

effectually because its operation is indiscreet and unsuspected. We refer to a home-bred influence that springs up by the fire side and around the table. It drops from the parent's lips on the heart of his child, to be carried into the gatherings of children in the neighborhood, and thence, with accumulated power into the school, there to injure if not to frustrate, the best endeavors of otherwise competent and useful teachers. It takes the place of a salutary influence that might easily be exerted by the judicious and decided coöperation of parents while their children are under the domestic roof. The indulgence of parental fondness humors the waywardness of the child, lends a willing and partial ear to his unfounded complaint against the teacher, entertains unjust suspicions of the latter's intellectual attainments, and discretion in government. Instead of placing the full weight of parental authority in the hands of the teacher, it takes away from those hands much of the authority which the deliberate and settled wisdom of the State has placed in them. We therefore respectfully, but with an earnest voice, call upon parents, by their tender and sacred regard to the best interests of their children, and by their enlightened respect to the general good, to refrain carefully from weakening the government and diminishing the usefulness of the teacher by hasty or ill-founded distrust of his competency or faithfulness, and to consider that, in the regulations of his school, and in his judgment of the character and conduct, the merit or demerit, of the scholar while under his eye, he has advantages for discernment which can be possessed by no one else; and to bear in mind that, as a general fact, the teacher feels his responsibility more deeply and constantly than others feel it for him, and that his reputation and disposition stimulate him to put forth his best exertions for the useful advancement of the school. Let them not forget that, while the children are in school, parental authority is passed away into other hands, and that neither the parent nor the scholar should entertain the thought that any remnant of domestic power may infringe on the supremacy of the teacher, whilst standing where the public will has placed him.—*Massachusetts Teacher.*

#### WINTER SCHOOLS.

The winter school! What stirring memories hang around this phrase! What visions of fun or fame does it not arouse in the minds of youth. The winter is the time for the revival of learning. The old school-house, which has through the long hot days of summer shrunk quietly aside under the shadow of the trees, or veiled its face in the way-side dust seems to grow larger and looms up with a sort of conscious dignity as the cold weather approaches. The big boys and girls are coming to school. The harvesting and husking are over, the labors of the farm and dairy are finished, and the older sons and daughters who have rendered good service at home, are about to turn their attention from the cultivation of the soil to the pursuit of science. The old school-room whose summer siesta has scarcely been disturbed by the patter of little feet and the piping voice of the wee ones, now proudly echoes the sturdy tread of stalwart youth, and the merry laugh of blushing maidens, who have gathered their books in hand, to grapple again with the knotty sums of the arithmetic and the puzzles of the parsing lessons.

What a time there has been about engaging a "master?" How the tide of talk has sent its eddying whirls to the very circumference of the "section" and agitated the minds of old and young as one candidate after another has been proposed for the truly important post of teacher of the winter school. Finally it has been settled; the progressive party and the young people have triumphed, and the teacher, just from the normal school, has been hired. Some old men shake their heads and talk doubtfully of new notions and high wages, but the older class of scholars express their joy that, at length they are to have a skilful and accomplished teacher, and all discontent soon disappears in their enthusiastic discussions of their purposes and plans for a hitherto unheard of diligence and success in study. The dust is brushed from the old books and the pages are carefully scanned for some familiar mark or passage which may indicate the last step of the last winter's progress. New studies to be taken up are discussed, and old ones are proposed for review, till, finally the whole question is deferred for the "master's" advice.

At length the day and the master arrive; the scholars assemble, the preliminaries are settled and the winter school is begun. The temporary feeling of strangeness and distrust between the "master" and his scholars speedily gives way to a sentiment of mutual interest and regard, and they bend themselves steadily down to their respective tasks as teacher and taught.

Ah! how busy and blessed a scene is that winter school! What a band of earnest thinkers is there, groping amidst the elements, or wrestling manfully with the higher problems of scientific truth! How the conflict of mind goes on as the spellers take their places, or the parsers bend over the contorted phraseology of Milton or Pollock or Pope, or as the young algebraists chalk their equations upon the black board. The intellectual strength and skill acquired here will by and by grapple, with a triumphant might and success, with the great prac-

tical problems of individual and social life. Amidst these scenes of mental excitement characters are rapidly receiving, as on melted metal, the stamp which they will soon exhibit as current coin in the wide world's marts.

Well may that winter school form as it does the staple topic for at least one half the talk of the whole section; well may the doings of the "master" and the pupils be made the subjects of constant discussion. Alas that those doings should be debated in passion and prejudice by those who have never entered the school-room door. How happy if every parent would visit in person that busy room. Let them come and mingle with their children in their school; let them sit down by the side of their sons and daughters on the hard benches, and watch with friendly interest the processes by which the noble boy and graceful girl are conquering their way to intelligence and power.

And why should not parents visit the school? There is no spot within the boundaries of the section so full of interest and instruction as that school-room. A half day spent in the school is better and pleasanter every way than an evening at some scientific lecture. In the well conducted classes one may hear unending courses of popular lectures. Once made it fashionable and no place of resort will be found to possess so many attractions as a good school. And how largely would the general intelligence and cultivation of any community be increased should the adult portion of that community adopt the plan of spending their leisure hours in the school room. If the minds of children increase in knowledge under the instruction of the competent teacher, how much more the minds of men who could comprehend the practical value and bearing of every truth, and bring to the illustration of every principle the light of an active experience!

Nor need there be any great fear that the lessons would be too simple. But few memories are so tenacious as not to need frequent reviews even, and a review of the lessons of childhood would often reveal to the man important truths which the inexperience or inattention of childhood had failed to perceive.

And how honorable and potential is the position of the master of the winter school! Throughout the section he is the observed of all observers. Wherever he walks the streets, from many a half-curtained window or door ajar, anxious eyes study his walk and dress. His words are caught and carried till their echo has been heard by every fireside, and they have formed the topic of talk for old and young. If a man of intelligence, cultivation and benevolence, how much may he contribute to even the present happiness of the section; how much of a generous and cheerful intellectuality may he breathe into the circles of its social life. And in the school-room how splendid the responsibilities of that winter school; how glorious and blessed the fruits. How may he infuse into the minds of those large boys and girls, just ready to start forth on the path of independent life, the vigour and energy of his cultured intellect, and animate them with his own loftier purposes or more generous ambitions. Teacher at once and companion, to the authority of the master he may add the persuasive influence of the friend, and there amongst the scenes of that winter school, in the familiar chat of the recess hour and in the familiar companionship of the fireside, where he goes as the honored and welcome guest, whatever of purity or true nobleness there may lie buried within him will get itself reproduced in their minds and manners. Amidst their mingled hopes and anxieties for the future, now drawing so near, when they must leave school and home for an independent place in the wide, working world, with what interest and confidence do they turn to the teacher to tell him the plans they have formed or to ask his advice concerning the course they are to pursue.

How that winter school sends out its lights far along the roadways of life, and how long will its memories linger through those coming years, carrying forward its own joyousness, even to the sear leaf age, like spring flowers which, in some favoured spot, linger on even till the snows of winter come again.—*Michigan Journal of Education.*

#### FAMILY CONVERSATION.

Very much depends on the conversation of those with whom we habitually mingle. How many great men have received their first impetus on the road to fame from the elevating influence of the conversation of some gifted friend! How many individuals, occupying distinguished public positions, owe half their distinction to the fact of their being permitted to absorb and elaborate afterward, in their own fashion, the sentiments and ideas that circulate from mouth to mouth around them!

Reading and conversation should go hand in hand, the former lending to the latter piquancy and weight, the latter giving to the former the power of stamping itself indelibly on the mind. Plato knew this; and in the quiet groves of Academe gave the immortal example of the worth of well-directed conversation. The man who reads a book and does not speak of it is like the squirrel who busies himself during the autumn in collecting treasures of beech-nuts and acorns, and buries them carefully in the earth as a store against the hunger of winter, but, having a bad memory, forgets where to seek for them