

Primary Department.

HOLIDAY WORK.

RHODA LEE

ALTHOUGH we speak our farewells to the children, and although we take our last look at the rows of empty seats, and enjoy the long-looked-for rest, we do not expect school and our loved school-work to vanish entirely from our minds.

In the holidays we have time to think and plan truer, better work; we have time to look about and study human nature a little more, and devise ways and means of making our work in the coming term more beneficial and enjoyable.

Plans for busy work may be thought out, as we can never have too many of these. Some of these plans take considerable preparation.

During a holiday time one of our teachers prepared a collection of business cards for a double purpose. She selected the cards carefully for the purpose of having stories written about them. These were passed around among the children, each scholar having a different one, and they were asked to write stories about the pictures they held. This exercise was a very useful and enjoyable one. The backs of the cards being blank, Miss H— wrote on that side short stories for sight reading.

This was a better plan than the ordinary soft paper, as they were more easily preserved, and those scholars who succeeded in reading the stories correctly and quickly were rewarded by being allowed to draw or write stories from the other side.

Short stories cut from Sunday school and other papers might be collected in the holidays, new songs discovered and old ones adapted to school work.

Thoughts will come and plans will evolve if we are only on the alert. Let us not pass our holidays in the sleepy idleness so often mistaken for rest.

SUNSHINE ON A DARK DAY.

RHODA LEE.

ONE of June's early days. Just enough sunshine to make joy and happiness everywhere, and just enough of a soft breeze that brought the scent of chestnut and lilac bloom into our class-room, to make a sweet, calm, good day at school. Easy enough to teach on days of that description, you say. Teaching is never easy. Teaching is too earnest a work to be easy, but let us never say it is toil.

Yet we have days (for even June weather is not always what we desire,) when the leaden gray of the sky and the ceaseless beating of the rain seems to reflect as much as possible of its gloom on the hearts and temperaments of our children. Clouds without, clouds within. We cannot change the weather, but we *can* change its effect upon our school.

Just now I think of a day we had not long ago, when all the bad effects of a dark, rainy day were too plainly noticeable.

We left school weary and discouraged. No fires, and the wind too cold and damp to permit of open windows; air consequently bad and the children tired and listless. Every sound intensified and warranted to bring out all one's nervousness and impatience.

Talking it over on our way home, we one and all decided to do away with this depression next time by making some stronger efforts to obtain that sunshine that had failed to find its way into our class-rooms. Now let me tell you how we get round behind the cloud and live in the *sunshine* on the "days that are dark and dreary."

Knowing perfectly well the effect a day of this kind has on my own spirits, I try to get into more perfect sympathy with my children. I need some special stimulus to arouse me, and this effort of rousing the scholars is just what is required.

Knowing how difficult it is for them to feel the proper life and spirit in a lesson on a day such as this, I leave to a certain degree the rut of ordinary work and plan new attractions and fresh employment for the day.

I pay special attention to the ventilation and indulge in calisthenics and marching more frequently than usual.

The sunshine has to be manufactured at first, but it soon becomes genuine.

We choose the most interesting reading lessons and perhaps use the prettiest supplementary reading books. We learn the words and meaning of a bright new song.

At recess, if the rain is still falling, we have a "guessing game" or a "question talk," in which every one in turn is at liberty to ask any question or narrate any story interesting to the class.

Perhaps I may read or tell a story of more than ordinary interest, or allow the children to write a story on their slates.

A spelling or geography match in some of the higher rooms would be interesting. Of course I do not advise the employment of all these means on the same day.

One or two plans will transform the day wonderfully, if along with them you wear your rosier spectacles and attribute some of the little disorders that you may witness, to dust on your spectacles. In other words, endeavor to be more patient and forbearing on these days than on any other. Start out in the morning knowing that the day will be a trying one, but at the same time determine to invigorate yourself with extra strength, courage, patience and peace, which all combined will produce the most veritable sunshine in your classroom.

CONCENTRATION OF ENERGY.

ARNOLD ALCOTT.

"CONCENTRATION of energy." What a unity of effort, what an intensity of specific, clearly-defined work is focussed in the above phrase. There is, it seems to me, a rich store of practical philosophy in this idea of gathering the energies, and concentrating their forces in one particular direction. The human mind is so constituted that it can attend definitely and impressively to but one thing at a time.

Once a class becomes inspired with an ambition to do its best, and a determination to excel in some one subject, or along some special line of work, that class is on the path leading to success, to victory. They must work who would win.

Now, there is no better plan of which we know for securing co-operative order, in a new class, than for the tactful teacher, who knows what she can teach especially well, to awaken the ambitious spirit in her pupils, to excel in this particular branch. The impetus which such a purpose will give to the work of the class-room is not easily over-estimated. We can not do well in one direction without its having a reflex influence for good on all our other efforts. The resolve to do one's best is the fruitful purpose we are endeavoring to implant.

For instance, a teacher taking charge of a new class discovers, on the first day, that the music in that class is deficient. Happy is she, if she loves music and the teaching of it so well that she can inspire her pupils with the ambition to be the best class in the district, or in the town, or in the city, in this direction. If the idea be presented skilfully and pleasantly we are sure that the boys and the girls will catch the inspiration.

But, says some one who has forgotten to subscribe for educational journals, or who has neglected to read works on education, or who has not pursued the interesting and profitable study of human nature, "Are you not neglecting other studies in your attempts to excel in music, or in calisthenics, or in, etc.?" Perhaps our pupils may at first fall off a little in other branches, though we do not think that this is a necessary result. But when the "trying hard to excel" has been practised for a time it becomes a habit, which is not circumscribed by music, or by calisthenics, but which extends to all that the pupils have to do.

For nine months we have tried devoting special attention to music, and we know the pupils are fonder of it than ever. Through music, harmony and sympathy have been established between teacher and pupils, and energy has been developed for other pursuits.

Again, there are times which are more suitable than others for devoting ourselves intensely to certain subjects. For instance, what time more suitable than the budding spring and the opening summer for learning about the flowers and the woods? Do take a picnic with your pupils. There is plenty of fun and development in it for teachers as well as for pupils.

Again, in the warm months of May and June the children like writing in their copy books; so we are specially interested just now in writing. And

"When chill November
Blows his surly blast,"

we may be very attentive to our calisthenics.

Do have a specialty. It will afford great pleasure as well as profit, morally as well as mentally and physically, to all. Earnestness and enthusiasm are two of the qualities which we like most to see in those with whom we have to do.

Let us try to build up in our scholars that sturdiness of character which we note in a true German or Scotchman.

Onward and upward is our motto. The powers, which the Creator has given to us, put to their best use. Nothing less will satisfy. Who can say that we may not reach such results?

Special Papers.

BE GUARDED IN SPEECH.*

BY CARRIE NEWHALL LATHROP.

"Thy speech bewrayeth thee" is as true to-day as in the time when first uttered, and it may properly be said that the "shibboleth" of respectable and cultivated society is a graceful and becoming use of our mother tongue. Though there are apparently startling examples to the contrary, and though one may cite instances of persons who hold honorable positions in society yet are destitute of this ability, still this honor may be paid to something else in their possession, either deservedly or undeservedly. Whatever consideration these persons may receive, they can never, for one instant, be considered cultivated. We, as teachers, should certainly aim to be so considered. Therefore it is that I would call your attention to some acts of commission or omission which will entitle us to the place we desire.

In the matter of pronunciation, what may we teachers do? We must certainly inform ourselves as to the proper pronunciation of words, and then use that pronunciation. It is a fact to be deplored that there are many of our capable men in different professions who are far from models in this regard, and we cannot turn to them as exemplars. It is true that the matter of pronunciation has been sadly neglected, and we hear flagrant errors committed by those of whom we have a right to expect much. But this is no excuse, for teachers themselves should strive to be models in this particular, and we have in the dictionaries a friend and guide. Pronunciation has not changed so greatly of recent years as is often asserted. It is not that pronunciation has changed, but that people are investigating authorities and the principles of pronunciation, are comparing them, and are endeavoring, more than formerly, to conform to these principles and authorities. While searching for the pronunciation of a word, the meaning or meanings and its derivation should be found. Next, the word must be used properly in conversation. Then, and not till then, may we truly say that the word actually belongs to us.

Another point that teachers should guard is the use of slang. The reply may be that teachers do not use slang. As a class they do not, but are the members of the profession entirely free from it? Is it not obtruding itself everywhere—among all classes of people? It is so pernicious a habit, a habit that so rapidly strengthens from its earliest growth, that too much cannot be said in condemnation of it. One word of slang, once used, soon obtrudes itself again, and when least desired. Teachers do not always refrain from slang themselves, nor do they sufficiently condemn it in others. If not, perhaps, indulging in the worst forms, there are many expressions that might be considered less coarse, in common use among teachers. Where is our wealth of beautiful expressive words, words that can convey every shade of meaning possible to be conceived of—that one should descend even once to expressions that should belong only to the vernacular of criminals?

A fact may be cited to prove that the language used is not too strong. In a little book of private devotions, prepared by an eminent divine, these questions occur in one paragraph, under questions

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