

THE BEST SCHOOL.—That school is not considered the best in which the machinery of government is most prominent, and the pupils behave like mere automatons, exhibiting no individuality, but a total absence of natural freedom; but where the spirit of investigation is rife, where all are actively employed in legitimate work, where a natural development of the best faculties of the mind is progressing, where pupils understand that they themselves have a great work to do, and not many years in which to accomplish it—there is the place to look for results which will be valuable and lasting.—*Hon. W. Richardson, Supt. Schools, Chilllicothe, O.*

HOW TO TEACH.—If an educated man wants to learn a foreign language, he begins, as soon as he can read at all, with something that he expects to find interesting. He reads a novel, unless he has a distaste for novels, and then he reads poetry or some author whom he has hitherto known only by repute or by a translation. The motive is the same in all three cases. He wants to have the necessary drudgery of mastering a foreign language lightened, and he chooses books which he thinks will lighten it. Precisely the same course should be taken with children in elementary schools.—*London Saturday Review.*

CONTRIBUTORS' DEPARTMENT.

A HIGH SCHOOL AND ITS MORAL.

To the Editor of The Nation.

SIR,—I have taught in a High School two months. In that time I have made several discoveries—I mean they were discoveries to me. I came out of college last June, knowing that I was to fill this position. I had no "experience" nor "methods" when I entered "the work;" I had done some thinking, and had a few notions about teaching. The chief one was that if I made the studies interesting, other matters would right themselves. I worked hard, and succeeded in getting thoroughly enthusiastic myself. I found, however, that my classes were by no means unanimous in *their* enthusiasm. I was puzzled; I did not consider myself wholly to blame; for there were a number who had been listless at first who were most animated now. I went to old teachers who had had "wide experience." I stated as clearly as I could my trouble, and asked for an explanation. With a smile that made me feel as if they had patted me upon the head and addressed me as "Sissy," I was told that I should soon "get used to that—all teachers did;" "there were some children that could never be interested in anything;" after I

had had more "experience" I should learn to accept this as an unavoidable evil. I was sceptical; I tried a little harder to be entertaining. My History class were studying about Egypt. It was dry for me, very stupid to them. Lessons dragged. We began to read aloud from Ebers's "Egyptian Princess." We had only half an hour a day for this, but it produced a marked change in the majority of the class. They were not suffered to take the book outside, and I found that the text-book lessons were recited with an astonishing velocity, so that a few minutes might be secured for the "Princess." However, there were several of the class who sat dreamy-eyed and passive, smiling in polite amazement when the rest of us became excited over our reading.

I have also a Natural Philosophy class. One day we learned that "nature abhors a vacuum." I thought of the minds of some of my nonchalant scholars. I concluded that nature must abhor a mental as well as a physical vacuum. Still, believing that these young people were interested in something, I set myself to find out what that something might be. One of my notions was, that the way I used to write compositions was all wrong. Like most chil-