

Helping the Rural School

Continued from Page 8

she does her work more faithfully than we, as mothers, with greater opportunities, do ours.

OPPOSED TO AGRICULTURAL INSTRUCTION

Dear Editor:—I have read with much interest the many letters that have appeared in The Guide on the question of education in the rural schools and have often thought I would like to tell my views, but having had only an elementary education, was afraid I could not express myself rightly and might be misunderstood. There are many good points in the letters that appear in the issue of Jan. 10, tho I differ from several opinions expressed.

I do not approve of the idea, which so many have, of teaching agriculture for these reasons: Most rural schools are open for only eight months, also they are set in the midst of a widely scattered and thinly populated district and, owing to weather conditions and other causes, it is almost safe to say that the children do not put in more than six months. That time is all too short for the teaching of such necessary subjects as reading, writing and arithmetic and the numerous other subjects considered necessary to a child's education. If a smattering of the science of agriculture is to be added to these the poor child's brain will be in a hopeless muddle and he or she will not know any one thing well. Also, to know the theory thoroughly, in order to teach it correctly, the teacher must rob the time she requires to learn this subject from her other studies. As it is, in my opinion, the teachers we are supplied with are all too poorly trained. It may have been my misfortune, but I have met several teachers who could not even spell correctly and have seen letters written by teachers supposed to be qualified, which were very poor specimens of composition and grammar.

Mrs. Armstrong hits the right nail on the head in her suggestion that the Education department should take the matter in hand. Many of her remarks re school board trustees are only too true. In some school districts, tho not in all, there are many who are interested in educational matters, but what can they do? Often they are accused of interfering with the teachers' work and many teachers look upon them as enemies and regard them with aversion.

I would like to see older teachers, or at least girls with more experience than we have had for the past few years.

I may be wrong, but I understand that after leaving high school a girl is only required to attend Normal four months, and if she succeeds in passing an examination at the end of that time she is considered an efficient teacher.

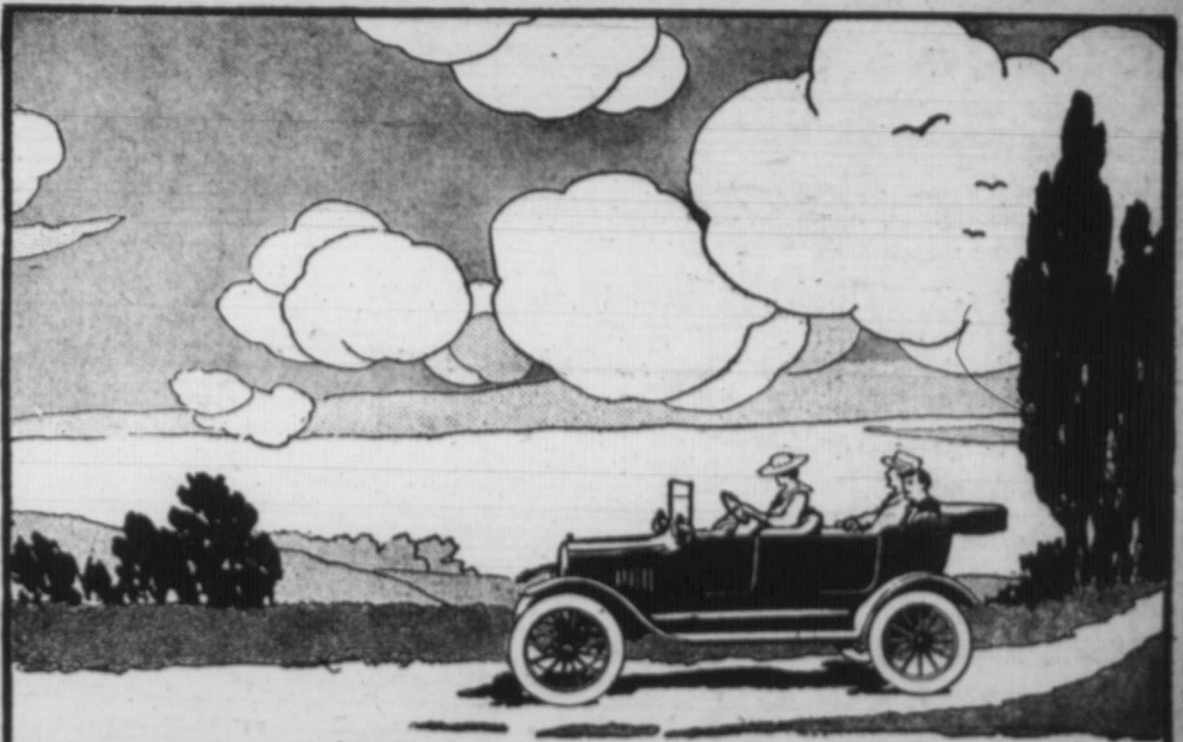
We know that it is almost impossible to learn all the necessary branches of subjects that are required, within such a short period; at least they must be crammed and worked at high pitch and what follows such a course? Forgetfulness of much of what after all was only surface knowledge.

If the teacher's heart is not in her work she does not trouble to keep up, much less add to, her store of knowledge.

Many of these girls are irresponsible. We could not expect otherwise at eighteen or nineteen years of age. Often they are influenced by the people with whom they come in contact and that influence is not always for good. Sometimes the trustees are not over anxious about the welfare of the scholars or they leave too much entirely in the teachers' hands, with the result that if the teacher should be a thoughtless, giddy girl, or one whose only interest is to see her cheques are paid when due, there is not much progress made in the children's studies.

So I say what we need most in our rural schools are, thoroughly efficient teachers and those of a staid character. It is also necessary to make the studies interesting so that the children will enjoy their school life rather than dislike, as so many do, going to school.

Many people are careless in the matter of sending their children to school and I think on that account compulsory education is necessary in order to enable the trustees to demand a regular attendance. In this respect I know the trustees of some schools have much op-



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