

EDUCATION.

Keeping up the Interest.

Were I required to give a rule in four words, for exciting an interest in school duties, it would be this: *keep each mind employed.*

Much may be accomplished by oral instruction; but hard study on the part of the pupil is necessary to mental vigor. Children should be taught ideas, not merely to commit to memory a confused mass of words, without connection or sense, or learn answers to questions contained in their books. Too many "complete their education" without learning how to study.

Emulation should be encouraged, so far as is consistent with harmony and good feeling; but, remember, emotions of envy and jealousy are easily excited in the youthful mind. Prizes are sometimes distributed by vote of the school. This accords perfectly with the republican spirit of our age. It is well to award prizes for amiable deportment towards teachers and playmates, as well as for good lessons.

Teachers are often troubled to find suitable employment for the infant portion of their schools. People are beginning to believe that children under six years of age, can best be instructed at home. Many, however, continue to send such little ones to school,—"it is so much trouble to teach them," "so convenient to feel that they are taken care of." If they come, let us take care of them. When the weather will admit of it they can, for the greater part of the time, employ themselves to the best advantage under a shade tree; but when obliged to confine them within doors, we should contrive to make their imprisonment as agreeable as possible. A slate and pencil, with small drawing cards or figures on the blackboard for them to imitate, answer a very good purpose. At all events, we must keep them busied, or they will give us plenty of business.

It is important that every association connected with school, should be pleasing. The reading exercise, which is often a lifeless repetition of what has been read many times before, may be made full of interest. A little monthly periodical, entitled *The Student and Schoolmate*, is extensively used as a school-reader. It is full of instruction and amusement, and children are delighted with it. Suppose a class subscribe for it: let all the numbers be kept through the month, in the hands of the teacher. Before reading, each member of the class is required to study carefully the article selected for the lesson, and, by the use of a dictionary, ascertain the meaning of every word not fully comprehended. No pupil should read a new piece, until he can properly read, spell, and define any word in the old lesson.

The old method of spelling senseless columns of words should be abolished. We have all seen those who could, parrot-like, spell page after page without "missing," and, yet, in writing, would misspell every fourth word.

Children ought, for several reasons, to learn writing quite young: 1st, Because it is the best way ever yet invented to teach spelling; 2d, That they may write sentences, and thus learn something of composition before they are old enough to feel diffident about it; 3d, Because it pleases them exceedingly.

The faithful teacher makes the duller studies interesting. His heart is in the work. Every item of foreign news, amusing anecdote applicable to certain lessons, ancient and modern history, are carefully treasured to give variety and life to recitations. Singing at the close of school inspires a kindly social feeling, and drowns the cares and vexations of the day. If music is taught in school, let the instruction be given at some fixed other hour. Then, at night, join in some favorite tune, and let all sing as well as they can. Even the little lisper will soon catch the sounds, if he don't the language. Those unfortunate teachers who cannot sing need not despair, for they may have scholars who can. So, let all our schools be singing-schools. We should not wholly disregard the amusements of our pupils. An occasional pic-nic, enjoyed with other schools, a pleasure excursion on a fine holiday, a meeting with them on a clear evening to point out the planets and constellations,—all throw a golden tinge over school days, and make impressions as enduring as the mind.—*New Hampshire Journal of Education.*

Favorites in School.

Some months since while engaged in teaching a grammar school, the mother of a pupil in our Intermediate Department remarked to

me with great bitterness, "Miss S. has favorites in school, I am told!" "That is hardly possible," was the reply, "in so desirable a department where there are so many lovable scholars and so few to dislike; there must surely be some mistake." Now as Miss S. had for a long time taught near me and succeeded so admirably in every arrangement, I felt truly indignant, having never known a neglect of duty on her part towards those whom she instructed, and I resolved that no effort of mine should be spared in bringing the parent to see the truth of what I had said. I thought much of the remark until I became sensitively alive to every look and tone, expecting soon to hear a similar one designed for me, though conscious of uprightness in that respect. At length I resolved to test my associate teacher. "You have a very pleasant school—such kind, affectionate pupils," I remarked. "O, yes," she replied, "pretty good; but there is a girl (pointing cautiously) that I almost despise! so awkward and uncouth, it seems as if she never would learn to do any thing well." "Is she badly behaved?" I asked. "No, not really bad, only as I have said—so disagreeable—and then she dresses so very much out of taste that one is disgusted with her all the time." "O, is that all? do you, indeed, dislike her because she is not graceful and is poorly dressed? Poor child! who will love such when we whose duty it is to love and help them fail to do so?" "O I can help her," was my friend's reply, "just the same, but perhaps I am not considerate enough; I don't like her and probably never shall. And there is George B—the most hateful boy that ever stepped into boots; only yesterday he brought Cayenne pepper to sprinkle on his neighbors' desks and make them sneeze. I guess his back tingled for one while when I found him out! But what would you have done under the circumstances?" "I might have served him as once I did a lad for bringing snuff and distributing it until there was a general sneezing around the room. I called the rogue to my desk and obliged him to take the remainder from his box before us all. Whipping would have done no good, as he would have braced himself to receive all I chose to inflict, and then felt ready for something else as bad. But he was too sensitive to endure being laughed at, and at length asked pardon, promising never again to disgrace himself and trouble his teacher, which promise was duly remembered. But George—does he suspect your feelings towards him?" "Suspect? he knows very well that I do not like bad boys, and I have given him my views of his conduct pretty plainly. He is always in some mischief. I don't see when he gets his lesson; I am sure never to see him study here, and his books seldom are taken home." "Perhaps you might find him some employment, and thus prevent the trouble his mischief causes you. A book to read; extra examples to perform; a card to draw; or, better than all—something to do for his teacher that will make him feel usefully employed, and thus exhaust the surplus energy that will be expended in some way. And little Mary too, perhaps after all she sees you care less for her than her more fortunate neighbor, and has therefore become reserved and embarrassed before you. Many a little being fails to act out its generous, loving nature, for that very reason, and goes yearning and craving in awkward silence the love and appreciation it never receives." "Thank you; it may be so," said my friend, "I will try in future to look more deeply into these little hearts and see. He truly is no friend who does not try to improve us."

Are there not many teachers who never understand the peculiar dispositions of their pupils, or who are careless in administering judicious punishment? With dispositions so varied and home surroundings so different, no wonder we sometimes fail to judge rightly of character and also to estimate its real value. A severe reproof might crush the spirit of a sensitive child, while it might be a needed discipline to another temperament. Kind words fall soothingly on hearts unused to gentleness, and who may know where they are the most needed! A boy once told me "no one ever loved him." Can it be that in this Christian land there are others who thus long for sympathy and love? God grant that those to whom is committed the guardianship of young immortals should be faithful in the ministrations of love, and that both giver and receiver be made better by its influence.—*Connecticut Common School Journal.*

Music a Means of Preserving Health.

It is the opinion of our distinguished townsman, Dr. Rush, that singing by young ladies, whom the customs of society debar from many other kinds of healthy exercise, should be cultivated not only as an accomplishment, but as a means of preserving health.