

Schoolroom Decorations.

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To decorate a schoolroom is to make it a pleasant and profitable workshop. High bare walls, dingy ceiling, broken plaster and defaced blackboards, creaking doors and rattling windows make up surroundings bleak and dismal enough to dampen the spirits and enthusiasm of almost any teacher; and a hundred times more do they affect the tender spirits of young children.

Let festoons and strings of evergreens be strung along over top of windows and doors, let a few neat inexpensive pictures break up the monotony of bare walls, let attractive designs in black and white, or in colors, adorn the unused blackboards—and how great the change! How bright and sunny everything has become. If now a few appropriate mottoes be placed in convenient unoccupied places (and what school has not large wastes of cheerless plaster high up under the ceiling), and if flowers in season be added, then we may be said to have a schoolroom at least moderately decorated, and even then perhaps unusually attractive. It will be found that the children can be kept interested and attentive with much more ease than in the bleak and bare house, the cheerless, undecorated school.

Many, if not all, the decorations used in a schoolroom may be made to serve a double purpose. They may be useful as well as ornamental. It is not enough that they delight the eye—they should instruct, stimulate and encourage the young.

Among the blackboard decorations which serve the double purpose of adding to the appearance of the room as well as inducing regular attendance and competition in work, is the bee-hive. This is a picture of a hive drawn in some quiet corner. Let the hive be the goal and the bees the pupils. Good conduct and satisfactory work entitle them to approach the hive. The effect of this little scheme is wonderful. The pupils, in their eagerness to be numbered among the "busy bees," give better lessons, and are more careful of their conduct, and the result is general improvement. Another device that is equally effective and attractive is the roll of honor, bearing the names of the pupils making the highest averages.

A calendar for the month might decorate any unused blackboard surface. So these little devices while adorning the walls, assist both the teachers and pupils in raising the standing of the school.

Many valuable lessons may be taught from these

decorations. Take, for instance, flowers. In the spring we have the mayflower. In ten minutes the teacher can give an interesting oral lesson on this plant; point out the different parts of a flower; get opinions as to why it is called the harbinger of spring, and relate some little story about it. Similarly, throughout the year, short nature lessons can be given on the flowers which decorate the room.

Besides lending beauty the flowers furnish good seat-work; the children can write short descriptions of them, or can draw them, and in selecting and arranging them the pupils have perhaps their first lessons in art.

Likewise many valuable lessons can be learned from the wall pictures. From the landscapes the pupils can become familiar with such geographical terms as mountain, river, lake, cape, island, etc. Pictures of the domestic animals will probably furnish most interest to the children. Many interesting facts can be learned about the horse; for example, his food, his habits, his kindness and faithfulness to man, his willingness to work and his ability to understand. Encourage the pupils to tell any stories they can that will prove the horse a noble and intelligent animal. The teacher can add some little story of the wild animals, and let the children state the points of resemblance or of difference between the wild animals and the domestic. These exercises on the pictures and flowers encourage reproduction and picture stories.

For the more advanced pupils the teacher can select pictures of such authors as the children are studying. This plan is very successful, for the reason that the personality of the author can be associated with the lessons.

The children's maps can be used to decorate the room in an effective manner, and the exhibition of work is almost certain to win the approval of visitors and to stimulate the interest of both pupils and parents.

By this simple and attractive decoration habits of order and enterprise are fostered, a spirit of excellence in school work is created, many pleasant and profitable exercises are furnished, and, most important of all, school life is brightened.

A map is the best and most accurate means of expressing certain geographic facts. Children should learn to read a map as readily as a newspaper, that they may use maps intelligently in later years:—*Journal of Geography*.