

NOTES FROM A TEACHER'S JOURNAL.

BY WILL WRIT.

I.

Sept'r. 22.

The matter of ventilating schools is one in which more stupidity is shown than there is any excuse for. Nothing could be simpler, at least in country schools. Let the teacher observe the direction of the wind, and close the windows on the windward side, and open those on the opposite side a little from the top. This will secure a constant change of air, and at the same time prevent draughts. It has been truly said that though foul air may poison, yet a blast of cold air may slay like a sword. It is true, these directions are only applicable where there are windows on two opposite sides; but in most country schools this is the case.

There are days in spring and autumn, when, as it is said, "it is too cold to have the doors and windows open, and too warm to have fire." This is simply a contradiction of terms, for when it is too cold to have the house open, it is cold enough for fire. It is true the room may be kept comfortable without, so far as temperature is concerned; but the children breathe foul air, and are restless and troublesome; and the teacher breathes foul air and is cross and irritable. Fire is sometimes necessary for ventilation simply. The teacher who is indifferent to the proper ventilation of his school-room, ought to be indicted for manslaughter. If no arrangements are made for ventilation, make them himself, or keep at his employers till they do. "Where there's a will there's a way."

II.

September 23.

The longer I teach, the more I am convinced that a great part of the time is wasted, ay, worse than wasted in our public

schools. Children are sent too young, are sent too continually, and are kept there too many hours. Consequently, school life becomes an old story, and they go to school as a mere matter of course, and without that real live interest which is essential to any valuable progress. George Macdonald has said that knowledge imparted is utterly useless without there having existed a previous desire therefor. To see how true that is, we have only to note the large numbers of youths and maidens who have gone to school unnumbered days and weeks, who have been the recipients of torrents of knowledge, which has acted upon their minds something like water upon a duck's back, and who have now as much (?) real education as if they had never gone a day.

September 27.

Children are not taught to think at home, as much as they should be. Most parents reason in this wise: "We pay our teacher to educate our children, so why should we trouble ourselves to do his work?" And they are right and wrong both. They are right in thinking that it is not fair for the teacher to inspire the children to turn the evening family circle into a school-room. I have no sympathy with those teachers who would have the lessons all prepared at home. To me it is a sad sight to see a fine boy or girl of ten, go trudging home with an armful of books that would better become a University student. It smacks of martyrdom.

But they are wrong as to what teaching really is. If they would cultivate the child's observation by calling his attention to the wonderful processes of Nature, that are daily going on around him; if they would gratify his natural thirst for knowledge by answering his childish enquiries,