

that illegible handwriting is not a mark of genius, or even of superior intelligence. I know, on the other hand, that there are many men of genius who write and have written execrably. Sir John Bowring is one of these. It is said that Lord Palmerston once sent back an important despatch of Sir John's to China with a request that it might be copied in a readable handwriting; and Lord Cowley, our late Ambassador at the court of France, wrote so hastily and so illegibly that Lord Granville, I believe, once asked his lordship to keep the originals of his despatches for his own information, and send copies to the Foreign Office. "Lord Lytton, who moved a clause to the Reform Bill that nobody should have a vote who could not write a legible hand, writes so illegibly that the clerks at the table could not read the resolution which he handed in," and Christopher Kerrick adds, that "Tom Taylor writes as if he had wool at the head of his pen." And these men are the types, I fear, of a far larger class than the first set of politicians and authors whom I have enumerated.—*Gentleman's Magazine*.

III. Papers on Natural History.

1. FLOWERS AND SCHOOL-ROOM MUSEUM.

We chanced to see the other day a very charming little addendum to a country school-room, which is worthy of note. The room was new, the walls pleasantly toned, the low skirting wainscot of native woods, left of its natural colour and simply oiled; but, best of all, before both of the south windows which flanked position of the mistress were two wide trays, of rustic finish, in which were grouped a geranium or two, a few starting jonquils and hyacinths, a variety of wood-mosses and ivys which clambered up on either side the windows and skirted them with a fairy hanging of green.

Could a prettier lesson or worthier one—which should teach at once regard for any love of flowers—be taught by any pictures in the school botanics?

The furnace heat of the day left a gentle temperature for the night, and all that was needed to guard against frost was a screening bit of muslin upon a Saturday night, or a little replenishment of the furnace fires. Even this might be avoided by an adoption of the warden cases. So then, the thing is every way feasible. And what unction might not an adroit teacher give to the first lesson in botany, with scores of eyes beaming upon the little leaflets which turn so eagerly to the sunshine, or upon the bulb lifting its green spears day after day and unfolding, by degrees, some wonderful pile of blossoms?

What now if we were to add to this in country school-rooms, some assemblage under glazed cases, of all the insects which haunt the neighbourhood—the beetles, the butterflies, the moths—all in their different stage of transformation, and all these to contribute decorative features, familiarizing the little ones with their appearance?

Then the minerals of the neighbourhood might have other cases, and the teacher challenge the pupils to bring in new types of their own finding, with some little reward for the eager and quick-sighted ones who should furnish a positively new specimen.

Still another cabinet might have its array of native woods, distinguishable by form of twig, or colour of bark, or shape of leaves, all of which might then be taught by the best and surest kind of object-lessons.

Nor would this style of teaching and properly within doors; the yard might have its appointment of varied shrubberies, with every species should be named and billeted, so that a miniature arborum should grow up around the school-room, and become a source of healthy pride to both pupils and mistress.

Will some of those elderly gentlemen who believe only in the old measure of ugliness and the "Rule of Three," give us their objections to the palliatives of teaching we suggest?—*Hearth and Home*.

2. THE BIRDS OF CANADA.

Mr. J. J. G. Terrill, of the Deaf and Dumb Institution, has issued a chart of the various Canadian birds. It is exceedingly well got up, and is alike creditable to Mr. Terrill's industry and knowledge of this most interesting study. We cannot do better than quote a notice of this chart from the pen of Mr. Thos. McIlwraith, a gentleman who has given a great many years of careful study to this branch of Natural History, and is entitled, perhaps, more than any other man in Canada to speak authoritatively on this subject. He says:—"To all lovers of birds it is matter of regret that so little is being done in our various educational institutes to direct the attention of the rising generation to the study of that branch of Natural History embracing the various feathered tribes which people our western woods and fields. Were we to ask one of the advanced

scholars in any of our country schools to enumerate the different species of birds with which he is acquainted, we might expect to hear mention made of the 'chicken hawk,' which means any of the eight or ten different hawks which visit the poultry yard. The blackbird, a name applied to four different birds; the grey bird, which is represented by some seven or eight different individuals of the sparrow family. The blue jay, robin, blue bird, and some of the more observant might add the chickadee and the woodpecker, but in a good many instances the list would end here. It is not at all creditable to us, that in a country so rich in ornithological specimens, so little is generally known of the haunts, lives and habits of our birds; and we cannot too soon begin to interest our young people in that elevating and interesting study.

"Mr. Terrill, of the Deaf and Dumb Institute here, has taken a step in the right direction, in getting up a chart which shows at a glance the most recent system of classification of birds as adopted by the Smithsonian Institute, Washington, and now generally used by ornithologists. The chart, beside giving the orders, sub-orders, families, sub-families, &c., has a full list of all the birds which have been observed in western Canada, with both their technical and common names. It is designed chiefly for the use of schools, but will also be valuable to private individuals wishing to be better acquainted with our feathered friends. Let us hope that the chart may have a wide circulation, and be the means of creating among our young people a taste for the study of this most attractive of all the branches of Natural History."—*Hamilton Spectator*.

IV. Papers on Agriculture.

1. INSECTS INJURIOUS TO THE FARMER.

Every year is bringing out new facts and a greater acquaintance with the habits of insects than formerly. It is interesting to know that a large number of the students have entered upon this hitherto almost unknown study. In consequence of the almost universal ignorance of insects, the farmer and gardener have hitherto been liable to great injury to their crops from their depredations. Even the enemies of insects and the friend of the farmer were indiscriminately persecuted and destroyed. Nobody knew the curculio a few years since, while thousands who had orchards bored to death by the borer did not know the cause of the mischief. The lady-bug on the turnip plants was supposed to be eating up the leaves of the plant, when it was busy eating up the insects that ate the leaves. Even now a wasp's nest, which is entirely out of the way of harm, is persecuted as a most undesirable companion of man, while the whole family may be busy in killing the insects that eat up his crops. It is said that some species of wasps will attack the gad fly, the sheep bot, or the flesh fly so injurious to cattle. It is true, it is not pleasant mowing into a big hornet's nest and getting the worst of it, but when they seek a home under the eaves of your dwellings they are generally harmless; and some species, at least, will do much to relieve the house and garden of various injurious insects.

Probably every insect in the world has some enemy, and it may often be of service to know this fact, in order that we may protect the one and destroy the other. It was but a few weeks since we met a man who owned a large orchard, and yet never saw an apple borer. Such ignorance in an orchardist where this insect abounds, is unpardonable at the present day.

The lepidopterous insects are among the most destructive orders. They are the larva, or caterpillar of the beautiful butterflies, or moths so abundant everywhere. What is a most beautiful object is the enemy of man in the shape of a caterpillar which eats the leaves of plants, and then hatches out as a butterfly, which will soon lay a great number of eggs to be hatched out into these same disgusting caterpillars. Thus we would let a butterfly go as harmless, but which in reality is the repository of a large number of destructive agents in the shape of worms and caterpillars which we would hasten to crush beneath our feet.

It is a noticeable and encouraging fact, that greater attention is given every year to the habits of insects by intelligent farmers themselves. This habit of inquiry and investigation should be encouraged. There is scarcely anything too trivial to go unnoticed in the animal kingdom. A single fact may serve to unfold a great principle. It is true that there may sometimes be found immense swarms of insects at certain seasons of the year, which the hand of man cannot destroy, but he may even in such cases evade the depredations, if he but study their habits. Early sowing of wheat has saved us in great measure from the ravages of the wheat-midge. We know better now than to soak onion seed with the hope of destroying the onion fly; and so just as far as we become acquainted with their habits shall we be able to withstand their ravages.—*Maine Farmer*.