

recitation somewhat more than a test of the memory. It ought to present to each student a problem in the art of putting a matter clearly and in well-ordered sentences. He may be led to see that to *understand* a matter is but a trifling attainment, as compared with a certain kind of *mastery* of the lesson, which enables him, when standing up to recite, to solve the problem of so putting that lesson before an intelligent audience as to be easily understood."

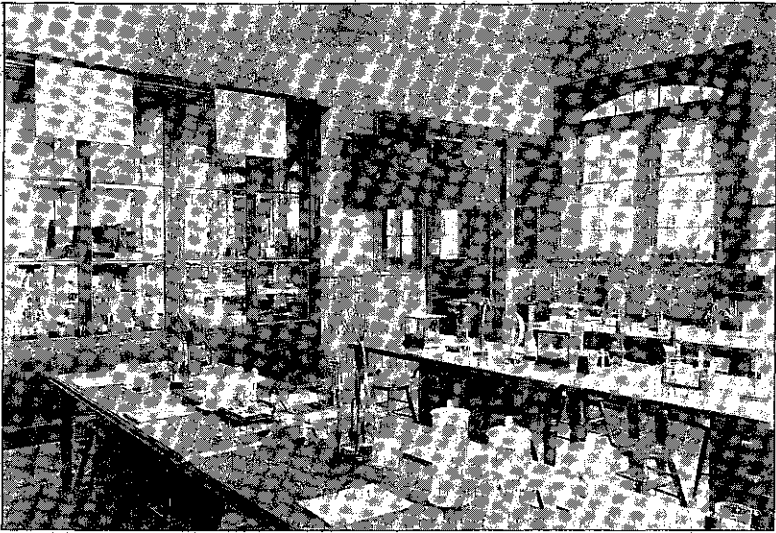
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### CAN WE INTEREST THE PARENTS?

BY E. L. MORRIS.

Under the conditions of teaching in the district schools of the eastern part of the United States, in the early days, the teacher, or school master, as he was called, was thrown much with the parents of his pupils. His contact with them was perforce to some extent, for he "boarded round" in the more well-to-do homes. He had opportunities of studying the home influences surrounding the boys and girls. He often could profit by silently listening to some home discipline, and from that time both in kindness to the parent and in justice to the boy, draw out the best in the overgrown youth. Boys and girls were misjudged by their parents, as now, because their parents failed to remember their own point of view at that age. Many were the teachers, however, of the prime of life, who knew well the awakening mind and life of the awkward student. In those days it rested on the individual character of the teacher whether he enlisted and turned to the profit of son or daughter the interest of the father as the family sat around the table after the supper things were put away, or won the sympathy of the mother.

In these days the situation is quite different, and more markedly so in the cities. In the country, the teacher can still retain some of the old-time influence through the parent's coöperation, especially if the students are few. In the towns and middle-sized school centers, there are more interruptions and fewer opportuni-



THE DISPLAY OF BIOLOGICAL WORK.

The Botanical Laboratory, looking southeast. (Taken by A. A. Doolittle, Instructor.)

ties and desires for social acquaintance between teachers and their constituents. In the larger cities, outside the corps of kindergarten and lowest grades teachers, there is among a few the feeling that naught but purely professional relations are desirable, while the opportunity for any other is very small. We certainly have today very little of the former knowledge by the parent of the teacher's work and the pupil's difficulties and successes. The value to the pupil and the teacher of all the coöperation which teachers and parents can give to each other has never been questioned. The fact that it has lessened, due to general trend of circumstances, is none the less patent.

The question which confronts us is how may the old-time benefits of coöperation be enjoyed under the present circumstances of so widely diversified interests. Under these circumstances, too, there must be grouped with the parents the public men and the childless taxpayers, the public press and opinion, of each community, then of each commonwealth of communities. To gain the coöperation and encouragement of these people is a much greater

labor than the school master had. Greater, because more of special effort is necessary to get their attention, to hold their interest, and to inspire their activity.

In an eastern city, under the need of bridging a gap which had formed by the development and change of the courses of study, the high-school authorities inaugurated the following plan. Various efforts had been made to acquaint and interest the public in the high-school work. For various reasons, unimportant here, the efforts were without appreciable results. But the people must be interested. So, in the spring, a demonstration was determined upon. It must be noticeable to attract the attention of the people. Invitations, printed, written, oral, official and personal, were issued by officials, teachers and pupils, to an "Open House" of the high schools. These "Open House" demonstrations were conducted one or two days in each of the buildings, so that citizens from every part of the city could find it convenient to attend. The hours were planned to further accommodate working people, as well as more leisurely folks. The invitations contained a statement of the features the public might expect to see. These features were representative work already done in the high schools and actual schedule work being done by the pupils in the regular classes. The instructors were engaged in directing the working pupils or showing and explaining the work to the people. The manual training exhibit was taken from building to building, instead of remaining at its own building alone. The other buildings showed practically their own work, there being a few exceptions in some departments. The language department had extensive sets of papers, both recitation and home preparations, as originally presented in every case, "corrected" or "uncorrected," and tables strewn with the text and reference books characteristic of each. The work in mathematics was largely the same, together with various blackboard demonstrations. Drawing and painting practically followed the plan in the sciences, given below.

In the natural sciences, perhaps, there was the most show, but none the less of training and education. The laboratories were in full working order. Regular work, by classes in course, done during the year or in progress, was carried on by the pupils. Each step in each kind of work was illustrated. The object, plan and



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Zoölogical Laboratory, looking southwest. (Taken by A. A. Doolittle, Instructor).

results both expected and realized were posted. Everything was carefully labeled, giving all the information one might care to read. Instructors and student assistants were busy answering questions by the visitors. The buildings were crowded, every age and station being represented. The enthusiasm was great.

But the after effect was and is the better measure of the result. Greater personal interest by the parent in his child's work and success is very evident on every hand. The active pupils are showing a better spirit of work, probably because they then got their first bird's-eye view of high-school work. At the same time they thoroughly read every exhibited paper which they could understand. The public press has moderated in its criticisms on pending school questions, and has published fuller reports of school matters and interests, than had been the case. Larger appropriations are under way. On the whole, every line has been benefited by the aroused interest. Parents now come into the schools for better understandings and decisions, and for personal pleasure.

What can be done in places where circumstances differ from those met with in this experience?