

EDUCATIONAL JOURNAL

OF WESTERN CANADA.

VOL. III.

WINNIPEG, FEBRUARY, 1902.

No. 10.

Contributions.

The JOURNAL is not responsible for opinions of contributors.
Replies to contributions will be welcome.

A BIT OF SCHOOL HISTORY.

When I came to this neighborhood the secretary told me plainly that I might expect trouble, for there had been trouble, not only in the school but among the people. My predecessor had been sent away amid quite a storm of expressed opinion.

I found that the trustees were quite right in saying that the school was totally out of discipline. The pupils would fight, not only out of school but in school. During noon and recess there was hardly five minutes in which some of the little ones were not crying. There were divisions in the school. Some families would not allow others to even look at them, although the cat is allowed to look at the queen. Notwithstanding my severity the older pupils would sneer at me behind my back, and sing about me.

Well, I not only had a lot to do, but also a great deal to learn, and teacher and pupil must set to work and learn together. And I will not say that the desire for discipline was all on the side of the teacher; for my faith is too strong in the virtue of the human heart. Children love good discipline and thrive and are happy under it. It would, I think, be utterly impossible to give a detailed account of all the circumstances that have contributed to the transformation of my school into what it is to-day. The influences are too subtle and deeply spiritual. It was not one thing, but many things, things I know but can't express, things that only God knows. I will give you an example to show you how an apparently small thing may turn a great issue. The family feuds had still been going on as badly as ever, notwithstanding the fact that I severely punished any guilty of abusing another. Sternness can put down evil, but cannot of itself destroy the roots of evil; it cannot change the heart. One Friday afternoon it struck me that I would try the plan of allowing them to have a programme all to themselves. So I nominated a president and left her orders to take down the names of those who misbehaved during my absence. I found that they had been all very good, and had had a splendid time among themselves; and to my surprise they all said good-bye to each other, and shouted it as far as they could see. That was the beginning of a great change which has now come over the school. This is merely an example of the many little artifices which, I believe, none other than the spirit of God impresses upon the faithful heart.

The same influences have been working away, silently and imperceptibly, until now children who would not look at each other will walk about arm in arm, and braid each other's hair. A man of the neighborhood told me that his heart throbbed with joy when his little girl came home with her hair nicely braided—and braided by the girl who sometime ago had heartily despised his children.