

3. An elaborate document on Scientific and Technical Instruction in Europe (not yet made public, though a few copies have been distributed) in the form of a report to Congress by the late United States Commissioner of Education, Hon. Henry Barnard, LL.D.

4. The papers published on various occasions by C. C. Perkins, of Boston, in reference to the plans proposed in that city for diffusing a knowledge of art.

5. A most suggestive and instructive book lately reprinted in this country, the lectures of John Ruskin delivered on assuming the duties of Slade Professor of Art in Oxford.

8. MUSIC IN GERMAN SCHOOLS.

Dr. Stowe gives an interesting account of what he saw in one of the public schools in Germany. In one department there were some two hundred boys practicing music on violins. In another department, all the boys were singing, and the superintendent said, in his peculiar phrase, "When the children don't sing the devil is here in the midst of them, but when they are all singing, he has to go out there"—pointing at the open window. And in that figurative way was indicated the truth that evil cannot easily dwell with a spirit of sacred song.

III. The School House and its Surroundings.

1. SCHOOL-HOUSE ARCHITECTURE.

There are four general points about a school house which demand our special attention, viz.: accommodation, heat, light and ventilation. These again, can be divided and subdivided. The most improved of each should be adopted and adhered to with the same spirit that the best teacher is chosen and retained. In its strictest sense these things belong to the *plan*, and as they are the most important let them have our first attention, but let us not forget, or neglect to associate with them, a good design, for thereby we increase the value of the whole work, and form a combination of utility and beauty which will have a powerful influence over the minds of all who are brought in contact with it.

These things established, the rest we leave to those who have charge of the young minds of the future. May they ever have the best facilities for the furtherance of the great work of education, whereby society is advanced towards a higher state of perfection.—*Rhode Island Schoolmaster.*

I. P. N.

2. BEAUTIFYING SCHOOL GROUNDS.

At a recent school exhibition in one of the Middle States, a farce was acted representing a meeting called for the purpose of deciding on the location of a school-house, and of raising money to build it. Among other things said and done after the organization of the meeting, one man stated, that having found his barn too small for convenience, and rather leaky withal, he was about to build a new one, and proposed to sell his old one at a cheap rate to the district for a school-house, saying that the roof could be patched, the walls lathed and plastered, and the building made into a very comfortable school-room without great expense.

Another opposed extravagant outlay in the purchase of a lot. He was in favor of getting it as cheaply as possible, and, moreover, he thought the best thing that could be done was to take the unoccupied corner of the old burying-ground. The yard was no longer used as a place of burial, he said, and nothing would ever grow in that north-east corner except sorrel, and the children might amuse themselves at recess, and perhaps learn something in reading the inscriptions upon the tombstones.

Now "pity 'tis true, 'tis," but many of our school buildings, with their surroundings, are actual sepulchres of the talents, tastes and nobler feelings and sentiments of those who meet there for culture. The remedy is a simple one. We must learn to cultivate the pleasure-grounds, as well as the cornfields, of the soul. There is a great deal of discussion about securing regular and prompt attendance at school, and good behaviour while there. Make the place beautiful, and the work is half done. It should be an educator itself, should impart culture.

Instead of fencing out a lot in some bleak and barren place, let the most delightful site in the whole neighborhood be chosen, even if it is not upon the highway, or exactly in the centre of the district. Let at least a quarter, or better, a half acre be taken, and place the building far enough in the rear to afford room to lay out the grounds in front. This should be done with neatness and taste. An abundance of shade trees should be planted, and in some part of the

yard a group, under which may be erected rustic seats, where, on hot summer days, a part or the whole of the school may spend an hour in study, instead of being confined all day in the school-room. Who can blame a boy, in a cheerless room, for cutting holes in the plank bench before him, and catching flies to imprison there? Better do that than sit aching all day. A child would sit in a grove studying for an hour, more willingly and more profitably than in the school-room. The outdoor air and scenery quickens thought. Christopher North, while composing articles for Blackwood, used to sit sometimes during all the summer night under a favorite tree in front of his house, engaged in deep thought. At other times, he would have his servant row him up and down the beautiful lake Windermere, which lay at the foot of his estate, and the next day would commit his thoughts to paper.

The ground at the rear of the building should be fitted for the foot-ball, and any other games that the boys happen to become interested in. The whole should be enclosed by a neat fence.

It may be objected that such a plan fully carried out would involve too great expense; but he is a poor economist who does not see that the value of property in the vicinity of such an opportunity for education would be greatly enhanced.

With a building constructed with equal taste and reference to the health, comfort, happiness and culture of the pupils, a great advance would be made in the true education of youth. Observe the contrast of such a one with the following description, taken from real life: In the midst of a dreary sand-bank, in unoccupied land, many rods from any tree, or scarcely a sign of vegetation, stands the school-house. The bleak north wind has an uninterrupted sweep of miles. No fence surrounds the lot, in fact, its limits are not clearly defined, for the drifting sands long since obliterated the "ancient landmarks." A part of the adjoining land was once fenced, but years ago it was buried deep in the sand-drifts. Within, rude desks and benches, no chair, no table, no maps, or anything for illustrations. One blustering day in winter, a large boy, who occupied a seat in the windward corner of the room, approached the teacher at noon, with the request that he might be allowed to bring an armful of hay to stuff into the holes, where the clapboards were off, in order to keep the wind out.

Such is a type of not a few elementary seats of learning.

It may not be a great task to inaugurate a movement which would entirely revolutionize these homes of the children. Let the teacher, trustees, or any one, awaken an interest in some enterprising district in as many towns of the State as possible, to lay out and improve their grounds and building in the way suggested. A healthy rivalry between districts, and then between towns, would soon spring up, and some other district would soon make an effort to surpass the first, and thus, when the ball is once set rolling, it will not be likely to stop till it has reached the foot of the hill. When one man paints his house, his neighbor soon sees that his own is needing the same attention.

Pupils, also, will become interested—will feel that the property is theirs, and take pride in keeping it from injury, just as the boy delights in the mirrored blade of his new knife.

Teachers, school officers, citizens, will you not interest yourselves in this matter? Be in earnest. Nothing can work greater improvement in our schools than this. Nothing will put a greater power for good into your hands. If you cannot at once carry out all the suggestions made, do something: have the lot enlarged, the trees set out, and as much more as may be, and next year do a little more. Let us hear reports of your success. The columns of the "Journal" are open to you. Which shall be the banner town of the county? What neighborhood shall work the greatest improvement?—*J. P. G., in Maine Journal of Education.*

3. PREPARATIONS FOR SCHOOL HOUSE FLOWERS.

Now is the time to arrange your plans for your flower-garden next summer. Do not delay, but as soon as you have a few moments to spare, look over the seeds saved last season, together with your notes, and then make out a list of what you will need to buy. If you have followed previous directions, your list will be small. Send it immediately to some well-known seedsman, so as to have them on hand in time to sow some of them in boxes hot-beds, or even in cold frames, early in the season. In this way you can have a supply of flowers from four to six weeks earlier than by the usual course. Do not sow too many kinds: you will derive much more satisfaction from about twenty varieties than you will from sixty. Be sure not to cover any more ground than you can take care of and keep in the most perfect order all the season. It is best to sow only the choicest kinds, as it takes no more time to care for good flowers than it does a lot of rubbish.—*Illinois Teacher.*

By B. R. CUTTER.

Washington School, Chicago, Jan 11, 1870.