

The plant has received the endorsement of several leading agriculturists, as good both for a cold and dry climate. It is said that three to five cuttings can be made in a season, that its yield is even greater than with lucern, and that it is equally suitable for animals, who relish the leaves of the plant particularly. The French, English and German horticultural journals praise it highly; its strongest endorsements in this country come from the Cornell University experiment station and the Iowa agricultural college.

Just now the seed is rather expensive, costing \$25 a pound wholesale—that is one-fortieth of what the original stock brought to this country cost; therefore it is only obtainable in small packets. For the present, there is not likely to be any rush for it in these parts, as its superiority over lucern has not been fully established, and even if it were as claimed is not sufficient to warrant great changes. It will be well, however, to note the results of tests to be made of the new plant in the West, with a view of ascertaining whether or not the horticulturists really have brought out an improved forage plant.

ON SCHOOL MATTERS.

This communication has been received from James M. Ballard, at Grafton, Utah:

If it is not asking too much, would you be so kind as to answer the following questions in regard to our free school law:

1. To Sec. 76 it reads thus: "No school district shall receive any apportionment of school moneys unless such district shall have maintained a school therein for at least twenty weeks during the next preceding school year." Now, does the law contemplate furnishing the funds to maintain a school for that length of time, or does it intend that when the apportionment for such district is exhausted that the people open their own purses and maintain the school the required length of time at their own expense?

2. Will the law compel such district to maintain a school twenty weeks unless the funds are furnished? Our school population is small, consequently our apportionment is light, but in order to maintain our school the required length of time, we have had to pay for a portion of it out of our own pockets, which in 1893-4 cost us nearly four dollars per scholar.

While we are thus situated there are districts on both sides of us that draw funds enough to maintain their school the required length of time.

From the foregoing I do not wish it understood that I am no friend to education, for there is no one who would make a greater effort for the cause of education than I would.

We are supposed to comply with a code of school laws, such as the changing of books, the employment of a suitable teacher and being compelled to send children between certain ages, or be fined for not doing so.

Now it looks as though, if the law compels us to do these things, that it ought to come to our aid with funds to maintain our school, and not because we are a small district leave us out in the cold to take care of ourselves the best that we can.

As to the first question: The law contemplates furnishing the funds to maintain a school in each district for the length of time stated; but it does

not contemplate that the apportionment named in that part of the law quoted is the only available fund for the purpose. The law intends that when the apportionment for such district is exhausted the owners of taxable property shall open their purses and maintain the school the required length of time.

For a further explanation it may be stated that there are three tax funds from which to draw for the expense of supporting and maintaining public schools. There are (1) the Territorial levy; (2) the county levy; and (3) the school district levy. The Territorial levy creates a fund which is apportioned by the Territorial commissioner of schools; the county fund of the same character is apportioned by the county superintendent. The distribution is based upon the number of school children residing in each district; and if the district trustees do not keep a school twenty weeks in the year for the benefit of the children referred to, no distribution is made to the district. That is the apportionment mentioned in section 76, quoted by our correspondent. The other fund to be drawn on is wholly under the control of the trustees, and is provided for in section 38 of the school law, where the trustees are empowered to raise "on the taxable property of the district, one-fourth of one percent for the support of schools, and to defray current expenses." This latter fund is the one referred to when we say the owners of taxable property are required to open their purses to maintain the schools. They do so in the case of the other funds as well, for it all comes out of the taxpayers' pockets.

Coming to the second interrogation: The law directs (section 39) that the trustees "shall organize, maintain and conveniently locate schools for the education of the children of school age within the district, or change or discontinue any of them according to law." The change referred to relates to the re-arrangement of districts, etc.; the discontinuance to schools where the average attendance of pupils is less than eight for twenty consecutive days. In all other cases it is provided (section 48) that "every district school shall be kept in session not less than two terms in each school year," that is, twenty weeks. This is about as near compelling the maintenance of a school for that length of time as can be well done under existing circumstances; the penalty for failure to comply is to deprive the district of the apportionment of Territorial and county school funds. But the failure to keep school is hardly chargeable to the law not furnishing the funds, since if the two-and-a-half mills district tax be collected in addition to the apportionments referred to, there probably is no school district sufficiently large to be entitled to that independent distinction which would then have plenty of funds to run school half time.

This answers all the direct queries of our correspondent. His statement of the advantages districts on both sides have in securing enough from the Territorial and county apportionment to run schools the required length of time, and the reason therefor, should afford a suggestion to our Grafton friends as to how they can become

equally well favored. It is the only way we know of, and then they are much better situated than many others who might be named. There is a large number of people, especially in small districts in the country, who fancy that in the larger cities the schools are maintained out of the general fund apportioned by Territorial and county school officers. This is a very great mistake. As a matter of fact, the city school districts are much more heavily burdened than those in the country, and the extra cost mentioned by our Grafton correspondent as accruing to people in his district for school maintenance would be regarded by city taxpayers as a comparative fly-spok, if at that price they could secure the educational facilities now enjoyed. The school taxation all around is proportionately much heavier in the city school districts in this Territory than in the country districts.

In comparison with its immediate neighbors, however, Grafton seems to be suffering an injustice, and in calling attention to this fact our correspondent certainly should not be deemed unfriendly to education. He is merely pointing out a situation that should be changed so that all in the locality can be treated alike, or that should be understood as the best that can be done, so people may bear it cheerfully. The county court might give relief in one direction, as the statute authorizes it to do, by consolidating Grafton with some district more blessed in the way of school population. If that should be deemed advisable, as it might be if the district is unable, by the three funds which the law provides, to meet necessary expenses.

POVERTY AND CRIME.

The News has published a communication from Mr. John B. Gleason, in which professing Christians are entreated to engage in what the correspondent very properly terms "practical Christianity"—helping those who are in need. Mr. Gleason assumes what is probably true, that there are a great many needy and deserving persons here upon whom the divine principle of charity could be made to operate beneficially, not only for the good that would come to them but also for the benefit that would accrue to those who by their liberality give an evidence of love for their fellowman. No doubt there are many people who profess Christian principles who might bless and be blessed by putting those principles into practice. To these the suggestions of the correspondent should come home with a force that will inspire them to action.

At the same time it must not be forgotten that practical Christianity of the kind referred to finds a broad exercise in this community. There are many people of all shades of religious opinion who give much time and means to the relief of those who are in distress, and in a general way they cover the field successfully, at least so far as the worthy poor are concerned. There may be instances among this class where the facts do not become known, and people suffer in consequence of a false pride that will not allow them to reveal