

In the Country School.

As a general rule there is no other place where a teacher is thrown so completely upon himself for both resources and guidance as in the country school. Nor is this altogether an evil, by any means. If he is a person self-reliant, earnest in his work, well prepared for his vocation, and endowed with the power of meeting emergencies, it may be most fortunate both for him and for his pupils, that he has no superintendent, no cast-iron course of study, no strictly prescribed grades, nor established methods to conform to.

Nothing is more important for any teacher, and this is especially true in the country school, than to be prepared beforehand for whatever may arise. Lack in this regard is probably much more frequently a lack of failure than lack of ability, lack of appliances, or lack of outside support. A wise teacher will be certain to go before no class without having looked carefully over the lesson for the day in the quiet of his study. In this way, he knows precisely what is coming, he knows where difficulties are likely to arise, and he will have plans for meeting them. If he knows his pupils as he ought to know them, he will know where each one is peculiarly liable to stumble, and he will have devised some special plan of meeting that pupil's special needs. Such a course will have an enormous influence in establishing the teacher in the respect and confidence of his pupils. They will feel that whatever may happen, he is master of the situation. And all this is quite as true in respect to matters of discipline and management, as in matters of instruction. In the school world, as in the world of nature, storms seldom burst out without ample warning. The teacher who is alert and thoughtful will take note of threatening phenomena; and he will be prepared to dissipate the storm if possible; if not, to meet it at no disadvantage.

Even in so small a matter as the making of announcements to his pupils, he will be prepared to do it in the proper way, omitting nothing, making no confused or bungling statements, and wasting no words. An excellent aid is to have tablets, or a sheet of loose paper, lying on his desk at all times, on which he will make notes of anything that needs to be said, at any moment when it occurs to him; and then, at the proper time, he will speak by the card.

A little ceremony at times has a good effect, especially upon boys and girls in the country,—a

formal "Good morning," on opening, and a formal "Good night," at dismissal. While this is made formal, it should by no means be heartless; let the tones be round, full, and hearty, and let time enough be taken to make an impression. On the entrance of a visitor, it may be well at times for the teacher to allow the school to rise and greet him with a proper salute. Visiting the schools of Toronto at one time, in company with Superintendent Hughes, nothing impressed me more pleasantly than to see the children rise and, in response to the superintendent's "Good morning, children," make a graceful gesture with the right hand and return a ringing, hearty "Good morning, Mr. Hughes." Some such well-managed ceremony does much to remove the awkwardness and boorishness which too often trouble children in the country.

Of course, every teacher will have a programme; it will be carefully prepared, conspicuously posted, and strictly followed. Such a programme saves much time; but perhaps that is the smallest part of its value. It trains pupils into the habit of planning their work beforehand. It is the lack of this habit which causes more noise, confusion, wasted effort, and vexation, in the world than almost any other one thing. But this is not all, perhaps not the best to be said for the good programme carefully followed. It has a wonderful power in developing a sense of responsibility. At the appointed moment, the exercise is due; it will be rigidly demanded; the pupil knew beforehand that it would be demanded at that time. Thus he grows into the habit of feeling fully responsible for demands which must be met, and for which preparation can be made. It should never be forgotten for a moment, that the effect of a school for good or evil is vastly greater in the habits it fosters than in the formal lessons it teaches; no amount of knowledge acquired can atone for the formation of bad *habits*, of thought, speech, or action. Habits make character; some one has pithily said "Sow an act, and you reap a habit; sow a habit, and you reap a character; sow a character, and you reap a destiny."

One most important point, in all the teacher's planning and preparing, will be to see that every pupil, in recitation hour and in study hours alike, has something pressing upon him to be done, and that he is held strictly responsible for the doing of it. In this one thing alone, lies more than half of the whole matter of governing a school. Pupils who are kept thoroughly busy at what they should