

MOTHERS' CLUB HOLDS MEETING.

Mrs. Nullo read an excellent paper, which was as follows:

A visit to the Lincoln school in Santa Barbara, Calif., three years ago revealed conditions as nearly what they ought not to be as it is possible to find in any public school in this country—rough, weed-grown grounds, dilapidated buildings, dirty and disfigured furniture, much of it refuse, banished from the other buildings of the city, a very high record of tardiness, disorder, rowdiness, and viciousness, and an almost entire lack of anything that might be called a wholesome and proper school spirit.

The reputation of the school was bad; its traditions were wholly wrong; it was looked upon by the board with disfavour and treated as a necessary evil. Two things, however, the school did possess: plenty of children and a few good teachers.

Unfortunate experiments in trying to "fix things up" at the Lincoln school made the getting of money from the board for improvement pretty nearly an impossibility. They did, however, as a sort of a joke, give the superintendent an old tool shed, a building occupying a part of a weed patch that served for a playground, on condition that he should get it moved away without expense to the district. The discovery of some good building material in its walls resulted, after rigorous efforts on the superintendent's part, in the sale of the old wreck for \$75, and upon the expenditure of this sum depended the physical transformation and rejuvenation of the school.

Previous efforts at flower growing and tree planting had resulted every time in the theft or destruction of every plant put out. This time, however, a course of the entire yard was made and the co-operation of the parents secured in the effort to collect proper plants and trees. The enthusiasm of the pupils was worked up to the point of clearing the yard and getting it ready for the new shrubbery. A professional gardener living nearby volunteered to supervise the planting, and a committee of parents petitioned the superintendent to make it the "palm school" for the year, and to plant only palm trees. So great was the interest aroused that nearly thirty varieties of palms were given and some forty others bought by subscription—and all this among laboring people. A fine design was made and with climbing vines and roses, and all kinds of flowers. Then the school board took hold of the movement, the play ground was graded and the building repaired and repainted. Today it is one of the most beautiful and well kept places in the city.

All this helped some in decreasing tardiness and lessening absence, but it was soon seen to be only the beginning of things needed. Ground was secured and a fine garden planted. Vacant lots nearby were rented, fixed up and planted with potatoes, squash and pumpkins, and the proceeds realized from the sale of these crops were used to equip a building in the basement. The old style, worn-out desks were banished from two of the large school rooms and replaced by chairs and tables at less cost to the board than in new desks would have been. One of these rooms was turned into a workshop for the girls, corresponding to the shop for the boys—and the other room was made a workshop for both the smaller boys and girls.

Much of the old formal order of the school room disappeared; the children helped each other, they work together at hand work and they study and recite together. From the first grade to the eighth, this idea of working together is carried out and yet there is no working in control on the teacher's part nor lessening of real "good order" on the part of the pupils. One group of children will be found gathered about a "rug frame," transferring the busy fingers a piece of old burlap and some discarded clothing into a serviceable rug; another group is tying a quilt; another building a book case; and still another constructing a punt for surf boating. And during all this time, while their hands are busy, they are talking over or reciting their lessons, most of which are based upon the things they are working with. At work with cotton goods they have a lesson in geography and history and they get its geography and history and nature study because they have a real reason for wanting to know it. Arithmetic and language grow out of the work in the same way, and with a like living interest.

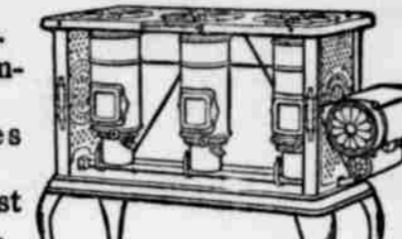
The courses of training that this school is giving are as varied as the home needs of the locality and the different mental tendencies and physical requirements of the children. For example, there is a course in mending—mending anything that belongs in or about the home, whether of paper, or cloth, or wood, or leather, or iron, or tin, or crockery. Everything about the school is thus repaired, and many things are brought from home.

And this is the way of it: A broken thing is placed before two or more children and they are asked to mend it. When they have done this, they report to the teacher and after some discussion a plan is adopted and carried through to success, whether on the first trial or on the third. And an acute persuasion that the educational value of a problem like that is equal to any that may be found in books. The ingenuity that some of them display in this mending is quite remarkable, and the training that they get makes not only for power but for culture as well, and for utility. These children have mended and reconstructed more than a hundred chairs and desks and other articles of school furniture, they have rebound more than two hundred school books and they have constructed many cupboards and bookcases and shelves and other things of use for the various rooms. Before anyone can start upon the construction of any new thing he must draw a working diagram of the thing, and figure out just how much stuff it will take and what it will cost. There are courses in sewing and quilting and rug making and basketry and housekeeping, simple housekeeping; and a course in selecting and buying the simple things needed for the home. They have "show judging contests," and cloth judging contests and fruit judging and vegetable judging—in their gardens and "patches" come to maturity.

One of the most acceptable features of this work is its economy. Of course almost anything can be done in an educational way where plenty of money is forthcoming. But in this school all of the various kinds of work are based upon the principle that there must be little or no expenditure. For the shop work, refuse lumber from the mill and discarded dry goods boxes have served for almost the entire supply. For the girls'

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department, burlap bags and sacks and old clothing and remnants from home have been used. One example will illustrate the method followed: The work is divided into the work in baskets, etc., but traffic costs a good deal of money for so many children, so they were told by the superintendent that they must discover some plant that would furnish them with the raw material for all this work. For weeks they searched the hills and the swamps and the fields, making experiment after experiment, until at length they found a flexible stem that would do for the framework and that has proven almost equal to the purchased rattan. These materials they gather, and cure, and color for themselves, and weave into waste paper baskets, hand bags and all sorts of decorative articles.

On investigation by a veral of the teachers, it was found that nearly half of all the girls in that school of about three hundred were the only home-keepers their homes had, many of them, too, under the age of ten years. This investigation also revealed home conditions that were pitiful in many cases and unsatisfactory in most instances. To remedy this, one of the rooms of the school was turned into a kitchen and by screens into a kitchen a living room and a bedroom and there these girls, big and little, are taught how to keep house, to cook and to buy the simplest and cheapest foods; how to mend, how to sew, how to make a bed; and how to sweep and clean; and how to decorate in a plain and tasteful way.

At the close of the term, the children of this Lincoln School of Home Industry had a "day at home" which lasted for three days, and "a fair," at which the products of their hands were offered for sale. Hundreds of people from all classes visited the children at their work and the net receipts for the fair exceeded a hundred dollars. From all parts of the city are coming requests that something like the same plan be followed in the other schools of Santa Barbara.

And the results are certainly being little short of wonderful. The whole spirit of the school has been transformed and the entire neighborhood uplifted. And this, too, it must be remembered, under as hard conditions, perhaps, as any city in this country is required to meet. None of the teachers had any special training for this kind of work. The plan had to be wrought by experiment. The attendance averages have leaped from 85 per cent to almost 97 per cent, tardiness is at a minimum, the spirit of the school is right and the general deportment as good as in any school I have ever visited. Formerly more than 70 per cent of all the pupils dropped out before getting through the seventh grade. Now 85 per cent stay in until the eighth grade is reached. I was particularly interested in going over the results of the regular December examinations given by the county board of education to all the schools of the county, and to my intense surprise I found the papers written by the pupils of this school as high as any in the county, in spite of all the time given to the industrial work, and better by far than this school had ever before produced. This is a convincing evidence of efficiency.

Mrs. Treiber read the following blue paper, which was selected from American Motherhood: Do you know her, that other mother of your little sons and daughters? Those little beings who until six years, or possibly kindergarten and beyond, are but little other than your thoughtful care and influence, now go somewhere at 9 o'clock every morning and again at one in the afternoon to spend five or six hours of each school day in immediate contact with some personality other than your own. Have you taken the trouble to become really acquainted with that personality, and its probable influence upon your child? You know the children go to learn numbers, to write and observe, to cultivate mental, and to some extent physical powers, but they learn more than this.

You take for granted that they are well taken care of, resting to the good judgment of superintendent and school board to place over these little people, people who are capable and worthy of trust. Yet school boards and superintendents are not infallible, and sometimes are in places of such responsibility through other agencies that natural fitness for the position. Let us hope that Frances Willard's beautiful words of praise in the main applicable. She has said: "This Christian land has no higher heritage than its grand army of public school teachers. As a rule their moral culture equals, if it does not excel, that of the average citizen. Very rarely does the press bring to light irregularities of deportment among those who are set to enforce the principles of good behavior among their pupils. There is also a deep interest among teachers in the subject of moral education in the public schools. The

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ing of an occasional meal, permits the opportunity for the teacher to observe the influences surrounding the child in the home and so enables her to individualize in this great work which is hers. This closer touch with the school life on the part of mothers will cause them to see the great necessity for developing a well trained profession. To have that we must have a well paid one, and one not to be entered into thoughtlessly. Gladstone says: "Education is an atmosphere, a discipline, a life." It is not mere brain culture.

Realizing this, should we not demand that those who train our children during the hours they are not with us, shall fully realize the magnificent possibilities of those in their charge; who see in these little beings the embryonic power to command all forces, and to make goodness and truth and purity, honor and integrity the touchstones of living, that "all life is education, and all education a growth." All mothers are not impressed with these vital facts, and we need not only to train the teachers, but also the mothers. This mother training should begin long years before the little beings who call us mother are here. When high school and college courses shall embrace instruction upon the care and understanding of physical powers and well being, the preparation for parenthood, in that day of enlightenment may we expect ideal mothers, who shall co-operate with ideal teachers in the perfect development of the child.

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