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Editorial

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SCIENCE BULLETIN

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EDITORIAL

We enjoyed a visit the other day with the representative of a company which supplies files for government publications. This reminds us of how essential to good teaching is supplementary material. It both instructs and offers variety. Too often, in the mind of the pupil, the words schoolroom and monotony are synonyms. Do you know where and how to obtain slides, motion pictures, project material, commercial displays, popularly written science books, manufacturers' pamphlets, and government and state bulletins? Do you encourage the pupils to bring you objects, articles and clippings bearing on your subject? We find that a small bulletin board, carrying interesting clippings, science and class news items, and other pertinent material, will invariably attract and interest.

We would like to tell our readers about your methods and results in the use of supplementary work and we will gladly go into greater detail about this phase of your teaching if we know your needs. Why not write to the Editor today?

LABORATORY UPKEEP

(Concluded)

Chemistry

The article last month dealt with reagent bottles. Another problem is met in the proper care of iron ware—the special target of the corrosive laboratory fumes. To supply the pupil with rusty, oxide encrusted metal equipment is to encourage careless, slovenly work. An annual "paint day" is essential. The author recalls one laboratory where help and funds were scarce and in which each pupil had to be his own painter. The first event in the paint day program is to collect all iron supports, rings, clamps and fasteners and sort them in piles. Next, remove rust and smears with an iron bristle brush or with sand paper. After final wiping with an old cloth the articles are painted with black asphalt paint

thinned with a good grade of turpentine. Care must be exercised not to paint screw threads. For the iron rings in regular use, there is no need of painting the circular part because the paint will burn off on first use. For the larger of these articles the author saves time and labor by dipping instead of brushing. The equipment consists of a rectangular tank which serves the double purpose of a dipping vat and a drip receiver. After being dipped the articles are placed on an inclined V shaped platform and the excess paint is allowed to run from them and drip into the vat. Articles dry completely in about twenty-four hours.

Test tube clamps should be sold to the pupils, since they are certain to corrode in service and usually lose temper through carelessness in overheating. The same is true for iron forceps. The main stock of these articles should be kept in a room free from fumes. Some teachers keep such articles in a jar of kerosene. The bases only of Bunsen burners should be painted because the barrel is usually made of noncorrosive metal. Rusty plumbing is inexcusable. Give it an occasional coat of some metal paint of any desired color, the popular one being brick red. The handles only of burning (deflagrating) spoons need be painted.

What of desk tops? Have you ever seen any that reminded you of a rutted, shell pitted no-man's land? Pity the pupil who has to "carry on" under such conditions. Notwithstanding some adverse opinions, the author prefers alberene stone for desk tops. The initial cost is higher but results justify it. It will not burn; it is easily cleaned; corrosive liquids do not easily attack it; it cannot warp; it is durable; and it is not especially destructive to glass and porcelain ware. If wooden desk tops are used they should be made "acid proof". Of acid proofing treatments I would mention two. The simpler, though less permanent, is the paraffin treatment. Provide yourself with a dish of melted paraffin (avoiding danger of fire from overheating) and some flat irons, preferably of the tailor's "goose" type. Pour a thin layer of the paraffin over a few square feet of desk top and persistently iron it in with a mediumly hot iron, before the wax hard-