

lation, established by law, is, that an Elementary school house should not cost more than \$1600 and a model school not more than \$3000; but the Superintendent is empowered to authorize a larger expenditure in case of necessity.

SCHOOL FURNITURE.

It is not enough that the School house be spacious and airy: the furnishings, seats, desks, and tables, for the classes should be suitable, and adapted to the physical requirements of the scholars. The desks, tables, and benches need not be uniform in size, for in this case the oldest and youngest would be alike rendered uncomfortable. Physicians have attributed to neglect of such considerations *Miopé* and *Dorsal Curvature* by which some weak children are afflicted. Moreover if the desk or table be flat, the scholar is forced to bend his body into the form of a curve in order to write. The benches ought always to have backs, as occasional changes of position and support for the loins, when the scholar is not engaged in writing, are indispensable. Serious and even incurable maladies have been attributed to the absence of backs to the seats in school-rooms. This need surprise no one. It is matter of every day remark that the bodies of young persons are readily susceptible of changes in their natural conformation. Physicians teach us that their limbs are as easily put out of shape as they are capable of being adjusted in cases of fracture or dislocation. If the benches be fixed, they should not be too far from the desks or tables, because, otherwise, the scholars are obliged to lean over too much or to sit upon the very edges of their seats.

The question of desks and benches is one of great importance; but the limits of this circular do not admit of my enlarging upon it in all its details. It must suffice for me merely to indicate the essential requirements of hygiene:

10. The scholar should have facilities for completely resting on his seat, with his legs underneath the table, and able, at his ease, with his feet on the floor, to form a right angle with the directions of his thighs and body.

20. The table or desk should be inclined, and adjusted to the stature of the scholar.

30. The bench or seat should be such as to suit the scholar's size and should always be furnished with a back.

40. The scholar's position should be such as to admit of his standing up to answer when required. If you further examine the question under consideration you will find, that, as a safe-guard to good morals, the seats should be separate. According to my views, both the desks and seats should be fixed and separate. In that case, a scholar, when rising to answer, is obliged to stand at the end of his seat, which prevents him from looking for his answer in a book, and from being prompted by his companions, without discovery.

THE SCHOOL RECORDS.

Let us suppose, gentlemen, that you have, for the present, an excellent teacher: the scholars have made good progress, and the examinations at the close of the year have afforded you entire satisfaction: but the teacher, for some cause or other, quits your neighbourhood: what becomes of the results of his teaching? His pupils, doubtless, will have gained something from him; but, perhaps, not a single document remains for the benefit of succeeding teachers and pupils. The good

teacher departs leaving behind him no traditional advantages or opportunities for future profit from antecedent instruction given in your school. One might well say that he carries away the school along with him.

It would not be so if the archives of each school were preserved; if you caused to be carefully kept the record of the labours by means of which the scholars are trained, and prepared for their periodical examinations—as their copy books for writing, and arithmetic, analysis, composition, and drawing. A succeeding master, or young female teacher, just entering the vocation, could not, without great advantage, refer to such records, and so become cognizant of work previously done, and of the methods pursued by former instructors. In other respects, want of experience would thus be in part remedied to the advantage of your children.

The copy books, &c., of the scholars should be, for this object, uniform.

The practice now referred to already exists in several other countries, and, particularly, in the United States.

I beg of you, therefore, to see that every one of your schools is furnished with a suitable receptacle for containing such records of past work, for the *Journal of Education*, &c., &c., and for preserving, during vacations, maps, models, and other appliances. You will soon realize the good results of such provision, which is not of a costly nature.

THE GARDEN.

I have already mentioned the extent of site for a school house, and, in specifying half an acre, my intention was merely to indicate the minimum, for I consider it important that a garden should be attached to it. I am aware that, generally, you allow teachers the use of ground sufficient for that object. But this should always be done. You should insist that the schoolmaster or mistress keep a garden; and, if the latter require some help for the performance of the heavier work necessary, I am convinced that they will always find, among the rate payers, persons willing to render such service.

The *School Garden* ought to be such as to maintain a good reputation amongst you; you ought to assist in adorning and enriching it, for if the teacher derives some benefit from it this will not fail to prove of advantage to yourselves indirectly. In fact, whatever acquisitions your children may make at school in the knowledge of processes of cultivation must be profitable to yourselves. You will be enabled to utilize their knowledge on your farms, and frequently, perhaps, you will be surprised at the amount of advantage conferred on yourselves through the results of a single lesson given at school to your children.

Moreover, in the hands of a well informed schoolmaster, the garden becomes a precious instrument of instruction. For example, in teaching from "*Le Petit Manuel d'Agriculture*," or "*First Lessons in Scientific Agriculture*," what can be more valuable than the practical exemplification presented to the observation of the scholar in the cultivation of a garden? Study is thus rendered attractive, and instruction is received without painful effort on the part of the scholar; for it is no longer by words alone that ideas are communicated, but by the sight and examination of the very objects themselves of which it is desired to impart the knowledge. A mere child may thus be made to learn things difficult and dry in their nature, and this without fatigue.