

Hints for Home Schoolrooms.

BY MRS. THOMPSON.

To those who are teaching in home schoolrooms and would like to add to the general interest of daily lessons the following ideas may be of use. The writer has proved them many times.

I have at present two daily pupils, each aged nine years; and in following out the P.U.S. programme, we use many things that are not strictly lesson books. As suggested in the programme, *The Times* appears in our room each day as a tried friend. We regale ourselves on the pictures or any salient item of news in a few minutes snatched from “break,” or when one pupil has to wait for the other. If we are following up any articles of great interest we save them for Saturday morning for a special lesson. Apart from these ordinary uses we turn to its pages for help in map questions, which the children have christened “travel geography.” Sometimes we take the foreign news sheet and find every place name mentioned—that is a stiff test. At other times, and this they specially love, we turn to the shipping columns and take the movements [sic] of ships. “Ann, you are the ‘Maitan’ of such and such line calling at Colombo yesterday en route from

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Yokohama to Brindisi, tell me about your voyage.” Somehow the fact that it all happened really yesterday quickens imagination. We follow up the new air lines, or diverge to wireless news by way of a change. Naturally now, we turn “Map questions” into talks of the coming British Empire Exhibition, and speculate on what we shall hope to see displayed in the various halls. Even the financial page has its use to us. In their occasional notation lessons the children read out the grandiose figures of some company balance sheet, enjoying the roll of big figures as they enjoy the sound of great words. It adds interest to a necessary but rather dull section of arithmetic. However, when it comes to arithmetic we turn to other sources. At present we are doing square measure. What can be more interesting when you have begun your sum, and drawn your plan, than to choose a carpet of the correct dimensions from Hampton’s beautifully colour printed catalogue, and find the total cost of a felt surround from the same source? We are getting quite learned in the price of tiling, carpeting, and otherwise covering a floor; also in laying out gardens by the help of Carters’ seed list with its compendious information concerning lawns and paths. Sometimes the two children are let loose on the room, with yard measures, and calculate new curtains, choosing cretonnes as if the whole responsibility of house furnishing was on them.

We make great use of catalogues in mental arithmetic. Since Harrods’ new book arrived we have, in fancy, fitted ourselves out in clothes—calculating in guineas—and the smaller articles we have chosen by the half dozen or so. This week we are starting the “Rule of the dozens” and shall use a Robinson and Cleavers’ catalogue and furnish ourselves with a complete house linen outfit of articles in dozens. Or we shall supply a Christmas Tree for several dozen guests from Hamley’s Christmas list.

These naturally are only a few examples of what can become a means of very real education to children. Not only do they learn the particular subject in hand, such as map knowledge or quick mental calculation, but they acquire a great deal of general knowledge as

well, and do this unconsciously, besides learning observation and concentration.