

letters often, as I lie alone a lot. Have not been even as well all this year. Suffered much more all the time, but yet at all times Jesus was my comfort. My constant friend is He, and I know when He cares for the sparrows, He cares much more for me. Sometimes the clouds come, and the sun hides awhile, but after a while how warm and bright the sunshine seems. So it is with pain and trials.

We appreciate it when ease and rest come and make us glad, after all, for being able to trust in Jesus, and know it

is all for the best, and we will understand some day if we wait. Oh, that we may trust more, for, lo, He is with us always. I would like to make special mention of all who were so loving and helpful to me, but I cannot hold pad up and seldom I can write at all this long time, but will you each and all kindly accept my greatest gratitude and thanks to everyone for any kindness shown me in any way, especially to dear Dame, for through her I have had the pleasure of much kindness from others. How grateful I am, and why I try so hard to

write, is to tell the one who wrote about yellow patches on her face, I forget who it was. A doctor says, "Tell her to have her kidneys tested, and if they are all right, if she will continue taking Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, they have cured others of those yellow patches, and I hope she will try them, and get cured, too; but one box alone will not be expected to cure."

Here is something useful, if it is not too late to try. Take grapes, fresh and good, and dip the stem at end of each bunch in warm wax, and they will keep

like fresh grapes for months, if laid in batting and put in a dry, cool place. So nice to have fresh grapes at Xmas, and how soon Xmas will be here. Hope it brings gladness and cheer to all, and able to enter the New Year with bright prospects. Now, dears, I have been days at this, and again thanking dear Dame and all for every kindness, and wishing all a most happy Thanksgiving season, and to Hope renewed strength after her trip, ever your grateful shut-in friend.

A LANKSHIRE LASS.

Introduction.

To-day we are more than pleased to present to you our new "Page of Opinions." The reason for its existence is as follows: For some time we have been thinking out plans to bring the Home Department of our journal into closer touch with the practical needs of its readers, and one of the plans formed was to write to various ladies throughout the Dominion, asking for personal opinions on specified subjects.

The first letters sent out asked for opinions on two questions:

(1) What do our schools most need to improve them?

(2) Give plans for amusing children on a rainy day.

The response has been generous, and we have indeed been pleased with the venture.

Now, a few words in regard to the future of "Our Page of Opinions." It will not appear every week, perhaps not more than once or twice a month. Any correspondent of the Ingle Nook, or anyone recommended by any correspondent of the Ingle Nook, may be especially asked to contribute. If any chance reader wishes to express an opinion called forth by the letters appearing in "Our Page" she may do so, but her letter must appear in the usual Ingle Nook issues. This is necessary to prevent overcrowding. We wish to finish up each question in one, or, at most, two issues of "Our Page," and if we threw it promiscuously open, there might be a dragging on from week to week, to the crowding out of a seasonable topic.

Many questions will be discussed, and we shall be especially grateful to anyone who will write us suggesting any topic which she would like to see brought up. Already one subject has been mentioned, "Beautifying Canada." This will be introduced during the winter, when the arrival of seed catalogues set the beautifying impulses tingling.

Now, we throw "Our Ingle Nook Page of Opinions" on your sympathy. If you wish to contribute to it, kindly send your name, address, and "specialty," addressing all communications to "Dame Burden."

What Our Rural Schools Need Most to Improve Them.

The need of more attractive surroundings, though perhaps not the greatest need of our rural schools, is at least one that must be obvious to the veriest outsider.

Draw a mental picture of your local schoolhouse; isn't it either one of the old frame type, with nothing in the world to distinguish it from a drive-shed (except the windows), or the more modern brick building, with very little more character than the first, except that its steep roof gives it some degree of grace, and that it has a porch, and sometimes a bell?

And the yard! The hot, shadeless, unlovely yard! One sees a few stunted trees, struggling to exist amid most hostile surroundings, which seems to imply that the School Board has at some time bought and planted trees, but, that done, considered their responsibility ended.

Children are destructive little creatures. They romp around the young trees, jump over them (if they are evergreens), tramp the earth hard around them, and sometimes willfully damage them. No trees could do well under such conditions. The only way is to put a fence (two wires will do) between the trees and the playground, and make it well understood by the children, that it would be better for their health not to be found on the wrong side of those wires.

How is it, that the greater number of people concerned in anything, the less individual interest is taken in it? We all take

an interest in our homes, most of us take an interest in our church, but how many take a real interest in the school—apart from their children's progress in their studies? He was a wise man who said, "What's everybody's business is nobody's business."

The efforts of the children themselves to beautify their school-yard are so misdirected, and the results so unsatisfactory, that it is little wonder they become discouraged. On Arbor Day they sow seeds in little round beds, and tend them more or less faithfully until the summer holidays, when the weeds have their turn, and hold undisputed sway until the end of the summer. If you want flowers, why not plant hardy bulbs and perennials in the fall. Daffodils, narcissus, peonies, and a few hardy rose bushes, will keep you in flowers until the holidays, and a few groups of golden glow and phlox will give you a bright welcome when school commences in August. And don't forget the shrubs, which are a garden in themselves, and, after a little care at first, are practically no trouble.

And, now, our time is up—and nothing said about the schoolroom—the pictures, good copies of great masterpieces, the library for the older pupils, and the picture books for the little ones, and to those who will have to build a schoolhouse in the near future, about the possibility of combining beauty and usefulness, and of making their schoolhouse a model of its kind, as regards modern appliances: sanitation, heating, etc., and a thing of beauty as well.

G. H. SHORE.

Middlesex Co., Ont.

Some Rare Food for Thought Here

Dear Dame Burden,—It is well that my ideas on "How to Improve Our Country Schools" shall be considered simply my personal opinions. I am quite well aware that they will not be very generally adopted.

The first and greatest effort should be directed towards keeping children out of schools. Most earnestly would I advocate that children should not be sent to school under eight or nine years old, except where parents are illiterate. Farm homes are not ideal, but the schoolhouse is usually the most sordid and dusty sitting-room in the whole section. For generations, we have misread the parable of "Tommy and the Cow." Tommy learned some valuable lessons, but not at school; he learned them dozing under a tree, where every child ought to be on fine May days.

But school law and public opinion, and often the child's own eagerness, force the little ones off to school.

If the room were painted and mended! If once a month the floors were scrubbed with soap and water; if the yard were drained and sanitary; oh, if only the poor children could, once a day, have a drink of clean, cold water!

Where school boards do put the premises in good repair, the teacher should be compelled to compel the children to maintain and preserve the school property, and to do all in their power to improve and to beautify it. The teacher should be required to stay at school during noon-hour, and, if necessary, to secure that, by close school at 3, or at 2 o'clock. By any, every, and all means, stop the unmanly, brutal bullying of the playground. There is no rural school in Ontario where a little child may go and escape being snuffed, spit upon, and mocked at.

The more inoffensive a child is, the more of this it must endure, while the sturdy, vigorous young scamp soon learns to pass abuse on to a weaker.

Every Township Council should appoint and pay some sensible, righteous man—accessible by daily mail—whose duty it should be to flog soundly any big boy or girl who will not behave at school, or on the road to and from it. Moral suasion of the immoral is casting pearls before swine, and the frail girl-teacher cannot adequately whip the hulking young tough of 14 or 15.

So far as country schools are concerned, one or two years might be taken off the High-school course for teachers, with, perhaps, a little added to the Normal training. Inspectors and Normal instructors should diligently weed out from the profession all the unfit. Common sense and justice are more needed than much book-learning.

Regular attendance is a fetish at whose shrine I worshipped many years, but I no longer believe in it, having demonstrated by experiment that the more irregularly a child attends the more it gains on its classmates.

Our counties might be divided into sections, say 6 miles by 3 miles, with three schools at intervals, and one teacher, who could take No. 1 on Monday and Thursday, No. 2 on Tuesday and Friday, and No. 3 on Wednesday and Saturday. So the teachers would obey the command, "Six days shalt thou labor," and any child will learn more in two days than in five.

"Home work" in small quantities might then be tolerated. At present, it is worse than wicked—it is stupid and stupefying.

In places thinly settled by poor or illiterate people, schools should be open all summer, as that is the only time little children can walk a long distance in comfort and safety.

Dear Dame, I have greatly exceeded my space, and you will wear your blue pencil to a stub cutting out "heresies," but if I coax a little relief for some poor over-driven little scholar, my evening is well spent.

"A WISE OLD CROW."

My blue pencil never once appeared. Wise Old Crow.

Re "Migratory Teachers," and Some Other Questions.

Ram it in, cram it in.
Children's heads are hollow;
Jam it in, slam it in.
Still there's more to follow.

More what? Education, or knowledge, or what? Education is one thing; knowledge is another. Education is driven in; knowledge is what we absorb, or take in. Some children are like some animals. "Good-doers"; others are like some of the poultry at Guelph, they would need a cramming machine, and then not be able to take in much. Then, there are different kinds of knowledge, and knowledge is power. But the question is, What do our schools need most to improve them? In the first place, we need more permanent and better teachers. Teachers who only use the public school as a stepping-stone to something higher, don't very often take much interest in it; at least, not as much as they ought to. A great many teachers, as soon as they are qualified, go to teach for a year or two, or till they get enough of the "needful" to

enable them to go on for another term, or to the Normal School. Such migratory teachers are, perhaps, just beginning to get to know the children, or the children are beginning to get used to their little ways, when they pick up and leave, and the whole thing has to be gone over again; whereas, with a permanent teacher, after, say, the first six months, the whole school would be able to go on and progress more rapidly. No doubt the Minister of Education and his staff are doing their best, but there are many mistakes made.

This summer, for instance, I knew of several schools where the trustees were notified to get a new teacher, because the one they had was teaching on a permit, or her certificate had run out. Some of them were nearly beaten to get what they wanted, and in some cases had to take a poorer teacher, or the old one back again. Now, I ask the question, is it fair to teachers or scholars, in cases like the following: In one instance, a man who had taught in the same school for six years, in another a middle-aged lady, who has had long years of experience in teaching (and both good teachers), are asked to retire, because they have only a permit, and young, raw recruits of eighteen (who have the necessary papers) are put in their places.

With which teacher, do you think, would the children come along best? With the old ones, of course, because they had the most experience, and the children had got used to their ways. In the Old Country, where I went to school, teachers were seldom changed, many of them keeping their positions for thirty or forty years. That was men, of course. The women teachers sometimes changed their occupation and name too. Over there, too, girls were taught sewing in the schools, which, I think, could be introduced with advantage here. Girls here are not taught to sew anywhere, as far as I know, unless it is at home (and very few there). Fine sewing is a lost art. Girls may learn dressmaking, and rattle up seams on the sewing machine, but when it comes to a bit by hand, or whipping seams, it is often done "not very neatly." Some may argue here that ready-made clothes can be bought so cheap that it does not pay to make them, but it does pay to know how to both make and alter them, and every girl who aspires to be a "homemaker," ought to be able to both sew and knit. In this, as in other things, knowledge is power.

The school I went to had three rooms. One for the head teacher, one for the assistant, and one for the lady teacher. The lady teacher had only the small scholars, up to the Second class. These she had full charge of through the day till three o'clock, when they were dismissed and sent home. Then all the girls in the higher classes marched into the lady teacher's room and received lessons in sewing and knitting and fancy-work till four o'clock. We had to take sewing or knitting or something useful first, and make whole garments by hand, and when we got proficient, we were allowed to do fancywork. On Saturdays, the teacher taught cookery and cleaning up the house. Why could it not be in our public-school curriculum here, that lady teachers should be qualified to teach such things? It would do the teachers good as well as the scholars.

I think that the hour that many teachers have on Friday afternoons is beneficial, when they have recitations and such. It helps the children in afterlife, especially the boys, when they may be called upon to preside at public meetings, or make a speech. Very few men among the farmers of the present day are able to do that same. And then the old-time spelling-bee was a good institution, but I do not like the phonic system of