

not to the solution of mathematical problems—though these are not by any means to be neglected—but to the study of the great principles of education and the methods of teaching most in harmony with these principles: to the study of how the native powers of mind may be developed and its own inherent forces trained to assimilate the materials of its growth; how the will, which is the force behind the scenes and the moving spring of all, may be stirred to action, governed and taught to govern itself. \* \* \*

But while much may be done to discipline and furnish the intellect, I hope that the great feature within these walls which are to-day being dedicated to the cause of education, will be any influence upon character by developing and strengthening the true spirit of the teacher's work; by joining with broad views lofty and pure inspirations; by giving depth and fixedness to principles; by bringing conscience to bear upon the grand aims and the minute details of the teacher's vocation; by kindling in the heart that love and affection for the young which, where'er the teacher goes,

'Will make a desert blossom as the rose.'

## Cleanings.

### PRETTY SCHOOLROOMS.

Wherever there is a homelike atmosphere, children are better and sweeter. Surroundings are of nearly as much account to the little ones as to grown folks. They may be even more, since childhood learns from impressions and is developed by their influences. Now, cosiness is one of the elements of a loved home. The children who have pretty rooms and cunning little corners for their own small "fixings" are, we will warrant, the children who do not continually run in the streets. Make your home attractive to them and they will gladly stay there. A schoolroom should be a kind of home. It should be made attractive. The children should be happy in the thought of going to school, and they would be if it were made a pleasant place. If the gentlemen who build our academies, grammar, and district school-houses, would save from some elaborate outside adornment sufficient money to hang the windows with pretty curtains, the walls with chromos and engravings, and fill the windows with plants and hanging baskets, they would work wonders in refining and elevating the taste of the pupils, and adding to their happiness. To say that the children would destroy these homelike and attractive additions to their study rooms, is to dub our little ones barbarians, whereas they are as easily moulded into ladies and gentlemen as wax is run into form if the surroundings of refinement and culture are given them.

Far from being careless of any adornment of their rooms, they would invariably take pride and pleasure in adding their little "mite" to the general beauty; and if teachers would encourage the scholars to bring with them from home any little ornament, brackets or pictures, which they may keep in their own little treasure boxes, they would be astonished at the delight displayed by their pupils, and the wonderful transformation which would take place in the too often barren, unsightly, and uncouth apartments in which they are obliged to spend half of all their days.

There is no collection of children who are too poorly off in this world's goods that some of them may not be able to contribute some beautiful object to the schoolroom. Little ones in the country speak out the longing for the beautiful when they gather from their gardens the morning bouquet for "teacher's desk." What harm would it do for each child to have a tiny vase on her own desk in which, for many weeks, a flower might be daily placed, to sweeten the whole atmosphere with its odour, and with its loveliness awaken in the young heart, so susceptible to all influences, that love of the delicate and beautiful which shall finally become permanently engrafted in their natures?

The pretty additions to the usual utter blankness of the schoolroom cost nothing but a little pleasantly spent time. The value of them cannot be estimated. The smaller scholars cannot study constantly. They are not habituated to it nor fitted for it. Their untrained eye must wander, and their untrained thoughts will wander too. Supposing they look about them on a plain dazzling white wall. What ideas can they gain from it? If it is summer the unshaded brilliancy of the light makes the air more hot and uncomfortable. If in winter there is no contrast to the white of the snow outside—no indication of spring-time and greenery—no hope or thought of summer. Decorate the wall with a bunch of pressed fern leaves, a spray of blackberry, a background of green pine;

hang in the window the creeping *madia virens*, the "wandering jew," or any other climbing or clinging plant. Here is a breath of coolness in the hot noontide. The breeze lifts the leaves and shakes the blossoms. Here is a bit of summer imprisoned and kept in the wintry season, for the little ones to poetize and dream about in their sweet, hopeful way when they are weary of their lessons. Remember how lovely these things are to you at home, good teachers and superintendents. A little money and a little time are all that are needed to make your schoolrooms happy homerooms for the children.—*Golden Rule.*

## MODERN RESTLESSNESS.

Condensed from "Saturday Review."

The winter evening, passed as Cowper describes it, has almost, if not altogether, ceased to exist among social customs, although it remained in the ordinary life of country homes through more than half the century which has gone by since the *Task* was written. Its limit may be taken generally as from six o'clock till ten; the "bubbling and loud-hissing urn" belonging to the opening scene, the hours of reading aloud while the ladies were occupied in needle-work and embroidery filling the space between seven and nine. Two hours daily of steady reading throughout a long winter gave a character to the home life in the past which is not likely to be repeated in the future. The *multa* of the circulating library have replaced, in such leisure for evening reading as now exists, the *multum* of the standard work; and with the change the art of reading aloud is dying out for want of practice. We are not recommending any literal return to the old routine. Unless books for reading were judiciously chosen, and enlivened by intelligent comment or explanation, the ceremonial to the elder children, who were not sent to bed till eight or nine o'clock, became insufferably tedious. The reader was usually one of the boys—partly because he could not sew like his sisters, and partly because it was otherwise difficult to keep him quiet and out of mischief—and one evil consequence of the tedious infliction may have remained to trouble his later years. The acquired habit of reading mechanically, although at the same time intelligently and well, while the mind was engaged on entirely foreign subjects of thought, had in some cases become so much a second nature as to make it difficult in after life to fix the attention on the book in reading, whether by the eye alone or with the voice as well. It is, however, certain that the schoolboy of the present day does not read aloud as well as would have been expected of him in a former generation, or as might be now anticipated from his own general intelligence. Information in our time necessarily extends over a wider range. But in ordinary society it is probably neither so solid nor so deep as it once was; and we know at the same time, more books than our fathers knew and less of them. Modern restlessness is incompatible with the steady progress of home education, which did in a manner go on within such circles as Cowper pictures; the newspaper, of course, forming only an accident and not the substance of the evening readings. Nor can there be any doubt that, to minds accustomed to the indulgence of the restless spirit, and seeking relief in continued movement and variety, the quiet winter life of the country home would be intolerably dull. Our contention is, not that every one is bound to find gratification in being thrown on the personal and literary resources of a country home, but that we ourselves, if we choose to take delight in such simple surroundings, have a right to enjoy our own tastes and to express our predilection, without being exposed either to censure as misanthropes and curmudgeons, or to pitying commiseration as a kind of half-conscious dormice.

We have spoken so far of the recurring intervals of a quiet life as affording opportunities for mental cultivation which are not so easily secured amidst the rush of modern restlessness. But in another way these intervals have their educational value as a preparation for the work of the world. That work, in the uphill course of the great majority of men who have their own living to earn, is necessarily very monotonous in its routine. Life, for the rank and file in the hosts of great communities, must move with the unvarying regularity of a machine; and its periods of daily rest, or of the brief relaxation of infrequent holiday, are for most men closely limited by conditions of time and of means. The early experience of being thrown on personal resource, and of being taught to find pursuits and interests within available reach and accessible always, is a better discipline in view of such a future