

HELPFUL HINTS FOR RURAL TEACHERS

REGULAR ATTENDANCE.

I found that the children in my school were irregular in attendance. They would stay away on the least pretext. To encourage them to come every day I have a piece of picture matting tacked on the wall. On the left side are the names of the children. After each name is placed a gold paper star if the child has been present each day in the week. We are going to see who will have the greatest number of gold stars by the close of the term.

TEACHING MANNERS.

Politeness is learned best by imitation. A cheery good morning seldom fails to bring a response. Even when a child is late I say, "Good morning." As each child leaves I say, "Good night." I speak each one's name. In a short time many stop to say, "Good night." Best of all, many stop to say "Good morning" to each other.

Politeness is mostly habit, and cautious drill is good. Lessons which cause politeness to be ridiculed do harm.

NEW WORDS.

On Friday I divide the class into two groups and give them a word drill. The first pupil in one of the rows reads a word studied during the week, and his companion in the front makes a sentence with the word. Then he reads another word which the first turns into another sentence, and so on, until all the words have been reviewed.

The mistakes are corrected promptly by the same children, and I have found by following this plan the pupils rarely forget the new words. They become interested in this exercise, and in the reading class they pay good attention when I explain about new words.

IN UNGRADED SCHOOLS.

The second and third-reader classes may be united into one spelling class. The first month give twenty words for a lesson to be recited orally. Drill on sound and pronunciation. The second give ten words, to be written as you pronounce them. After they are written have the pupils change papers. Then require each pupil to rise and spell and pronounce all the words on his paper.

The next month give them ten words to write and mark diacritically. By thus alternating the work the pupil becomes thoroughly acquainted with the sound, pronunciation, and written form of the word.

(To be continued).

PLANT STUDY.

H. G. P.

Ferns, continued.

Among our native land-plants few are more attractive or more widely represented throughout the Acadian region than the ferns.

Apart from their natural beauty, ferns have long been the objects of deep interest in all lands. But, for the early investigators, there was so much mystery about their growth and reproduction that for centuries we find them connected with many of the superstitions of the times. The magic "fern seed" were everywhere eagerly sought.

"But on St. John's mysterious night,
Sacred to many a wizard spell,
The time when first to human sight
Confest, the mystic fern seed fell;

I'll seek the shaggy, fern clad hill

And watch 'mid murmurs muttering stern
The seed departing from the fern."

The story runs that the bracken fern, our common brake, on St. John's eve put forth a small blue flower which soon gave place to a shining fiery seed that ripened at midnight. If this "seed" were caught in a white napkin, as it fell from the fern on its own account, it conferred upon its possessor the power to become invisible, to which in some countries was added the gift of "second sight" and other powers. Shakespeare says,

"We have the receipt for fern seed;
We walk invisible."

We find the church setting its face against the practice of "watching the fern," as it was called, and a "French Synod condemned all who should gather ferns or fern seed on St. John's eve."

Scientific knowledge of these plants was a thing of slow growth. It was not until the year 1851 that the life history of the fern, its wonderful alternation of generations, as outlined in the last issue of the REVIEW, was made known through the researches of Hofmeister; and even after its discovery for many other groups of plants it was not until the year 1877 that the great significance of the "alternation of generations" in the vegetable kingdom was finally established.

A strong geological interest is also associated with ferns. In the long ages of the past they reared their stems, now mostly underground