

"Since the opening of school in September many interesting book reviews and compositions on favourite books or authors written by pupils in the grammar grades have been received from teachers of English.

"This work, aside from its value as an exercise in English composition, penmanship, &c., usually gives us a very good idea of what the child gets out of the class library, and even in its crudest form, his written opinion often offers many valuable hints and suggestions to the selector of children's books. When a little girl says she likes a book 'because it had so much asking and telling in it,' we may be sure the book contains a minimum amount of description and a great deal of animated conversation.

"When a boy selects as his favourite 'The Minute Boys of Lexington,' because 'it is a very exciting book; it has something in every chapter that makes your blood tingle,' it is evident that the book offers as much in the way of action and interest as the cheap paper book of the news-stand, but we know it is a decided improvement over the latter as regards English and ideals.

"Another boy expresses his approval of a book 'because it is full of humour, and besides there is *not one word I do not understand*.' Again, 'My reasons for liking it are, first, it has not a dry part in it; second, it describes a sailor's life, his superstitions, and his love of danger.'

"Such recommendations to my mind outweigh a great deal of adult opinion on such matters.

"The amount of reading done by the pupils out of school hours is evident from the reported circulation. I hope from the reviews and compositions to collect soon some interesting statistics regarding the class and quality of the books read."

Museums.

I saw good museums in several American schools—nearly as good as the best school museums in Germany; but in one respect New York and Chicago are ahead of anything I have seen elsewhere—namely, in the excellence of the system of circulating collections.

That a great museum like the American Museum of Natural History should deem it not beneath its dignity to aid in this work for school-children is worthy of note: the parts played by that institution, by the New York Aquarium, and by the Bronx Botanical Garden in encouraging nature-study will be seen from the report which is printed in the Appendix.

Training-schools for Teachers.

The Teachers' College of the Columbia University, which is described elsewhere in this report, is a most excellent institution providing University undergraduate and post-graduate courses in education, suitable for the training of secondary-school teachers, of first assistants and principals of elementary schools, and of superintendents and other directors of education; but the course is too long, and the amount of theory included in it is too heavy, to suit the great majority of elementary teachers. If a shorter course is taken, the arrangements are such that the amount of practice obtained in teaching is regarded by the authorities as insufficient to train the students for the severe and varied demands made upon them in the large schools of the American cities. The State Normal Colleges, though giving a less severe course of educational theory than those connected with the University, still devote too little time to the actual observation and practice of teaching.

Accordingly, like Chicago, the New York Board of Education has its own training-schools for teachers (three in number), in which the entire time of the student for two years is given to learning the theory of teaching, to observation, and to practice. No student is admitted who has not demonstrated through attendance at institutions of learning and by examination that he has received a sound and extensive liberal education. It is considered that the work of training teachers should be under the direction of the Board of Education and under the supervision of its officers, to the end that the methods of training may be in harmony with the policy and aims of the schools. The minimum qualification for entrance is a four-year secondary course at a recognised high school, in which certain specified subjects must be included—namely, *English*, taken continuously during the four years, 494 "hours" (*i.e.*, recitation or lesson periods—each 45 to 60 minutes); *History* (Ancient, English, and American), 380 hours; *Mathematics*, 380 hours; *Science*—biology and physiology 190 hours, physics 190 hours, total 380 hours (the laboratory method of teaching these subjects is prescribed); *Foreign Languages* (Latin or French or German), 380 hours; *Drawing*, taken continuously throughout the four years, 228 hours; *Vocal Music* (adequate instruction in sight singing and in common technical terms), 152 hours; *Physical Instruction*, 152 hours. The number of hours required