

4. WHAT HEIGHT SHOULD SCHOOL WINDOWS BE ?

At what height should the windows in schoolrooms be placed above the floor? is a practical question in Boston just now. The architect of the Dorchester Everett School has placed the windows of the two schoolrooms in the upper story five feet above the floor, while those in the other rooms (32) are placed three feet above the floor. The school committee have petitioned the architect for a change of his plans without avail; now they have requested the City Council to order a change to be made. The result does not yet appear. The action of the school committee is as follows:

"Whereas any theory relating to the admission of light, which is correct in its application to thirty-two windows placed *three feet* from the floor in eight rooms, cannot be correct in its application to ten windows placed *five feet* from the floor in two rooms, all in the same schoolhouse.

"Ordered, That the City Council be respectfully requested to cause the windows of the two schoolrooms described in the preamble of this order, to be lowered to the height of the windows in the other schoolrooms of the same building."

Two things strike us as remarkable in this discussion. The first is, that no uniform rule prevails in the mind of the architect as to the proper location of windows for the admission of light; and the second is, that the school committee of a city is powerless to secure valuable results in architecture, heat, light, and ventilation, when its views may be in opposition to those of an architect who may or may not know the requirements of school hygiene.

In a recent article in an architectural journal with reference to schoolhouse windows, the following "practical considerations that influence the placing of windows in any building" are given; viz., their uses in lighting and ventilating the building, construction, convenience, and architectural effect.

Reasoning from these, the writer claims that the windows of rooms which are to be used as sitting-rooms or living rooms, should be placed low enough to enable the occupants to look out-of-doors: while in rooms to be used only for study or writing, the windows should be so placed as to give sufficient light, and have it come from the right quarter; and that when this is secured, nothing else need be considered. He goes on still further to make a practical application, saying that in schoolrooms five feet is, on the whole, a better height for the sills than three feet.

But are study and writing the sole things to be considered in a schoolroom where pupils from five to fifteen years of age are to spend a large part of their time? Are we to consider, in the construction of these rooms, simply the quantity and direction of the light, as in an artist's studio, a picture gallery, or a photographer's room? or are they to be, at the same time, cheerful, airy, homelike rooms, where the children may be happy as well as studious? or, perhaps, still better, be happy that they may be studious? A good teacher will have no trouble with "children looking out of the windows" three feet from the floor, as the article suggests; and no dun-geon-like contrivance will force children to be studious with a poor teacher.

The schoolroom partakes of the nature both of a study-room and a living-room, and the nearer it can be made like the home of the middle class of scholars, the better. Pictures and flowers and mottoes are employed for this purpose by the most successful teachers; but this element of school-life and school architecture is fast being forgotten in this city, in a desire to imitate foreign examples.—*New England Journal of Education*.

5. ADORNING COUNTRY SCHOOL ROOMS.

The memories at the school-room cling to us through life, and influence us in no slight degree; hence it should be the brightest of all places. There youth, with its love of beauty, its keen appreciation of tasteful adornments, its never-failing admiration of the beautiful in nature or art, spends much of the first years when all impressions are lasting. Later in life, we are clad in the armor of good taste, and awkwardness, uncouthness, or deformity, have little effect on our well protected character; but the child, exposed to these influences, and susceptible to their contamination, has no defence. They steal upon him like the treacherous tide, slowly but surely overwhelming the correct ideas of beauty which are inherent in every soul. As the heliotrope seeks the sunlight, so the soul of the little learner turns to beautiful things, grows, in the contemplation, and drink in their sweet qualities.

In cities, teachers are brought into close competition with each other, and nearly ever one makes an attempt to beautify the room where her pupils congregate, but from lack of funds, taste, or judgment, the attempt is often futile. Few rooms are really decorated, but many have in them some curious and tasteful objects that break the monotony. In visiting hundreds of city schools, I have never

seen a room utterly devoid of beauty. But, during a childhood of district school attendance, and in inspecting many district schools in, at least, two states in the Union, I have seen no more than five that were adorned by any of the thousand beauties that might have been placed in them. The very acme of bare, blank dreariness is reached in these schools. Who does not remember the expanse of rough, smoky wall, relieved by nothing save, perhaps a dusty line of cobweb along the angles? The old rusty stove, broken, perhaps, and minus a leg, the drunken pipe that zigzags its way to the smokiest part of the room, the dilapidated wood-box, the patched blackboard, the dusty, uncurtained windows, the grimy, uncomfortable benches (the bane of all country schools), where little forms lose all their grace, and little faces grow weary and pitiful—all these are parts of the average district school. Yet fond parents send their children to those places, and earnest teachers stand there working for them, and both think they ask a possible thing when they urge the young creatures to be good, to be ambitious, to practice all the virtues. *Can a child be good* when the love of beauty and comfort which God has planted in its heart is *outraged* every hour by its surroundings? Teachers, parents, ask yourselves this question; ponder it carefully, then answer it in *works not words*. If the above be a picture of *your* school-room, begin the work of beautifying it to day. The labour belongs to parents as well as to teachers, but I know, by experience, how hard it is for teachers to impress parents with this fact, especially in the district schools, in whose behalf I write. I say, however, to every teacher, "Begin the work." The children will prove earnest little helpers, and often impart their enthusiasm to the apathetic parents. The first requisites are soap, water, and whitewash. Cleanse the building and the plot of ground surrounding it. If you can, take Saturday for the work; this will show that you do not desire to interfere with the school programme; that you are willing to sacrifice something for the beauty of the room, and will inspire the pupils with a desire to "clean up." Divide your little army of volunteers into companies, giving each division its own work. On this day the "big boys"—bless the roguish, boisterous creatures!—will prove the best workers. Encourage them by judicious smiles, and they will do all the hardest work, leaving the easy and ornamental part for the girls. The uncomfortable benches cannot be remodelled, but they can be cleaned; the smoky wall whitened; the stove polished; the floor and windows washed and the yard freed from all its debris. Then your tired little band must be sent to their homes after you have informed them of some articles they might furnish to make "our house pretty." They rush off to sound the praises of the clean room, and nine out of every ten appear on Monday with some contribution. Some may be wholly unfit for your purpose, but some means may be found of urging Johnny to donate his ugly glaring print to the girl's playhouse, and of disposing of Susie's impossible cotton-flannel cat, without wounding the loving little donors. If the house has no closets, have the large boys make a corner cupboard, to hold the broom, pails, wood, and all unsightly paraphernalia; paint or stain this cupboard, if possible.

Country teachers are rarely burdened with the "filthy lucre," so desirable when one begins to indulge in adornments. Mindful of this, I will give some cheap, yet tasteful articles that may be easily made. To begin with mottoes: These may be made of evergreen, but they are more durable, and even prettier, when cut from dark blue or green paper sold at all stationers, and faced and tipped with a narrow line of gilt paper. The letters should be of ornamental patterns, and be fastened on the wall with pin-head tacks. At the usual elevation of mottoes, the tacks are not visible. The paper need not be attached to pasteboard. For small mottoes, to be framed with evergreen or rustic work, take white card-board and trace the letters and accompanying vines on it. Then paste dried fern leaves and other leaves over the tracing and you have a motto quite as beautiful as any that can be purchased. For cheap frames, encourage the boys to whittle out strips of pine, dip them into a strong solution of logwood, and glue them into the shape of common rustic frames. They look nearly as well as walnut. For money to buy pictures, get parents to contribute, deny yourself some luxury, or give an evening entertainment, conducted by the school, always stating clearly for what purpose the money is to be used. *Select the picture yourself*. Have nothing glaring; quiet, tinted landscapes, children at play, animals resting, these have a charm for any one, though they are nothing more pretentious than lithographs. Procure a large chromo or engraving for the front of the room, if possible, and let it be a subject from which many an instructive "talk" can be framed. I know nothing better for the purpose than the portraits of Washington or Beatrice Cenci.

Brackets can be made in the same manner as the rustic frames. I know no prettier design for the front of the room than a paper motto arched above this large picture, or a group of small pictures and a bracket placed each side, upholding a vase from which Madeira