

PRIMARY HAND WORK.

(A Paper read before the Charlotte County Teachers' Institute) by
Miss F. A. Osborne.

In this paper on Primary Hand Work are offered suggestions for work for a whole year in the first and second grades. This work calls for no less than three half hour periods a week in Grade I and two half hour periods a week in Grade II. If possible the Manual work should be given either just before or immediately after the recess, using this time for distributing or collecting necessary materials. To secure unity and flexibility as well, the work should be grouped about literature, history and nature topics, making it an outgrowth of whatever has been under discussion in these various subjects. An attempt is made to give the child as many opportunities as possible for the expression of thought, believing that expression comes only from impression and that thought is not complete until it goes forth in action. These first free expressions will, necessarily, be crude, but, from the comparisons which the child is constantly making through his observations, analysis will follow and soon proportion and symmetry will be more intelligently expressed in his work.

That the child should be happy,—happy in his work as well as in his play—we believe to be his first and rightful prerogative. Only when working in this spirit can we draw out and develop the best that is in him. However, happiness is never secured from wholly selfish interests but comes only in obedience to law and thoughtfulness of others. To have the child taste this real joy is what we would desire for him. Ruskin says: "The entire object of true education is to make people not merely do the right things, but enjoy them, not merely industrious, but to love industry." If Hand Work be of such a nature that it may prove conducive to home work, keeping hands and brain happily employed there as well as at school—if we succeed in this and so bring the school and home into closer harmony, then will it be serving its highest purpose as a factor in character building.

During the first half year, lessons should be made as simple as possible. Perfect and accurate work should not be expected from young children, but let the age and ability of the child be considered and the results judged accordingly. A class should never be given work of such a nature that it means failure to the majority of the pupils. The representation of an object to the best of a child's ability, must be the criterion of success in a primary room. Manual Work offers large opportunities for

profitable instruction. It imparts dexterity and skill. It brings the joy of successful doing. It gives a new thought of himself to every child who is fortunate enough to pursue it, and it applies and gives the most concrete of uses to almost every other subject that is taught in school. It has come into education to stay, and to expand and grow into larger usefulness than it now supplies. Goethe has said:

"If hand and eye you deftly train,
Firm grows the will and keen the brain."

I have suggested the following devices for work for Grade I: Stick and Pea Work, Paper Tearing, Paper Cutting, Paper Folding, Sewing Card Work and Work for Special Days.

The materials needed for the Stick and Pea Work are round and very thin sticks and soaked peas. The sticks come in different lengths from one to five inches,—or ordinary toothpicks may be used. Selected peas may be purchased from the Milton Bradley Company at twenty cents a pint. The sticks cost from twenty to thirty-five cents a thousand according to the length, while a box containing one thousand of the best toothpicks may be had for twenty-five cents. Use small empty boxes for distributing and holding materials. The peas sometimes split or the toothpicks are broken, and the fragments should be placed carefully in the box. A few peas and some toothpicks are given at first, and the children learn to thrust the stick into the pea by holding it near the end and working on the desk. The peas must previously be soaked in water for eight or ten hours. The models made are skeleton forms of different objects such as: a hammer, ladder, hat-pin, cane, poker dumbell, wagon, wigwam, bear's trap, chicken coop, Christmas toys, house, chair, table, stool, bed, cradle, church, star, garden tools, etc. "The interior of things is known only by its exterior manifestations," says Froebel, and the skeleton bodies made with sticks and peas are so much more instructive as they allow the observation of the outer form in its outlines, and at the same time bring to view the inner structure and being of the body. All children love stories, and most stories, for instance the story of Hiawatha, may be used as an historic basis for much interesting work. The dramatic power of the tale, its wealth of symbolism and imagery, and fascination for all young people, make it a mine of pictorial material. The babies enjoy hearing of the Indian's way of building his house, the description of Hiawatha's wigwam, its location.

(Continued next month.)