

## SCHOOL OCCUPATIONS.

BY EVELYN S. FOSTER.

We have all heard of the the Frenchman's three rules for happiness, each rule consisting of the the one word "Occupation." We are equally familiar with the old saying about the mischief supplied for idle hands. If men and women need something to do to make them happy and to keep them out of evil ways, surely we demand too much of little children when we tell them to be quiet and good and yet give them nothing to do. In the first years of school-life, the pupils cannot gain much profit from a study-hour, or even a study-halfhour. A Boston teacher, whose success in his profession gives weight to his opinion, once said to me: "Never ask your little pupils to study longer than ten minutes at a time." In many schools the older pupils would be neglected if the primary children received the teacher's attention at the end of every ten minutes. It becomes then quite important to find something for the little ones to do that will not be play, and yet will not be study, but will be as interesting to them as play and perhaps as helpful as study. Happily the child is easily pleased.

We have sometimes given our primary pupils large pieces of printed paper and asked them to prick holes in each word they knew. To hunt for these words seemed to them like a game of hide-and-seek, and it kept them quiet for a long time. One needs to be careful to find pieces of paper on which the print is not too fine before giving this task to the children. Many of the advertising cards are quite pretty, and may be cut into pieces, thus forming dissected pictures. If the pieces of each card are kept in an envelope, it will not be much trouble to distribute the pictures to the children. An idea of form may be given by these cards, as some may be cut into squares, some into triangles, etc. A box of wooden tooth-picks may be purchased for a few cents. These are easily broken and bended, and so can be formed into letters, words, and figures.

We knew a teacher once who allowed her youngest pupils to write letters to her, which, after school, they placed in a drawer of her desk called the "post office." Here, too, in the morning they found answers. It was a delightful occupation to the children to write and receive letters. As the term advanced,