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JANUARY, 1886.

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THE  
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OF THE  
PROVINCE OF QUEBEC,

THE MEDIUM THROUGH WHICH THE PROTESTANT COMMITTEE OF THE COUNCIL OF  
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION COMMUNICATES ITS PROCEEDINGS  
AND OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS.

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CONTENTS:

	PAGE
Teaching Composition..... <i>Dr. Edward Brooks</i>	1
Ventilation.....	9
Writing..... <i>Col. F. W. Parker</i>	10
Why not Grade the County School?..... <i>R. N. Roark, Ky.</i>	13
Items from a Juperintendent's Note-book.....	17
Editorial Notes.....	20
Board of Examiners—List of Diplomas.....	23
Clippings.....	24
Examination of Model Schools and Academies.....	26
Book Notices.....	27

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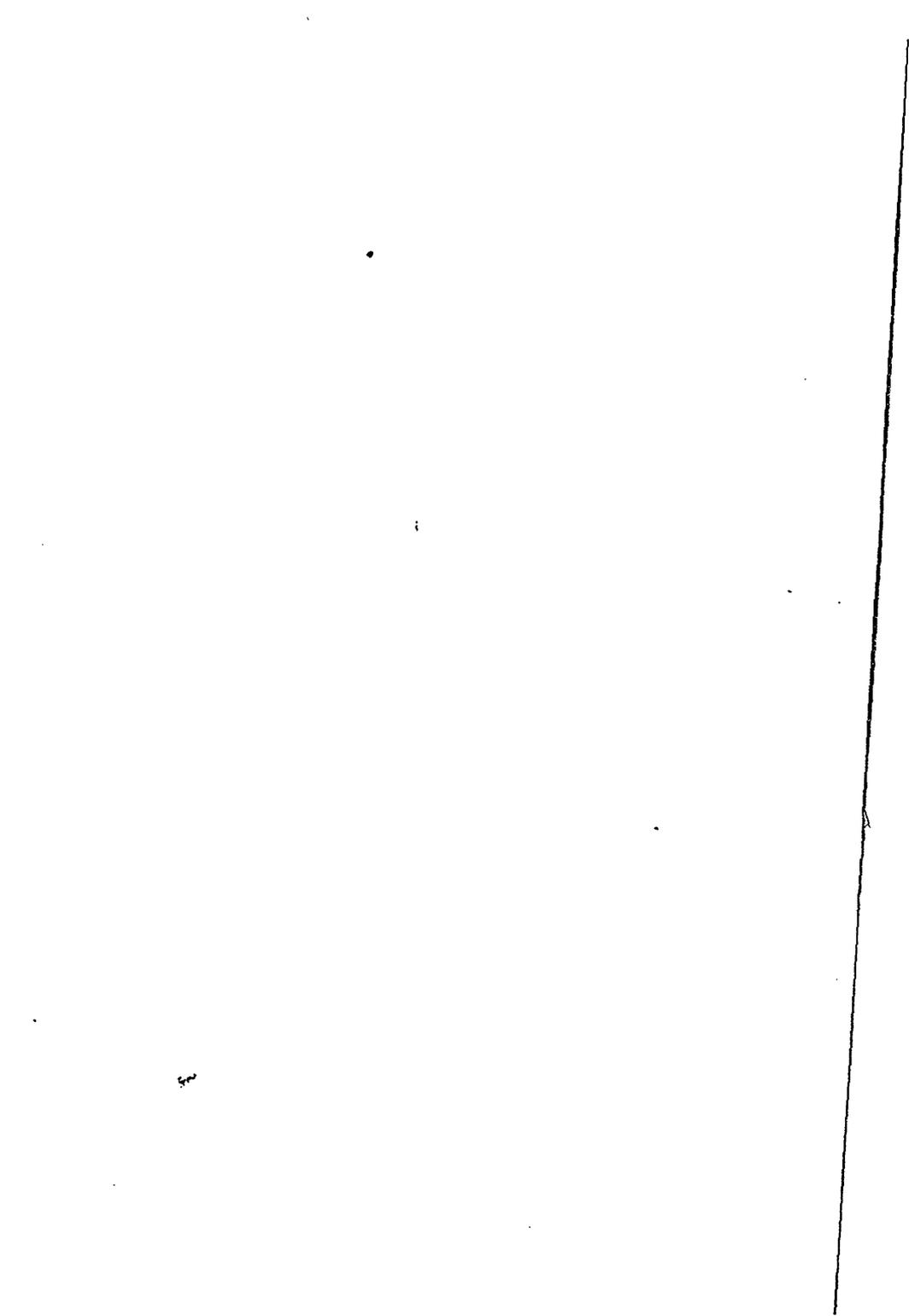
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VOL. VI.  
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1886.

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GAZETTE PRINTING COMPANY.  
1886.



## CONTENTS.

---

	PAGE
Amended Pension Act.....	131, 154
Administrative Commission (First Meeting) .....	310
€	
<b>BOARDS OF EXAMINERS—</b>	
Candidates who obtained Diplomas at the November meet- ing (1885).....	23
Candidates who obtained Diplomas at the May meeting '86 .....	223
Book Notices .....	27, 83, 194, 221, 279, 306
Clippings.....	24, 56
Correspondence.....	57, 81, 113, 138, 218, 304
Colonial and Indian Exhibition.....	100
Calendar of McGill University.....	164
Closing Exercises of McGill Normal School .....	166
Current Events and Comments.....	207, 273, 292
Department of Public Instruction .....	74, 283
<b>EDITORIAL NOTES—</b>	
The Record .....	21, 287
Exhibition.....	21
Education.....	21
Copy Books.....	22
Pension Act.....	22
Protestant Committee.....	55, 190
Physiology and Hygiene.....	55
McGill University.....	55
Provincial Association of Protestant Teachers.....	55
The Educational Weekly.....	55
The Canada School Journal .....	55
Teachers' Association, City of Quebec.....	55, 205
Secretary Department of Public Instruction.....	56
The Teachers' Convention.....	78, 106, 190
The late John Dudley Philbrick .....	78
Education for March.....	79
The Educational Exhibit.....	107
Teachers' Institutes.....	135, 161
Inspectors' Meetings of Teachers.....	136

Secretary-Treasurers and their Half-yearly Reports . . . . .	136
The Amended Pension Act . . . . .	163, 100
Professional changes . . . . .	188
Inspection of Academies and Model Schools . . . . .	189
The Schoolmaster . . . . .	204
Specimens of School-work at the Colonial Exhibition . . . . .	204
Examination for Teachers' Diplomas . . . . .	206
Echoes from the Convention . . . . .	269
Examination of Model Schools and Academies . . . . .	301
Elementary Science Teaching . . . . .	41
Experiences in Elementary Schools of Oxford . . . . .	123
Examination Papers . . . . .	191, 301
Items from a Superintendent's Note Book . . . . .	17
Local Items . . . . .	79, 108
Literature and Science . . . . .	216, 275, 298
Moral and Physical Education . . . . .	116
Methods of Teaching English Composition . . . . .	180, 263
Moral Education . . . . .	199
Notes of Lessons on Morals . . . . .	52
Notable features English system of Elementary Education . . . . .	171
Official Notices . . . . .	85, 142, 198, 226, 281, 308
Practical Work . . . . .	47
Protestant Committee, Minutes of . . . . .	59, 143, 227, 285
Provincial Association of Protestant Teachers . . . . .	87
Practical Hints and Examination Papers . . . . .	300
Suggestions to Pupils . . . . .	45
Sun dance of the Cree Indians . . . . .	103
Summary Results of Inspection . . . . .	152
Teaching Composition . . . . .	1, 31, 67
Total Abstinence Teaching in the Schools . . . . .	43
Time Table . . . . .	140
Teachers' Normal Institutes . . . . .	183
"    Convention . . . . .	
"    Reading Circles . . . . .	255
Ventilation . . . . .	9
Writing . . . . .	11
Why not Grade the County School . . . . .	13
Weights and Measures, English and French . . . . .	38

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TEACHING COMPOSITION.

BY DR. EDWARD BROOKS.

Composition is the art of expressing our ideas and thoughts in words. It is the art of telling what we know, or of embodying our knowledge in language. This knowledge may consist of facts which we have observed, heard, or read, or of thoughts which we may have acquired by conversation and reading, or developed by thinking.

*Importance.* — Composition is one of the most important branches taught in our schools. It does more to prepare a pupil for success in many departments of life than almost any other branch. It also affords valuable culture to the mind, for it requires closeness of observation, fulness and readiness of memory, and the power of original thought and generalization. It is valuable for its own sake; the art of correct and elegant expression is an accomplishment to be highly prized. It also cultivates a literary taste that enables one to appreciate the works of literature, and thus becomes a source of the most refined and exquisite pleasure.

Composition is also, when properly taught, one of the most interesting and delightful of the common-school branches. The popular dread of composition writing is due to the fact that it has been so poorly taught in our schools: There can be no intrinsic repulsiveness in writing compositions. Children love to

talk, they delight in expressing their ideas and feelings; and if they are taught to understand that composition is merely writing what they know and think, as they would talk it, pupils will take delight in writing compositions, and long for "composition day" more than they now dread it.

*Errors in Teaching.*—The errors in teaching composition are numerous. Our methods give pupils a wrong idea of the nature of composition writing. Many pupils seem to have the idea that writing a composition is trying to express what they do not know, or the stringing of words together after some mechanical model, instead of merely writing simply and naturally what they know or think about something. Pupils have been required to write compositions without any instruction or preparation for the exercise, and allowed to write blindly without any assistance. The subjects assigned are often unsuited to pupils, being too abstract and difficult. Teachers have made the subject too formal, and thus have taken all the life, freshness, and zest out of it.

Such teaching has given the pupils of our public schools a dread of composition writing. They regard it as the "bugbear" of the school-room, and think of "composition day" with a shudder. They perform the allotted task without any interest, merely because they are compelled to do so. They put it off to the last moment, and slip out of it whenever they can. They copy their compositions out of books, or get some older pupils to write for them. They acquire stilted and artificial forms of expressing themselves, instead of writing in that natural and interesting style in which they converse.

There is great need of reform in this respect, and this need seems to be widely felt. It is an oft-repeated question, How shall we improve our methods of teaching composition? Our educational periodicals are crowded with criticisms of the old methods and suggestions for improvement. Authors are turning their attention to the subject, and text-books are multiplying upon it. Our grammars are growing more practical, and text-books on language lessons, designed to teach expression, are becoming abundant.

*Division of the Subject.*—In the discussion of the subject we shall speak first of the Preparation for Composition writing, and secondly, of the Methods of Teaching Composition. The Preparation for Composition will include a statement of those condi-

tions and that culture which prepare a pupil for writing. Instruction in Composition will embrace first that primary instruction which is designed to prepare a young pupil to express himself in writing with correctness and freedom. These exercises are now popularly known as *Language Lessons*. Under the second head we shall present some formal directions for Writing a Composition.

#### I. PREPARATION FOR COMPOSITION WRITING.

*Conditions.*—The fundamental conditions of composition are, first, something to say, and secondly, how to say it. In other words, composition writing includes the *matter* and the *expression*. The matter consists, in a general way, of ideas and thoughts. For the expression of these we need a large and choice vocabulary of words, and a finished and accurate style of expression.

The first requirement in writing composition is, that there shall be something to say; when there is nothing in the mind, nothing can come out of it. Here is the mistake of many teachers, who expect children to express ideas upon a subject when they have no ideas to express. Ideas, thoughts, knowledge in the mind, it should be remembered, are necessary antecedents to expression. In the second place, there must be something with which to express what we know. Our knowledge must flow out in the form of words, and we must be familiar with individual words and know how to use them. The third condition is that we shall acquire a clear and correct method of expressing our thoughts, and cultivate, so far as possible, those graces of style which give beauty and finish to expression. Let us inquire how each one of these conditions is to be attained.

*Sources of Material.*—The materials of composition, as already stated, are ideas, facts, thoughts, sentiments, etc. There are several sources of these materials. The principal sources of our ideas and thoughts are observation, reading, judgment, imagination, and reflection.

**Observation:** Many of our ideas come from the observation of the objects of the material world. The facts which we express are drawn largely from our experience of things and persons. Nearly all the great writers have been close observers of nature and human nature. Homer was in deep sympathy with the material world, and drew some of his finest figures from his obser-

vation. Shakespeare was a devoted lover of nature, and gives us hundreds of pictures like "The morn in russet mantle clad walks o'er the dew of yon high eastern hill," showing how close and accurate was his observation. Dickens drew many of his characters from actual persons whom he knew, and whose peculiarities he had carefully studied.

Pupils should, therefore, be taught to observe closely and accurately. Objects should be presented to them to examine and describe. They should be required not only to observe the principal features, but also to notice the minutiae of things. Observation should be analytic, descending to the minor and less obtrusive parts of objects. Trained in this way, a pupil will acquire accurate ideas of things, and be able to point them out and to describe what he has seen with ease and accuracy.

Reading: We can also obtain ideas and thoughts by reading. In books we find facts, ideas, sentiments, opinions, figures of rhetoric, etc., which remain in our memory, and may be used in their original form or become types for creations of our own. In books are embalmed the choicest productions of the master minds, and they enrich the mind of the reader, and give wisdom to his thought and grace to his utterances. Young persons should cull in their reading the finest passages and write them down and commit them. They should also take note of the interesting and important facts in their bearing on the subject, and fix them in the memory. An effort should be made to become familiar with the opinions and noble sentiments of the great thinkers, for in this way thought will be enriched and expression beautified.

Judgment: Pupils should be taught to exercise the judgment as well as the eyes and ears. They should be taught to compare things, to see their relations, and to draw inferences from them. They should be required not only to see, but to think about what they see, and to form opinions concerning it. It is this observing with the judgment that makes the philosopher. By it Copernicus attained to the true idea of the planetary system, and Newton reached the great law of universal gravitation.

Imagination: Pupils should be taught also to exercise the imagination. Every form of nature not only embodies an idea, but may be perceived as the symbol of an idea. The things of the material world are typical of the things of the spiritual world; they are often the symbols of ideas and sentiments and feelings.

Here is the source of personification, similes, metaphors, etc. The flower looks up into our eyes, the streamlet bathes the brows of the drooping violets, the stars are forget-me-nots of the angels, etc. It is the office of the imagination to catch these analogies, to transmute the material thing into the immaterial thought, and "give to airy nothing a local habitation and a name."

The imagination may thus be taught to leap from the visible image. Things may become the ladder by which it rises to the sphere of beautiful and poetic thoughts. Thus, Shakespeare gives us the figure, "How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank;" Alexander Smith says, "The princely morning walks o'er diamond dews;" and Longfellow gives us the picture of a "silver brook" which "babbling low amid the tangled woods, slips down through moss-grown stones with endless laughter." The attention of the learner should be called to these and similar creations, and he should be encouraged to create images of his own.

Reflection: Much of the material of compositions comes from thinking. We must, therefore, learn to think in order to learn to write. It is not enough to acquire the thoughts of others; we must learn to evolve thoughts for ourselves. We must cultivate a reflective and creative cast of mind that seeks for the idea lying back of the fact, that searches for the cause of the phenomena, and is ever inquiring what these facts prove, or what principle they illustrate or establish. We should endeavor to originate new forms of expression, new figures of rhetoric, and to form ideas and opinions of our own on many subjects.

*Sources of Words.*—The second condition of becoming a good writer is the acquisition of words. In order to write, we must not only have ideas and thoughts, but we must have language in which to express them. The thought is to be incarnated in speech. Ideas and thoughts existing in the mind, intangible and invisible, are to be transmuted into audible or visible forms. Nature, as it were, goes into the mind through the senses, and re-appears in the form of language. Form and color and tone in the material world give form and color and tone to expression. The freshness of spring, the brightness of summer, the rich tints of autumn, and the silver habit of winter, all give freshness and beauty and glory to the literature and language of a people. These words may be acquired in several ways.

**Instinct:** Words are derived partly by an instinctive habit. We pick them up in conversation without any conscious effort. A child will often be heard to use words which it but a short time before heard some one else make use of. Children seem to have an instinct for language, and new words cling to their memory like burrs to the garments. A child of four years of age may be able to speak three or four different languages if it has had an opportunity to hear them spoken. It is, therefore, of great advantage to a child to hear a large and expressive vocabulary used in the household.

**Conscious Effort:** Words should also be consciously acquired. There should be a special effort made to enrich the vocabulary. We should notice the words in our reading, and make a list of new words, or of those which we may think do not belong to our practical vocabulary. Such a list may often be reviewed until the mind becomes familiar with it. We should also make use of these words in our conversation and in writing. It is surprising how rapidly we would improve in expression by the adoption of this method. Our vocabulary, which is often small, smaller than we think, will become enlarged; and we will learn to speak and write with a copious, rich, and elegant expression.

**The Dictionary:** The pupil should form the habit of studying the dictionary. The dictionary has sometimes been used as a text-book in schools, but this is not recommended; it should, however, be a student's constant companion. It should lie on every student's table, and be frequently consulted. This has been the habit of some of the most accomplished scholars and writers. Charles Sumner was a most assiduous student of the dictionary. He had several copies in his library in constant use, and usually carried a pocket edition with him; and they were found, after his death, to be the most thumbed of any of his books. Lord Chatham went twice through the largest English dictionary, studying the meaning of each word and its various uses.

**General Reading:** An extensive course of general reading is valuable in acquiring a large, and choice vocabulary of words. Such reading should be largely confined to our best authors, those who use words with correctness and artistic skill. The finished and thoughtful writer often puts a meaning into a word which we never noticed before, and thus stamps it upon our memory. It is only in this way that we can acquire that nice and delicate

sense in the use of words which distinguishes the refined and scholarly writer.

**Ancient Languages.** The study of the ancient languages is especially valuable in this respect. It was formerly thought that a knowledge of Latin and Greek was necessary in order to understand the English language; but this claim is now seldom made. The great value of their study consists in the constant use of English words in the translations, and in the comparison and weighing of the sense of the various words given in the definitions to see which will express the meaning of the text the most accurately. If the student should forget every word of Latin and Greek the year after he leaves college, the linguistic culture he has received is a permanent possession, and will enrich his expression.

**Small Words:** In the choice of words, young pupils should be careful not to select merely the large words. The large words attract the attention and are the most liable to be remembered. It is the little words, however, that are the most expressive, and are the most artistic in use. The good old Anglo-Saxon basis of our speech contains a richer and more expressive meaning than the larger Latin and Greek derivatives. Our best writers delight in the skilful use of the small words; and this is an especial characteristic of Shakespeare and our English Bible.

This caution is the more necessary, as young persons have an idea that large words indicate learning and profundity of thought. Goethe refers to this when he makes Mephistopheles say to Faust, "For that which will not go into the head, a pompous word will stand in its stead." This is quite a general opinion among the uncultured. The man who came to his minister, frightened at a strange appearance of the sun, was entirely satisfied when he was told that it was "only a phantasmagoria." Hazlitt, referring to the use of large words, says, "I hate anything that occupies more space than it is worth; I hate to see a parcel of big words without anything in them." Leigh Hunt gave a fitting reply to a lady who asked the question, "Will you venture on an orange?" by his answer, "No, thank you, I fear I should fall off." Let the pupil, therefore, not select the large words, but learn to use the little words, the language of the heart and home, with skill and artistic effect.

*Style of Expression.*—We not only need ideas and thoughts,

and a rich vocabulary in which to express them, but we need also to know how to put these words together to produce the best results. We need to acquire a good style of expression. We need to acquire that ease and elegance of expression and that artistic skill in the use of language which distinguish the cultivated writer. In order to aid the pupil in this, several suggestions are made.

**Read Extensively:**—First, we remark that pupils should read extensively. Reading not only gives words, but it gives facility in the use of words and the expression of ideas. Pupils who have read most are usually the best writers. We often find in schools those who are deficient in the more difficult studies, yet who write excellent compositions; and, upon inquiry, learn that they have read a great deal, perhaps merely novels. The best scholars in the school branches are often very poor writers, because they have done but little reading. By reading, we become familiar with the style of an author, and form a style of our own. Many distinguished men have formed their style by reading a few books very thoroughly. Lincoln received his language culture very largely from reading the *Pilgrim's Progress*. Kossuth's masterly knowledge of English was acquired by the study of Shakespeare and the English Bible. The unique and expressive language of uncultured men, derived almost entirely from reading the Bible, has often been a surprise to us and demonstrated the utility of reading in acquiring a style of expression.

**Copy Productions:** Pupils should be required to copy literary productions. Copying an author will make a deeper impression than even a careful reading of one. Sight strikes deeper than sound; to execute form stamps it upon the memory like a die. To go over a production, word by word and sentence by sentence, writing it out, will impress the style of the author deeply upon the literary sense. I would, therefore, require pupils to "copy compositions." If a paragraph could be written every day on the slate or on paper, it would greatly aid the literary growth of the pupil. Many eminent writers have practised copying the productions of the masters of literature. Demosthenes copied the history of Thucydides eight times, in order to acquire his clear, concise, and elegant style.

**Commit Extensively:** Pupils should be required to commit extensively, both prose and poetry. Committing will make a

deeper impression than either reading or copying. It will tend to fix the words and deepen the channels of thought and expression. It will, as it were, give one literary moulds in which to run his own thoughts, or dig out literary channels in which our thoughts and sentiments may flow. This has been the practice of all who have obtained excellence in the use of language, Burke and Pitt cultivated their wonderful powers of oratory by committing the orations of Demosthenes. Fox committed the book of Job, and drew from it his grandeur and force of expression. Lord Chatham read and re-read the sermons of D. Barrow until he knew many of them by heart.

Declamation: The old practice of "declaiming pieces" was of very great value to students in the culture of literary power. It gave them models of style, and stimulated expression. Indeed, it often did more to give a command of English than the whole college course. We have noticed the style of young men after their graduation at college, and could, in several instances, trace it back to the culture derived from their declamation pieces.

All this preparation for writing requires time and patience. It can not be acquired in a few months or a year, but is a matter of gradual development. Literary skill is the result of literary growth. A student can master a text-book in geometry or algebra in a few months, but literary culture is the work of a lifetime. It is an organic product, like the development of a tree. The exercises should be continued day by day, and the result will crown the work.

We shall now proceed to the second division of the subject, *The Methods of Teaching Composition*. We shall divide the subject into two parts, *Language Lessons and Composition Writing*.—(*Educational Courant*.)

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

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*Ventilation*.—A simple and effectual method of supplying fresh air without draft to a school-room, appeared in the pages of the *Builder*. It may be described as an air-box made of sheet iron, and placed behind or connected with a stove. The box is connected by an air-shaft with the outside wall, and has an inlet pipe above, which admits the fresh air into the room. In passing through the "box" the air becomes slightly warmed in winter, when there is a fire in the stove, and it is a good ventilating shaft in summer. It is most effective when it is most required, i.e., when other openings, doors and windows, are closed. Its advantage over the old plan of a simple opening under the stove, is that there is no danger of dirt or ashes falling into it and filling it up. I may add that I designed it twelve months ago, for a Board School in Leicester, where it has been found to work admirably. The fresh air inlet pipe could be taken to any part of a room where the stove might be placed.—*Selected*.

## WRITING.

By COL. F. W. PARKER.

I have said that the general introduction of writing in the lowest primary grades was caused by using writing as a prominent means of teaching little children to read.

## REASONS FOR USING SCRIPT.

1. The method by which the children have been learning oral language for five or more years is—first, to acquire an idea or thought,—second, to listen to a word or words directly associated with the idea or thought,—third, *to utter the word or sentence*. The utterance of the word is of the utmost importance in fixing the word in the mind. If a child could hear language without the power to express thought, orally, he would no doubt be greatly crippled in his power to hear and understand language. Thought demands expression not only for the purpose of strengthening thought, but also to give clear concepts of words and associations with ideas and thought.

The analogy between learning to hear language by utterance, and learning to see language (to read) by writing is complete and perfect. Five or six years of constant practice in uttering what is heard has formed one of the strongest habits of the child's nature. Writing the words he is learning, simply carries this permanently fixed habit, this ever active and constant power, over into the method of learning to read. The failure to use the acquired powers of pupils in each step of progress is one of the great and lamentable mistakes in teaching.

2. Writing a word that has been associated with an idea, follows the method by which every oral word has been learned, and utilizes a powerful habit. The mind associates an idea with a word—and the utterance or writing of the word; the *expression* of the word, is in obedience to a natural and active tendency of the soul.

3. What peculiar form of written or printed words should be used in the first steps? The answer is plain and practical in the highest degree; the forms of written expression the pupil is to use all his life long.

All conventional form of expression are learned entirely by imitation; *as the pattern or model is, so will the forms of expression be.*

Printing, or writing a poor hand, is precisely analagous to mispronunciation and bad articulation. There is no time to be lost trying to correct habits, which need never have been acquired, Not one precious minute! It is a fact of common experience that many if not most pupils in our schools struggle through eight years of writing, writing a half or an hour daily, and after all cannot express their thoughts upon paper easily and legibly: it is also a well-known fact that every child with normal powers can, under proper teaching, learn to write in the three first primary years.

If the child is to use in writing the normal or the easiest and most legible form of expression, why should he not use from the first and all the time the terms in reading that he will use all his life, with some considerable exceptions, to wit, prints.

This seems to be in direct conflict with the principles above laid down. If script and print were identical in form, there would be no conflict. They are dis-similar, they must both be learned, and the question is, which should be learned first, or should they both be learned together?

#### SCRIPT AND PRINT LEARNED TOGETHER.

Both script and print can be learned together, there is no doubt of that; and in acquiring both at the same time, there is no positive infringement upon the main principles of teaching reading. The question is: Does the teaching of script and print together use time and mental power in the most economical way? How to work with the least possible amount of waste, is a matter of immense importance. Can a child learn as well and as quickly by using one as both, in the first steps?

Haste in beginning is generally waste at the end; the point to ascertain is not how much a pupil can learn in three months, but how much and well he can learn in one or two years.

#### POINTS IN THIS DISCUSSION.

a. Every child should learn both script and print, the former he will use all his life in expressing thought, the latter never.

b. The reproduction of the word or words a pupil is learning, and the expression of the idea or thought associated with the word or sentence, is an exceedingly important aid in learning to

read. This reproduction of words should be made in the conventional forms the pupil is to use all his life.

c. Owing to the means it affords for the constant reception of words in different sentences, the blackboard is by far preferable to the best charts or first readers ever yet made.

A teacher can write much easier and much more rapidly than she can print. The writing she produces upon the blackboard should be, like pronunciation, the exact forms her pupils should reproduce.

d. Children learn script more easily, taking reproduction into the account, than they can print without reproducing the print.

e. In copying from the blackboard, pupils begin spelling, pronunciation and capitalization in forms they will never be called upon to change.

f. The greatest danger in teaching all first steps, reading in particular, is to hurry and overburden the mental power of the learner, thus creating a disgust rather than a love for reading.

A strong appetite for books should be developed in the child. This can be done by working very slowly at first, by teaching a few words thoroughly, so that when pupils do begin print they will succeed every time they try to read a sentence. This end may be reached by using script alone, better than teaching script and print together. It has been urged that parents could help children, and children could help themselves, if print were used. The help, of most parents, at this time, when they cannot see how any one can learn to read without knowing the names of the letters, would be as a general thing detrimental to the children. Children can help themselves, at first, more by writing the words they learn than in any other way.

g. Children who have been taught script for four or five months, can, under skilful teaching, change from script to print with great ease. One or two days' time is amply sufficient to make the change.

In my experience, pupils who have been skillfully taught script for five months are also able to read three or four first readers in the next five months.

#### WHEN A CHILD SHOULD BEGIN TO WRITE.

I would use script alone in the first steps, because by so doing there is the least waste of time and effort.

Thus far answering the question, "When should a child begin to write?" I have shown the uses of writing, rather than to directly answer the question. A child should begin to use any avenue of thought manifestation when muscles and nerves, to be used in that mode of expression, are capable of action under the direction of the mind, without detriment to the physical or mental nature of the child. It has been proven by more than eighty years' use in Germany, and nearly twenty-five years in this country, that every normally developed child can write as soon as he begins to learn to read.

It has been said by a person who ought to be good authority, that children should not be taught to write until they have thought to express. The suggestion that little five year old children have no thoughts to express, is eminently ridiculous.

Very much of the reasoning concerning what children can and should do, and upon what they cannot, and should not do, is done from a lofty, theoretical height, far above (or perhaps below would be a better word) an intimate knowledge of the child and the facts.

A theoretical leader, who does not constantly temper his theory by careful and continued practice, is too often a blind leader of the blind. I have lately heard of two prominent normal school teachers who go down into the primary schools and teach one hour a day. Stock arguments against progress in education would be at a great discount if all principals, superintendents, and professors of pedagogy would do this. Go then, Sir Authority, and do likewise!—(*The School Journal.*)

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## WHY NOT GRADE THE COUNTY SCHOOL?

BY R. N. ROARK, GLASGOW, KENTUCKY.

When the question is first asked, the vision of a small room, crowded with boys and girls of all ages and sizes, following all studies from a, b, c, to physiology; of recitations from a medley of books following on each other without order or sequence; of tired self, driven to nervous fracture by drains upon the vital force from every quarter, rises and confronts the average teacher. Upon further consideration, the objections thus shadowed forth take form and substance somewhat as follows:

1. Such a thing has never been done within the memory of the oldest men in the "deestric." It is contrary to custom, and the "patrons won't like it." This indicates either old fogyism in the teacher, or a cringing submission to the old fogyism of the "patrons." The latter is the more contemptible. A good teacher will either secure the consent of the Board to such a measure, or carry it over their heads.

2. *There are too many different classes.*—This is an objection greatly weakened by the very doing of the thing objected to. The great number of classes is an error in common-school practice due to two causes—first, to the not allowing the teacher to be master in his own domain. and second, to not having a clearly-defined plan of work in the school, for teacher and pupils. Parents and pupils insist upon certain studies being pursued, without reference to classification or suitability. So, the spectacle is not uncommon, of a boy in elementary English grammar and in Latin at the same time; or of some other equally absurd and injurious combination. To this demand for a helter-skelter, *me-made* curriculum the average teacher yields in "fear and trembling," in the face of his own common sense, and the school law. The remedies are apparent; let the teacher assert himself as the rightful ruler of the school, and the administrator of the law, and classify the pupils upon fewer bases of division. Then, if the teacher knows his business—and one who does not should not be employed—he will have fewer classes, and get better work from them,

3. *The school uses no uniform series of text-books*—and probably will not until the school millenium. However, this is not at all an evil unmixed with some good. The teacher who has inventive and organizing power enough to grade his school, without a uniform series of books, is competent to do a great many things that will show the value of his work. The use of a graded series frequently leads, in the hands of an incompetent teacher, to a servile following of the text-book, while topic teaching (the true method) is the best refuge of the teacher who has no uniform series of texts.

Two ways around this objection present themselves—make the School Board adopt a series, or grade the pupils by their advancement in the mastery of *principles* and subjects, not by "how far" they have been in certain books. The latter way is the true one, after all.

4. *The teacher is not sure of his place* for more than one year, and so has neither incentive, nor proper opportunity for such work. This, pitiable to say, is the strongest and most just objection, although itself a grave injustice, both to the teacher and the pupil. The feeling that his work will not be appreciated, and that he will occupy his present position for only half a year, produces a lack of interest and indifference in the teacher. Here is the greatest room for wide-reaching reform. None but the best teachers should be employed; the common school should run nine months in a year, and the teacher should be employed for *not less* than two years. These are reforms that must come after a long, hard fight, but they *must come*. That is the ideal condition of things, and until it comes we must use the real as best we can.

It will pay the teacher amply to grade the school, though it continue but five months, and though he have control over it for only one session. So much better work can be done that, perhaps, his services will be thought indispensable for at least another year.

5. *I don't know how*. This is an objection which a teacher should be ashamed to put forth. Ignorance is a sin in so far as opportunities for removing it are neglected; and there are so many facilities for knowing how to classify a school that this excuse recoils upon a teacher with force. It will be the object of a second paper to set forth some ways of knowing and doing.

Over against these objections set the following advantages to accrue from grading the country-school:

1. Order and arrangement are necessary for conducting any business properly. Every business house has the duties of its employees classified, and each one knows what his own peculiar work is. Definite tasks and definite times for performing them ought to be, and are, as productive of good results in the school-room as in the store and factory.

2. The grading of the common school upon a rational plan, will reduce the number of classes, and thus give rise to two advantages: First, there will be more time (scant enough at best) for the recitations; and, second, each pupil will be subjected to the powerful stimulus of *class association* and emulation.

Every teacher knows and appreciates the value of these advantages. As it now is in the school, if the hours be divided pro-

portionately, there is not sufficient time to more than *introduce* the lesson properly, much less conduct a recitation upon it.

The superior results of class work, as compared with individual work, for the young, are too well understood to require comment.

3. A definite and immediate end and aim for all work done will be kept continually before the pupils and teacher. As a necessary result, all work will be more direct and precise, more according to a *plan*, and, therefore, more effective. The passing from one grade to a higher, the earning of a grade or class-standing, will act as powerful incentives to the pupils.

On the other hand, the close study of the work of each pupil, and his individual powers, as compared with others, will afford the conscientious teacher a clear conception of the value of his *own* work, and furnish him a test of its results.

4. If the grades of study are properly arranged, they constitute for the pupil an *object lesson* in the logical arrangement, relative value, and natural sequence of the various branches and their divisions. In making the classification, the teacher can emphasize the value of the *three main lines* of school work, and thus correct the one-sidedness of study so common in country schools.

5. Proper grading will secure *regularity* of work, upon the part of the teacher and pupils. Each study will be assigned its place for preparation and recitation in the day's schedule. Thus, each piece of work will have its own *due* share of attention, and no more.

6. Each branch will be studied and taught with direct reference to a higher one, and the proper grasp of fundamentals will thus become a necessity. Teacher and pupil will work upon each part with a connected view of the whole before them. The result must be a more thorough mastery of each part, and a clearer idea of its relation to the others.

A little energy, a little ingenuity, a little patience, will, working through the machinery of *gradation*, accomplish much more for even a five months' school, than more energy, ingenuity, and patience, can *without* such system.—(*Educational Courant.*)

## ITEMS FROM A SUPERINTENDENT'S NOTE-BOOK.

J. M. REED.

From notes taken during my visits to schools last winter, I take the following concerning teachers, which are placed to their credit:

1. Going to school each day in good time.
2. Having a programme prepared which gives proper time for preparing and reciting each lesson; also a sufficient number of recitations for small and large pupils during each session.
3. Keeping the schoolroom neat and clean and having the stove nicely polished.
4. Making the schoolroom as attractive as possible by having suitable pictures and mottoes on the walls.
5. Having each day's work carefully prepared before coming to school so as to be able to hear recitations without a book in hand, and give the proper directions to the pupils when the lesson is assigned.
6. Studying not only the subject to be taught, but the disposition of pupils and the best methods of teaching them also.
7. Showing a spirit of improvement, by the inquiries made, the educational journals read, and by attending and taking part in educational meetings. Some teachers take, study, and use three or four educational papers, and some have attended as many as four local institutes in different places, without being allowed the time during the past winter.
8. Giving attention to each pupil in school, and giving such instruction as the disposition and wants of each demand.
9. Calling on the dull pupil to recite as frequently as the bright one, if not more frequently.
10. Speaking to pupils in a pleasant and friendly way, and *asking* them to do certain favors instead of *commanding* them to do so.
11. Teaching each subject so thoroughly that the pupil will not need to spend a large part of next term to get as far as he is at the close of the present term.
12. Considering the comfort and health of pupils by having the house properly heated and ventilated when it is possible to do so.
13. Calling and dismissing classes in an orderly way.
14. Neither talking too loud nor too much.

15. Leading pupils to *think* for themselves by putting subjects in such an order as to invite thought.

16. Giving plenty and a variety of employment to small pupils when they are not reciting—such employment as writing on slate or paper from copy on board; writing, reading and spelling lessons, names of objects in the schoolroom, names of objects of same color, same shape, etc. In some schools, teachers had small pupils writing descriptions of pictures and objects; and having them re-write stories which had been related or read in their hearing.

17. Giving a pupil a chance to be benefitted by the corrections made on him by having him “try again” immediately after the correction has been made.

18. Having pupils *explain* their work instead of first *reading the figures*.

19. Training pupils to classify and arrange the subjects studied that they may be retained.

20. Having written reviews frequently—“What a person can write out, that he knows.”

21. Giving each pupil a report of his work in the different subjects at the close of each month.

22. Assisting pupils when the lesson is assigned, that they will not need to go to the teacher, when she is hearing a class, to ask her “How do you pronounce this word?”

23. Keeping lessons fresh in mind by reviewing during each recitation.

24. Giving pupils directions which will assist them in learning *how to study*.

25. Giving attention to pupils at noon and recess, and not permitting the schoolroom to be used as a play-house.

26. Getting out of old tracks by using such new methods as are based on the true principles of teaching.

27. Keeping pupils evenly in their work; not having them ahead in one or two branches and almost, if not entirely, neglecting others.

28. Requiring pupils to do neat work at all times.

29. Making good use of blackboards, maps, charts, etc.

30. Keeping up the interest of school to the last day of the term.

31. Giving directions to the pupils in regard to how to increase their power of study.

32. Requiring so much of pupils that they will not have time for talk or any other disorderly conduct.

33. Not forgetting that the dignity and honor of the profession depend as much on their conduct when out of school as on their teaching when in the school.

34. Having a fixed time for commencing and ending each recitation, also a time for the preparation of each lesson.

35. Making every effort possible to have pupils come on time each day and be regular in their attendance.

36. Becoming acquainted with the parents of the pupils and citizens of the district, and having them visit the school; giving them special invitations to visit the school on a certain day.

37. Many teachers prevent tardiness by having some very interesting subject at the opening of school.

38. Conducting recitations in such a way as to make each pupil responsible for the whole lesson.

39. Having something new and interesting for each day's recitation.

40. Asking questions in the order of the subject, but not in the order of the class.

41. After the questions, naming the pupil who is required to answer, instead of questioning the class in general, and having answers from but a few pupils.

42. Requiring answers to questions to be given in complete sentences.

43. Having the pupil rise to give his answer when a long answer is required.

44. Avoiding leading questions such as would indicate the answer desired.

45. Not prompting pupils, but requiring clear, unhesitating answers without assistance.

46. Not allowing too many trials in a recitation.

47. Condensing questions so as to avoid using so much time with the questions that there will be but a short time for pupils to answer.

48. In some subjects teachers required the pupils to ask the questions with very good results. This was done without any book in the hand of the pupil, each one asking two or three questions on the subject. Frequently this is a quick and good way to conduct reviews,

49. Studying the "art of questioning," so as to be able to question quickly and in a logical order, and completely test the pupil's knowledge of the subject, lead him to study, think, thoroughly understand and explain the subject under consideration.

50. Training pupils to study quietly, recognizing the fact that pupils study with their *brains*, not with their *lips*.

51. Teaching their pupils to classify their work and recite from these outlines, thus saving time and giving the pupils a valuable training.

52. Not permitting pupils to prompt another while he is reciting.

53. Making each class exercise include *reciting* and *teaching*.

54. Having much reciting by the topical method, that pupils may have a chance to cultivate the power of expression.

55. Making good use of the encyclopædia and dictionary in schools which are fortunate enough to have a reference book.—  
*The Teachers' Assistant.*

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#### EDITORIAL NOTES.

We cannot enter upon the work of another year without directing the attention of our readers to the present position of the RECORD, its past history and its future prospects. During the past five years the EDUCATIONAL RECORD has been circulating among the teachers and other educationists of the Province, in the interests of Protestant Education. If our present educational status is not all that could be desired, still we feel confident that the progress which has been made could not have been made without the aid of the EDUCATIONAL RECORD. Two years ago, when the RECORD came under the control of the present editor, arrangements were made to issue 1,500 copies each month. An appeal was made to the teachers and school boards, to sustain the RECORD in this new departure. Many to whom we looked for support have failed us, but, on the other hand, we have received substantial assistance from many quarters from which we least expected it. We have, however, passed over two years and we enter upon the third, confident that we shall receive the support, financial and literary, necessary for the success of the RECORD. The EDUCATIONAL RECORD is issued with one object in view, the promotion of the interests of Protestant education in the Province. It is

because we believe that the RECORD may be made a powerful instrument for good among the teachers of the Province, that we consented to undertake the editorial work. Professional reading is absolutely necessary for successful teaching, especially to the teachers of this Province, the majority of whom have had no professional training. Many however, are reluctant to spend any part of their small salaries in purchasing professional works. The EDUCATIONAL RECORD, however, robs such teachers of every excuse. It brings to them every month well-written articles, from the best teachers of the continent, upon the very work in which they are engaged. If they do not read it is because they *will* not.

In order to provide well selected matter for our teachers, and to circulate official information, we consented to undertake the editorial management of the RECORD. We accordingly appeal to teachers for their support, feeling assured that the appeal will not be in vain. Teachers may help us, first, by writing short articles and by giving items of interest concerning their schools. Secondly, by subscribing for the RECORD. Thirdly, by getting their School Boards to subscribe for one copy. Fourthly, by directing the attention of advertisers to the advantage of the RECORD as an advertising medium. If our teachers are faithful in this respect the success of the RECORD is secured.

*Exhibition.*—As the time for the Colonial and Indian Exhibition draws near, great activity is manifested by those who are preparing to take part. It appears from present indications that the Province of Quebec will take a leading place among the provinces of the Dominion. An important meeting was held at Sherbrooke recently, to provide for a complete and separate exhibit from the Eastern Townships. It is specially important, therefore, that our educational display should be in keeping with the rest of the Provincial Exhibits. Teachers and School Boards are reminded that the specimens intended for the Exhibition must be forwarded to the Department before 1st of March.

*Education.*—Among the educational journals of the day those of the New England Publishing Company take a leading position. They are *Education*, *The Journal of Education* and *The American Teacher*. Mr. William A. Mowry, who is not unknown to the teachers of this Province, has been employed for some time as Editor of the *Journal of Education*. At the beginning of the New

Year he retired from his position and bought out the Bi-monthly Magazine "EDUCATION." He is now proprietor and Editor of *Education*, which is to be issued as a monthly magazine. We wish Mr. Mowry every success in conducting what is, without doubt, the most important educational magazine in the English language.

*Copy Books.*—In the Superintendent's Circular, No. 2, concerning the preparation of specimens of work for the Exhibition, it is stated that "the specimens of writing from the *English Schools* should be prepared in Gage's Series of Copy Books," This statement, however, was intended to apply to the Protestant Schools only, as the two other series mentioned are to be used in all English Roman Catholic Schools.

*Pension Act.*—As the time for the next session of the Legislature draws near, the attention of teachers is naturally directed to the question of the Pension Act. The fate of this much criticised Act must be settled at the next session of the legislature. It must be amended and put into force, or it must be abrogated. Both these courses are beset with difficulties, and teachers will await the action of the Legislature with great interest. Important amendments have been prepared and are now before the government, the substance of which we gave in our issue of May last.

In order that teachers may be familiar with these amendments when they come up for discussion, we reproduce them here.

(1) That the pension shall be one-fiftieth of the average salary instead of one-fortieth for each year of service.

(2) That the stoppage shall not exceed four per cent.

(3) That the stoppage on salaries for years previous to 1880 shall be six per cent. without interest, one-third to be paid before July, 1886, and one-sixth to be deducted from each of the first four pensions.

(4) That the ordinary stoppage shall be made upon teachers' pensions as well as upon teachers' salaries.

(5) That the maximum amount which a teacher may claim as emoluments of his office shall be fixed.

(6) That an annual statement of the receipts and expenditure of the Pension Fund shall be printed in the Superintendent's Report.

(7) That a council of three, two elected by the Roman Catholic teachers and one by the Protestant teachers, shall act with the Superintendent in the administration of the Pension Fund.

## BOARDS OF EXAMINERS.

*Protestant Divisions.*

List of candidates who obtained diplomas at the November examinations under the regulations of the Protestant Committee of the Council of Public Instruction:—

NAME.	Grade of Diploma.	Class of Diploma.	For what Language.
<i>Aylmer.</i>			
Cross, Isaac E. ....	Elementary.	Second.	English.
Cuthbertson, Mary .....	"	"	"
Garrett, William .....	"	First.	"
Hewes, Susan E. ....	"	Second.	"
Jackson, Olive .....	"	First.	"
Larivee, Minnie. ....	"	Second.	"
<i>Bedford.</i>			
Davis, Belle .....	"	First.	"
<i>Montreal.</i>			
Dalgleish, Carrie F. ....	Model	Second.	E. & French.
Graham, Marion R. ....	"	"	"
Reeves, Archie. ....	"	"	"
Rowat, T. ....	"	"	English.
Scott, Annie J. ....	Elementary.	"	"
Scott, Minnie E. ....	"	"	"
Sutherland, James .....	"	"	"
Watson, Georgina. ....	Model.	First.	E. & French.
<i>Pontiac.</i>			
Campbell, Mary A. ....	Elementary.	Second.	English.
Harris, Elizabeth .....	"	"	"
Hanna, Charity .....	"	"	"
McRieenk, Lizzie. ....	"	"	"
<i>Quebec.</i>			
Smith, Thomas A. ....	"	First.	English.
<i>Richmond.</i>			
Fessenden, K. H. ....	"	First.	"
Harriman, Susan .....	"	"	"
Haggart, Eliza C. ....	"	"	"

LIST OF DIPLOMAS—*Continued.*

NAME.	Grade of Diploma.	Class of Diploma.	For what Language.
<i>Stanstead.</i>			
Bachelor, Geo. N.....	Elementary.	Second.	English.
Chamberlin, Effie.....	"	First.	"
Jordan, Wm.....	"	"	"
Tompkins, Chas.....	"	"	"
<i>Sherbrooke.</i>			
Bailey, Hattie L.....	"	Second.	"
Blodgett, Ida M.....	"	"	"
Bottom, Clara A. J.....	"	"	"
Buzzell, Jennie L.....	"	First.	"
Canning, Susie M.....	"	Second.	"
Chapman, Carrie R. E....	"	"	"
Goodenough, Henrietta...	"	"	"
Harg, Robt. J.....	Model.	First.	E. & French.
Myhill, W. M.....	"	"	English.
Sanders, Kate M.....	Elementary.	Second.	"
Simons, Clara A.....	"	First.	"
Scott, Carrie.....	"	Second.	"
Smilley, Lillie F.....	"	"	"
Stacey, Idelice.....	"	"	"
Watts, Theresa J.....	"	"	"
Willard, Lillie A.....	"	"	"
Willard, Elvia A.....	"	"	"
Williams, Minnie A.....	"	First.	"
Wood, Abbie S.....	"	Second.	"
Wood, Ellen F.....	"	"	"

## CLIPPINGS.

Sir William Dawson, in introducing Professor Mulgan as lecturer the Ladies' Educational Association, Montreal, on Thursday, the 14th, instant. said:—

It may be interesting to those who have been engaged in the work of the Ladies' Educational Association, and to the public, to know what has been done by the University up to this time under the Donalds endowment and to what extent it is carrying out the work handed over to it by the Association. In the present session the total number of students is fifty-one. Of these, twelve are undergraduates, nine are partials taking three or more courses of lectures, the remainder are occasionals, taking one or two courses of lectures. It would thus appear that, so far, the number is

not quite as great as in some of the larger classes of the Association. On the other hand, the number of lectures taken by each student is much greater, and it is to be anticipated that in future sessions, as the number of years in the undergraduate course and the number of lectures open to occasionals increase, the attendance will increase in proportion. It is also to be considered that at the opening of this session, the dread of the epidemic then prevalent must have diminished, in this as in other departments, the class in the junior year. In the present session, there are regular students only in two years, and the classes open to women are those in Latin, Greek, English, French, German, logic, mathematics, chemistry and botany. Next session there will be regular students in three years, and separate classes for women in experimental physics, zoology, advanced logic and rhetoric. In the session after next there will be students in all the four years, and separate classes in mental and moral philosophy, geology and history, in addition to the foregoing. It will be reasonable to expect that when the classes in the whole course are thus in operation, and so great variety offered to occasional students, the number in attendance will be nearly doubled. We are prepared to find that for some years the number of partial and occasional students shall be large, in comparison with that of undergraduates. It is hoped, however, that as the advantages of the regular course become better known, and facilities for preparation are afforded in the schools, the number of undergraduates will increase. To this end the university would beg to invite the attention of parents, and especially of those ladies, who have heretofore aided in the work of the Association, to the importance of cultivating a taste for the higher education, and sending young women to those schools which provide an adequate preparatory training. In the arrangements for the third and fourth years it will be provided that there shall be separate classes for women in all the ordinary subjects up to the standard for the degree, giving them all the options enjoyed by male students. In each subject the lectures to men and women will be delivered by the same professor or lecturer, and the examinations will be identical. The degrees to be given have not yet been formally decided by the corporation, but it may be considered as settled that they will be the same for women as for men.

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The senate of the University College, Liverpool, now incorporated into the Victoria University, is preparing a "business curriculum," such as shall be suitable for clerks and apprentices. The curriculum is to extend over a space of two academic years, and is divided into two portions, one more especially devoted to languages, and the other to science. The business men of Liverpool are, it is satisfactory to know, heartily co-operating with the senate: it is anticipated that a number of firms will meet the wishes of the senate by consenting to relax one year of the apprenticeship of young men who shall be holders of a certificate to the effect that they have satisfactorily passed the examination to be held at the end of the curricu-

lum. It is obvious that if the local English colleges are ever to attain to the importance of the Scottish universities, they must find some means of persuading the business men and shopkeepers of England that a good education is a good thing in itself, and does not incapacitate for business. There is also no doubt that if the University authorities wish to attract to them the young men of the great business centres, they must make every endeavour to secure the co-operation and learn the views of business men as to the kind of education necessary to fit men for business. It is a great thing to know that at both colleges of the Victoria University, modern languages are well taught, and that oral examinations are held in them, so that a diploma from that university, or from either of the colleges, setting forth that a young man had passed satisfactorily in these, would have a valuable import.

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When I first began to visit the Prussian schools, I uniformly inquired of the teachers whether, in teaching children to read, they began with the "names of the letters," as given in the alphabet. Being delighted with the prompt negative which I invariably received, I persevered in making the inquiry, until I began to perceive a look and tone on their part not very flattering to my intelligence, in considering a point so clear and so well settled as this, to be any longer a subject for discussion or doubt. The uniform statement was, that the alphabet, as such, had ceased to be taught as an exercise preliminary to reading, for the last fifteen or twenty years, by every teacher in the kingdom.

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Whoever will compare the German language with the English, will see that the reasons for a change are much stronger in regard to our own, than in regard to the foreign tongue. The practice of beginning with the "Names of Letters" is founded upon the idea that it facilitates the combination of them into words. On the other hand, I believe that if two children, of equal quickness and capacity, are taken—one of whom can name every letter of the alphabet at sight, and the other does not know them from Chinese characters, the latter can be most easily taught to read,—in other words, that learning the letters first, is an absolute hindrance.—HORACE MANN. (*Seventh Annual Report, 1844.*)

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The Model Schools and Academies will be examined during the month of March by Inspectors McGregor and Van Iffland. Schools that received no grant last year and desire to be examined this year should make application at once.—(Ed.)

## BOOK NOTICES.

*Treasure-Trove* is especially useful to teachers in their school work; they will be particularly grateful for "Stories from History;" "Lives of Great Men;" "The Doctor's Letter;" "The Capital of Egypt;" "The Living World;" "The Man Who Caught Gold and Silver Fish," by Prof. John Monteith; and "Something to Speak."

*Studies in Greek Thought.* Essays selected from the papers of the late Lewis R. Packard, *Hillhouse Professor of Greek in College.*

I. Morality and Religion of the Greeks. II. Plato's arguments in the *Phaedo* for the Immortality of the Soul. III. On Plato's scheme of Education as proposed in the *Republic*. IV. The *Œdipus Rex* of Sophokles. V. Summary of the *Œdipus Coloneus* of Sophokles. VI. Summary of the *Antigone* of Sophokles. VII. On the Beginnings of a Written Literature in Greece.

*Stories for Kindergartens and Primary Schools*, by Miss Sara E. Wiltse.—These stories are intended for children of the kindergarten age, and for the primary schools. Where facts of natural history are interwoven, the author has taken pains to make them scientifically correct without using scientific terms. The stories have been told to children; in truth they are a *kindergarten growth*.

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