

HAMILTON.—Hail on 28th. Fog 17th. Snow 4th, 6th, 9th, 23rd. Rain 3rd, 6th, 7th, 17th—19th, 25th.

SIMCOE.—Meteor at 8 p.m. on , commencing 40° above the horizon, proceeded in a South-easterly course, and exploded when it arrived at about 30° above the horizon. Wind storm 7th. Rain 4th. A very cold month, there being scarcely any rain.

WINDSOR.—Lunar halo on 2nd, 28th, 30th. Navigation on Detroit River resumed on 10th. Lake St. Clair open 17th. Lake Erie 23rd. Lightning with rain 3rd. Hail 7th. Thunder 18th. Lightning 17th. Wind storms 7th—9th, 11th, 12th, 22nd, 23rd. Fog 2nd, 6th, 17th, 18th. Snow 4th, 7th, 12th, 26th. Rain 3rd, 6th, 7th, 17th, 19th.

III. Papers on Practical Education.

WHERE LESSONS SHOULD BE LEARNED.

On the question as to whether pupils should prepare all their lessons in the school-room and none of them at home, there is something to be said on both sides. The *Philadelphia Bulletin* says:—

It was a very remarkable fact that in these days, when the subject of education is so extensively discussed, and when there is such a general desire among an entire people to procure for their children a higher attainment in learning than they have enjoyed themselves, that there should be almost no schools, either public or private, where children are taught anything. This assertion may sound a little startling; and a good many parents may read it with an instinctive contradiction, as the familiar visions of school bells, rise before them, and they remember all the trouble and expense that it has cost them to find a good school for their boys and girls, and to keep them at school after it has been found. And it will be also resented by those who labor under the impression that they teach school in this city. But it is a stubborn fact that speaks badly for our vaunted progress in the science of education, that almost nothing is taught in the schools of the present day. They are simply recitation-rooms, where the children go to repeat the results of laborious study and instruction at home. The school proper is at home, and the parents are the teachers. The amount of labour that our modern school system throws upon the parents of the scholars is as intolerable as it is wrong and unreasonable. In many families, the evening circle is simply a drudgery over the teaching and learning of lessons, often so badly adapted to the capacity of the pupil, to be learned from text-books so ingeniously contrived to "darken wisdom with words without knowledge," that parent and child are alike incapable of mastering their difficulties. Hours that belong to domestic recreation and enjoyment are thus converted into hours of weariness and vexation.

Under such a system as this, the school has very little to do with education. It merely affords a machine for cutting out the work, and inspecting it when it is done. If it is a well-ordered school, it may also supply some useful moral discipline; in a few, it may even supply the much neglected physical training of the scholars. But it has very little to do with educating the mind. The mental discipline, the habit of intelligent study, the acquirement and digestion of knowledge, these ends, which the school professes to compass, are all remanded to the parents at home. They are the teachers. They do the chief work for which schools are established, and for which they pay. The nominal teachers are mere monitors, inspectors, occasionally drill-masters, to whom boys and girls, crammed at home by painstaking parents, or by private tutors hired to relieve the parents from the labour, go daily to recite. That this is strictly true will be testified by the thousands of homes that are converted into night schools by this absurd and radically defective system.

Let some body invent a school where children shall be taught, a system of education by which no school-books shall be carried home, but under which the teacher and not the parent shall have the drudgery of the work. Such a school, in these days would be a novelty and a success, educationally and pecuniarily. If the parents must do any part of the work, let them hear the recitations, and not have the onerous task of instruction, which they pay the teacher to perform, thrust upon them, as is now ordinarily done. The public need is for schools, not for mere recitation-rooms.

To this the *Doylestown Democrat* responds:

We thank the *Bulletin* for the above sensible views on the school question. They meet our approbation, and no doubt will meet that of the thousands who read them. There are several things radically wrong in our school system which need correction. As the *Bulletin* remarks, our schools, as a general thing, are only places for the children to recite their lessons, while the drudgery of preparation falls upon the parents at home.

The common practice of having school children carrying their books home to study their lessons, should have a stop put to it. The teachers are paid both to teach the children and have them recite their lessons, and they should not devolve this duty on the

parents. Let a person notice the scholars of this town return home from school, and he will be astonished to see the books they carry with them. They are expected to study a lesson in each book before the return to the school-room the next morning, where they recite, and the next evening they return with a new batch of lessons with which to bother their parents. Here children even carry their slates and arithmetics home for their parents to teach them how to cypher. If this is because they have more lessons than they can study at school, the sooner some of them are cut off the better. Children are burdened with too many studies; in consequence none are well learned, and the children become discontented with school.

A child should have but few lessons, but they should be well prepared, under the eye of the teacher. We doubt whether modern school books are the great aids to study they have the credit of being. As a rule, we do not believe the children understand, or can appreciate the author's system. Teachers and scholars should understand that there is no royal road to knowledge. It is labour to teach and labour to learn, and both parties should understand it. When children studied Comly's spelling book, Pike's arithmetic, and read from the English reader, they had better prepared lessons than now, and had as good, if not better, knowledge of the branches they studied. Then the children were taught in the school-room, and the parents were not taxed with this duty. Will some of our educational experts turn their attention to these evils?

SHALL WE HAVE A BOTANY CLASS.

"The time of the singing of birds draws near." The sun is thrusting his nood mornings upon us at an unseasonably early calling hour and as kindly delaying a little each day his evening (a) dews. Nature has a new edition of a wonderful book just now "in press." The question is, shall we, when it is "out," give more than a passing glance to its innumerable, curiously wrought leaves, its gorgeous illustrations of incomparable grace and beauty. I know that when the volume is spread out before us in its freshness and glory, all the world for a little season will yield to its inspiration. With wondering eyes and awe-parted lips, all the world will then be one great Botany Class. But why should we as teachers lose so favourable an opportunity of leading the minds of those we teach still farther in this department of truth. Let us consider whether there are sufficient reasons why we should take up this subject in all our schools; whether at this season of the year this should not be one of the regular branches of study. A few suggestions will be presented here, but stronger and better ones will present themselves to the thoughtful investigator of the subject, and the aim of this article is to stimulate such investigations.

What is our aim in teaching any subject? Surely not simply to pour from the chalice of the fulness of our knowledge into the empty cups of ignorance around us; but rather to put our pupils in the way of satisfying their God-given thirst for truth. Can we succeed in leading them to a quick perception and a ready use of truth? Then verily we hold not our office in vain. How this can best be done is the question all true teachers are trying to solve. Any means which will lead them to be wisely observant, and to systematically arrange the result of their observations will certainly be a step in the right direction. And just such are the inseparable results of a properly directed study of the subject. Charles Dudley Warner says: "It is held by some naturalists, that the child is only a zoophyte, with a stomach and feelers radiating from it in search of something to fill it. It is true that a child is always hungry all over; but he is also curious all over; and his curiosity is excited about as early as his hunger. He immediately begins to put out his moral feelers into the unknown and the infinite, to discover what sort of an existence this is into which he has come."

And have we not all proved that this mental appetite can be so stimulated as to cause him, for a time, even to forget the physical. What a quantity of beautiful and varied material so admirably adapted to stimulate and satisfy this appetite, the vegetable world affords. And as if that were not enough to entice us, we find a new set with which to begin operations every year.

Another reason, not to be overlooked in these money-getting times of ours, is, the culture it gives to the finer sensibilities. Who can "hold communion with the visible forms" of fairy ferns, stately trees, the exquisite shapes and colourings of flowers and fruits, without his innate sensibility to beauty developing and growing within him? Do not imagine that anything of the pure and elevating influence of flowers is lost by looking at them scientifically. The more we study them the more we shall feel with Wood, that: "The benevolent Thought, which first conceived of this crowning glory of the vegetable world had evidently in view the education of man's moral nature as well as the reproduction and permanence of vegetable nature."