

and the kinds of movements of the clouds—these and many other daily phenomena are of such a nature as to attract and interest the attention of children, whether they reside in city or country. In addition to the small thermometers now supplied in each schoolroom, there should be a barometer at each building, and the pupils should be taught how to read it and to make records of the weather daily. There is no reason why the children should not become entirely familiar with these common objects of nature, and learn how to interpret them as they do other daily phenomena. It would furnish a basis for more extended observations, and would be carried forward as a means of establishing a rational and systematic method of arranging and classifying many of the leading facts concerning the atmosphere, the weather, its changes, and some of the laws underlying the subject of meteorology and its influence on men and crops generally.

This knowledge may furnish the explanation of what is known as "noisy and restless days in school."

Some things are accomplished by accident, but the habit of easy, rapid and accurate writing or speaking the English language is not one of them. It is a self-evident fact that wide differences exist among individuals as to the natural ability to acquire and to use the art of written or vocal expression, just as there are variations in the power to acquire other kinds of knowledge.

So far as instruction in this department of education is concerned, perhaps the unsatisfactory results may be ascribed, in a large measure, to the indefinite aims that the majority of teachers have in mind, or rather not in mind, in conducting pupils forward in this line of work. The usual method of procedure has been that of absorption or contamination by words and

sentences. That is to say, certain authors are read, analyzed, and reduced to the saturation point, so that unconsciously the learner is filled with their effluvia, and he lives and breathes a literary atmosphere till it literally fills his word, sentence, and paragraph-brain-cells, and all that he has to do when he needs to use this pent-up energy is to turn the composition tap, and let it flow out through cold ink on white paper, or to toss it out into the air to vibrate as a shiver around the world. Close reflection will convince anyone that this theory of making a style is largely imitative, and the effort of a writer trained under such a system of tuition will be put forth to counterfeit his style so as to avoid detection. I would not be understood as condemning the advantages that come to one from studying the classic authors of ancient and modern times, or of preferring some authors to others, because such studies are invaluable as revealing the structure and logical development of the human mind when working under the highest degree of intellectual inspiration; but what I do contend for is that the imitative standard is not the highest, nor, indeed, is it the best, for the learner. The style of each one is his own, and it should be as far removed from the imitative one as possible, and the sooner this fact is recognized and acted upon the better will teaching in English become.

A second element of weakness, as I conceive it to be, is in the vagueness of the objects aimed at. If I can succeed in making my meaning clear on this point, one great step will have been taken.

First, there are certain mechanical conditions that have to be complied with, such as the ability to write a clear, legible hand; to know how to spell correctly all the words used; to use capital letters properly, and to punctuate correctly, and to know when a sentence ends, and where a para-