

among children, who, notwithstanding the somewhat unthinking animadversions of their critics, are really never happier than when they are engaged with some congenial task. Nor in any sense is the true teacher a grumbler, however often of necessity the phrase *thou shalt not* is in his mouth. There can be no doubt that one of the first of the teacher's functions is to make the school a pleasant place, wherein his plans for the improvement of his pupils are ever being set afloat amid an environment of good-will and benevolence. And, though our schools have by this time fairly started upon another year's work, yet we venture to utter a word of congratulation to the teachers on their return from their holidays, even if it be not the first word of encouragement they have received during the first month of the school year. The teacher who does not think of his work during the holidays is as much of an exception as the child who hates work; and to those who have been investigating school methods during the midsummer recess we would send a special congratulation. This method of imparting instruction or that method is not necessarily the only method. Indeed, the best method—judged, as a method ought to be, by results—is the teacher's own method. As we have said before, the experimenting teacher is the successful teacher, and it is from the freshness of his personal influence that school progress is to be seen at its best. It is said that Pestalozzi's experience in his later days was a striking example of the evil tendencies of a stereotyped method. As Dr. Fitch says, while illustrating the Latin aphorism *Corruptio optimi pessima est*;—"It is very touching to read M. Michel Bréal's account of a visit to the school-reformer at the end of his career. He describes the old man, pointing with his finger to the blackboard, to his diagrams and to the names of the qualities of the objects, while the children repeated mechanically his favorite watchwords, which they had learned by heart. Those words had once been full of meaning. But they had ceased to represent real intellectual activity on the children's part or on his. They had become dead formulas, though he knew it not. And so it will ever be, with you and with me, if we lose the habit of looking at all our methods with fresh eyes, of revising them continually and impregnating them anew with life." Returning from their holidays, with the freshness upon them that comes to the mind from the recreation of the body, we venture to associate these words of one of our most prominent educationists with our own congratulations at this season. The old field of labor has become in great measure a new field of operation. The re-organization of the classes has brought