

Hamilton is rapidly becoming a city of the very first importance. A bright and mighty future is before her. In commercial enterprise, and in public spirit, she is already second to no city in Canada. Her system of public instruction is yet in its infancy, and to this Board is assigned the momentous duty of establishing it in such a manner that it will become the pride and glory of her citizens. It is even now, under the careful supervision of your Board, gradually developing itself into a healthy maturity. We may gaze upon the rose bud when the heating sun pours its rays upon it, and the dews and gentle rains water it, but the closest watching eye cannot discern its imperceptible expansions; and yet, beneath these genial influences, it soon blossoms into the full blown rose. Thus too, of our school system, while it is difficult for us, now, to realize the blessings it is intended to confer, they will be fully appreciated by our children and children's children. May its foundation be based upon principles of the most profound wisdom, and may the members of this Board be rewarded for their anxious efforts, by seeing Hamilton, at no distant day, rivaling even Boston itself, in the efficiency and perfection of her common schools.

### THE STUDY OF BOTANY.

Since the Schools of our State, as well as those of all adjoining States, with their thousands of scholars and teachers will soon again be engaged in the pleasing study of Botany, I have thought it incumbent on me to make a few suggestions through the medium of the *Journal* in relation to the best modes of study and instruction in this department of science.

In this Institution (Ohio Female College) we commence the study of Botany in the month of February, in time to acquire a good knowledge of its scientific terms and principles before the full opening of the spring. In the more Northern States, however, March is sufficiently early. But the study of botany in the abstract is liable to become dull, and in the absence of living illustrations, the teacher will find it necessary to enliven his recitations by black-board drawings, dried specimens, cuttings of wood, &c.

But no artificial preparations will satisfy the learner in science. As indications of Spring multiply, he goes forth into the fields and forests to watch and welcome the first open blossom of the season. This, with us about Cincinnati, is the well known "Pepper and Salt," (*Erigenia bulbosa*, Nutt.) The first discovery of this little Spring-born plant is a triumph, and the delight which our young botanists express on that occasion is altogether extravagant, and quite surprising to the uninitiated.

The appearance of the first flower of Spring, then, brings us our first relief from the dry abstractions of science, and affords us our first exercise in botanical analysis. When assembled again in the classroom, each pupil bearing a specimen of the plant in hand, the teacher directs them all to examine attentively the several parts of it, and to ascertain the nature of the root, stem, leaves, and other appendages, until they are able to describe with promptness, in appropriate terms, when called. A few interrogatories will show whether these things have been correctly learned. Then, in succession, they each resolve the several steps in the analysis. This process if conducted without error, leads promptly to the Natural Order of the plant under examination. The same process with the "Conspectus of the Genera" under that Order, conducts to the *genus* of our plant.

In order to confirm the results of the analysis, we recommend to the student the careful comparison of his specimen with the characters given at the head of the Natural Order, before proceeding to the analysis of the genera; and the same comparison with the generic characters before the study of the species.

This method of analysis conducted according to specific rules, and leading to a speedy and accurate result, affords an exciting rational amusement, as well as an invigorating intellectual exercise; and may often be exchanged in the class-room for the ordinary recitations, with much advantage to the learners. For, in tracing this little plant (*Erigenia*) to its proper place in the Natural System, we do effectually learn its every important character, and put to the test nearly all the science we have previously acquired. Thus the student learns to recognize at once and forever, the *tuberosus* root, the hollow stem, sheathing petioles, the umbel, involucre, &c. of the *UMBELIFERAE*. So with regard to any other plant.

In the use of our analytical tables, the student will soon learn the necessity of keeping the *right track*. A single erroneous decision turns him aside from the true course, and all his subsequent search for the place and name of his plant, until that error be retrieved, will prove in vain. And yet, it must be confessed, that very few botanists are able in all cases to avoid these errors in analysis, so numerous are the disguises which plants may naturally or accidentally wear. To fortify

the learner as far as possible against these errors, I had designed to point out the sources, and to refer briefly to those plants in our Flora most liable to be thus misunderstood in their character.—*Ohio Journal of Education*.

### INCENTIVES TO EVENING STUDY.

Perhaps I should say at the outset, that different scholars require unlike treatment; and different teachers adopt various methods of dealing with the same pupil: this is owing to a dissimilarity in age and disposition, as regards both teacher and scholar. All will agree, however, unlike as may be their means, that their object is the same, the greatest good to the greatest number of those under their jurisdiction. Now, in order that they may progress rapidly in their studies, it is necessary that all things of a vain and trivial nature be prevented from pre-occupying and monopolizing their attention. I need not again urge that evening is the time when this mental dissipation most naturally occurs; but I will proceed to say that—

First of all, every scholar, young or old, should have the advantages of evening study clearly and impressively explained to him: this alone will induce all well disposed and ambitious pupils to assent to any reasonable requisition by the teacher, in this respect; so that only the rebellious and slothful will need special rules for their government; and then of course, the seditious must be subdued, while the powers of the indolent need not be energized. The desideratum here, as in all other cases in school, is that the general sentiment be favorable to the plan proposed by the instructor: unless he can render his system popular with those for whose benefit it is to be applied, he had better discontinue it at once. Every successful teacher is necessarily sufficiently acquainted with human nature generally, and the dispositions of his scholars in particular, to foreknow what will meet the approval of the greater number of those whom he instructs.

Again: though the teacher may make such rules as he pleases, provided they are not unreasonable, for the government of his pupils in school, he can not compel them to study evenings, unless he secures the consent and co-operation of their parents or guardians. I am aware that there are teachers who think a large share of determination and menacing will enable them to govern their scholars out of school; but it seems to me that such a course is unnecessary, and hence unwarrantable. At all events, such teachers generally fail to obtain the good will and confidence of their pupils, without which I look upon the vocation as excessively unpleasant and wearisome.

As to those scholars who can study in the evenings, if they choose but whose parents will not enforce the practice, I adopt the following method:—At the beginning of the term, I announce that every pupil will be expected to study at least one hour each evening; and that unless he do, or bring an excuse from home, I shall mark him low in *diligence*. At the close of each day, I take the time each studied the evening before, which record I preserve carefully, and at the end of the term, read the total amount of study by each scholar, with other items that I note down concerning every pupil under my charge; such an attention during the time of recitation, neatness and order, general conduct and his credit in each study. Of course, before such an announcement, I explain fully as I can, the benefits arising to scholars from their studying in the evenings.

The result of all this is, that out of a school of sixty pupils, I have not half a dozen that disobey the requirement. Several of those under my care study from three to five hours every evening, and one or two study as much out of school as during school hours, and thus actually, get the benefit of two terms' schooling every term. In the place of the hooting and yelling that once made "night hideous," proceeding from my pupils, any one passing through our streets is not disturbed by such rowdiness; and should he call at the residence of their parents, he will find them book and slate in hand, quietly surrounding the study-table, and there laboring to master the lessons given them during the day.—*Ohio Journal of Education*.

D. A. PEASE.

### SYSTEM AND ORDER.

The life of Noah Webster, the author of the best dictionary of the English language, affords a striking illustration of the value of system. When a young man he conceived the idea of producing a new dictionary of the English language. Having determined to make this the great work of his life, he set about preparing himself for it, by an extensive course of study. Year after year he labored on in patient obscurity, exploring the fields of literature and science, and gathering and arranging the materials for his great work. Every thing he read, or studied, or accomplished, had a bearing on the great object of his life; and this was the grand secret of his success.

"Method," says his biographer, "was the presiding principle of his life."

The love of order and system often manifests itself at an early age, and is a praiseworthy and enviable habit even at that period of life. The boy who studies and works by method will accomplish much