

PRACTICAL HINTS ON TEACHING

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Practical Hints on Teaching by John Menet

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JOHN MENET

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ON

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BY

JOHN MENET, M.A.

VICAR OF HOCKERHILL, AND LATE CHAPLAIN OF THE HOCKERHILL
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PREFACE.

THE "Practical Hints on Teaching" were drawn up and printed some years since for private circulation, solely for the use of the Students of the Hockerill Training Institution.

They are now published in deference to a request made at one of the Annual Meetings of Diocesan Inspectors held by the late Bishop Wigram at Danbury.

A few words are needed to explain for what purpose these "Hints" were compiled.

In order that the Students might be trained in an exact and definite system of school management it was of course necessary to consider fully the details of organization, discipline, and instruction. When these had been settled they were carried out in the practising schools, and were further explained and illustrated in the Criticism and School Management lessons. Students were taught to carry out this one system, and were not allowed to depart from it

in any respect whatever. The "Practical Hints" were printed in order to put the system clearly before the Students, and to secure uniformity of practice. It was also thought that Students would find them useful by way of reference when they were settled in their schools, and had become instructors of pupil-teachers.

But when it was decided to publish these "Hints" it was found that they would scarcely be intelligible without the addition of other hints, which were given to the Students in the shape of oral explanations and manuscript notes. These additions have been made as concisely as possible, but it is due to those who requested publication of the pamphlet that some account should be given of the altered form in which it now appears.

The "Practical Hints" are in no sense a treatise on education, nor do they pretend in any way to take the place of any one of the many manuals which have been published on school-keeping. They do not profess to discuss any questions connected with schools, but only to state the conclusions which were arrived at after full consideration and the experience of several years. The object was simply to state clearly the system which the Students of the Training School were required to adopt.

It may seem strange that no allusion should be made to the Standards of the Revised Code, and that the organization and instruction have reference to classes only. The Standards are not mentioned because the writer is convinced that any attempt to organize a school by standards rather than classes must disorganize it, and that the standards must not be

considered at all if the interests of the children are to be consulted. It seems that the best plan is to disregard the standards altogether, and to teach the children in properly graduated classes, allowing them to fall into the standards, according to the official regulations, when the annual examination is held.

It may also be well to state, in order to prevent possible misapprehension, that the following "Hints" refer to day schools only, and that night schools are not taken into account at all. The writer believes that it is a mistake to connect the staff of the day schools with the night schools, and that it is wiser to treat them as distinct institutions. When the principal teachers of the day schools are made responsible for the night schools, one or other of two results seems inevitable: either the interests of the day school are sacrificed by the absence of the head teacher in the afternoon of the days on which the night school is held; or the teachers themselves are overworked by the additional labour at a time of the day when they need some relaxation, if the work of the day school has been vigorously done. This is more especially the case when there are pupil-teachers or monitors to be instructed; and the provision of the old Code which prevented teachers in charge of apprentices from taking part in the night school seems to have been a very wise one. Night schools differ in almost every respect from day schools; and what is said in the following pages does not relate in any way to them.

The writer desires to acknowledge how much he owes to several persons for many useful hints, and particularly to the

former Mistresses of the Practising Schools at Hockerill, and to other pupils in charge of Elementary Schools in various parts of the country, in which the system here described has been carried out for several years. He wishes especially to state that having been in constant communication during the last twelve years with his friend, the Rev. D. J. STEWART, H.M. Inspector of Schools, he is indebted to him for a large number of useful practical suggestions and notes, which have been freely used in preparing the following pages.

HOCKERILL,

BISHOP'S STORTFORD,

July, 1867.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

A SECOND edition being required, a few alterations have been made in the hints on drill (p. 7); and in the directions for giving lessons in Dictation and Arithmetic (p. 54-59). The book list (p. 111) has been corrected. Further experience and observation have strengthened the conviction already expressed, that if the best interests of the children are considered, the Standards should be disregarded. It is to be feared that, under the Revised Code, schools are too often treated as merely commercial ventures; and when this is the case, the work of the teacher becomes more and more mechanical, and a false test of efficiency is adopted, the percentage of passes being accepted as a sufficient proof that the school is doing its proper work.

HOCKERILL,

May, 1870.

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