

THE SUMMER HOLIDAYS.

A correspondent informs us that the County Council of Grey recently sent a communication to the County Council of Peel asking the latter to unite with them in memorializing the Education Department in favor of shortening the summer holidays in the Public Schools to three weeks. We do not know whether the Peel fathers acceded to the request; but it is to be hoped that neither they nor those of any other county, save Grey, would sanction such a retrograde movement. We have no idea that the Education Department would, under any circumstances, think for a moment of making such a change. To do so would be to fly in the face of the most enlightened educational opinion, and to array the intelligence of the Province against it.

The whole tendency of modern opinion is in the direction of curtailing, rather than extending, the length of school days and terms. The old idea that the progress of a pupil can be measured by the number of hours per day, or of days per year, he is at his books, is exploded. With the child, as with the adult, one hour of vigorous work, when the mind is fresh and active, is worth two or three after it has become jaded and its power of close attention relaxed. The brain even when matured by age and discipline, finds five or six hours per day as much as can ordinarily be spent with profit in close study of any kind, and even then frequent and prolonged holidays are in most cases found indispensable to continued health and vigor.

In the case of the average child of school age the six or eight weeks of vacation, in the heat of summer, are a necessity and a blessing. To take them away, or cut them short, would be both folly and cruelty. The whole nature of the child, physical and mental, cries out for out-door life and liberty for a few weeks in the year. By all means let the precious boon be granted. To condemn him to close confinement for five or six hours a day during all the long bright summer, with but three weeks intermission, would be enough to cast a shadow over his youth and make him a mope and a dullard for life. Every teacher, and parent too, must know how tired of school work and routine the ordinary boy or girl becomes as the summer draws on. After six weeks of change and recreation they come back like new beings. The present arrangement is the smallest concession that should be made to the demand of nature.

There is another party to the arrangement, whose case, too, demands some consideration. Can it be that the Grey Councillors belong to a class which we had hoped was well-nigh extinct, those who grudge the teacher his intervals of rest and relaxation. We speak from experience when we say that the vacations constitute one of the chief of the conditions which make the toil of the teacher endurable. Take away the summer holidays and there would be found very few who could endure the mental and nervous strain for any length of time. There is a wear and tear of human vitality in the school-room which the ordinary laborer, and the man of business, whose lives, however toilsome, are full of variety and free from the constant pressure of anxiety and responsibility, can form no ade-

quate conception. The rest in prospect sweetens the hourly toil, and nerves for each day's strain. And the rest enjoyed brings back the teacher full of a fresh life and cheerful vigor which tell most favorably upon the work of the school room.

From every point of view the six weeks' vacation is quite short enough. It is in the interest of pupil, of teacher, of all concerned. Parents be wise, and frown down every proposal to rob your children and their teachers of their long summer holiday.

The SCHOOL JOURNAL aims to have something useful to every teacher. Its motto is: Be practical. Be practical. Be practical.

Special.

HIGH SCHOOL LITERATURE.

By J. E. WETHERELL, M.A.

EIGHTH PAPER

"FRANCE: AN ODE."

(Introductory.)

1. "France is a misnomer." Why?
2. Why was the ode first styled "The Recantation"?
3. Give the ode a suitable title.
4. Show from internal evidence that the date of publication, 1798, given in several editions, is wrong by a year.
5. "The prelude is magnificent in music, and in sentiment and emotion far above any other of his poems, nor are the last notes inadequate to this majestic overture." Quote the last notes and the majestic overture.
6. "Coleridge is in this ode—not the most prominent personage merely—but the sole." How does the intrusion of the poet's personality affect (1) our interest in the poem, (2) our estimate of its merit as a work of art?
7. "The ode revolves upon itself and is circular." Explain the statement.
8. Show that the versification of this ode is not as elaborate as that of "The Ode to the Departing Year." What is the only deviation from perfect parity of structure in the respective stanzas? Does mere poetic overflow account for this deviation?

I.

1. In stanza V. the poet says:—
"Yes, while I stood and gazed, my temples bare,
And shot my being thro' earth, sea and air,
O Liberty! my spirit felt thee there."
In stanza I is nature seized at a particular period? (Compare "night-birds singing" with "rising sun.")
2. Has the use of different tenses in lines 1 and 16 any special signification? ("Ye Clouds! that float and pause": "Ye Clouds that soared.")
3. "No mortal may control." Does "may" indicate permission or power?
4. "Yield homage only to eternal laws." Show that this line embodies the essence of true liberty.
5. "A man beloved of God." Show that the "man beloved of God" (The Hermit) in *The Ancient Mariner* is just such a keen observer of nature as is here described.
6. "Inspired beyond the guess of folly
By each rude shape and wild unconquerable sound."