

**Glimpses into Schoolrooms — III.**

BY THE EDITOR.

A correspondent considers this series of talks on "Glimpses into Schoolrooms," as one of the most helpful and encouraging features of the REVIEW, because few teachers have the opportunity to visit other schools, and "because many teachers, from long meditating on their own troubles in school, sometimes imagine that they are the only ones who have any difficulties. So, in your account of visits to schoolrooms do not give us only the bright side of the picture. Tell us some of the trials and troubles, and how they are overcome."

These records of visits to schools are intended to help teachers, and if the editor has so far strayed into the good schools, it was not intentional to do so, but rather to take them as they come, and to afford glimpses not only of those recently visited, but to call up pleasant impressions—or otherwise—of school work seen in the past. It is much more pleasant to jot down the impressions produced by visiting a school where everything is in "apple pie order" than the reverse picture. There are two difficulties in the way in presenting the latter: In very many schools teachers and children do better work when visitors are present; if both are placed at a disadvantage and obviously embarrassed by the presence of a visitor, the lessons drawn from failure may not be either happy or accurate. Again, the bad schools with harsh, unsympathetic teachers and impish, noisy children are rare,—at least the evidence points that way. If any correspondent will tell the REVIEW of such a school it will be visited, if not too far away.

During a visit to a school a few months ago there was a recitation in geography. The pupils had their books open before them. The teacher asked questions; the pupils answered after consulting their maps or books. There was no interruption to the cross fire of questions until the visitor volunteered one, which was answered readily enough. But it mattered little whether the question was answered correctly or not. The class had no evident interest in the work; there was no opportunity to think, compare, observe, for which the right study of geography is so well fitted; there was no history, current events, travel, incident, or other companion subjects of geography to enliven the lesson. It was geography pure and simple, and so crudely conducted that it was charitable to suppose that teacher and

pupils were merely putting in the time—it was the last half hour of the day.

No subject has been more changed in its methods of presentation during the last decade or two than geography. Instead of memorizing a mass of details, consisting of names of capes, islands, rivers, boundaries, etc., it is now recognized as a distinct branch of science and an important adjunct of nature-study. Its aim is first to make the pupils acquainted with home and its surroundings, and using these as a starting point to proceed to a knowledge of the world—its features, inhabitants, products.

A lesson given to a fourth grade class at a normal institute, which I attended in Eastern Nova Scotia a few years ago, will illustrate how interesting this subject may be made to young children, and how it may be used to train them to habits of observation and reading. The lesson was carefully prepared by a teacher and given as a model to other teachers present.

The teacher had not met his pupils until that morning. A few minutes were spent in obtaining from them what they knew about their surroundings: A village overlooking the Strait of Canso, some few facts about the occupations of the people who live there, and the products and industries of the place, with a few incidental references to the plants and animals found in the neighborhood. The teacher soon gained the sympathy of the pupils, by his own evident interest in all matters that they talked about, and by his offer to take them out that afternoon on an exploring trip. Here was a teacher who volunteered after a few hours' acquaintance with the place (if I am correct in this opinion) to do what some other teachers hesitated to do after weeks or months spent in acquainting (?) themselves with the vicinity of their schools. The remaining time of the lesson was spent in drawing from the pupils their knowledge about the ships in the harbour, what they took away and what they brought back, and the same with the railway, with an imaginary journey on each, and the places probably visited. There were maps and pictures to illustrate these journeys, which though imaginary became very real under the influence of a live teacher.

Bear in mind that the purpose of this lesson was simply to draw from the pupils a knowledge of their surroundings and then to connect the people and products of their home with those of more distant places, without entering into too much detail. In these respects the lesson was indeed a model.