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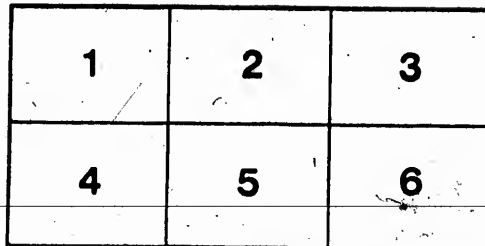
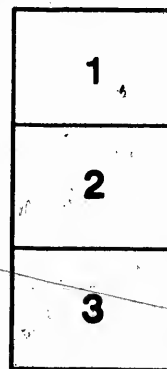
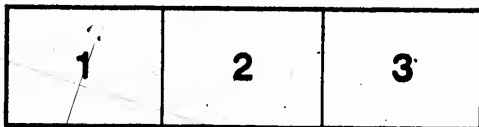
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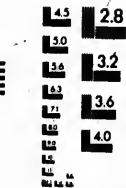
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THE SENSES CONSIDERED

IN THEIR

RELATION TO THE SCHOOL.

A LECTURE.

BY A. DINGWALL FORDYCE,

LOCAL SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS FOR NORTH WELLINGTON.

"It shall be the duty of the Local Superintendent to deliver, in each of his School Sections, at least once a year, a Public Lecture on some subject connected with the objects, principles and means of practical Education."
—[Com. School Act, Sec. 91, clause 5.]

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A SCHOOL LECTURE.

WHATEVER may act, by any possibility, as a *help* or a *hindrance* in the education of the young, must merit the serious attention of the Teacher, the Parent, of any in short, who are interested in their welfare. Such, in both ways, do the Bodily Senses prove themselves to be. They are indispensable to the acquisition of useful knowledge, they are in their highest vigour in the season of childhood and youth; and yet they often stand in our way at that particular era of our existence, if we are devoid of consideration. Herein lies to the young, the value of wise counsellors in their Teachers, fully as much as of able instructors. For this reason, there may be a want of wisdom observable in employing extremely young teachers of either sex, who, however well qualified in all other respects, cannot commonly be expected to possess a maturity of mind much beyond their years. Never will the mind be in a better state to work on, than in early school days, and, if not secured by the Teacher then, and guided in the right course, evil influences will, most assuredly, be all too successful in leading it astray. It is at this critical period that, as the poet says—

“The mind, impressible and soft, with ease
Imbibes and copies what she hears and sees;
And, through life's labyrinth, holds fast the clue
That Education gives her, false or true.”

To be of real value, the Education must bear on the whole being—physical, mental, moral, and religious. The latter is mentioned last in order, not by any means because of its being of secondary or inferior importance, for the directly contrary is the case; but on account of the attention that is given to it at our Common Schools, being inevitably limited by the circumstances in which we are placed, these institutions being literally “common” or open to the children of those of every creed, who choose to avail themselves of the benefits and privileges they hold out; so that while, under legal authority, the Word of God is read in them, and prayer is offered to the Almighty, no other more direct religious training enters into the daily routine. This being the case, the more attention is requisite on the part of the Teacher to the moral training of the scholars, so far as he has the opportunity of furthering it, whether it be by direct or incidental methods; so that, while making progress in the various studies prescribed, there may underlie all, that which alone can afford the hope of their proving of substantial benefit to the individual and to mankind, that “fear of the Lord” which is “the beginning of wisdom.”

While the bodily senses to which I have adverted and desired to direct attention in what follows, may be of the very highest benefit to those who employ them aright at school, they do, on the other hand, very often lead the scholars into manifold transgressions; so that their exercise has to be checked in some respects, while it is heartily encouraged in others. In the subsequent observations I do not propose to advance any novel views. All that I aim at, is, to make some remarks that may aid those who are using efforts to employ faithfully the blessings offered by our Common Schools, and to lead the young espe-

cially to offer a more determined resistance to the dangers which they will probably meet, and which may sometimes be regarded as invariable accompaniments of Public Schools, by those who are disposed, from special causes, to look more at the disadvantages incidental to such institutions than at the benefits which can scarcely be otherwise secured. Of all the Bodily Senses, the faculties of Sight and Hearing will be admitted to be of the highest value. The importance of conducting a considerable part of the studies that are pursued at school by means of the Eye, is now, very generally allowed. We thus find *object* lessons taking the place of set tasks on some subjects, or accompanying them, creating far greater interest on the part of the scholars, and leading to more intelligent acquaintance with the subjects which are studied. A better mode of fixing these studies on the memory, and securing the lively interest of the scholars, it would, indeed, be difficult to imagine. Illustrative teaching may, from the very commencement of a child's instruction at school, be carried, to a greater or less extent, through every one of the studies pursued there, occasioning the feeling of pleasure, when formerly there existed weariness, and only weariness, alike to the Teacher and those he instructed; while, in addition to such studies as are pursued in every school, simple yet interesting supplementary lessons may soon be given by any Teacher of ordinary ability and some love for the work, by the introduction of some object or other of every-day occurrence, and the employment of a judicious mode of questioning, that may draw out what knowledge is already possessed, and impart what more is desired or needed, in connection with subjects which have come up in the ordinary course of study, and without deviating very greatly from attention to them. Such teaching, it is true, may at first call for special study on the part of the Teacher, if he would be skilful in this special department, and may seem to himself and to others to consume time that might be employed more profitably; but the evident benefit and quickened interest will prove an ample recompense in most cases, I believe, for the additional labor it involves; while the Teacher, by degrees, will acquire ease in conveying his thoughts in fewer and fewer words, and gain additional and most valuable powers to benefit others in this peculiar way. Not merely, however, in the actual and positive intellectual studies of the school, may instruction by the Eye be thus conveyed and greater interest awakened, but even moral lessons may be given simply and yet, possibly, very effectively. If it is true, as the poet Tupper says, and we think it is, that "The eye catcheth in an instant what the ear shall not learn within an hour," and that "A sentence hath formed a character," it is surely wise, not merely to render our school rooms as attractive as possible, by the utmost taste that can be displayed in inexpensive decoration, but also to give prominence to such words of wisdom as, from a Teacher's lips, might often pass unheeded by some, but on which, the eye being allowed to rest, may possibly, with them, prove an avenue to the heart. It seems to me, that we lose something, in these days, from not keeping up in our dwellings this practice of our forefathers—the practice of bringing under our view, where we cannot help seeing them, aphorisms of the highest practical value; and we might beneficially return to such a practice, at all events, in our schools. A writer on education, who has himself as a Teacher tested its worth, recommends, as a useful incidental mode of conveying moral lessons, that every

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school should have *two* Black Boards; on one of which some verse from the Word of God should be always exhibited, a different one appearing every day. The eye taking this in at a glance, interest may be excited, and the *truth* instinctively, as it were, instilled into some minds, which might otherwise hear it with apathy or indifference.

The more thoroughly the teacher has his own bodily senses trained, the more successful will he probably be in the discharge of his duties in all respects. Whatever benefit mature minds might receive from the instructions of those who, although deprived of sight or hearing, have the ability to instruct their fellows notwithstanding, it would scarcely be the young whom we could expect to benefit by such teaching. How almost hopeless to them would be the task of receiving instruction from such a source alone; how sad for them if none else could be had! Even where these faculties are impaired or naturally feeble, under how manifest and manifold disadvantages must both Teacher and Scholars generally labor—the one in communicating, the other in receiving instruction; the one in securing, the other in yielding necessary attention and obedience. Let us merely glance at some of the special uses the eye serves to a Teacher in the discharge of his daily duty. How readily, in a well-arranged and well-conducted school, can the idlers be detected, and the diligent scholars noticed; the source of any disturbance reached, and the remedy applied, without the Teacher's changing his place, or almost speaking a word. The well-behaved will meet his searching eye unflinchingly; those who are not, will most commonly shrink from it—not always perhaps, for some are as bold in acting a lie as in uttering a positive untruth, and if the Teacher's eyes are not open, some children will cunningly elude the blame they deserve, and even contrive to throw it on others. It is of no small consequence to save the lungs as much as possible by using the eyes aright, and applying timely remedies where anything wrong is observed; and the scholars will very soon discover for themselves whether or not their Teacher has the right use of his eyes, and turn their knowledge to account. Under a Teacher's eye, some of the scholars may very properly be called on, to assist him occasionally in hearing recitations. Real benefit may accrue from this plan, occupation being given to some who, if unemployed, would probably be creating or adding to confusion; and opportunity afforded for shewing confidence in others, in such as a Teacher feels he can safely trust with the temporary charge of a class. Nor, perhaps while unable to propose any equivalent and altogether satisfactory substitute, should serious exception be taken to a practice which sometimes prevails, of causing particular scholars to look out for and report to the Teacher on misdemeanors of other pupils; but a very careful appointment of suitable monitors, whether for reading or supervision, is always essential, and a constant general oversight by the Teacher himself. I would not seek, however, where it could be avoided otherwise, to use a child's eyes as evidence against his schoolmates, where any fault is discovered, the perpetrator of which is unknown; since it is needful to throw as few temptations to deceit as possible in the way of the young, and they may be led, inadvertently, at first, into a process of deception, by such means. We are ready sometimes to think that there are those who can almost read the heart, detect its hidden emotions, and praise or blame with wonderful correctness independant of outward manifestations

of character, so intuitively accurate physiognomists do they seem to be.
To use the language of another—

"Sometimes, at a glance, thou judgest well,
Years could add little to thy knowledge;
When charity gloweth on the cheek, or malice
Is lowering in the eye, when honesty's open
Brow, or the wensel face of cunning is before thee."

Such a gift however, is possessed by very few, and is scarcely to be coveted by any; but apart from any such extraordinary power of discernment, there is or may be, great power for good in the human eye, if it is honestly, faithfully, and lovingly employed—a species of fascination, somewhat akin to that of certain of the lower animals. What does not actually pass under a Teacher's eye, he cannot strictly be held responsible for, although he may often have to investigate and decide on complaints, respecting difficulties which have arisen among his scholars, when they have been out of his sight; but he should certainly, have open eyes when danger evidently threatens them: as the hen gathers her brood under her wing when the hawk is hovering near. A warning glance may be the means of arresting the unspoken profane or angry word; a tender look may strengthen the timid and wavering scholars, encouraging them to good conduct, when on the verge of transgression. A Teacher may be disposed to shut his eyes in order to save himself trouble, which he fears may arise out of conduct he is liable casually to observe. This however, cannot be right under any circumstances; it even renders him in some sort "art and part" in the wrong that ensues. He cannot venture to "connive" at what he cannot cure, and "evils not to be endured, endure." It may be quite true that, to cure certain evils, may be altogether beyond his power, but he may at all events, put a check in the way of their commission, which may be followed up by others, independent of him, yet aided by the counsel or hint he had originally given. It were unwise however, nor would it be right, to be specially looking out for delinquencies. Rather let us as recommended by the writer already quoted, "Treat men gently, trust them strongly if we wish their weal; or cautious doubts and bitter thoughts will tempt the best to foil us." The safeguard of some scholars may be found mainly, in the possible meeting of their Teacher's eye. The consideration "He sees me," may change irresolution into decision, and be the means of saving from many a wrong action and many a bitter regret; and a Teacher cannot really divest himself of concern in his scholars, even when they are beyond his reach. He should, and I have no doubt many Teachers do feel a certain responsibility, based on what he may do while they are, or what he might have done while they were under his immediate eye; and they likewise need to have a watch over themselves, when no Teacher's eye is near them. What a blessed thing it would be if the eye, like some plants, had a bias to light; shutting itself at once to whatever was dark, unholy, and sinful, opening only to whatever was pure and lovely—I mean as a safeguard from pernicious influence from without. The young, it is undeniable, do often run fearful risks of contamination in their moral natures at school; and a very watchful eye must be kept, to shield them as far as it is possible; and yet, what eye can really and effectually do this but that under which all now are alike, Teacher and Scholars, and under whose scrutinizing glance all shall one day stand? If the young can be led to bear this habitually in mind, they may come to seek constantly *His* inspection who reads their very hearts, and thus

to dread and refuse admittance to whatever is known to be displeasing to Him. I shall only add, by way of summary here: The Teacher needs to have open eyes, to see that his pupils are employed profitably, that their interest in study does not flag; that when it does, he may kindly adopt some change, which, though a simple, may yet be a satisfactory remedy. He needs to have open eyes, to detect incipient disturbance or concealed trickery, and to mark any want of strict truthfulness or other species of immorality; to nip the evil, if it be possible, in the bud; to see who are really diligent, and who are not; who are trying to do right, and who are indifferent or careless about it, so as to apportion to each the due meed of praise or blame. He needs to have open eyes to check rude, unmannerly conduct; to inculcate consideration for others, and respect for every one in their several relations. All this in the school. Abroad, he is still the Teacher, although his scholars may not now be under his direct control; indirectly they are so whenever he happens to come across them. Then, if he thinks and acts as he ought, his eyes may be used to good purpose. He may be the means of shielding some from many an evil, if he does not throw overboard, as none of his concern, and as some, it is to be feared, do, all regard to his scholars when they are once outside of the school room. Some scholars would sadly miss their Teacher's recognition; others, who would not be inclined to seek it, may stand even more in need of it. The scholars, too, need to have open eyes. If they are to be successful, they must be wide awake. Instruction will not come to those who are not looking for it. They need to have their eyes shut to some things, and open to others; shut to the enticements of their schoolmates to lead them to trifle when engaged in study; open to their studies all the time they are pursuing them; open to what it is really good for them to copy in others; shut to what may do themselves harm in the conduct of others, or in anything that may injure them on which the eye lights and is permitted to rest; open to opportunities offering for forwarding their own studies, or enabling them properly to assist others in theirs; open to every opportunity to do a kind turn to a school-fellow, or to any one besides; shut to allurements to disregard study, for the sake of inferior gratifications, or to regard *self* wholly or chiefly under any circumstances; open, in short, to whatever is right to look on, shut closely on everything else.

Above all, they need to seek specially, constantly, and very earnestly, that the bodily vision may be guided by the mental, that the conscience may be ever kept sensitively alive—the bodily organ responding unhesitatingly to its monitions or suggestions.

It seems to me, very foolish and very useless to discuss, as is sometimes done, the question, whether blindness or deafness is the greater calamity—unless it be to increase our sense of the vastness of the blessings comprehended in the full enjoyment of both these precious gifts of a beneficent Providence. Deplorable in many ways is the condition of those who are either blind or deaf, mitigated as the evil often undoubtedly is by alleviating circumstances, such as a keen perception on the part of the senses which are unimpaired, the sympathy that is generally felt by those who are in the entire possession of their senses, and christian submission and resignation to the will of God; while the compensating goodness of God is often apparent still further in such cases, when the outward darkness is accompanied by a quickening of

the apprehension of the inner faculty, and where mental organs, alive to the harmonies of the unseen world, accompany entire insensibility to every external sound. As respects the subject before us, the ear occupies a most important part in connection with the school, and in the intercourse of the scholars with each other as well as between them and their Teacher. To mention merely a few particulars: A Teacher must himself labor under no material defect in respect of hearing if he expects to be successful to the fullest extent. Some might imagine that, in one way, a Teacher's infirmity, in this respect, might rather be an assistance to some scholars than otherwise, so very prevalent is the habit in schools of speaking or reading so as to be almost inaudible, that the very peculiarity of the circumstance would compel the scholars to exert their voices more than they commonly do. I am disposed, however, to judge differently, and to conclude that it would not be productive of the desired result, at least not more than to a very limited extent; that the same drawback would exist as may be found where a reading class is placed at the extreme end of the school-room—some scholars speaking better out, but others speaking still more inaudibly, from the increased distance, and, consequently, having inaccuracies in pronunciation, or otherwise, only more and more confirmed. It is a point of primary consideration in all good reading that it should be audible. There are, of course, many other requisites, but this is the only one we have to do with at present. The more attention all the scholars in a reading class can be got to give, the better, and the less embarrassment put in the way of those who are naturally timid or diffident of their own powers. For this reason, it seems a good method, one that is not practically unknown, to make no corrections whatever, nor permit any, while a pupil is reading aloud; but when that is over, to throw the reading, with all its defects or inaccuracies, into the hands of the whole class for criticism. By this plan the scholars are taught to *hear* with careful discrimination, while any oversight or error of theirs is open to correction by the Teacher himself, and the scholars are not put about by corrections during their own recitations, which is liable to lead them into many mistakes they would otherwise avoid. It may be added, that with respect to hearing, scholars require to be cautioned against suffering themselves to be led astray by the mistakes of others—letting the ear take in the last heard sound, without the judgment being at work to observe and correct the error that has been committed.

A correct *ear* as well as a correct *eye* is of no small benefit to any one, and Teachers do well to habituate their pupils to accuracy in all simultaneous movements.

When *singing* can be carried on in any school, as a relief from severer study, an agreeable recreation and a healthy exercise, a few moments devoted to it now and then during the day are, most assuredly, well bestowed. Sweet sounds, no less than beautiful sights, exert a powerful influence on most natures; and where the sentiments uttered have the tendency of elevating, and nothing is permitted that is silly or wrong, there can scarcely be two opinions as to the exercise being profitable. One danger that has to be guarded against in connection with the ear, is habitual inattention, amounting to unconsciousness, of what should be heard, such inattention being the result of continued heedlessness. It is remarkably easy to get into the habit of not hearing. It matters little whether it is the school bell, or a command or request, or intima-

tion—if the scholars at the time are engaged in a pursuit that possesses peculiar interest, they are very likely, unless specially watchful, to turn a deaf ear to it. Still, the sound has gone forth in their hearing, and is a legitimate evidence against them if they are culpably dilatory, or an encouragement and real assistance if they are attentive. A pleasant sound the school bell, or summons to assemble, of whatever kind, always has to the diligent scholar, when body and mind are both fresh and active, at the commencement of the day; an equally agreeable sound has the intimation "You may go," when the schoolday's work has been concluded, and rest and change of pursuit are required.

The Ear, however, like the Eye, is in many cases merely the servant of the heart, the will, or the affections. It follows the impulse from within; is awake or asleep, confiding or credulous, as the case may be; so that it is often not so much the training of the outward organ that is wanted, as the education of the moral nature which it obeys. The ear and eye of a loving child, or friend, or scholar, will almost anticipate the request or desire of the friend, whose regard or smile is valued. There is a speedier than electric communication at work in such cases, which serves all the purpose of actual words. In School Rooms as well as in Families, how often do we find the same thing told, the same command issued, and yet the same inattention to its performance, and why? but just or chiefly because the loving heart has not been there, to respond in prompt obedience. It is indeed possible, that sometimes the tone in which an order is issued, has something to do with the regard or disregard that is manifested; some natures it may almost invite to disobedience. This, however, need never be. Commands may surely be given with sufficient firmness, without rousing the opposition, which an irritable, querulous tone is almost sure to provoke. They may surely be given in such a way, as in general, to procure what is sought, in a pleasant mood and with a ready will. In all situations, and at every stage of our being, the ear, like the eye, needs to be shut to some things, and open to others. In none more than in childhood and youth. Swift to hear what will or may benefit, attentive to the instructions of the Teacher in the school; ready to leave amusement for duty, when the summons sounds on the ear; to leave any pursuit, however attractive it may be, if it cannot be longer indulged, without involving disobedience. Open also to appeals for assistance, not uncommon at school, where the strong are sometimes disposed to tyrannize over the weak and timid, or torment and annoy them. And it is no less needful, that it should be closed against enticements to do wrong, bad advice, or bad language; needful to have the heart guarded from contamination through the channel of the ear. Safety in certain cases, lies in shutting the ears, if we cannot leave the company we are in, as Bunyan's Pilgrims did, in passing through "Vanity Fair." "Example," the poet tells us, "is a constant monitor, and good seed will die among thorns; Character is mainly moulded by the cast of the minds that surround it." We shall, most certainly, be cast into the mould of those whose company we frequent by preference, whose language we persist in listening to, or whose misdeeds we willingly witness. A Teacher may have to hear complaints which he would gladly disbelieve, and on this very account has to guard against hearing with partiality. He has to cultivate the disposition of bearing and forbearing among his pupils, to check rather than encourage the disposition of children to make petty complaints, and to fancy intended injury in ebullitions

of light-hearted frolic; yet while this is so, he has to exert needful authority to prevent the ruinous effects of evil example, counsel and action, by the timely use of such remedies as are at his command. Too ready an ear he ought certainly never to give, if he is conscious of not overstepping the bounds of duty, or neglecting any manifest obligation, to the remonstrances of parents, who may have been influenced by the accounts given by their own children, and who would seek to prevent the exercise of discipline, which had been rendered necessary by their own failure to exercise it in season. Due protection has to be afforded to all the scholars, and restraint imposed on any who would act with impropriety, inconsideration, or unkindness. All in short, who are connected with the school, whether as Teacher or Scholars, have to take heed *how* they hear, as well as *what* they hear. Failing to do so, the worst consequences must follow.

A few observations will suffice on the senses of Smell and Taste.— There can be no reason whatever, why the former should not be gratified even at school. A taste for flowers should be encouraged by the Teacher. They minister to the enjoyment derived from more than one of the senses with which God has endowed us, and, without the risk that attends the gratification of some of the others. It is pleasant to see them growing in flower pots around the school house, or tastefully arranged on the Teacher's desk. They are in themselves proofs of the Divine Wisdom and goodness. They afford pure and simple delight, and are emblematical of virtues and graces that are the fitting ornaments of the mind; so that the cultivation of a spot of garden ground by the scholars, has not only the recommendation of its direct and positive benefits to themselves, in the pleasure they can at once appreciate, but they may be led to regard it in addition as a silent monitor, teaching them to seek and cherish such dispositions as are not indigenous to our nature, but which by God's grace and blessing, may spring from it. And, if so, it is surely of no less consequence to guard against offensive odours about a school; against whatever is calculated to create disgust; and for this purpose, to keep up a constant circulation of fresh air, purifying the physical atmosphere in which the Teacher and Scholars pass so much of their time; and removing by such means and attention to cleanliness in all respects, whatever might taint it, or act hurtfully or even unpleasantly on the system.

For the development of the sense of *Taste*, there is no legitimate opportunity at school, except it were in its *aesthetic* application, whatever occasion there may sometimes be for cautioning the scholars against practices which have to do with it; but it may not be out of place to make a single remark regarding the *Tongue*, in the capacity of the organ of the *Will*. As such, in school days, it is peculiarly liable to transgression. It is then, emphatically, the offending member, and needs to be constantly and jealously guarded; to prevent its owner being led into countless difficulties and embarrassments, through that heedlessness which notoriously characterizes it. If the inner tongue, however, is sufficiently alive, and permitted to speak out on every needful occasion, the outer organ will be much less liable to those repeated acts of insubordination, which are sure to bring down the reprimand or incur the punishment. The scholars will then be led to think before they speak, and to strive to speak the truth at all times, without exaggeration or embellishment; and to avoid improper language, so highly offensive to the God of Truth and Holiness, and so *deadly* injurious to all companions or associates.

deadly

The last of the five Senses is the *Hand*, for which abundant use is found at school. It has its duties and its dangers, fully as much as any of the rest. It enters into almost every kind of school study, as well as every kind of school *scraps*. The hands, however, even in the work provided by the Teacher, may sometimes be employed on what had better be let alone, I mean where disproportionate attention is paid to certain studies, at the expense of others; or where the practice of rules is observed, without regard to the theory involved in them. At other times, the hands might be turned to account much earlier than they really are; for some Teachers as well as parents, appear to have a great aversion to putting slates and pencils into their scholars' or children's hands, before, as they conceive, they are fit to use them; but occupation of some kind must be provided, and variety of pursuit is equally essential to young children; and, at a very early stage, some good may be got from feeble enough efforts, to imitate the letters or simple figures on the black board, while the danger to be apprehended may be almost wholly imaginary. The hands, however, we very well know, are frequently at work when they should be at rest. There is a natural propensity in children to indulge in their use at times when they should be otherwise engaged, and in ways which cannot be permitted. When unemployed, owing to whatever cause, school desks, or school books, or school-mates, afford many inviting opportunities for their use. The true remedy seems to be useful occupation, by some means or other. It has been well said—

“Would you dam a flowing river,
Thinking it would cease to flow?
Onward it must go forever—
Better teach it where to go.”

Let there be sufficient occupation always found for the scholars in school, connected with their studies, vary them as you may; and out of school, let there hands be kept from mischief by having some pursuit provided, that shall combine interest with benefit, in addition to the numerous legitimate amusements that may be indulged in. Where mischief and grosser evils prevail, we are quite aware that it is, as with the other senses, the *hands* are merely the organs of a will which needs restraint of some sort. The Conscience, in such cases, is either ill-informed or callous; and that it is one or the other, may quite probably be chargeable in no small measure on those who should have attended better to its training. When the hands are made the organs of unlawful desires, in appropriating what they have nothing to do with, or of other evil passions in any of the quarrels that occur at school, the heart is always the real source of the mischief, whatever extenuating circumstances may be urged. It is the conscience that needs to be reached, the will controlled, the temper curbed, the hasty word restrained, or the unkind insinuation withheld, rather than the hands merely kept where they should be, and employed as they ought to be. Still, they have their peculiar dangers, against which, and the occasions of the danger, the young need to maintain a careful watch, and to be guarded by those who have more discretion than themselves, and led to look to a higher than human eye, and hand, to be their continued and Almighty Guardian and Protector.

In the foregoing observations, I have endeavored to show, that, in respect of Educational Training at school, our Bodily Senses serve for use, for enjoyment, and for safety; and that these Senses need always to be under the strict control of the Moral Sense, so that the benefits which

it is possible to receive from their employment may be actually secured, that the enjoyments may be perfectly legitimate, and that the dangers incidentally arising may be perseveringly and resolutely shunned. Now, we may have the unimpaired use of all the Bodily Senses, and may even have them in some degree under the control of the Moral Sense, and yet, if we lack *Common Sense*, they will do us comparatively little good, and we may even be justly culpable for failing to turn them to right account. We may use them in such a way, moreover, as to do ourselves and others serious injury. It is common sense and conscience that, jointly, direct us to a suitable employment and improvement of them. A fool's eyes are said to be in the ends of the earth, so that what they should especially regard lies wholly unobserved by him; and the same is true with regard to the other faculties. What is given for use, and is allowed to lie idle, is really abused; the possible benefit is removed, the ability to employ it in future weakened, if it be not wholly deadened. It may not be amiss to remark, that we must not make too much of one sense at the expense of the others. One who is all *eye*, may have no *ear*; and one who is all *ear*, may have no *eye*. By this I mean that we should seldom, if ever, place implicit confidence in any one of our senses so as to become liable to reject the correcting testimony we might get through the others. *Seeing* is said to be *believing*; but we may see numerous things from which we should draw very unfair and unjust conclusions, if we wholly disregarded concurrent facts of which we may be conscious. If we act on the evidence derived solely from popular rumor, and let that outweigh every other consideration, we shall, in all probability, do what is as unfair as it is unwise. Common sense and conscience are like the balance wheel in machinery, enabling us to adjust our movements, and teaching us neither to approve or condemn while we wilfully ignore anything that should exert an influence on our decision.

The bodily senses have been justly and appropriately designated "the Gateways of Knowledge." Let these gateways, then, be jealously guarded, so that, while all valuable knowledge has freedom of entrance, that which is worthless or vile, however specious, may be resolutely excluded. Let them, above all, be constantly under the strict control of Common Sense and Conscience. That they, are so often, under no such control, but are suffered to act quite independently, is the reason, I believe, in no small measure, why we have not a greater amount of prosperity in our Schools. Wrangling and bitterness will neutralize the best efforts in the best cause imaginable; and, so far as future exertion is concerned, must weaken the hands of those, who are placed in situations of trust and responsibility, either as Teachers of the young, or as Trustees of Schools. What headway can be made against such difficulties, in the midst of which, School Authorities are frequently called to work? They are often, in a manner compelled, as Teachers, to seek some other sphere in which to exercise their abilities, or, as Trustees, to get rid of their Trust as speedily as possible. I would not pretend to say, however, that Conscience and Common Sense are invariably and exclusively to be found with School Trustees and School Teachers; but perhaps, in the majority of cases, where difficulties arise, they do so, in consequence of some report being allowed to get circulation, which rests on a very shallow substratum of truth. Causes of such difficulties are exceedingly various, and the smallest matter if it were

thoroughly sifted from the mass of accumulated misapprehension and misrepresentation, might very often be found to have procured the removal of a really efficient Teacher, against whom there was no valid ground of complaint; or the injudicious appointment of another, on very slight and inadequate if not wholly unjustifiable grounds. Too ready attention is not uncommon to testimonials given rashly, and not always of the most recent date; given too, in some instances, because of sympathy based on considerations that have nothing whatever to do with the applicant's real ability for the discharge of the duties of a Teacher; and, in like manner, from altogether frivolous reasons, are individuals frequently chosen to fill the situation of Trustees, contrary, as much to their own desire, as to the real interests of the school and of those who choose them. Hasty, ill-judged movements thus take place, by which, casting aside the guidance of Common Sense, mistakes are made in haste, to be repented of at leisure; a party or selfish motive being often quite enough to carry the day without much concern as to whether or not the true interests of the School will be thereby advanced. To remedy such a state of matters, so deeply injurious to real Educational progress, there must be an increased sense of moral obligation, accompanied by greater liberality of sentiment, and independence in carrying out honest convictions. Let men have eyes that can and will see for themselves, and ears that can and will do their own hearing; that will not, as a general rule, accept the testimony without question, of such as would hear and see for their neighbours as well as for themselves; and yet, let them not have such dogmatic reliance on the evidence of their own senses, as will cause the superior opportunities of others, to be uniformly counted as of no value whatever, and utterly rejected in consequence. Let common sense, be carried into all Common School matters, along with simplicity or integrity of purpose, and a far greater amount of satisfaction will undoubtedly be experienced. There is no reason, even as it is, why we should not feel abundantly satisfied with much that we do see in connection with our schools; but no reason whatever to be content to take things as we find them, if any wise action of ours can improve them. After all, I do believe that the main thing is, to have a right minded and thoroughly competent Teacher employed, even if in very many cases the remuneration has to be increased. We should not have so many Teachers, whom it is desirable to retain, drifting into other pursuits, if they could reckon on that provision which they should get. Experience is certainly of value, so far as we do not allow ourselves to travel in the ruts we have made for ourselves, while a better road lies along side of us. Teachers who are disposed to plume themselves on their experience, need not feel disappointed by younger men superseding them, if they will not examine all things, and while holding fast what is good; avail themselves of such real improvements as, in this day of progress, are continually being brought to light; and while it has been already remarked, that there is probably a want of wisdom in employing the very young, and wholly inexperienced under certain circumstances, Common Sense tells us, that they must commence before they have any experience at all; and that those who have most now, must, at one time have been equally destitute of it. There is no question at all, but that the young have many advantages over those as Teachers, who are up in years. There is commonly more sympathy, a more ready understanding of a child's feelings, more animation, less exclusive adherence to modes

of instruction, which are generally felt, not to be the very best for advancing the scholars in such a way as to make learning a delight; and we are by no means destitute of youthful Teachers, whose youth has been no barrier whatever to their success, where it might have been feared that it would; whose hold on their scholars in the very best way, has not been inferior to that of others greatly their Seniors. And, on the other hand, we have known some Teachers, whose lengthened experience has been valuable indeed; whose weight of character has been recognized and felt, and who have not been content to stand still, but have kept themselves abreast of the times, and maintained as it were, a sort of perennial freshness. Still, those who have not youth on their side, feel as if they were crowded out; and one reason may be, that the young can afford to teach for less; they have probably no intention of continuing Teachers all their days; and a very moderate salary indeed, what in other circumstances we might call a very *mean* one, satisfies them. Still, this is not best for the schools; it has the tendency of making local authorities desirous of getting teaching really below its value, and of injuring those who have borne the burden and heat of the day in the work. No one can be known who is untried. I would not blame Trustees for giving but a moderate salary at first to a young Teacher whose teaching abilities are wholly undeveloped; but when they have been tested and found adequate, and satisfaction has been experienced in other respects, his salary ought not to remain as it was originally fixed, just because it is rather less burdensome, and because other young Teachers are coming on the field. I have generally observed, that where a Teacher has been thoroughly efficient, and given satisfaction in every possible way, there has been much greater freedom from other sources of *dissipation*. The rule, however, will certainly not hold good universally, and difficulties are probably inseparable from the system, such as are encountered now, till, as I have already said, and now repeat, a greater amount of honest independence is manifested, more liberality or catholicity of spirit, and a generally increased sense of moral obligation on the part of all who are concerned.

The foregoing observations are respectfully submitted to the Teachers, Trustees, and Ratepayers of the Schools under my superintendence, in fulfilment of the spirit, at least, of the obligation of the School Law, contained in the 5th clause of the 91st Section, and as a substitute, in most cases, for its literal fulfilment, which various and varying circumstances combine so frequently to render impracticable; and also, as a means of reaching some who may peruse remarks in such a shape, while they would not be found at an appointed meeting to listen to an address embodying precisely the same words.

A. DINGWALL FORDYCE,

Local Superintendent of Schools N. R. Co. Wellington.

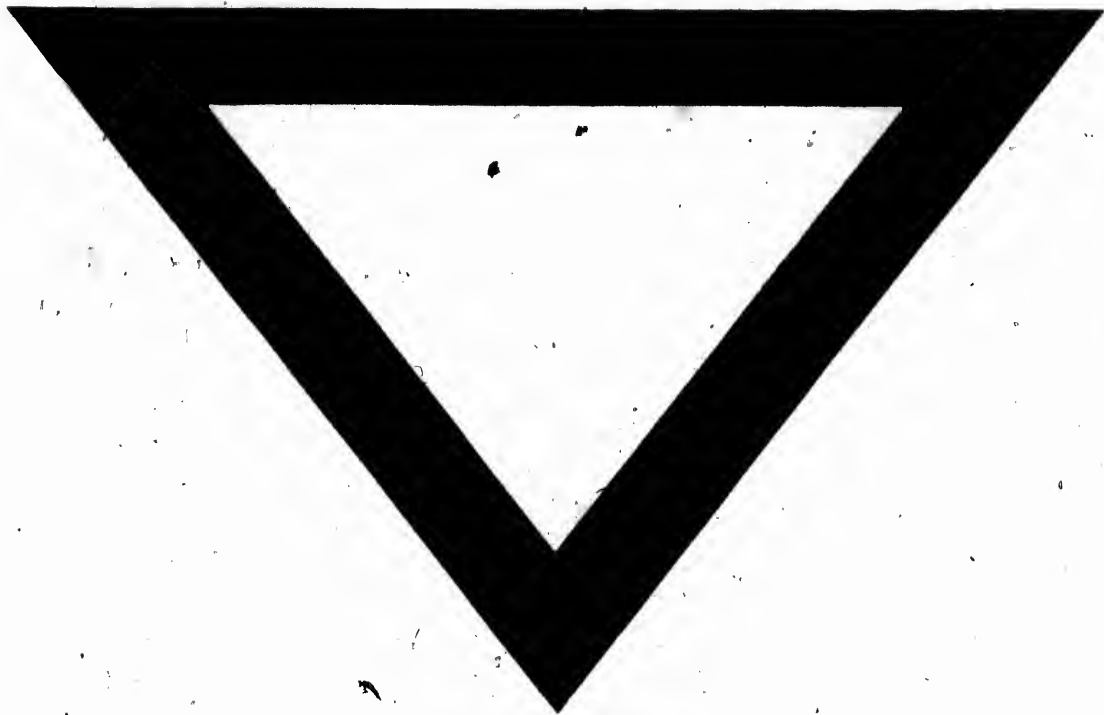
FRAGUS, Ontario, August, 1867.

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