

Culture and Agriculture.

PRESBYTERIAN MANSE, WAWEIG, N. B.,
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The Editor Educational Review:

Dear Sir—During the past few weeks I have been honored with requests for help in the selection of material for schoolroom decoration, or pictures suitable for composition-writing. A firm or art publishers in Chicago* has kindly agreed to sell a set of twenty-five for the very moderate cost of one dollar. It is not to be expected that the choice will suit all tastes, and it is not claimed that the pictures are the very best on the market, but I know of none to be had on equal terms. The manager suggests that it will suffice for your readers to enquire for the "H. B." set and enclose \$1. One half of the pictures are in color, and unmounted, but a cardboard mat will suffice for some, and many are worth a good frame.

The Art for Schools' movement is hardly in its infancy in these provinces, and that is perhaps scarcely to be wondered at, as the greater portion of the Dominion is still in the pioneer stage. However, a good beginning has been made in the North West Territories, owing to the efforts of the late principal of the normal college at Regina. Then, too, the inspector of schools for Toronto, Mr. J. L. Hughes, is a recognized authority on the matter, and his pamphlet on the subject has been helpful in moulding opinion and deserves to be more widely known. Quite recently Supt. Dr. Inch, of Fredericton, has expressed his appreciation of the more extended use of pictures for the promotion of a love of the beautiful in all its phases, and has inserted a clause in the school registers referring to the desirability of teachers using pictures.

But do we not need concerted action and co-operation in this matter? Would it not be well to enable educators, members of art associations, and workers for social progress to have some point of contact, in order to exchange views, suggest suitable material, and prepare a scheme which would heighten efficiency and minimize cost? At present there are hundreds of teachers who procure calendars, or pictorial supplements, and a medley of material according to opportunity or individual fancy, and thus one sees gruesome battle scenes, or trivial story-telling pictures, plain or colored, on our schoolhouse walls. In France thousands of dollars are expended in order to train the appreciation of scholars for textile fabrics and so on, the government being aware that

unless this is universally done there will be a dearth of designers, and a lamentable lack of artistic workmen, and still worse an unappreciative public to purchase the varied and exquisite productions.

It would not be advisable for me to seek to indicate at length, the policy of England in this respect, and still more recently the remarkable movement in Germany. In the United States Greek and Italian influence prevails in the selection of material for decoration of schoolhouse walls, and cabinets of pictures for closer inspection and study. In my judgment we should do well to be eclectic in Canada and devise a scheme that will be truly Canadian. Over sixty per cent. of our people are engaged more or less in agriculture, and the proportion is likely to be larger. We need material, good, moderate in cost, and largely uniform in character, that will serve not only the pedagogic service of cultivating the esthetic side of child life, but also to kindle more love for natural scenery and agricultural pursuits. The school-garden project is excellent, but the period of practicability for Canadian schools is reduced to a few weeks, because it is late before frost leaves the soil, and the vacation soon follows; besides, not all can or will have them, but all can have art. Let us have a bureau of information on this subject, and when organization follows it will be worth while for Canadian publishers to produce suitable and approved material, and in course of time there may be means of communication between the teachers of Canada as to methods of teachings, and improvement of choice of subject, and so on. Thus we may develop a distinctively Canadian type, a type that will appeal to the settlers from many countries, and hasten the day when even if the same songs are not sung by all, nor the same prose selections admired by all, the same pictures may appeal to all, and help to evoke feelings that will serve to unify the varied races. R. W. Emerson in his essay on "Beauty," says: "Every necessary or organic action pleases the beholder. A man leading a horse to water, a farmer sowing seed, the labors of haymakers in the field, the carpenter building a ship, the smith at his forge, or whatever useful labor, is becoming to the wise eye."

It surely would be congruous to the Macdonald consolidated schools at Kingston and Middleton, or the Macdonald institute at Guelph, to embody a department that looks towards school and farm; but meantime may we seek for a response through your columns.

Yours sincerely,

HUNTER BOYD.

*Royal Picture-Gallery Company, 152 and 158 Lake St., Chicago, Ill.