

* Hints and Helps. *

ADORN THE SCHOOL ROOM.

MAKE your school-room pretty. Somewhere I have read: "The influence of the teacher over the scholar is next to the parent. The school-room, in pleasant association, should be next to the home." Our children have come from all sorts of homes and influences. To some beauty and taste are so closely connected as to form a part of their being, while others are strangers to all such save, perhaps, an occasional glimpse of the fairy land. The fine sensibilities should be kept untarnished, the dormant ones awakened to activity. How is this to be done? Have, as nearly as possible, the surroundings such that the mind may feed upon. Awaken and cultivate a desire to study the new and beautiful. Fill the room with that which will have a tendency to elevate and refine. Children admire pictures. Let them bring some of their own little pictures from home, or each contribute a few pennies which, put with the teacher's mite, will buy a picture or two. Encourage them to bring flowers, shells or pretty stones. A glass jar with two or three windows will be quite an ornament. Fill the jar half full, or more, with water, put in a handful of pebbles and sand, also a bit of a branch or any swamp grass or weed. These will answer for a hiding place for the fish. Don't forget to pour out nearly all the water every day and put in fresh. —Independent.

SYSTEM FOR ARBOR DAY.

BY ONTARIO TEACHER.

I BELIEVE that at present in the majority of schools in Ontario, Arbor Day is observed by the planting of a few trees—often very few—and that, without system or ceremony, that might prove a lesson and remain a stimulating memory to pupils in after years.

I do not believe in complex systems in work, nor in undertaking too much at a time, but I do believe in extending the improvements of Arbor Day to other things as well as tree-planting, and that some system should govern our work on that particular day. We are required to teach, to maintain proper order and do school work in general, systematically, why not Arbor Day's operations? During each year the defacings of school property by time, weather and the pupils are great, and demand attention, as well as the adornment of school premises.

I have a large ungraded school, having a daily average of fifty-six pupils in attendance. To avoid difficulty and disorder, placing and keeping each at his proper place and work on Arbor Day, I tried to think of some plan by which all might know just what to do and be interested in the doing of it.

This is the plan I finally devised, tried on May 6th last, and found to work satisfactorily. I give it to fellow-teachers for the few suggestive thoughts it may contain.

I divided the work for Arbor Day into four classes, viz., (1.) Tree planting and pruning. (2.) Improving interior of school room. (3.) Improving grounds and fences, and (4.) Supplying materials required for Arbor Day work, such as: spades, hammers and nails, saw, garden-rakes, etc. I placed each of these departments in charge of a committee of six pupils, who were to be responsible for the carrying out of all work in their respective lines. The committees were named respectively, "Tree Committee," "School-House Committee," "Ground and Fence Committee," and "Supply Committee." To these I added a "Programme Committee," instructed to prepare a suitable programme to be rendered at the close of the day's work. A member of each committee was chosen, by myself, to act as overseer of the work of the committee of which he was a member, and to record the completion of each item of work on a sheet of paper, on which was outlined the work to be done. The overseers handed in their reports at the end of each hour to the teacher, thus giving the latter an idea of the progress of each department of work.

In the tree-planting, each tree was planted in honor of some person or persons and for each class in the school. A tree was planted by one chosen from each class to plant the tree picked out by his or her class, the pupil doing the "planting" by

fastening on the tree a red ribbon, on which was marked the name of the class and the words, "Arbor Day, 1892." Trees were also planted in honor of others connected with the public schools, one for the people of the section, another for the trustees, another for the Inspector, another for the Minister of Education, and one for the teacher; these also having bright ribbons, properly marked, waving from their centres.

While the trees were being planted, pupils and teachers joined in singing "The Maple Leaf for Ever." It was indeed very impressive. My mind peering forth into the deep future seemed to see these very pupils at more advanced years, looking back with pleasant recollections on the scene of today, feeling thankful for the lessons of "natural piety" they had learned when they, with their own hands, had planted these noble trees, and revering the stately trees, whose planting they had the honor of witnessing and whose praises they had so heartily sung.

With the teacher's supervision, and the active, willing work of the little ones, the day sped on happily and by four o'clock (indeed, it was five o'clock before we were through with work), the grounds and school had received a marked improvement.

As soon as the work was finished, and each overseer had proudly presented me with his report, carefully completed, we entered the school, and for a few minutes were entertained by the fine selections the Programme Committee had prepared during the week. A few remarks on the day's work, and a few suggestive thoughts for the future, gathered from the day's work, were given to the pupils by the teacher, and then all, young and old, little ones and larger ones, wended their way home, doubtless wearied, but, nevertheless, having a greater love for "Arbor Day" and "Nature," than ever they had, and enjoying the satisfaction of knowing that the day had been made more attractive and more useful by their presence.

Who can estimate the value, to the minds of the future men and women of our land, of a day thus spent, chiefly in the worship of nature. Let us have more of it; and may the time soon come when our legislators will see it to be their duty to enforce as strictly the observance of Arbor Day systematically, as to enforce the observance of other days, of not half the importance.

THE PLAYHOUR IN A COUNTRY SCHOOL.

BY FRED BROWNSCOMB*, PETROLIA.

IN response to the frequent demands in THE JOURNAL for school games, I shall endeavor to describe such as I have found practically useful, beginning with those suitable for the winter.

OUT OF DOORS.

The present is the season when the big boys and often young men turn their attention for a time to the school. Being too old for children's games, they ordinarily prepare for an extended course of "loafing," than which nothing is more productive, not only of mischief, but of positive evil.

This is how I found things at my first school. A goodly number of my pupils, some of whom came solely "to have some fun," were within a year or two of my own age, and lurking rebellion and ill-concealed impertinence made school government a tremendous nervous strain.

FOOTBALL.

As a means of getting them out of doors at noon and recess, it occurred to me to try football. I talked the matter over with the boys, got them to subscribe each a small sum, and bought a ball. And then what a change there was. By taking an active part in the game myself, singling out the natural leaders of the school and frequently asking and acting on their advice, I soon had established such relations with them that the government problem ceased to be a problem, and those who came to scoff remained to play football. Then, by arranging several friendly games with neighboring schools the enthusiasm of the boys was so maintained that spring came without any of the outbreaks I had feared taking place.

Since that time I have regarded a football as a much more necessary adjunct to a school than a rubber strap, and to every teacher who asks me, "How am I to get along with those boys?" my invariable reply is "Get a football."

"What! In January?"

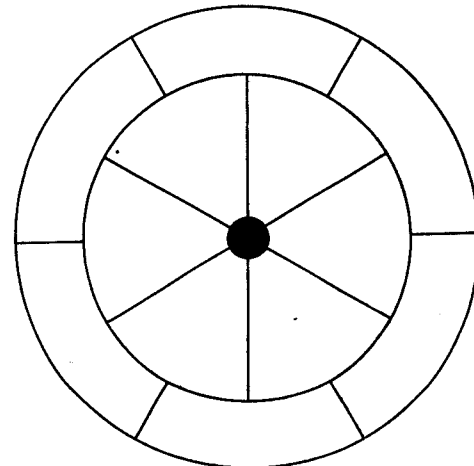
Certainly, and help use it yourself too. The two feet of snow in your school-yard will be very quickly packed down so as to be no impediment to the players. Your most mischievous pupils are those who are the most active, and the football supplies a legitimate outlet for their energies, leaving them much more manageable in school.

As to what to play, owing to the great differences in size and strength of the pupils in a country school, the game under association rules, is I think, to be preferred to Rugby.

Occasionally, when there are not many players, the boys play cricket with the football, using wickets, etc., and following the rules of cricket, but placing one foot before the wicket and kicking the ball instead of using a bat.

FOX AND GEESE.

A very good game to play immediately after a fall of snow is "Fox and Geese." After the boys have tracked a large figure in the snow as below, one, the fox, takes his stand in the centre, while the rest, the geese, take any position on the tracks they choose. When all are ready, the fox rushes out (along one of the lines) and endeavors to touch any of the geese. When one is touched he assists to catch others, and so on till all are caught. No one may be caught while standing in the centre and no one may leave the track while playing. The first caught is the fox for the next game.



Skating and snow baling, which require no description here, about conclude the number of outdoor winter sports for the school.

WITHIN DOORS.

Provide yourself the following games, which may be obtained at any book store: Game of Authors, game of Logomachy, or War of Words, game of Nations, and Checkers. They will cost you about a dollar only, and you will find the money very well invested.

If you wish to get more than these, or others more expensive, your best plan is to hold an entertainment at the school and charge an admission fee of ten or fifteen cents; the proceeds will enable you to buy games sufficient in number and variety to keep your pupils happily busy in the playhour for many days to come.

But entertainments may be distasteful to you, and you may not feel called upon to lighten your purse as above mentioned. Then get your pupils to assist you in manufacturing "home-made" games which will, in some respects, prove more satisfactory than the purchased articles. Here are a few:

CARD GAMES.

Take some pasteboard boxes, or pasteboard in any shape, to school, and have your pupils cut sixty pieces an inch and a half or two inches square. Number these 1 to 15, four of each number. With them you may play "Snap," "Animal Grab," "Pig," and "Old Maid." Snap is played as follows: The cards are dealt face down, and held so by the players, an equal number to each. The one next the dealer lays down a card in front of himself, face up, and each of the others in turn does likewise. The first player then plays again, laying his card on the first one he played. This is continued till two players have on the cards at the top of their packs the same number; then each of these players calls out "Snap," the first to call taking up both packs, after which the play goes on as before. Continue till one player has all the cards.