A SALE ADVENTURE

IN THIS "creative age" of school life it seems necessary for the teacher and children to be searching together for "bigger and better" things to do—activities which will lead on in a variety of ever-widening interests and the acquirement of skills. It was in just such a search that the children of 4-A and their teacher began to work for a Christmas sale. The plan was thought of late in September because it offered possibilities for making money for new library books and because there would be time to make enough things for a big sale.

By the second week in October every child had decided upon something to make—something which he himself would like ever so much to possess. This was the best way to insure a heavy sale of finished articles on the appointed day of the sale. To list everything in the grand array is almost impossible here, but to say that there was assembled "everything from a monkey on a string to a bright tin hopping toad" will give an idea of the variety offered. Toys and doll furniture led them all on the list of articles to be made. What a busy time there was in making animals which could stand alone and look real, in making suites of furniture to match in size and color, and in making stencils to use in the decoration! The children really had the "stencilitis," it seemed, after they once knew how to make and use them. Ships, they thought, were the next most desirable and most beautiful to make, because they could use such striking color schemes in the flags. The color chart just barely saved some of these from being "color screams"—anyway, they were colorful. Probably the most interesting experience for the children was their use of Duco on glass jars and bottles to make vases. No one in the room had before realized that so many well-shaped jars were going to waste until they began to look for them for this special purpose.

When they had finished, no one but a queer person could have failed to find a vase just his style to buy.

Even though making satisfactory products for the sale was first in the minds of the children, there were obstacles which had to be overcome before the final goal was reached. The group had no capital to start with, and the seriousness of getting materials had to be faced. This meant planning and searching for scraps and waste products which could be turned into something. When the supply of spools, oatmeal boxes, dry goods boxes, and scraps from the mothers' sewing boxes was exhausted, the incubator factory came to the rescue. This was fortunate, for a supply of wheels and other well-shaped scraps of lumber gave ideas which no one had thought of. A few materials, like beaver board for the animals, paint for decoration, and dolls to be dressed, had to be bought on credit. This necessitated very careful bookkeeping so that the project would come out.

The financial "coming out" was very important to the children, but one problem which caused still more excitement and hotter discussion was the naming of the store. What would they call it? Each one who could think of names presented one to the class and gave every possible reason why it should be chosen. Novelty Shop won because it suggested such a delightful mixture and would look well on the posters and hand bills which were to be used in advertising.

At last the day of the sale arrived. The name and the advertising together drew a crowd of onlookers and buyers who were treated with all the courtesy expected in a well-managed shop. Each clerk took care of the business at his counter with the air of an experienced salesman and not an error was made in keeping the accounts. When the cashier made his report, the amount on the bills and the cash balanced exactly.

Seeing the happiness and the wholesome thrill which the children get from doing a
good job and making it turn out well is believing in this kind of learning situation in the schoolroom. This type of work represents an attitude or a point of view, not a “method” or “device” in teaching. It stands for experiences which lure the children into new adventures and new fields of discovery; it is the beginning of choosing life interests which lead to joyous self-expression.

MARIE ALEXANDER

LEAVES IN FALL

A Unit for Kindergarten or First Grade

The children had noticed the leaves turning and beginning to fall from the trees. After asking the teacher a number of questions about these leaves, they decided they would like to know something about leaves in fall.

I. What the Children Did:
A. They brought leaves to the schoolroom.
B. They pressed and shellacked the best examples of each kind of leaf they had collected.
C. They made a border of shellacked leaves for decoration.
D. They traced leaves and colored them.
E. They heard stories about the leaves and trees.
F. They took an excursion
   1. They saw leaves growing on their trees.
   2. They brought back as many different kinds of leaves as they could find.
   3. They pressed and shellacked these.
G. They made a chart of leaves with which they had become familiar by putting a pressed and shellacked example of each leaf they knew on the chart.
H. They sang songs about autumn leaves.

II. What the Children Learned:
A. They learned to recognize the leaves of the following trees:
   Maple
   Poplar
   Elm
   Umbrella
   Horse Chestnut
   Sumach
   Pine
   Cedar
   Oak
   Sycamore
B. They learned how to press leaves.
C. They learned how to shellac leaves.
D. They learned how to use their crayons
   1. To use either the straight up and down movement or the straight across movement of the crayon.
   2. Not to use a combination of the two.
E. They learned the following facts:
   1. That evergreens do not lose their leaves.
   2. That maple leaves turn gold and bright red.
   3. That oak leaves turn brown or dull red.
   4. That elm leaves turn yellow.
   5. That leaves fall from the trees after they have turned.
   6. That fallen leaves protect the plants that grow close to the ground.
F. They learned the following songs:
   1. “Autumn Leaves”
   2. “Come, Little Leaves”
   3. “Falling Leaves”
G. They enjoyed the following stories:
   1. “Anxious Leaf”
   2. “How the Oak Became King”
   3. “The Kind Old Oak”
   4. “The Little Pine Tree”
   5. “Why the Evergreen Trees Keep Their Leaves in Winter.”