they teach reading, obtain order, awaken interest, etc. They must learn to be clear, precise, and not prolix. It is a fact that new discoveries are being made in education all the time; and those making them should put them on paper and send them to us. The number of good writers on educational subjects is really small; it is usually said to be not over one in 10,000. The reason of this is believed to be, that so many go into the school-room because they must, and not because they like the work."

—ANOTHER matter which has been spoken of in the RECORD, is thus plainly and briefly put by the *School Journal*: "That the school should be a centre and the centre of intellectual activity for the community tributary to it, has been a thought often presented in these pages; it is

now being accepted as a solution of many problems that seem otherwise beyond the school. If it were possible (and who shall say it is not) we would have the principal of the school in our towns and cities live in or near the school building. We would have him impress himself on the community; the community is now, in our judgment, behind the school. The community needs to do more for the boys and girls than it does, after they leave the school."

—THE *Michigan School Moderator* has a blunt way of putting things, as for instance when it says: "Teachers, do not be afraid to talk of school work with anybody. Be well posted on the very latest phases of educational thought, and be ready to talk it with any one interested in the subject. This is not 'talking shop.' Harping on petty annoyances, and enumerating the little details, may be classed as 'talking shop.' The teacher should be able and ready to converse on other subjects besides school subjects, but no teacher should feel any hesitancy in talking about educational topics." And speaking of the habit some people have of talking of their personal ills, the following remarks of Edward W. Bok, in the December number of the *Ladies' Home Journal*, apply to the teacher as well as to the layman. "Every one of us," says Mr. Bok, "has his or her own ailments. It is enough for us all to keep well ourselves: to be compelled to listen to the ailments of others does not make that task any easier. Besides all this, these unnecessary narratives of personal ailments are positively injurious to ourselves. Physicians all agree that many of the slight illnesses, of which some people make so much, could be cured if they would but take their minds from themselves. Too many people work themselves into illnesses, or prevent themselves from getting well, by talking about a petty ailment, which, if forgotten, would right itself. I will not say that women, more than men, are prone to this evil. But as the majority of women have more leisure than the majority of men, they are more likely to let their minds dwell upon every little ill that assails them, and talk about it. It seems to me that one of the most important lessons we can all learn with the close of the year is to refrain from inflicting upon others what is purely personal to ourselves. Let us cease this tiresome, this inconsiderate, this un-

necessary talk about our ailments. Cold and hard as it may seem, the fact is nevertheless true, and will ever remain so, that the vast majority of people are interested in what is pleasant in our lives, but not in what is unpleasant. Pains and sorrows are elements in our lives which are sacred and interesting only to ourselves."

—WE are all tempted at times to doubt those parts of the biographies of famous men which treat of their early youth, and more particularly when we are told of the marvellous progress which some of these "infant prodigies" are supposed to have made in their youthful studies. Whatever we may have thought at such times, few of us have had the audacity to challenge the truth of the biographer, still less of the autobiographer. Now, however, some one has written to the *School Journal*, venturing to suggest that there is an educational danger in these otherwise harmless exaggerations—exaggerations which the writer referred to calls "big lies for little folks." He says:

In the olden time, the biographer endowed his hero with super-human wisdom and all the virtues of the fabled gods. The fictitious achievements of the mighty So-and-So were recorded in heroic hyperbole, unhampered by truth. The great were deified, and literature teemed with demigods and prodigies. Nor have the spirit of exaggeration and the love of the marvellous become extinct. Here, for instance, is an extract from a biography of John Fiske, published by a well-known house and intended especially for public schools: "His actual scholastic preparation for college may be said to have begun when he was six years old. At seven he was reading Cæsar, and had read Rollin, Josephus, and Goldsmith's Greece. Before he was eight he had read the whole of Shakespeare and a good deal of Milton, Bunyan, and Pope. He began Greek at nine. By eleven he had read Gibbon, Robertson, and Prescott, and most of Froissart, and at the same age, wrote from memory a chronological table from B. C. 1,000 to A. D. 1820;" and so on until he was sixteen, when he had read everything under the sun and had learned everything that mortal man ever knew or ever can know. The biographer fails to mention when Mr. Fiske learned such common things as spelling, grammar, arithmetic, and geography. Did he master these before the age of six, or did they come to him in his dreams? If he had mastered

orthography at the age of one, added grammar at the age of two, and so on, completing the common branches at six, then devouring science and languages ancient and modern in quick succession, his performance is, indeed, unsurpassed in fiction or fable, except by the infantile achievements of Horace Greeley, of whom a popular school history says: "At two years of age, he began to study the newspapers given him for amusement, and at four could read anything placed before him. At six, he was able to spell any word in the English language, was somewhat versed in geography and arithmetic, and had read the entire Bible."

Now, if Greeley, who could spell better at six than Noah Webster ever could, who could read before he could walk, and who had finished the Bible about the time ordinary children begin the first reader—if this miraculous prodigy failed even to be elected president, what chance is there for the average boy, who is unable, at sixteen years of age, to do what Greeley did almost as soon as he was born? Fables are harmless when there is a tacit understanding that the children shall only pretend to believe; but when we teach fable as fact, the child is deceived, and discouraged by contrasting himself with the fabulous children of books, and when finally he sees the deception, he distrusts all teaching and regards with contempt both teacher and books that put forth big lies for little folks in the clothing of truth.

### Current Events.

AT a recent meeting of the Protestant Board of School Commissioners of Montreal, the important matter of the education of children without means came up for discussion. From what was said it would appear that the Commissioners are doing all in their power, with the means at their command, to give to the children of the poor the same educational advantages as those who are better able to pay. Besides the free teaching of the really indigent, only two children in each family are requested to pay fees, all the rest being educated free. It was also remarked that in the public schools, the fees do not amount to more than one dollar per month for each pupil taught.

—THE last report of the Montreal Commissioners shows that they have under their immediate control fifteen schools with an average attendance of 7,706 pupils. The McGill

Model School and the Baron de Hirsch School, which receive assistance from the board, have an attendance of 435 and 331 respectively. The system of kindergarten classes introduced five years ago is now established, a kindergarten class having been formed in each of the city schools excepting the Britannia School. At the present time there are twelve kindergartens with thirty-five teachers and six hundred and thirty pupils. The institution of kindergarten classes has led to the introduction of transition work, connecting the methods of the kindergarten with those of the regular school classes. In this connection, it may be mentioned that hitherto the board has trained its own kindergarten teachers, but that the McGill Normal School is now offering a course on kindergarten principles and methods, to be followed by those holding the advanced elementary diploma. The classes in cooking, inaugurated in some of the city schools during the last two years, have been successful, the lessons given being both practical and theoretical.

—THE next annual meeting of the National Educational Association will be held in Washington, U. S. A., from the seventh to the thirteenth of July. The advantages of this arrangement are that Sunday travel going to or from the meeting will be unnecessary. There will be no session on the afternoon or evening of Saturday, the time being given to social and other recreations. The churches of Washington will be invited to arrange for sermons and addresses bearing upon educational themes on Sunday, the ninth. It is believed that this relief of Saturday afternoon and Sunday, occurring in the midst of the session, will be welcome.

—IN view of the general interest which was taken in the recent election for the first mayor of what is called Greater New York, the following account of the department of public schools under the new municipal organization, taken from the *School Bulletin*, is interesting: "The working of the educational chapter of the new charter is recognized by all as likely to be for some years an experiment, which only experience will codify into rules and regulations that will answer the needs of the great city. The Greater New York has 900,000 children of school age, and nearly 9,000 teachers, and now expends nearly \$11,000,000 a year for schools. The Board of Education consists of nineteen members, serving for one year,



and has charge of the business of administration. It is made up of the chairmen of the school boards of the boroughs of Manhattan and the Bronx, and ten delegates selected from and by those boards; the chairman of the school board of the borough of Brooklyn, and five delegates selected from and by that board; and the chairmen of the school boards of Richmond and Queens. It elects the city superintendent, the superintendent of buildings, and the superintendent of supplies, makes repairs and furnishes school buildings, purchases and distributes the supplies, administers the special school fund, acts as a board of trustees for the city college and the normal college, prepares and transmits to the board of estimate and apportionment the annual estimates for the entire system, and in general acts as the representative of the system. The members of the several borough boards are appointed by the Mayor for a term of three years, one-third retiring each year. That of Manhattan and the Bronx has twenty-one members, that of Brooklyn forty-five, those of Richmond and Queens nine members each. These boards have the care and oversight of the schools in their respective boroughs, appoint, promote and transfer all principals and teachers upon the nomination of the board of borough superintendents (except in Brooklyn), adopt courses of study and text-books upon recommendation of the board of borough superintendents, administer such part of the general school fund as may be apportioned to their boroughs, choose and determine sites for schools, and in general act for their respective boroughs. The city superintendent will be an extremely important officer. He nominates to the Board of Education four examiners, who, with himself, prepare the lists of those eligible for principals and teachers. Appointments in the several boroughs may be made only from these lists."

—THE following figures may give some idea of the size of England's great university. Oxford has a freshman class of 725 this year. Of these only 300 come from the public schools, Eton sending 48, Winchester 30, Rugby, Charterhouse, Harrow, and Marlborough over 20 each, and eleven other schools over 10 each; the rest come from small grammar schools, only twenty having been educated by private tutors. There are only twenty students from the British colonies and a few from American and German universities.

—THE *School Journal* says in a recent issue : “ The statement recently made in the papers, that the Russian government contemplated introducing compulsory education in that country, is officially denied. Compulsory education may some time be tried in Russia, but not for many years to come. As there are not sufficient elementary schools even in the large cities to meet existing requirements, any such plan would, at the present time, be impossible. Even if school buildings were erected to supply the demand, there are not educated people enough in the whole country to act as teachers. What the Russian government is doing is to plan new places of secondary education to meet the present needs, leaving the future to take care of itself.”

### Practical Hints and Examination Papers.

METHOD OF CONDUCTING THE RECITATION.—There is a good deal of truth in the following extract from Tompkins' “*School Management*,” published by Ginn and Company, of Boston : “ In the process of recitation, the teacher must avoid thrusting anything between the thought on the point under discussion and the minds of the class. A prominent form of this is that of requiring pupils to recite in words of the text, as if the text were a collection of memory gems. The recitation is a movement of thought on a given theme, and whatever requires straining to conform to language, when the form of language is not essential, checks the free movement of thought. The *memoriter* recitation may be very beautiful in outer form, but closely inspected, it reveals distortion. The pride of the teacher in the prim and so-called perfect recitation leads to formal and mechanical work, which defeats the object of the recitation. This prevails to such an extent that it is well to beware of the pretty and perfect recitation. When a history class, seated ever so correctly, with arms folded, say off in order, each in turn, the paragraphs of the lesson, and repeat by ingenious distribution till all show perfect preparation, it is not beautiful, because not the freedom of the inner life. Yet teachers have commanded exceptional salaries for skill in neat, ingenious mechanism. Two kinds of recitation in geometry are often heard. In one each member moves through the demonstration without a halt, triumphantly following

the figures and letters precisely as given in the text. In the other, the members struggle, stumble, and fail in the effort at original demonstration; but in this case there is intense and free demonstrative activity, while in the former there is but the pretense of demonstration ingeniously obscured by the perfect form of it. The recitation is beautiful just in proportion as it secures energy of thought, however struggling and halting it may seem; and the beautiful external form may be secured at the expense of this."

**BREATHING EXERCISES.**—The exercises here given are taken from an article in the *Journal of Health*. The writer of the article, Dr. John L. Davis, suggests it as of great value in developing the lungs. Standing as erect as possible, with shoulders thrown back and chest forward, the arms hanging close to the body, the head up, with lips firmly closed, inhalation is to be taken as slowly as may be; at the same time the extended arms are to be gradually raised, the back of the hands upward, until they closely approach each other above the head. The movement should be so regulated that the arms will be extended directly over the head at the moment the lungs are completely filled. This position should be maintained from five to thirty seconds before the reverse process is begun. As the arms are gradually lowered, the breath is exhaled slowly, so that the lungs shall be as nearly freed from breath as possible at the time the arms again reach the first position at the side. By these movements the greatest expansion possible is reached, for upon inspiration the weight of the shoulders and pectoral muscles are lifted, allowing the thorax to expand fully, while upon exhalation, in lowering the arms, we utilize the additional force of the pressure upon the upper thorax to render expiration as complete as possible. These deep respirations should be repeated five or six times, and the exercise gone through with several times a day. It is hardly necessary to remark that the clothing must in no way interfere with the exercise. In some cases this exercise is more advantageous when taken lying flat on the back, instead of standing. In this position the inspiratory muscles become rapidly strengthened by opposing the additional pressure exerted by the abdominal organs against the expanding lungs. And, on the other hand, expiration is more perfect and full on account of the pressure of these organs.

In a somewhat similar connection, these suggestions for keeping erect, given by the *Youth's Companion*, will be found to be a great help in avoiding the roundness of shoulders and general stooping position with which the teacher, from the nature of school work, is too apt to be afflicted.

1. Make it a rule to keep the back of the neck close to the back of the collar.
2. Roll the shoulders backward and downward.
3. Try to squeeze the shoulder blades together many times a day.
4. Stand erect at short intervals during the day—head up, chin in, chest out, shoulders back.
5. Walk or stand with hands clasped behind head and elbows wide apart.
6. Walk about, or even run upstairs, with from ten to forty pounds on top of head.
7. Try to look at the top of your high-cut vest or your neck-tie.
8. Practice arm movements of breast-stroke swimming while standing or walking.
9. Hold arms behind back.
10. Carry a cane or an umbrella behind small of back or behind neck.
11. Put hands on hips, with elbows back and fingers forward.
12. Walk with thumbs in arm-holes of vest.
13. When walking, swing arms and shoulders strongly backward.
14. Stand now and then during the day with all the posterior parts of the body, so far as possible, touching a vertical wall.
15. Look upward as you walk on the sunny side of the street.

WHEN VISITORS ARE IN.—A writer in the *Educational News*, gives the following bits of advice to teachers who do not know the proper attitude to assume in the presence of visitors in the class-room.

Don't make excuses.

Don't ask visitors if they wish any certain subject taught.

Don't change the regular order of work unless requested.

Teach as if no stranger were in the room.

Don't leave your pupils and pay too much attention to the visitor. There is sure to be disorder if you do.

Always be ready for visitors. Never allow your pupils to get into such conditions or positions as you would not care to have visitors see.

Don't try to cover mistakes of pupils. Mistakes are only natural. Visitors enjoy them and delight to see children correct themselves and each other.

Be natural. Don't put on a "visitor's" manner of voice. The children will notice it, and, being unused to the sudden change, will not respond promptly. They will, too, set you down as a hypocrite.

QUESTIONS IN GEOGRAPHY.—The following questions in geography, with appropriate answers, are reproduced from that bright educational journal, the *Canadian Teacher*. Our readers will find them a valuable test of the work that is being done by the pupils.

1. What is the earth? The sun? The moon?
2. Describe the orbit of each of these.
3. Distinguish the diurnal from the annual motion of the earth. What is the purpose of each?
4. What is the circle of illumination?  
Show two causes for its constant changing.  
How does it divide the equator?  
How does it divide the parallels of latitude?  
When does it bisect them?
5. What are the equinoxes? The solstices? Account for each name.
6. Account for the length of a day, a month, a year.
7. Why do the sun and the other heavenly bodies appear to us to move from the east to the west in twelve hours?
8. Why does the moon rise and set later each succeeding day while the time of sunrise and sunset vary so little?
9. What produces the change in seasons? What produces the change in length of day?

#### ANSWERS.

1. The earth is a planet—a heavenly body revolving round the sun.

The sun is the centre of the solar system.

The moon is a satellite—a heavenly body revolving round a planet.

2. The orbit of each is an ellipse. The moon revolves around the earth, the earth around the sun and the sun around the centre of the universe.

3. The diurnal motion of the earth is its rotation on its own axis. The annual motion is its revolution around the sun. The first produces the succession of day and night. The second produces the change in the seasons and the change in the length of day and night.

4. The circle of illumination is that line on the surface of the earth which divides the light part from the dark.

It is constantly changing on account of the rotation of the earth and also because of the annual motion. It always bisects the equator.

On each succeeding day it divides the parallels differently. It bisects the parallels at the equinoxes.

5. The equinoxes are those times of the year when the sun shines vertically over the equator and we have equal day and night.

The solstices are those times of the year when the sun shines vertically over the Tropic of Cancer or over the Tropic of Capricorn. The sun then appears to stand still in his northward or his southward course in the heavens.

6. A day is the length of time it takes the earth to turn once on its axis. A month is the time it takes the moon to revolve once around the earth. A year is the time it takes the earth to revolve once around the sun.

7. The heavenly bodies appear to us to move from the east to the west in twelve hours because the earth makes one half a revolution towards the east in that time.

8. The moon is constantly revolving around the earth towards the east, and therefore is changing its relative position to us, while the sunrise depends merely on the rotation of the earth, and that is regular.

9. The change in the seasons is caused by the annual motion of the earth with its axis inclined to the plane of its orbit, and having the axis always pointing in the same direction. The change in length of day is caused by the daily and annual motion of the earth and the inclination of the axis to the plane of its orbit.

### Books Received and Reviewed.

[All Exchanges and Books for Review should be sent direct to the Editor of the *Educational Record*, Quebec, P. Q.]

The educational feature of the December *Atlantic Monthly* is an article on "State Universities and Church Colleges." Every number of the *Atlantic* contains an article on some large educational subject, and in its prospectus for 1898 it announces a series of articles of the first importance on "Modern Psychology and its contributions to Education." In an early number of the new volume will appear an article by Mrs. Alice Freeman Palmer, on "The Ideal Relations of a Community to its Public Schools." Among the other interesting features promised by the *Atlantic* is a new serial by Gilbert Parker, author of the "Seats of the Mighty." The indications are that the forty-first year of

this progressive magazine's life will be a most important one.

The December number of the *Ladies' Home Journal* is a special Christmas one, containing a wealth of matter appropriate for the holiday season. A year's subscription to the *Journal* makes a gift that cannot but be appreciated by the recipient. The publishers are the Curtis Publishing Company, Philadelphia.

Among the special Christmas features of the *Canadian Magazine* for December, are several beautifully illustrated poems and holiday stories. We are glad to learn that the *Canadian* has had a prosperous year, and that its prospects for 1898 are very bright. May it go on and prosper, as, indeed, it deserves to do.

The *Hesperian*, that independent literary quarterly hailing from St. Louis, is as good as ever in its November-January number. The *pièce de résistance* is a study in Shakespeare, "The Strength of Antonio," and there is a cleverly written paper on "England in Egypt and the Soudan." The literary notes by the editor, Mr. De Menil, in the "Literary Wayside," are as bright as in former numbers, and that is saying a great deal.

In the December number of the *Presbyterian College Journal*, Montreal, is reproduced a paper, "The Parousia," by the Rev. D. J. Fraser, of St. John, N. B. It is a thoughtful essay, and the reader will be well repaid for his perusal of it.

EPIMETHEUS is the title of a poem addressed to his students by Dr. J. Clark Murray, professor of mental and moral philosophy in McGill College. Those who have had the privilege of receiving instruction from Dr. Murray, either at Queen's College, where he taught for ten years, or at McGill, where he has been a member of the staff for the last twenty-five years, will surely feel much gratification on reading these reminiscent and hopeful lines, and will at the same time appreciate the metrical grace which characterizes the kindly sentiments expressed. *Epimetheus* has been published and forms a dainty little booklet.

PRISONERS OF THE SEA, by Florence M. Kingsley, and published by the Copp, Clark, Company, Toronto, is one of the most entrancing of the many good stories which have

been recently published. The scene is laid in the last decade of the seventeenth century, and the narrative circles round one of the most interesting personalities in French history, the mysterious "Man with the Iron Mask." It is a book that no one will lay down till the end is reached; and though the plot is not intricate, the reader is held in a certain suspense as to the *raison d'être* of the beautiful palace on the lonely island, until the last chapter, when all is explained. The get-up of "Prisoners of the Sea" is excellent, making it altogether desirable as a gift book.

### Official Department.

#### NOTICES FROM THE OFFICIAL GAZETTE.

His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor has been pleased, by order in council dated the 11th of November instant (1897), to detach from the school municipality of Sainte Louise, in the county of L'Islet, the following numbers of the cadastre of Sainte Louise, to wit: Nos. 64, 67 and 69, and to annex them, for school purposes, to the municipality of "Saint Aubert," in the same county.

This annexation will take effect on the 1st of July next (1898).

His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor has been pleased, on the 15th November instant (1897), to make the following appointments, to wit:

#### *School Commissioners.*

Huntingdon, Saint Romain of Hemmingford: Revd. Mr. François Xavier Goyette, instead and in place of Revd. Mr. Jean A. Ducharme, who has left this parish.

Saguenay, Fox River: Mr. Flavien Bouliane, instead and in place of Mr. Gabriel Bouliane, absent from this municipality.

Témiscouata: Mr. Hubert Morin, instead and in place of Mr. J. A. Lavigne, who has resigned.

17th November.—To detach from the school municipality of "Côte Saint-Michel," county of Hochelaga, the village of "Villeray," and erect it into a distinct school municipality, with the same limits as are assigned to it by the proclamation of the 30th day of October (1896).

This erection to take effect on the 1st of July next (1898).



To make the following appointments, to wit :

*School Commissioners.*

Dorchester, Saint Abdon : Mr. Bélonie Bisson, to replace Mr. Hubert Vachon, whose term of office has expired.

Parish of Rimouski : The canon A. D. Vézina, parish priest, of Rimouski, to replace the Revd. Mr. Luc Rouleau, who has left the municipality.

Town of Rimouski : The canon Vézina, to replace the Revd. Mr. Luc Rouleau, who has left the municipality.

His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor has been pleased, by order in council dated the 19th of November instant (1897), to detach from the municipality of Saint Ignace de Missisquoi, the following cadastral lots, to wit: Nos. 1446, 1447, 1448, 1449, 1450, 1451, 1452, 1453, 1454, 1456, 1457, 1459 and 1462, and annex them, for school purposes, to the municipality of Missisquoi.

This annexation will take effect on the 1st of July next (1898).