

4. HOW I KEEP MY SCHOOL-ROOM CLEAN.

When a school girl, I particularly disliked the days on which I was obliged to help sweep the school-room. I came from the encounter with grimy hands, dusty hair and garments, and if my memory serves me correctly, my temper at such times was not the most angelic. When I became a teacher, I resolved to have as few regular sweeping days as possible. I think I have found out how to keep clean without very much trouble, and my school-room is swept but once a week.

Friday is my cleaning day. When school is out at noon, I say to my little band, "Now, all that want to help me to work, raise hands," and I have plenty to choose from. I select two for sweeping, and two more for a reserve when the others tire; two more shake the carpets; two scrub the vestibule closet and out-houses, and two sweep and put the cellar in order. I put on one of the girl's sun-bonnets, and a big apron and superintend the whole of it. Then we throw open the windows, dust, lay down carpets, wipe finger-marks from the white paint, and wash the zinc. I generally have the whole place fit for Queen Victoria in half an hour. Many hands make the work easy. Then we rake up the leaves, and sweep the yards, and when all is nicely done, we run down to the creek and wash, shake off the dust, have a good laugh, and fall to work over our dinners with rare appetites.

On Friday afternoon, I appoint workers for the following week, to do "general house." They are called "house monitors." Their business is—to pass the water four times a day, go around with the hand-basin twice a day to wet all the slate-rags, sweep the vestibule when necessary, and once a day to wash the zinc and the front door-step. Two carry water and are called "water monitors," and in cold weather I have a "fire monitor." His business is—to bring coal from the cellar, rake the fire, and empty and sift coal. This office is no sinecure, and the work is not the most fascinating in the world. Yet there is quite a rivalry to secure it, as well as the other situations, and I have often my monitors engaged for weeks ahead. They work expeditiously and lose but very little time. They study at home so as not to miss any lessons. I sometimes give little rewards, pencils, picture cards, &c., but all seem to take pleasure in keeping the school-room neat. I have a good scraper at the door, and every morning I put out the door-mat for the accommodation of dusty feet.

Every scholar is responsible for dirt or bits under or near his desk and is obliged to have everything in perfect order before going out at noon or recess. No one is allowed to have eatables in his desk, and the law regarding sassafras and birch, baby-wood and chesnuts, is as inexorable as that of the Medes and Persians!

I have a few careless folks. There are one or two boys that all the soap made, and all the water in the river could not keep clean. They bid daily defiance to combs, towels and the soap dish. If, after line upon line and precept upon precept, they persist in coming with unkempt hair, dirty hands and clothes, I send them home to get freshened up. But my boys are generally neat and capital workers. They don't lean on the broom handle and gossip and giggle as the little feminines do! To be sure I have surprised more than one Highland fling on the cellar floor, when I thought the errand for coal had been lengthy. I have also had small toads brought up in the scuttle. I have seen heavy bayonet thrusts and charges with the broom handles. I have seen the most marvellous double-shuffles executed on the door mat; but all these things do not depreciate their general usefulness and I wouldn't give a copper for a boy who hasn't fun, and whistle and dance in him.

No matter what work I wish done, they are always willing and pleased to help do it. I hardly know the reason. Probably because I always ask them pleasantly—possibly, because they see that I am not afraid of work myself. The place in which I spend eight hours out of twenty-four must be clean and attractive. I cannot do my school work well, or with enthusiasm, amid ugly, dirty unsightly surroundings. I have an aversion to ragged, soiled books, and broken slates—have a place for everything, and there it is kept. Why, we even brush out the flies at night! You think that verging on "old maidism." Well, say it again; I like it! Trustee A. says I will be wanting fly screens, next summer, and Trustee B. says my cellar is clean enough for a milk cellar, and even the big, good-looking, blonde gentleman, with the official title of County Inspector, before whom I stand in fear and trembling, vouchsafed me a crumb of praise on his last official visit.

So, with my girls as neat as pinks, and my boys striving (with many inward groanings) to be methodically inclined, I sit with clean hands and conscience, under my own vine and fig tree; and so puffed up with pride am I at my success, that I think I should not be molested, or made afraid, if the whole School Department at Harrisburg, with Dr. Wickersham at head, were to come down some fine day and inspect the premises.—Miss A. Lee, in *Pennsylvania School Journal*.

5. NECESSITY FOR PLAYGROUNDS.

The question of playgrounds has once more curiously emerged in the discussions of the London Board. Healthy play is surely as necessary to the national vitality and to the progress of the people as "the three R's." There is moral discipline, to say nothing of physical training, in the playground. We may make a fatal error if we limit our ideas of elementary education to books and copy-books and slates.

III. Papers on Practical Education.

1. A TEACHER'S GATHERINGS.

From Dr. Arnold's Life and Letters.

In reading *Dr. Arnold's Life* some years since, I noted down, amongst other points of interest, several that seemed to me to bear specially on Sunday-school work. It has occurred to me to select a few of those points, and, using the passage in which they occur as a text, write a series of short papers, which, I venture to hope, some of my fellow-teachers may find useful.

Dr. Arnold was a teacher of boys, and his wonderful influence with them is well known; and to us who also are teachers of boys, and whose aim it is to influence them for good, it surely is a profitable study to observe the line of conduct which this successful teacher adopted, and the principles by which he was guided, believing that, if we use the same means, the same result will follow.

It will be seen that the style adopted in these papers is, for the most part, suggestive; not by any means exhaustive. Many of the topics briefly touched upon are capable of, and some have received on various occasions, full and elaborate treatment. The references refer throughout to the ninth edition of *Dr. Arnold's Life*.

I.—SYMPATHY BETWEEN TEACHERS AND SCHOLARS.

"To be in sympathy with the mind you propose to influence is at once indispensable, and will enable you in a great degree to succeed in influencing it." (Vol. II. p. 150.) His knowledge of the characteristics of boyhood was very great. 'Often and often,' says one of his pupils, 'have I said to myself, If it is one of ourselves who had just spoken, he could not have known and understood our thoughts and ideas.' (Vol. I. p. 140.)

To be in sympathy with those you would influence is the first condition of success. But some may think that sympathy is out of the question in a case where there is so little in common as must generally be between teacher and scholar. In respect of age, social position, intellectual religious attainments, disposition, taste, and habits of life, very great is the disparity usually found to exist. And yet sympathy is indispensable if any good is to be done. The fact is, sympathy is quite independent of all these inequalities, and can well exist in spite of them. The essence of true sympathy consists in bridging over the gulf which these create—in annihilating social and moral distances—in showing how much there is in common between a man and his fellow-man, and coming near him, and thinking with him, and feeling with him, and suffering with him.

If we would influence the children of our class the very first thing we must strive to cultivate is a genuine sympathy in them, and in all that concerns them. We must bring ourselves down to their level; we must think their thoughts, use their words, see with their eyes, and regard all things from their point of view—in fact live and move in their world.

But, it may be asked, in what practical way can we set about this? I reply, first, we should draw upon our memories to reproduce to us something of our own early years, and see how we thought and felt and acted when we were at the point of the journey our children now are at. Human nature is much the same always, and probably what interested and attracted us at that age, will interest and attract them now; what we disliked and took offence at will probably have a like effect on them. And the great majority of teachers are not so far removed from the time of life we speak of as to make this retrospective method so difficult.

Another way of learning sympathy—the best of all ways—is by means of a kind and gentle manner, a loving heart and zeal in the work, drawing the sympathy of the children to you. There is no way like this.

"A further method is to "understand" the children. I do not now mean understanding generally their thought and ideas, but understanding each child—knowing the individual lives, the peculiarities, weaknesses, wants of each. A moment's reflection will show the value of this. The more we know of them, and interest ourselves in them, the more shall we gain their interest; hence will result a regular and full class, and also an attentive class. The better the teacher is known the greater scope will there be for that