

Notes and Comments.

ON Saturdays, since the first of May until a week or two ago, Mr. Dearness, J. P. S., East Middlesex, has been giving the teachers a course of lessons on botany—chiefly on the morphology and classification of plants. The ponds of Westminster and the broken and varied banks of the Thames make the neighbourhood of London an excellent botanizing ground. The class make good use of its opportunities, and during the season examined typical specimens of the greater number of the phanerogamous orders given in Spotton's text-book.

THE salaries of the teachers in Ireland, although falling considerably below the corresponding amounts in England and Scotland, can hardly be called bad, and they are evidently rising. The average for principal masters is about £80 a year for all classes (against £131 England and £155 Scotland), for principal mistresses under £67 (£79 England, £75 Scotland) assistant masters under £49 (£121 England, £135 Scotland), and assistant mistresses £39 (£74 England and £65 Scotland). But there is a regular pension fund in Ireland, with which the vast majority of the teachers are connected.

THE religious question in Ireland is met by the use of two kinds of schools—mixed (where there are Roman Catholics and Protestants together) and unmixed (where there are Roman Catholics alone or Protestants alone, as the case may be). There are 2,755 mixed schools (where Roman Catholics number 94 per cent. of all the scholars) taught exclusively by Roman Catholic teachers, 1,240 mixed schools (where Protestants number about 86 per cent. of all) taught only by Protestant teachers, and 75 schools (with about an equal proportion of both denominations) taught by Roman Catholics and Protestants conjointly. Besides these, there are 3,829 unmixed schools, 3,072 for Roman Catholics under Roman Catholic teachers and 757 for Protestants under Protestant teachers. The figures are taken from the recently published report of the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland.

THE Committee on Christian Education has reported to the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States, suggestions in the line of their functions. It declares that there is no system of education complete which ignores the sources of the Christian faith and the obligations of Christian morality. It was the Church's duty not to create education, but to Christianize it, not to lavish benevolences on institutions where its own principles were rejected. To lift up the Church institutions there must be endowments, outspoken interest, and, thirdly, a practical method of pro-

moting the cause might be the assembly of the heads of the Church schools and colleges into an association for mutual council on questions of instruction, discipline and worship, and so move towards the final erection of a great Church university worthy of the property and intelligence of the Church. And the committee accordingly recommended that the existing committee on Christian education in this house, with power to fill vacancies, be continued until the next session; to devise means to direct public attention to our schools and colleges, and to invite all educators in charge of schools to meet together at an assigned and practical place, to consult together for the furtherance of Christian education. The report was unanimously adopted.

PRESIDENT GILMAN, in a recent address, speaking of the influences of the University, said:—The history of European universities is yet to be written by one who has the requisite vision, and who can estimate with an accurate judgment the various forces by which they have been moulded, and the various services they have rendered to humanity. But there are many histories of famous foundations, many biographies of illustrious teachers, many surveys of literature, science, and education, many elaborate schemes of organization, and many proposals of reform. The mind of a master is indeed needed to co-ordinate what is thus recorded; to be the Interpreter of the House called Beautiful. But the American scholar need not wait for such a comprehensive work; the American philanthropist need not delay his beneficentions until more experience is secured. The centuries speak with many voices, but they are all harmonious. From the revival of letters until now, from the days of Gerson, the great Chancellor of the University of Paris, five hundred years ago, every advance in civilization has been dependent upon the influences which have proceeded from the seats of learning. Their light has illuminated the foremost nations of Christendom. In days to come, more than in days that are past, their power for good will be felt upon the interests of mankind. Let us hope and believe, let us labour and pray that the American universities when they are fully organized may be worthy allies of the strongest and best foundations—steady promoters of Knowledge, Virtue, and Faith.

THE following paragraph taken from the *Canadian Gazette* of the 14th inst., is worthy of reproduction in a prominent place:—The tests of Colonial woods made last week at the works of Messrs. A. Ransome & Co., Chelsea, certainly did much to bring the superior qualities of some of the timbers of Canada before the notice of those in England interested in their employment. Among the Canadian specimens submitted to this practical test were the Douglas fir and

swamp or black ash. Mr. Ransome, in announcing the conclusions at which the experiments had enabled him to arrive, pointed out the suitability of these two classes of Canadian woods, in that they were adaptable to building and joiners' work. The swamp ash was found to be particularly strong, sound, tough, and cheap. Professor Macoan, who subsequently spoke, pointed out that English merchants knew so few Canadian timbers simply on account of their natural indisposition to take a new departure from old habits. The Douglas fir of Canada was, he said, fully equal to the white pine now employed, and when the supplies of the latter were exhausted the former would of necessity take its place. The Douglas fir grew in vast quantities, attained a great height, and tapered very gradually. In their black ash, too, the Canadian possessed a species of timber which would some day be very widely employed, for it had all the qualities of the now favourite white ash, and its supply was unlimited. The Douglas fir could be supplanted in England at £5 a load, and the black ash at the same price as elm or white pine. Other Canadian varieties tested were bitternut, white fir, and iron-wood, all suitable for various forms of joiners' work.

THE following illustration of the necessity of vigilance in the school-room, sent to us by a teacher-in-training at a certain model school, is worthy of publication:—In a certain school-room were two classes—the one had problems in arithmetic, while the other was reading. The teacher noticed two boys in the arithmetic class were doing their work while all the others were talking and making a general noise. She told them that all but those two must stay in at recess. After she had gone on with the reading class, one of these two boys hit the little fellow in front of him, and said, "You've got to stay in." The boy turned partly round and said, "Well, I don't care." This the teacher saw, told the little boy to bring her ruler, and whipped him. The boy across the aisle, while rattling his lead pencil on the desk broke off the point—failing to get a knife from any of the other boys around, he asked the little fellow across the aisle for his; not having one he told the other boy so. The teacher saw him speak again, this time he got a similar punishment, but with one slap extra. The boys near were in great glee, and slyly taunted the little fellow, who was usually good, for getting whipped. The teacher looked round to see where the noise was; her eyes naturally falling on the one who had just been chastised, she saw him talking back to his accusers. Again he was called up and punished. The little fellow was quite overcome by all this, which had taken place within ten minutes. The mistaken teacher went on with the reading, while quietness reigned in the arithmetic class. This is a case in which the teacher failed in vigilance and comparative innocence had to suffer.