

There was much unintentional sarcasm in the sentence which we lately met in an exchange, in which a young teacher, writing to a friend, said: "I am in my school-room; hence you can easily imagine my surroundings without description." The implication, of course, was that all Public School-rooms are so much alike that to be familiar with one is to have a picture of each. But why should this be so? Why should not every school-room have an individuality of its own; something to please the eye and charm the fancy; something in its artistic arrangements and decorations worth describing to a friend? The reason is, we suppose to be found not so much in lack of taste on the part of the teacher as in lack of means for supplying anything beyond the simplest furniture and most necessary apparatus. But why should this be so? Do not teachers ignore a strong force in the development of both taste and morals when they neglect to make the school room, so far as it may be in their power, attractive and even beautiful? Do not parents commit a great blunder when they lavish money in the decoration of fine parlors at home in which their children spend scarcely an hour in the week, and fail to supply means for the tasteful adornment of the schools in which they spend most of their waking, in-door moments throughout the most susceptible years of their lives? The silent influence of beautiful and artistic surroundings will often do more to cultivate and refine the taste than scores of lectures.

The improvement of taste that would result from this constant association of study and learning with agreeable and beautiful surroundings, would be of itself a most valuable factor in education. The vandalistic proclivities of the most reckless users of the pencil and jack-knife, are checked by the prettiness and tastefulness of the articles upon which they are most likely to be exercised. While the unpainted pine-board almost irresistibly invites the whittler's attack, none but the veriest Goth will mutilate a beautiful bit of furniture. A universal instinct compels those who stamp unhesitatingly, with the muddiest of boots, over a naked and not over-clean floor, to use the doormat before venturing upon one brightly carpeted. A still more important consideration is that the taste for neatness and prettiness once formed, will in most cases attend the pupil through life, leaving its impress upon his person and home in all the future, and contributing in no small degree to the increase of those little comforts and adornments which make the home attractive, and promote domestic happiness and virtue.

THE MODEL SCHOOLS.

We are pleased, but not surprised, that the views of J. L. Tilley, Esq., Inspector of Model Schools, as expressed in his last valuable Report to the Education Department, coincide to a considerable extent with those expressed in these columns before we had seen the report. The weak points in the present Model School system are many and obvious. Mr. Tilley makes several recommendations, which, if adopted, could scarcely fail to improve the character and work of many of the schools. One of the most important of these is that the Principals of all the

Model Schools shall be relieved of all teaching duties outside of the Model School department. There were during the last school year 26 Model Schools in which the Principals were relieved from Public School work during the whole of each day, 18 in which they were relieved during half of the day, and 8 schools in which they were expected to teach their own divisions in the Public School the full day, from 9 till 4, and then, after the regular school hours, to give the requisite instruction to the teacher-students.

Another important change advocated is also in the line of the SCHOOL JOURNAL's suggestions. The Inspector would have the number of Model Schools reduced to about twenty, the Province being divided for that purpose into the requisite number of Model School Districts. This would give an opportunity to select the best schools and the most efficient Principals. It would also enable the salaries of the latter to be increased. This is but a matter of justice and would no doubt have the effect of encouraging and stimulating the work of instruction. It would also tend largely to lessen the frequency of change in the principalship. These changes have been hitherto so frequent as to render good work in many sections impossible. Mr. Tilley makes the very reasonable proposal that the salary of the Principal shall never be less than \$1,000 a year.

The system that would promise absolutely the best results would be the abolition of the Model Schools and the establishment of a sufficient number of good Normal Schools for the accommodation of all teachers in training. But the great yearly expense this would involve, which Mr. Tilley estimates at \$60,000, renders it, we suppose, impracticable. The time has not yet come when teachers can afford to pay for their own professional training, like aspirants to other professions. The inducements and rewards for Public School teachers will have to be very largely increased before this will become possible. Meanwhile some such plan as that suggested by Inspector Tilley is probably the best attainable. Mr. Tilley does not underestimate the objections to be met, but states them fairly, and shows that, though some of them are of undoubted force, they are greatly overborne by the prospective advantages to accrue from the change. It is to be hoped the subject may receive the consideration its importance demands, both from the teachers and from the Department.

Special.

THE METHODS OF TEACHING BEGINNERS TO READ.

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A paper read before the Nova Scotia Provincial Educational Association.

It has been said by somebody that the man who aims at nothing seldom misses the mark. He who hews a log without purpose or plan makes simply a pile of chips. Definite aim and determinate effort in the line of doing some one thing are essential conditions of success in any enterprise. Educational work is not exceptional in this regard. The teacher should have a well-defined object—a clear conception of what is to be the grand outcome of his work, and he should so build each part that it may sustain proper relations to