HASZARD'S GAZETTE, JUNE 28.

CORRESPONDENCE.

Correspondents must furnish us with their names, not necessary for publication, but as a guarantee of their good faith, as we do not hold themselves responsible for the opinions of such contributors.

To the Editor of Haszard's Gazette.

Sir,

The following address delivered before the Belfast Teacher's Association, at its monthly meeting on the 26th April last, being thought at the time too *lengthy* for publication along with the minutes of said meeting. I now take the liberty of forwarding it to you for that purpose, hoping you will find room for it to oblige.

Yours very truly,
W. M'Phail.

To the B. T. Association.

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

You will probably expect *something* from me in the way of an essay, as I was the first to propose addressing the association formally on a given subject. I fear, however, you will be disappointed. Much of my time, out of school hours, as you are aware, is required for the performance of duties apart from those of teaching, in which case, I hope to be excused for largely quoting from others well versed in such matters. I propose to allow my remarks to include any or every thing connected with *Teaching as a Profession*.

Education presents a widely extended field of operation to mankind, mankind I say emphatically. It is in fact if viewed aright, the main business of man in this life. For it will be found that in no other occupion are engaged in educating those around, either for good or evil, by precept or example. How important then, that a right direction be given to the various avenues leading to the paths of wisdom, and that the three main agents in this great work—the Parent, the teacher, and the minister, and especially the parent, by reason of his greater responsibility for, and more continued intercourse with the child—act co-operatingly, and with a single eye to the *chief end*" in view, viz: God's glory, man's highest good.

But the question at present is, how shall we as teachers, best promote the noble work of Education? Shall we listlessly go through, as it were, a certain mechanical routine of school duties daily, and when the school is dismissed at 4 o'clock in the evening, bestow not another thought on the subject till 9 o'clock next morning? Or shall we earnestly throw our whole heart and mind into the business, and make it what it ought to be, and what it can be, "Our work is of the utmost consequence and and interest, so far as relates both to the present and future welfare of those with whom, and for whom we dwell, our time and talents; and if we have a due appreciation, correct knowledge, and faithful discharge of appropriate duties, will lead to a most desirable degree of true education, a wrong estimate, a want of clear understanding, or an unfaithful performance of them, will tend to the injury and depression of the teacher and pupils, to an extent proportionate to the degree of the deficiency." When we consider that there are in our Island, thousands of youth of a school going age, whose future success, happiness and usefulness, depend in so great a degree upon the nature and extent of their school training, and school influence, with what weighty power for good or evil, does the consideration invest the hundreds of teachers to whose care and training they are intrusted.

"That is probably nothing which tends so much to prevent the development of rare excellence in teaching, as the habit of relying too much upon the experience of others, or of exclusive imitation in the modes of teaching and discipline adopted. Young teachers particularly are tempted to follow in the steps of those who have devoted many years and much attention to the science of instruction. This is all well enough, it the effort to imitate others is not carried to such excess as to destroy all individuality. Teachers, whether of limited or large experience should ever be ready and willing to learn. They should possess a teachable spirit, and endeavour to draw instruction from all proper sources. If otherwise, they will grow wise only "in their own conceit." But while gaining this knowledge, the teacher should be extremely careful lest he does not allow himself to become a servile copyist" A mode of imparting instruction which may seem perfect in school, will not prove so in other occupations in another. Such can be the case only where there is a precise similiarity between the two. Every school, to be at all successful, must have some system, and the teacher to some extent, must be exact and methodical in the execution of his plans, but he should be able to make and execute his own plans, because every man's own system is the best for him, and he may derive important hints and ideas for the experience of others, such may be gained at teachers' meetings, from visits to other schools, from public or private discussion of school questions, and many other sources too tedious to mention, a judicious teacher may derive many useful hints."

Yet after having projected and set in operation, perhaps a very excellent plan, let a teacher not expect that the precise and unerring operation of it will always produce equally gratifying results, therefore let him vary his mode of teaching a little occasionally, if he wishes to have it work well, and continue to interest himself and his scholars. "Variety" is the spice of life and a little of it is necessary in the too often monotonous business of teaching.

"Cheerfulness is a great assistance to the teacher. "Cheerfulness and kindness, like the sun, warm and animate; and there is that in the heart of every child that never fails to respond to it.

When a little fellow enters school in the morning with his eyes and face sparkling and smiling with animation and pleasure, he should instead of being met and damped by a frown, be repaid by an approving smile from the teacher, and then he will be happy for the day. Pupils soon learn too guess by their teachers' countenance as he enters school what the probable nature of his movements through the day will be. In the words of Goldsmith.

"Well do the boding tremblers learn to trace
The days disasters in the morning face.

Teachers are often too stern and precise in their movements, some one said of a teacher, that he wore a countenance that seemed to say like the almanack, "look out for a cold day this time" and with mere certainty that that predicted by the almanack. Now if teachers would have pleasant scholars they must be so themselves, and be ready to smile and speak pleasantly, willing to provoke laughter even in their pupils sometimes. By such a course, and by their observing the teachers diligence, pupils will be incited to diligence themselves, without which all the teacher's efforts will be in vain.

Constant employment in a useful, interesting way, will do much to keep scholars in a good state of discipline. Napoleon-I used to say, "if a dog has a bone to gnaw, he will not bite." So when he was Emperor, he kept the Parisians quiet by giving them something to do, and keeping them employed on great public works.

Dr. Arnold, (a celebrated English teacher) adopted a similar course in the management of his school. He would not let his boys be idle, lest they should be discontented, and disposed to mischief. He was ever devising new plans, to create in his pupils, fresh interest and diligence in their studies.

"An instructor may possess every literary qualification, and work constantly, and industriously and yet fail of success, if he has not the requisite skill for wisely governing his pupils." Lord Bacon has said "If there is any place on the surface of the earth where order is the first, last, and highest law, that place is the school room." Without it there can be no such thing as progress."

A school may be compared to, and indeed is, a large family, made up of many smaller ones, subsisted at home perhaps to as many different kinds of discipline, as there are families, and in which they come, so that a teacher requires great judgment in the management of so heterogeneous a mass of human nature as is to be found in a school room. Few regulations, the reasons for the justice of which must be obvious to the youngest scholar, will be far better observed and followed than a long list of rules, with appointed penalties annexed."

In maintaining discipline, it is necessary to be rough and severe, armed with bludgeons, sounding out harsh threats full of sound and fury signifying nothing, but promoting, first, for purpose, and uniform action is what does the teacher more noise a person makes in his efforts to obtain order, the more he must make. As the Poet has said, "Order is heaven's first law then commanded, but command not often." Continued scolding and whping will only tend to make bad children worse, and good ones indifferent. A blacksmith brought up his son, to whom he was very severe, to his own trade. One day, the old Vulcan was attempting to harden an old chisel but could not succeed. At last the youth, who was standing near, willing to impart knowledge, which he had learned by bitter experience, exclaimed with an expression full of faith, "Horsewhip it father, if that won't harden it nothing will.

Cases no doubt occur, in which the good of the school and the offender, calls for severe chastisement, but it should be calmly and deliberately done, and in such a manner, that all concerned may see and feel that it is the offender alone attempting to harden an old chisel but could not succeed. At last the youth, who was standing near, willing to impart knowledge, which he had learned by bitter experience, exclaimed with an expression full of faith, "Horsewhip it father, if that won't harden it nothing will.

Cases no doubt occur, in which the good of the school and the offender, calls for severe chastisement, but it should be calmly and deliberately done, and in such a manner, that all concerned may see and feel that it is the offender alone attempting This followed by a kindness on the part of the teacher indicating that it was not done in malice, will have a good effect. If persons exercised more calmness and gentleness, in what they do and mean, and mean just what they say, in a kind unyielding manner, it would rarely be necessary to resort to the extremity of severe punishment. Obedience perfect and unhesitating from the beginning all exercises for a single minute, often operates well.

Most children have little idea of a quiet schoolroom till they can learn it by some such method.

But the teacher should be regular in his disciplinary efforts; if strict to day, and lax to-morrow, punishing at one time, who he disregards at another, the scholars lose confidence in his judgment, which will have a very unhappy influence.

Again; the teacher should strive to incite in his pupils a desire to do well rather than much, remembering that a little well done, is far preferable to much that is but half done. Thoroughness in all they do, should be impressed upon their minds, so that the exercises, in passing hour, whether it be grammar or spelling, should be well prepared, and receive undivided attention until clearly understood. The recollection of such a course of training will prove beneficial to them in after life, so that in whatever calling they may be engaged, whether lowly, if laudable, they shall have learned that to perform its duties well and thoroughly, is the only way to success and honour. "There was once in Boston a noted and very wealthy merchant, a gentleman known as Billy Gray. When he was somewhat advanced in years, he was one day superintending a piece of carpenter's work, and had occasion to censure the workman for not doing his work well. The carpenter had known Billy in his youth, and, rather sensitive at the reproof thus administered, he said, "Billy Gray, what do you presume to speak to me for? you are a rich man tis true, but didn't I know you when you were nothing but a drummer? "Well said Mr. Gray, didn't I drum well?—the idea of a boy, being ashamed of his trade, if their work well, it should be made as easy as possible to them, consistently with a due degree of mental activity on their part, by prescribing short lessons, and taking an intelligent interest in all their studies, and by analyzing minutely, the subject of every lesson. Making it plain sometimes by practical illustrative anecdotes drawn from every day life, rather than text books. But the other extreme of making lessons too simple should be avoided. Knowledge gained without an effort is not so highly prized, as what costs some labour to attain. Another great means of making pupils do their duty heartily and well, is to secure the co-operation and judicious interest of parents with regard to what their children do in school, and it may be observed that whatever tends to interest the pupils, will most surely, have a favourable influence on the parents; and it is scarcely possible to obtain a high feeling on the part of pupils, without securing a corresponding feeling on the part of the parents, because their feelings and prejudices mutually act on each other. The childs demeanour to the teacher as seen at home, will be the great guide with which the parents regards the teacher, if as the parent himself expressed it in words. A good way of obtaining this co-operation of parents, is by visiting them at their dwellings.

As the character and disposition of each pupil must be studied, so as to govern the whole aright, so no time or place is so well calculated to afford an opportunity for that purpose as at their own homes, and when surrounded by the peculiar influences the bear upon them there. Half an hours conversation and observation in such circumstances, will yield highly serviceable information. These visits, especially if reciprocated by the parents visits to the school, to see and hear the exercises, will have a good effect in stimulating the energies of all concerned.

These means or better, must be used for such purposes, for if parents and teachers pursue opposing views or feelings, the teacher must labour to enlighten them. To complain of their indifference or neglect, will only tend to alienate feeling and make bad worse.

Emulation and prizes are sometimes beneficial in inciting pupils to diligence and superiority, but they are liable to objection. The difficulty of selecting from the surviving out of a class of competitors is great, and when some are selected, others perhaps nearly equally as deserving must be neglected, thus stimulating the few, and discouraging the many. And boys who are trained to regard the attainment of some prize as the chief object of study, are often tempted to resort to dishonourable and selfish unions, and disregard the rules of right, and the interest of others.

Says Sir Walter Scott, "There was a boy in my class at school, who always stood at the head of the class, nor could I with all my efforts, supplant him. Day after day, week after week, he kept his place, in spite of all my exertions.

I at length observed, that when a question was asked him, he always fumbled with his fingers at a particular button his vest. To remove it therefore became important to my success, and I found it was removed with a knife. Great was my anxiety to know the secrets of my measure, and it succeeded too well. When the boy was again questioned, he hesitated, stammered, and blundered, but it was not to be found. In his distress he looked down for it; but he could neither see nor feel it. He stood confounded, and I took possession of his place; nor was he ever able to recover it, though he was the author of his wrong. Often in after-life has the sight of him smote me, and I often resolved to make some reparation, but it ended in good resolutions. This when I once gave way to strategem, was a serious loss to the other. How then shall a teacher form industrious habits in his pupils without emulation? Let him excite their curiosity and love of approbation, and set upon them a noble emulation."

Good judgment and discretion are required in the assignment of lessons, and the mode of conducting recitations, the time and design of which should not be to store the mind with words and rules, but to discipline it, and fit it for grasping and comprehending what ever subject may come before it in life, in proportion to the time and opportunities for it.

Pupils should be made to study their lessons so that they may be able to give clear proof that they understand them when called upon to recite. Many pupils have been made to feel, that just where it is, but like a thief's honesty, in a moment of trial it is not there? They seem to be well versed, and ready to communicate, so long as the question asked by teacher manages the charge well. But, when without the assistance of the teacher's question, they are asked to tell what they know of a subject, alas! they suddenly find that their knowledge, like a scholars lesson, is entirely gone, the utterance Much depends upon the manner of conducting recitation. From a visit to some schools, one might infer that it was the teacher's part to recite, and the scholar's part to listen and be silent listeners, whereas the scholar should be made to feel it to be his duty to recite, and to give clear prompt answers to questions. Many scholars acquire a habit of confounding exercising, with giving lessons. They may feel pretty certain that one of two answers is correct, but cannot say positively, which. The colour of the article under consideration is either black or white, but they are not sure which, and are much in the same condition as the recruit, who on being asked by his officer, what his height was, replied that the man who measured him said it was five or six feet, and he was not sure which he could not tell at all at all, though sure he was, one of the two was right." Now who does not see that such indefiniteness is no knowledge? it is mere guessing.

School examinations also, when properly regarded and judiciously conducted, have a beneficial effect. They should not however be considered as an end, but simply as an auxiliary in the great work of education. The examination day should not be looked upon as the day for which all other days are made, and formal preparation for its exercises made, so it may be for the convenience of the true future of the purposes of all school training. Occasional visits of trustees and parents, without previous notice, would better afford an insight into the every day movements and mode of teaching than formal public examinations. At the time of these visits it should be the aim of the teacher to conduct the several exercises precisely, as he does when no visitors are present that the school may appear in its usual condition.

Within a few years past, more than ordinary attention has been devoted to vocal music throughout the Island, so that in many places it has become a regular exercise, and in some schools it has been profitably introduced.

I know two myself. The question may be asked, what good results from it? Singing tends to promote good order in school and to increase the happiness of the pupils. In every school there is more or less of monotony and an occasional tune will do much to relieve it, and will as I have experienced, tend to produce a greatder interest for the intellectual taste. The influence of music upon the moral feelings is highly salutary. If as the poet says,

"Music has charms to soothe the savage breast,"

it will certainly require no poetic imagination to show that it has the same effect over the feelings and passions of heedless boys. No one, who has witnessed a school engaged in singing, can have failed to observe its salutary effects. No angry look, or morose feeling can exist at such a time. Well was he acquainted with human nature and the springs of action, who said "Let me make the songs of a people, and I care not who make their laws."

But we should not neglect the means for our own self-improvement, professionally I mean. It is quite desirable that those who are engaged in the same occupation, should often meet together for purpose of mutual improvement. Hence the formation of our Association, and I am sure it has already tended to improve our professional character and standing as teachers, as well as to stimulate the friendly feelings of one towards the other in relation. The benefits derived by us from our visitations of each others schools are neither few nor trivial.

No two scholars are precisely alike, neither is it desirable they should be so. While in all some accellences will be found, we need hardly expect to find any one so entirely without fault, as to desire the epithet of perfect. To visit each other with profit, we must be candid and generous, we must, I admit, that others have good qualities as well as ourselves, and perhaps better, and however skilful a Teacher I may think myself, I must not expect to find a school which should equal some beneficial. A mere listless attendance on these meetings can do but little good. It should be a leading object and desire with us, to impart some useful thoughts and suggestions which may be of use to our brand, we receive some valuable hints and ideas in return. No one can attend these meetings without gaining something. Moreover, the opportunities which they afford for the cultivation of the friendly and social feelings are of no inconsiderable importance. It is alike pleasant and profitable for those of a common pursuit often to meet; and "hold secret counsel together." We will return to our respective positions of labor with fresh courage, new impulses, clearer views, and more definite aims and designs, for "as iron sharpeneth iron, so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend." I beg leave, gentlemen, to apologise for intruding so far on your time and patience.

W. M'PHAIL.

Man's Duty to Woman.- Let him learn to be grateful to a woman for this undoubted achievement of her sex, that it is she who has kept Christendom from lapsing back into barbarism—kept mercy and truth from being utterly overborne by those who have no acquaintance with mercy and truth. Let him be grateful for this, that almost every great soul that has led forward or lifted up the race, has been furnished for each nobler deed, and inspired with each patriotic and holy aspiration, by the retiring fortitude of some Spartan—some Christian mother. Moses, the deliverer of his people, drawn out of the Nile by the king's daughter, some one has hinted, is a symbol of the way that woman's better instincts always outwit the tyrannical diplomacy of men. Let him cheerfully remember and acknowledge, although he achieves enterprises in public, it is the nerve and sensibility of woman that arm the mind and inflame the soul in private life. Everywhere a man executes the performance, but woman trains the man.

That was a timely and beautiful thought, expressed by a clergyman at the grave of a lovely bride of four summers, from the garden of whose parents, as they all passed through to the churchyard, he had plucked a little "Forget-me-not." When the little coffin was lowered into the grave, the clergyman, holding up the sweet flower in his hand, said;

"I hold in my hand a beautiful flower, which I plucked from the garden we have just left. By taking it from its present home it has withered; but I here plant it at the head of this grave, and it will soon revive and flourish.

"So is it with the little flower we have just planted in the grave. It has been plucked from its native garden, and has withered; but it is *now* transplanted into the Garden of Immortality, where it will revive and flourish, in immortal glory and beauty!"

A sick colber must be regarded as being well when he begins to *mend*.