

TALKS WITH TEACHERS.

Most teachers aspire to a city school, and look upon such a position as the acme of perfection in as far as teaching goes. A situation in a graded school certainly has many advantages, among which may be mentioned — greater chances for self-improvement, more social advantages, better living and less hardship in reaching school, less meddling interference and gossip on the part of parents and sometimes trustees, and shorter hours.

These advantages are undeniable, but "all is not gold that glitters." To begin with the teacher in the country is a much more important personage than in the city. The dwellers in cities are less social to strangers than those in country districts, and unless a teacher has friends in the city she is likely to lead a lonely life for some time. Though the hours are shorter in the city, the work is harder, the pupils are more difficult to manage, and more is expected of the city teachers. You strive with pupils for a year only to fit them for some one else, and they pass from your hands. You will miss the fresh air of the country, and the kindly greeting of all you meet.

It is the practice in some city buildings where there is a reserve teacher stationed, but no class-room, to send her into some of the more overcrowded rooms to assist the teacher. In my opinion, such a course does more harm than good. The work of both teachers is repressed for fear of interference, or confusion takes place in consequence of such. The reserve teachers would be far more profitably employed in observing the work in the different rooms than in attempting to assist where there is no separate class-room.

A case, somewhat similar to the following, came to my notice a few days ago: A teacher, anticipating a notice of dismissal from the trustees, sent them his resignation instead. On the last day of the term, he withdrew his resignation, but if the trustees received the withdrawal at all on that day, it was too late for them to call a meeting to notify the teacher. Can the teacher legally hold on? I think not. If he could, it would render abortive the clause in the agreement regarding notice. A notice once given, cannot be withdrawn by either party, except by the consent of the other party, and even then it is doubtful, if a new agreement would not be necessary.

Can two trustees legally notify a teacher without consulting the third? The third trustee must be consulted and given the chance to refuse if nothing else. If two trustees could transact the business, a third would not be necessary. At the same time it would hardly be advisable for any teacher to take advantage of this and hold on in a district where the majority of the board is against her. There are many ways in which her position could, and no doubt would, be rendered unpleasant.

For the REVIEW.]

Natural History in the Common Schools.

It will be necessary to procure one or more small spirit lamps, a dozen or more test tubes, and a pint of alcohol. Spirit lamps can be bought at twenty-five cents each. It would be well to have one for each desk, which would involve an outlay of about fifteen cents per pupil for lamp and alcohol. If so many lamps cannot be afforded, one or two pupils should heat the minerals and show the results to the others. Do not buy test tubes in nests, as the larger tubes are not suitable. Get small ones, not more than five inches long, with corks to fit tightly when half in. Test tubes cost not more than fifty cents per dozen. Also get a few cents worth of litmus paper, and, if the paper cannot be conveniently procured, a little litmus powder, to color white paper when needed. Prices are given here, partly that teachers may see that the outlay need only be small, and partly that they may be able to protect themselves from dealers, who would charge exorbitant prices. The writer will always be glad to select and purchase the required apparatus for teachers who may desire him to do so.

Before this course of lessons begins the teacher should make up his mind not to tell his pupils anything which they can find out with reasonable effort. He is not to communicate knowledge to them, but simply to direct them in acquiring it for themselves. Nor is he to spend all his time in directing them. Let them grope their way as far as possible. When they get off the track they may need a little guidance in getting on again.

Nor should the teacher often hinder them to communicate facts that they *cannot* discover themselves at the time. It will generally be better to leave such knowledge to the future. An interesting fact may be given occasionally, when it would be likely to stimulate enquiry.

But the teacher will find it easier, perhaps, to restrain his own *telling* propensities than those of his pupils. The lesson must be conducted in such a way that the quicker pupils will not tell the slower ones, before the latter have had time to reach the result sought. Lessons are often so managed that none but the brighter pupils do any original work. They deprive their duller or slower class-mates of all the *pleasure* and all the profit to be gained by discovering things for themselves. The result is that the majority of the class not only display but little interest in their work, but gain very little in the power of independent thinking. Their time is practically wasted, or worse than wasted.