

EDUCATIONAL COLUMN.

H. S. RAMSEY, Editor.

Communications on Educational Topics, Reports of Educational Meetings, etc., are respectfully solicited for the Educational Column, and may be addressed to Educational Committee, Box 26, Rock Bluffs, Nebraska.

The report of the Rock Bluffs School for the month ending October 8th, shows that in the Higher Department there were enrolled: males 13, females 12, making a total of 25. The average attendance was, males 9.9, females 14.7, or a total of 24.6.

The number in the different branches was as follows: Spelling, 32; reading, 19; arithmetic, 32; writing, 20; grammar, 13; geography, 13; history, 8; algebra, 7; and composition, 12.

The following named scholars were absent during the month: Marcus White, James Patterson, Emma Bridenstine, Jennie Patterson, Olie Jones, and Anna Mann.

The following named persons have visited the department during the month: Miss Myra Patterson, Mr. Wm. Hobbs, Dr. F. W. Reed, and Mr. C. H. Pinham, the two latter gentlemen being patrons of the school. These visits occupied 240 minutes or four hours.

The enrollment in the primary department was as follows: males, 31; females, 29; total, 60. The total average attendance was 58.6.

Patrons of the school and friends of education generally, are cordially invited to visit the school.

ARITHMETIC.

The prominence given to this branch in our public schools, would seem to indicate its importance over any other branch. Mathematics in general have been cultivated to a greater or less extent in nearly every age of the world. The ancients gave more attention to Algebra and Geometry, than to Arithmetic. Indeed, it is only within the last half century that Arithmetic in popular education which its importance would seem to demand. We believe that it is eminently proper that Arithmetic should be the leading branch, especially in our public schools. Its tendency, particularly when taught analytically, is to develop the powers of reasoning. The young mind is naturally impressed by it, because it seldom ever fails to see the reason of it, that is of the example or principle. We have frequently heard objections urged against the early study of this branch. It has been frequently urged that children should not be required or allowed to study Arithmetic until they were of a certain age, say ten or twelve years old. Now, the study of mathematics generally has a tendency to render the reasoning more exact, as well as to strengthen the powers of reasoning. A little familiar illustration will soon convince a very young mind that "two and two make four"; but why "two and two make four" may not be so easily explained. But to use a common expression the child "sees it," and it would be difficult to convince it that "two and two" made anything else.

The exactness and clearness of the fact renders it less difficult to comprehend, and thus it is with nearly all arithmetical investigations, when conducted analytically. Now we do not deny that there are arithmetical principles and complex formulae involved in the study of arithmetic, but we claim that the simpler elements may be taught children when quite young. The habit, which many teachers practice, of requiring pupils to commit to memory the many arithmetical rules with which our text books abound, we deem rather a disadvantage than a help to the pupils. The ready application of a rule will, of course, enable a pupil to "work" an example with dispatch, but suppose the rule to be forgotten and the principle to have been unlearned, then there is no alternative but to fail; whereas, had the principle been learned and the rule entirely forgotten, the principle or principle being more easily retained, the person would have no difficulty in solving an example. This fact was strongly impressed upon our mind at one time during our experience in the school room. We had in our charge a class composed of members who had attended different schools, or father we were engaged in organizing the class. An example was given to one, and a request made that the rule by which the example was worked be repeated, but a failure, either to repeat the rule or work the example was the consequence. We next called another pupil and to him gave the same example and made the request, that the rule be repeated. The pupil acknowledged his inability to repeat the rule but behaved he could work the example. The example was worked and what seemed more surprising the example was analyzed. We refer to this incident to illustrate our theory with regard to teaching arithmetic, and in conclusion we would say to teachers: "Do not burden the minds of your pupils with long and to them meaningless rules.— Better instruct them in the principles upon which the rules are founded, and then even though the rule be forgotten, the principles entangled upon the mind will remain. It is only in this way that arithmetic as taught to the young, can be made to remain in the memories of the children."

The Kingston (N. Y.) Journal recently had an old subscriber call and pay a subscription that had been running for thirty-one years. He said as he might not be around right away, he would pay for ten years ahead. This he did, together with a subscription of twelve years for his mother. He left \$44 with the astonished newspaper proprietor. He had long been a non-resident, and will probably continue so for another dozen or so years.

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