

to-day with mixed feelings. In the circumstances, he found it difficult to explain himself. He pleaded guiltily to having given hostages to fortune, but that did not wholly explain his leaving the State. He would like his hearers to understand that, though he was a Victorian, and loved the place of his birth, he was, before all, an Australian (hear, hear). Personally, he owed a great deal to the Victorian Education Department. He had been a State-school boy in Victoria, and won a State scholarship which had helped to see him through the University, his sisters had been State-school teachers, and Mr. Tate, Director of Education, had been a personal friend. For these reasons, he was reluctant to leave, but he hoped to uphold the good name of the Victorian Education Department in New South Wales, where there was ample scope for effort.—*From Education Gazette and Teachers' Adl. Victoria.*

### THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH.

In the course of some articles upon the teaching of English, which recently appeared in the *Education Gazette*, a contributor made certain criticisms of the work done in the Primary School. Some teachers of Primary Schools are inclined to be restive under this criticism, and have protested that it is an unfair reflection upon their work.

It is a matter for regret that criticism of this kind should arouse resentment. It is probable that there are elements of truth in it, but it is equally probable that the criticism is based upon the work of a minority of the pupils, whilst the majority will satisfactorily meet the High School tests. "Inefficiency in the class below" is one of the shibboleths of our tribe.

The University Professor thinks the High School work should be better done, the High School teacher is sure that the work of the Upper Primary School is poorer than it should be, whilst the teacher of 6th class has no doubt that the boys were poorly prepared in the lower classes.

The pessimist of Punch's cartoon complained to his friend that "Things are not as good as they used to be," and the friend replied, "They never were!" This tendency to under-estimate the work of the other fellow is very human, but is not always very just. The High School must not expect to get work which is really "secondary" done in a Primary School. On the other hand there is something to be said for the High School teacher, who finds the raw material sent up to him from the Primary School variable in quality, and often, apparently, not up to sample.

We need a little sweet reasonableness on each side. Nothing but good can result from an earnest effort to view the question from the other man's standpoint.

Does the High School teacher expect an unreasonably high standard?

Is the Primary School teacher satisfied with a standard which is really too low?

Examination tests are notoriously imperfect. Written examinations are retained only because the wit of man has not yet devised a means of testing intelligence which is not more objectionable and less impartial than a written examination.

In any large body of boys (or of men) there must be a proportion which, judged by any test, barely reaches the pass standard. However thoughtful the teaching has been, it is in the nature of the case that the minds of

Primary School boys should not uniformly respond to the tests of the High School teacher.

If the primary teacher, on the one hand, will strive with unwearying zeal, to make his work more effective, and the High School teacher, on the other hand, will continue cheerfully to make good such deficiencies as he finds in the Primary School product, we shall make progress all along the line. The more so if we accept criticism in the right spirit and endeavour to profit by it.

### EMPIRE DAY.

EMPIRE Day this year will be celebrated on Monday, 24th May. For information as to the preparations and procedure to be adopted, Teachers are referred to Circular, Instructions to Teachers, No. 21, page 100 of the Regulations.

J. DAWSON, Chief Inspector.

### POT PLANT CULTURE IN CONGESTED SUBURBAN LOCALITIES.

These photographs illustrate a very charming phase of the training received by the girls of the Rozelle Girls' School. Mr. Inspector Henderson, during the last annual inspection, expressed a wish that each child in the Girls' School should own a pot plant, which should be cared for by herself.

Following on this suggestion, the teacher found that the children responded readily. The movement commenced in September last, and in February the children were able to see the result of their efforts—a fine collection of some two plants. As a result of this work the teachers observe that the plants have taught the children to love Nature more, for in watching and tending them they have been led to take a keener interest in other plants of the garden. And then they have something to care for, and thus is one of the girls' instincts satisfied. This care of the plant has also stimulated in the child carefulness, tidy habits, thoughtfulness, love and a keener observance of, and deep regard for, Nature.

Mr. McLellan recently visited the school on a "pot-plant field day." Four classrooms were closely packed with girls—big girls and little girls—each one nursing a plant, which gave ample evidence of loving and effective care. As one gazed through the vista of glass partitions at the pretty faces peeping out of a world of green, brightened here and there by colour, the colour of living flowers, the spirit of beauty pervaded the whole scene and stirred the heart. But it was more than a delightful tableau. It was the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual process at work. Mr. Henderson and Miss Fitzpatrick and her staff are to be congratulated on the success of their plan for making beauty and service a portion of the daily lives of these girls, both in their school and in their homes.

The photographs were sent to this office by special request for publication in the *Gazette*. Though they fail to show the colour harmonies they are still very interesting as a record of the cumulative result of the co-operation of mothers, fathers, teachers, and daughters, but above all, daughters, for social ends—all springing out of a love of beauty, which is deep in us all, but so often gets buried under the rubbish we pile upon ourselves.