

in this work than in receiving presents for themselves. Such plans as these cannot be carried out everywhere, but try to have as many children as possible share in doing something for others. If one of the class is ill, let fifteen or twenty minutes be spent in writing little Christmas letters to him and send them with a wreath of evergreen to hang in his room, or some other little gift that the children can have a hand in. There will always be someone to be remembered.

If you have not yet made any plans for closing day, and are inclined to think it too much trouble to mark it in any way, think better of it, even now. Remember the children who will have no Christmas pleasures at home, and think how little will make them happy. If you can do no more, at least you can do this. Invite the children all to be present, as for a special occasion. Put on a pretty dress, to do honour to it. Read or tell Christmas stories, sing Christmas hymns, and play games. The simplest refreshments will add to the pleasure, but they are not indispensable.

Where programmes for entertainments to parents and friends are to be carried out, they are probably arranged before this. But you will find some simple recitations that can be quickly got ready, on another page. "Santa Claus' Little Boy" has the advantage of giving an opportunity for the little ones to show what they have learned during the term, and different acquirements of theirs may be introduced.

A word about Christmas decorations. Make up your mind whether you want to make your room look pretty or to display the children's work. You cannot always do both, effectively. It is a good idea to keep one corner for the work. Many things that are pretty when looked at closely do not look well from across the room. In general, aim at getting broad and simple effects. A few yards of red, white and blue scrim, properly placed, are much more effective than the dozens of cheap little flags that we see in so many places; and a few large wreaths of evergreen, or a few large branches of pine or fir, or even two or three small trees are better than a number of niggling little bits of decoration stuck here, there and everywhere. And before you begin to decorate, let the school-room and its approaches be clean. Not with merely negative cleanliness, mere absence of dirt, but with that positive cleanliness which is itself a beauty, and with which Holland is said to shine.

I have seen a bare, shabby country schoolhouse transformed by vigorous use of soap and scrubbing brush and the careful placing of a few flowering plants, into a very pleasant place. "Why," asks a would-be literary lady, in one of Mrs. Whitney's stories, "why was Venus fabled to have risen from the foam of the sea?" "Because," snaps out a practical New England housekeeper, "you must be clean before you can be beautiful."

USE OF GARDEN TEXT BOOKS.

L. A. DEWOLFE.

The chapters of *Beginners' Botany* outlined in the November REVIEW will keep students employed until after Christmas. In the meantime, very helpful lessons for all grades above the third may be found in *Elementary Agriculture and Nature Study*, by Brittain; and *The School Garden*, by Weed and Emerson. Many teachers possess both books. All should have them.

In Brittain's book, a very valuable chapter is that on Contents of a Potato Tuber (page 44). That chapter should be gone over thoroughly. Do everything suggested. No elaborate apparatus is needed. The principles taught and methods used here will assist in similar lessons on page 49-60.

It is not enough to find the composition of a potato. Raise the question of why these elements have been gathered and stored away in the tuber. Did the potato manufacture food for *us* or for *itself*?

Plants, like people, look after their own interests. Do we realize what robbers we are in the matter of food? The potato, through inherited instinct, worked all summer gathering elements from the air and the soil and storing them in the tubers with the apparent hope of a big crop of similar potatoes next year. Every tuber was intended to feed a young potato plant. We steal the tubers from the plant and eat them ourselves.

Possibly, however, we more than pay for the damage we do by selecting the best tubers, multiplying them by cuttings, and thereby not only perpetuate the potato race, but improve it. This, however, we do, not for the potato but for ourselves. The potato has in this country become our servant. During its period of servitude it has changed vastly from the wild potato of the south. From our standpoint, we have improved it. I don't know what the potato thinks about it.

Children take cultivated plants and domestic