

"Young Folks Circle"

Where Uncle West Presides

It is time to be brave, it is time to be true,
It is time to be finding the things you
can do;
It is time to put by the dream and the
sigh
And work for the cause that is holy and
nigh.

It is time to be kind, it is time to be sweet,
To be scattering roses for somebody's
feet;
It is time to be sowing, it is time to be
growing,
It is time for the flower of life to be
blowing.

It is time to be lowly and humble of
heart,
It is time for the lilies of meekness to
start;
For the heart to be white, and the steps
to be right,
And the hands to be weaving a garment
of light.

UNCLE WEST'S MESSAGE

My dear Nephews and Neices:—You are now back at school and will be settling down to work, and I want you to remember the Progress Club. I feel assured that much good work can be done in preparation for the opening of the spring, when I hope my boys and girls will have learned so much about gardening that they will be ready to undertake the care of at least half an acre, prepare it themselves, and plant it with vegetables or flowers. I am anxiously waiting for your letters containing your application for membership in the Progress movement. Already one or two letters have been received from teachers who are anxious to know what this movement means. Write often and write nice long letters telling me about yourself, your home and your school.

Yours lovingly,

UNCLE WEST.

P.S. I invite correspondence from school clubs.

REPLY TO TEACHER

My dear Teacher:—I am glad to receive your frank letter re Progress Club. I do not think I can tell you of any way for successful teaching that does not involve work; however, there is hard work and work that is not so hard. There is work like going up stream and also rowing down stream, some rowing has to be done in either instance. It is the down stream situation that I wish to talk about. I can see between the lines of your letter that you are a successful teacher. With all your successful experience tell me what portion of the school time are the children engaged in serious study? Do you think it more than forty per cent? What are they doing the other sixty? Does the uneasiness of that unoccupied time give you more trouble than all the rest of the school work put together? It is for some part of that idle sixty per cent. that I am begging, that it may be given to us. Can you spare it? It is profitless for the child and a bane to you; let me have a chance to modify the evils of this idle time. I will give the pupils that which is engaging and instructive. A busy child is easily controlled, something quite obvious to one of your alertness. How will I do it and not make it a grind to you? I know a chef who can make forty-seven kinds of soup from the same stock, and all good soup too. I am ready to declare with great positiveness that I am able to get forty-seven different kinds of educational diversions and benefits from my plan of children's garden clubs and nature studies. The pages of a book would be necessary for me to explain all the combinations, but such is possible. Proof of the pudding is in the eating. Let me have the names of your children, and let us see what may be demonstrated. You may call a halt any time you think the trouble is more than the compensation. In recruiting membership for clubs never coax; make admission a privilege. Do you remember how Tom Sawyer got his fence whitewashed by letting it out in privileges? Imitate Tom's methods. Let me hear from you again.

UNCLE WEST.

Dear Uncle West:—In answer to your query as to how I made a club successful in my school work, I will say the ways are numerous. I will recall the early history of the first club that I ever organized. I was teaching a rural school then and was troubled because of its tardiness. Many children came long distances, and all came from farm homes where both boys and girls have to assist in the chores out of doors and in the house. Those were the reasons usually given when I chided the tardy ones for their shortcomings which I knew in many cases had some show of reason. Yet, I felt that if the opening of the morning session had some attraction so the pupils wanted to be on hand, they would find some way of doing so. I knew the fondness of a child for the sound of his own voice in a meeting that is entirely his own, and I concluded that I would avail myself of this impulse to correct tardiness. I therefore announced that each morning ten minutes would be given to a club meeting directly after the roll call. You may wonder how I made discussion and conference to be attractive to the members. That was the least of my troubles. All children, even those we call dull ones, are investigators. Their observations may often appear trivial to adult minds, but not so to them. In the earlier stages of my experience, one child brought a teasel and asked what the hooks were for. I was not much up on nature study, but I could easily see that it was one of the means of seed dispersal, and the teasel opened up that subject which had a run for several weeks. We had many specimens—burdocks and devils pitchforks galore. One girl brought us the story from her grandmother, how in pioneer days the teasel was used by weavers of woolen cloth to comb the nap. The remarks of one would suggest something to others, and the problem of the chairman of the club was—who should have the floor next. I was ever present as the power behind the throne—I mean the chair, and I always suggested an adjournment before the conference began to lag. A good time to close a meeting or a talk, in fact a letter, is before you get tired of the topic, therefore I remain,

Yours sincerely,

A.M.B.

P.S. I forgot to say that the club meetings abolished tardiness. I would not like to teach school without a club.

Dear Uncle West:—Your Nephews and Neices in the Junior Naturalists' Club have just been passing through a very exciting time. The event was the trial of one of its members for conduct "unbecoming a gentleman." I assure you the affair was taken very seriously. A few days ago the club took a snow shoe excursion and one boy thought it "cunning" to act the rowdy and make himself quite offensive to all the members, particularly the girls. Complaint was made to me, with the request that I inflict some punishment. I suggested that the accused be brought before the club for trial. The offending lad comes from a home where money is freely spent, but the home influences are not of the sweetest and most benign. By a free use of candy and similar aids he had gained something of a following among his school companions, and I at one time feared that I had made a mistake in my method of punishment. The president of the club is a serious-minded lad and he quickly suppressed any flippancy on the part of the culprit's friends during the trial. When the evidence of misdeeds had been presented, and the indignant opinions of members expressed the culprit weakened. Just before the club was to take a vote of censure he asked if he could apologize and be considered in good standing. A motion was made that an apology be accepted and the charges dismissed. The charges formulated by a committee called the offence "trying to be smart." We have had no trouble in this style of smartness since.

Dear Uncle West:—I am getting a lot of collateral benefits from my club. My teaching is among the bread-winning class in this city, and elections and mock courts mean more to my children than do birthday parties to the young people who

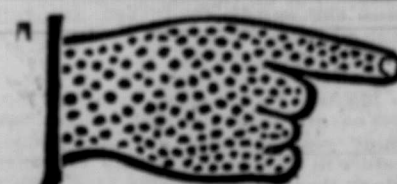
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MENTION
THIS PAPER

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come out of the homes up on the avenue. When a set of club officers are elected politics run high. We have universal suffrage. The most common election cry is, "Shall we have boy officers, or girl officers?" The girls accept defeat more graciously than do the boys. I have no dunce block for bad boys and girls but instead I suspend such from the privileges of the club. A suspended member cannot vote, disfranchisement is more effective than corporal punishment.

Yours sincerely,

J. McN.

THE GERANIUM

All my readers are familiar with the geranium, as nearly all farm houses have a pot of geraniums for their window. The geranium will grow for every one and is much loved because of its bright blossoms. At any season of the year it is possible to have the flowers for study. The single varieties are best for this purpose. No outside help would be needed in getting the children interested in this plant, it would grow in the school house window, and would be of great interest to the children. This lesson is given to cultivate a habit of closer observation of this common plant to our readers, or to help the teachers in interesting their pupils in the care of this homely plant.

Lesson 1

The Geranium Plant.—Note, that the stem is thick and fleshy, there is food stored in these stems which accounts for the readiness with which cuttings will grow. Notice the stipules where the leaves start from the stem, and that these remain after the leaf has fallen. The leaves should be drawn as they offer excellent material for a careful drawing lesson. They are of various shapes, although of one general pattern. Some of them show the dark horse shoe mark which gives the name "Horse Shoe Geranium." The first thing to note about the flower is that there are many flowers growing together in one head. Note, especially how much more showy are the flowers thus arranged than if they were scattered over the plant. Note how many flowers there are in one head. It is well to begin to study the blossom when it is still in the bud. Note that the buds droop; note that the bud at the centre rises first and blossoms. Let the pupils keep a calendar stating each day how

many there are in blossom, whether the center or outside blossoms first, whether some of the blossoms are faded before the last one opens. In studying the single flower, note the five sepals, and five petals, while the double ones have many petals. Note, that the anthers are five in number and that the top of the pistil is five-parted, each division curling back, making it a most exquisite object to look at through a lens. The geranium has been cultivated so long that it seldom produces any seed. It would be well to say something to the pupils about these plants, which have depended upon man so long for their planting and distribution, that they do not raise any more seed for themselves.

Lesson 2

How to Make Cuttings from Geraniums

Purpose.—To familiarize children with the best way to make a cutting and start them growing.

The smaller side branches or the tip of the main stem if the plant shows a tendency to grow too tall, may be used as cuttings. With a sharp knife make a cut straight across, plant the cuttings in deep boxes putting the stem one-third its length into the sand. After about a month the plant may be replanted in fertile soil. The fall is the best time to make the cuttings. (See Cornell Nature Studies, Vol. P 370).

Cr-rash! Sh-r-r-ash! Sh-sh! With a low moan the aeroplane battered itself to bits. With a louder moan the aeronaut fell flat among the dozen beautiful pies that had been placed on the flat roof of the farmhouse by the careful housewife.

"Pardon my untimely interruption," murmured the bird-man, as he mopped the mixture from his features. "But—"

"I'll not pardon you!" snapped the fiery farmer's wife, as she stood on the roof and surveyed the wreckage.

"Really, madam, I couldn't help it," explained the unhappy flying man. "You see—"

"Oh, don't talk to me!" retorted the furious dame. "Couldn't help it, indeed! Why, I saw you falling long before you got here, and hollered to you to go for the hayrick. Couldn't help it! You never paid the slightest attention to what I said at all!"