

THE SCHOOL-HOUSE.

FLOWERS FOR THE GROUNDS ADVOCATED.

A Timely Article in "La Minerve" on the Question of Decorating Properly the School Grounds—Mr. Archambault's Characteristic Reply.

The following timely and beautiful article from La Minerve of the 27th May last, will be read with great interest by our many friends of education; also will the letter from Mr. Archambault, in reply to La Minerve's remarks, be taken as a fair sample of the excuses that can be concocted, when the neglect of the more refining and elevating elements in the training of youth are pointed out to those whose business it is not only to instruct but to educate the young. Not alone by cramming grammar, mathematics and history into a child's head, do you educate him; that is mere instruction in the rudiments, the laying of a foundation; but through the medium of every one of his senses should he be trained. He should always have the beautiful in nature, as well as in art, before his eyes, even as he should have the good and great before his mind: his surroundings should be refining, his tastes for the delicate and chaste should be constantly cultivated by means of object lessons in everything near him. But Mr. Archambault evidently places more value upon a well paid and experienced teacher than upon flowers. Were the teachers so poorly paid and inexperienced that the flowers had to be abandoned in order to improve the staff? There is something so cold and calculating in the letter that we give it in full as a striking contrast to the spirit of the article that called it forth. Our attention was drawn to this subject by one who has taken a more active part than, perhaps, any other gentleman in Montreal in school matters and who was one of the most efficient school commissioners of his time.

THE SCHOOL HOUSE FLOWERS.

La Minerve of 27th May, 1893.

"The child finds an irresistible need of space, of liberty, movement and gaiety. All are necessary to his physical and intellectual development; and his natural instinct urges him ardently on in the desire to possess these. He therefore, detests, for the same reason, seclusion, inaction and sadness. This is not the place to discuss in what measure they are right or wrong from a certain point of view, nor the inconvenience which might result from an improper control of these functions. It comes so as to merely take the facts as they are presented, and those who possess children will find an easy solution of the problem by simply leaving the solution to common sense. Nothing is clearer than that the needs of the child should be satisfied, and that all which would appear to restrain or oppose its progress should be kept in the background. In the same way the plant kept in a cellar turns to the light from the shade so that it may find sustenance and life.

"It follows then that not only the class should be interested, animated, living, but that the surroundings should be gay, giving the smallest idea of restraint and inconvenience; or in a word imprisonment.

"This is thing to which the school authorities unhappily do not give much thought, not considering it to be a thing of much importance.

"They confine children in dark and badly constructed buildings, often dirty and even filthy, with old and inconvenient fittings, all producing a constraint and ennui. The neighborhood of the school is sadly neglected. It more resembles place of penitence than the abode of youth, beauty and hope. In a word they make the child leave the school with much the same feeling as the bird leaves the nest, and with the desire of never returning.

"It is not necessary to go to much expense and to employ difficult means to arrive at a point whereby the school-house can be made attractive and an agreeable place of sojourn. Order liberally and intelligently used, the fittings of the house well disposed, trees, grass and flowers around the grounds will suffice with the assistance of a certain kindly disposition on the part of the master to impart an air of freedom and self control to the child which in reality are the

space, the movement and the liberty which he desires. All the same it is in accordance with the charms and advantages of the reality. In this way the scholar will arrive at the school, not with the lowered head and hardened heart of the recruit entering the barracks, but with an uplifted head, a clear eye, and as gay a heart as he would enter his own home.

"This is partly why in the school regulations the Council of Public Instruction has expressed the desire that every schoolhouse, at least in the rural districts, should possess a garden, or at least a suitable ground for the formation of one. Not only will the master or mistress find in it an agreeable and salutary physical exercise, but they will also find a physical exercise which should not be neglected and which will be easily felt by those who have studied the art of teaching outside of the old routine and superannuated methods.

'Cover the soil of our province with schoolhouses,' said one of our public men, 'and make them numerous, elegant and comfortable, so that our children will enjoy seeing and entering them.' 'Surround them with trees and flowers so that the young may know that knowledge is the ornament of the rich and the wealth of the poor, following the thought of the philosopher.'

"This happy state of things cannot be established everywhere, but it should be where it is possible, and it will be a short coming if it is not encouraged for we will be repaid a hundred fold by the immediate effects.

"These reflections are inspired by the conditions in which we find the greater portion of our Montreal schoolhouses, which have cost so many sacrifices and which can easily at a very small cost be put and maintained in a very attractive and agreeable condition. It should above all be acted upon for the boys' schools.

"Thus, the Plateau Academy had for some time, in front of it a very well kept parterre, where many beautiful flowers attracted the attention of the pupil, not only by their beauty but by their odor, as he entered the school, offering an agreeable sight and an idea of comfort and in the midst of his studies and the monotonous labors of his lessons. All this has now disappeared and a plain stretch of grass to-day replaces the gay and odorous flowers of yesterday. Why? It cannot be a question of economy; the idea is ridiculous. Can it be that the Commissioners have abandoned new and progressive ideas of a few years ago to return to the old and fossilized tracks? The same remark can be applied to Belmont school, on Guy street, to Olier, on Roy street, to Champlain on Fullum and to the Sarsfield school at Point St. Charles. All these schools were constructed at some distance back from the street, with a parterre of flowers, to-day replaced by a grass plot. The last mentioned, the Sarsfield, had before it a bed of fine roses and other flowers which required but little care and which were certainly an ornament to the whole locality. When they at last disappeared the residents of the locality offered to pay the cost of maintaining these flowers which they had found so pleasant. The roses certainly disappeared. Here there certainly could not have been a question of economy. To what, then, can this regrettable step be attributed?

"We said, and we repeat it, that we should do all we can to make the aspect and the stay in the school as pleasant as possible. To do this we should be willing to make sacrifices. How much stronger then is the argument when doing this will cost nothing, or, to say the most, but very little?

"In instruction we are not content to remain stationary, for we follow progress and adopt modern ideas. And this is why we should consider, at its just value, the importance of the role played by those surroundings which affect the soul through the senses in the formation of the heart and intelligence. In this direction nothing should be neglected. Everything is important, for it either produces good or bad. We should teach the child principally through sentiment and reasoning, but at the same time we should pay attention to all the little details, insignificant though they may be, in appearance, which act upon sentiment or reason, and which oppress or elevate the soul.

"You would not be so cruel as to take away from the prisoner the flower which he has on his window sill, which by its presence sweetens his captivity a little. Then why should you take from the

the child, the prisoner of duty, the flowers which console him and give him the same liberty or at least an illusion of freedom?

"Give the pupil flowers and gaiety and you make a bright and happy soul; give the pupil shadows, and as the dew-drop falls to the ground you will make a blemish which cannot be wiped out and which will pass into the ardent fire and sadness of life.

"Here is a great truth which all the world does not see, but which for all that is neither the less true nor the less grand.

P.S.—Since these lines were written we have seen an article in La Presse of the 13th, in which the same question is treated and in which an offer is made to the Commissioners to furnish them free of charge the necessary seeds to plant their gardens. We go even further,—If the Commissioners cannot or do not wish to pay a gardener to care for these flowers we promise to make up a subscription to obtain the necessary funds.

To this the Secretary-Treasurer of the Plateau makes the following reply; it requires no comment:

La Minerve, 30th May, 1893.

"TO THE EDITOR,—On the 13th of this month La Presse of Montreal published an article on flowers, according to which it was the duty of the Catholic School Commissioners to plant flowers around their schools. La Minerve of Saturday last comes to its assistance with another article which is evidently the progeny of the article of the 13th.

"My thanks are certainly due to both the writers of the articles in La Presse and La Minerve, for having so generously offered, the first to provide the seeds and the second the gardeners for this purpose. In return for this kindness I invite the writers and all those who have faith in their remarks, to at any time visit the gardens of the Plateau school, so that they may determine if they merit the reproaches regarding flowers levelled at the Catholic School Commissioners of Montreal.

"I moreover invite the two writers of La Presse and La Minerve to inform their readers if the Federal or Provincial Governments have a garden or greensward as fine as that of the Plateau Academy. I do not refer here to the Champlain, Belmont, Sarsfield and Olier schools, as I have never had charge of the gardens of these schools, which have a special grant for this purpose.

"As to the pleasure and benefits of having the scholars surrounded by flowers, opinions do not all agree. Some people believe and I am one of them, that a well educated and experienced teacher, well remunerated, will do more towards inciting a desire to learn in the pupil than will the sight of flowers. Besides the scholars never have access to the ground which they wish to convert into a garden, as their playground is on the north side of the commercial academy, and the garden on the south side. Besides the administration cannot see, in spite of their admiration for flowers, why they should be forced to place the useful before the ornamental. I wish to refer to the time when the Plateau Academy had numerous flowers attracting attention and charming by their perfume the passers by. The finances were in a bad condition in 1883-84, and it became necessary to do away with the services of two Professors and to close two schools. To-day, owing to the increase in the school taxation, this state of things has been ameliorated, and it must not be forgotten that the population of the city is increasing rapidly, and that it will be necessary to erect new schools from time to time. These demands are becoming so numerous that the Commissioners, despite their perfect willingness, cannot answer them all.

I must thank you Mr. Editor for allowing me to place these explanations before your readers.

Your very humble servant,
U. E. ARCHAMBAULT.

Friend of her bosom. Why, dearest Mable, you have been married only three months, and here I find you in tears. Fair Bride. Yes; but Arthur has been trying to be elected as M.P. for Phoosborough, and I have been reading in the papers what an unmitigated scoundrel he is.—Judy.

NO OTHER Sarsaparilla has effected such remarkable cures as **HOOD'S** Sarsaparilla, of Scrofula, Salt Rheum, and other blood diseases.

AMONG THE KOLS.

In a recent article of the Indo-European Correspondence, we meet with certain very interesting details of the progress of the Catholic faith among the Kols of the Chota Nagpore Mission. The education of children is the sure and safe means by which missionary work may be rendered permanent, and it is to education therefore that the good Fathers above all devote themselves. In 1887, when the mission was still young, it was provided with a large catechumenate at Ranchi; but it was only in 1889, a little more than a year ago, that an educational system upon a grand scale was resorted to; and so successful has the undertaking been that at the present day the schools under the control of the Jesuit Fathers, which have been established throughout the district, afford instruction to no fewer than 960 children, all told. Of the kind of instruction administered in these recently founded establishments our contemporary furnishes information which will be perused with very particular interest. The study of Christian doctrine is of course what is principally insisted upon; but in addition the pupils are taught whatever is most likely to be hereafter serviceable to them, such as agriculture, carpentering, masonry, and the manufacture of tools. A knowledge of reading, writing and arithmetic is of course regarded as essential; but the practical trainers of the youthful Kols will have nothing to say to the kind of education which turns out mere clerks and seekers after employment in the public offices of the State. It is thus that a hardy and industrious race is being gradually and surely trained to become a credit to the holy religion so recently established in that part of India, and that the new converts are fitted to become the instrument whereby the blessings of the true faith may be handed down, as we may hope, to a distant posterity.—Illustrated Catholic Missions.

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"Why do you go to the Dartmoors' ball, Wallace? You can't dance." "No, but I can eat."

A COMPLICATED CASE.

DEAR SIRS,—I was troubled with biliousness, headache and loss of appetite. I could not rest at night, and was very weak, but after using three bottles of B. B. H. my appetite is good and I am better than for years past. I would not now be without B. B. H., and am also giving it to my children. Mrs. Walter Burns, Matland, N.S.

Mary's Explanation.—Mistress: Well, I'm sorry you want to leave me, Mary; but what's your reason? Mary keeps silent. Mistress: Something private? Mary suddenly: No, mum. Please, mum, he's a lance corporal.

Montreal, November 1891. I was suffering for three months from an obstinate cough, prickling in my throat, night sweats and a general debility, which caused me to fear consumption of the throat. I am now perfectly well, and owe my cure to Dr. Lavolette's Syrup of Turpentine. I took four small bottles of 25 cents each. FELIX SAUVAGEAU, General Contractor, No. 179 St. Antoine Street.

MONTREAL, 29th February, 1892.—J. G. Lavolette, Esq., M.D., No. 217 Commissioners street. SIR,—I suffered for 22 years from a severe bronchitis and oppression which I had caught during the Franco-Prussian war. I made use in France and Canada of many important remedies, but unavailingly. I am now completely cured after having used 4 bottles of your Syrup of Turpentine. I am happy to give you this testimonial, and hope for the good of humanity, your syrup may become known everywhere. AUGUSTE BOUSNEL, Advertising Agent for "Le National."

MONTREAL, 13th December, 1890. I, the undersigned, do certify that Dr. Lavolette's Syrup of Turpentine, which I am using for some time, is the only remedy that has given me a notable relief from "Asthma," a disease from which I have been a sufferer for many years, and which had become so very serious as to require my dispensation from occupation of any kind. I have been treated by several physicians abroad, but without the slightest result; and do here state that the progressive improvement which is daily taking place in my health by the use of this Syrup gives me entire confidence in a radical cure. SISTER OCTAVIEN, Sister of Charity of the Providence, corner of Fullum and St. Catherine Sts.

PROVIDENCE ASYLUM, corner St. Hubert and St. Catherine Streets. I consider it my duty to certify that, being a sufferer from Chronic Bronchitis since over 22 years, the use of Doctor Lavolette's Syrup of Turpentine has given me a great relief. The cough has diminished and sleep has returned gradually. SISTER THOMAS COBAINI, Sister of Charity of the Providence.