

## IN THE HOME

By Mrs. R. C. Cruickshank

It is hard to believe in a successful primary teacher, who is not known and loved, or, at least, respected, in the homes from which her little scholars come. Not the least part of her work is her visits to them. In dealing with small children, the co-operation of the parents is most important, but, strange as it may seem, it is not always given unasked, even by church members. "Oh, yes, Willie may go if he likes," is often the grudging assent that is received. Here is where the teacher can prove the usefulness of her visiting. A few pleasant calls, and the knowledge brought home to his mother that the teacher really cares whether Willie is there or not, that in her eyes he is an important addition to her class, and the mother is enlisted as a helper, and it is "I'll see that he comes every Sunday he possibly can."

If the class is large, frequent visits are not always possible; but twice a year might be managed, and in cases of sickness, trouble, or poverty, of course, oftener.

As in all work, so in this, common sense is indispensable. Every woman knows Monday morning is not a suitable time for a call. The teacher should make it her aim that her visits should be as welcome as possible, and if she choose unseasonable times she can hardly expect a welcome. But if inadvertently she come in at a busy time, the least she can do is to offer to call some other day, or perhaps she may be allowed to go into the kitchen or wherever the work is being done, and so not be a hindrance. Many of the mothers cannot afford to stop work.

Many of the poorer homes are dull and commonplace; and a pretty gown and bright presence may bring an unspoken cheer to the hearts of those who love beauty, and yet have not the money nor education to compass it for their own belongings. It is a great mistake to say "anything will do to wear." The poorer the home the more likely they are to appreciate a daintily-dressed visitor.

Some teachers, going among those who are poorer or who hold a position socially lower than their own, feel justified in asking questions and making remarks they would never think of making to those in their own "set." And what won-

der if this is repeated, and the mothers are as non-committal as possible. Undue curiosity is always rude, and any lack of politeness is not passed unnoticed by women whose humble position may perchance lead to over-sensitiveness. On the other hand one should be quick to see and encourage the slightest hint of a desire to confide. To have the tact to know which is the heart that craves to unburden itself, and which will bear its sorrow best alone, is to be blessed indeed. Such "consecrated tact" is invaluable.

One of the things to be most studiously avoided is tale-bearing. If a teacher cannot manage the small boys and girls in her class it is very doubtful whether home authority will help. Tale-bearing is much more likely to create dislike in the mind of the accused child. Instead, let the teacher go prepared to praise, having treasured up anything and everything to be said in the scholar's favor. If it is only a question answered, a pleasant smile, even a pretty dress worn last Sunday, let her mention it. A single word of commendation will help more in winning the sympathy of the mother, and in encouraging the small scholar, than a hundred of reproof or blame.

It is no light matter this home visiting by the primary teacher. It needs prayer, sympathy, patience and love. She must be able to rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep, be ready to taste the just-made preserves, to give an opinion as to the relative merits of blue and pink for Mary's new dress, as to whether Johnnie will look better with or without his curls—any thing that will show her to be interested in what concerns her scholars and their homes. Happy is the teacher whose name comes first to the lips of the mother when trouble or sickness are in the home. She is sowing seed in the hearts of the children, and, incidentally it may be, in the hearts of the others in the home, which, God blessing it, may spring up to bear some thirty, some sixty, and some an hundred fold.

St. John, N.B.

Teach your children to chant the 23rd, 100th, 121st Psalms, and long after other Primary Exercises are done away with they will have these words in their hearts never to be forgotten.—Mrs. Alstrom.