

What the Summer School of Science Means to Me.

While listening to the lecture of Dr. Marshall Perrin on "The Modern Child," one peculiarity of his address took and held my attention throughout,—the necessity of presenting to the children continually, in himself, a noble and vigorous ideal. Only in this way could he truly hold and form them to his will. To gain this end, Dr. Perrin said, the teacher should neglect no means that would add to his own physical, mental and spiritual strength.

The Summer School of Science is, I think, a most valuable means to this end of which Dr. Perrin spoke, and one of which the teachers of the Maritime Provinces might easily avail themselves. In the first place, the mere physical value of a change of scene and thought is not to be despised; and physical and mental vigour would seem to go hand in hand. We all know the restless minds—and bodies—of the children of today, the nervous strain of the school room. We feel that we are following a true instinct when we seek relief from old grooves of anxious thought, something that will raise us out of ourselves to a higher plane from which we can see our own little affairs in a truer perspective. Then we can take courage for renewed and patient effort, and say, as Burns said once of his own difficulties:

"I've a hert aboon them a."

But this more optimistic view might not be permanent, were our minds not filled, to the exclusion of all cares, with new thoughts and ideas and ideals for the coming year. We are a school, composed, we think, some of the most vigorous teachers of the Maritime Provinces. Our instructors are men well qualified for the positions they hold—college-bred men, who have made their mark in the great schools of Canada and the United States, and whose teaching is worth listening to, and whose methods one would do well to note. Is it a wonder then, that, in this daily interchange of ideas, we feel the atmosphere of a wider culture and thought, the influence of strong and varied personalities; and that we discover in ourselves and others unguessed powers and possibilities.

The character of our instruction would seem to be two-fold; partly that which we can apply directly to use in our schools, partly that which widens our own knowledge of the subject studied and gives us

the newest ideas and discoveries in the scientific world.

I can speak with conviction of some of the newer, better ways of instructing, which I have learned while I have been attending the sessions of the Summer School. I have applied the method for memorizing Chaucer, used in our literature class, to teaching Grade V the few Shakespearian sonnets and other choice bits of poetry given in their reader, and found it to work admirably and give much pleasure to the pupils. Last spring, I tried, with my two classes, some of the experiments relating to the germination of a seed, which had been performed in the botany class at Liverpool and, I think, both the children and myself learned a good deal. I know that I can teach botany much better now than I could before. Perspective drawing, I have found, is particularly hard for most children to understand. My intention is, as soon as school begins again, to use some of the new methods which I have learned for teaching this subject; for they seemed to me most excellent. These are only a few of the many helps which I have received for the teaching of my Grades V and VI. I can think of many, many more, which I might use with profit, were I to teach high school work again.

But, after all, the greatest value of the Summer School of Science seem to be, not so much in improved mechanical methods, which the teacher learns so much, as in making him a broader, more enlightened individual—consequently, a better, wiser teacher and a more useful member of society.

I have heard it said by people who have not really thought much about the matter, that the teacher does not need this further training—that he would do better to confine himself to teaching properly "the three royal R's." Does it do any harm, do they think, to learn something about the great, noble battle against disease which is being waged, even sometimes in the face of death, by the scientists of today? Will it do any harm to tell the school children about this, and so help to educate the next generation to improved sanitary conditions? If a teacher knows more of the psychological part of physiology, should he not be the wiser and more charitable in dealing with those placed under his control; and, what is sometimes more difficult, with their parents? Will he teach reading any the worse for having learned a truer appreciation of what is really good in literature? Any one who has taught