

ORNAMENT THE SCHOOL GROUND.

In too many places the ground around the school house is destitute of a shrub, or tree, or flower—nothing but a bare yard, worn even bare of grass by the many little feet. We never pass such a school house without a feeling of regret, especially when we remember how beautiful it could be made with only a little labor, which could be performed by the scholars, or by their older brothers and friends.—We know of a case where the older boys of a district clubbed together and improved the grounds for those who succeeded them. With how much pleasure will these thoughtful youth look upon the result of their labor in after years. He who plants a tree, plants a monument for himself. We commend this example to all Young Ruralists.

Mrs. Hoyt, in the *Wisconsin Journal of Education*, gives some valuable thoughts and directions on the subject, from which we make the following extract:

For single trees, where there is to be left sufficient space for their entire exposure, in a level or moderately hilly region, there is no tree in grace and beauty which can surpass the drooping elm. The oak and chestnut are among the largest and noblest of our trees, and either of them may be taken for the central object of a group. The weeping willow appears best as a single tree, and in a level space.—The spruce, hemlock, ash, and beech from our common forest, all make beautiful shade trees. Among those that can be easily procured, in some portions of the country, are the horse-chestnut, locust, and hickory, the magnolia and the cottonwood of the Southern States, and the buckeye, sycamore, and black walnut of the West. The soft maple is especially valuable as an ornamental tree, on account of its red blossoms of early spring, its dense, green foliage of summer, and its beautiful dress of deep crimson after the first frost of autumn. But whatever are the trees selected, the arrangement of them should be the subject of careful study. They should be planted singly, or in groups.—Single trees should be such as have a graceful and beautiful outline, and convey to the mind the feeling of completeness. Groups should always be composed of one principal tree, larger and taller than the rest, with others grouped around it as subordinates. Shrubs that are used for hedges should be planted in gracefully curved lines, so as to screen such fences and buildings as, exposed, would detract from the general beauty of the scene.

School grounds arranged in this manner would become great powers of refinement and influence for good. When trees are once planted, the winds, the sun, and the rain, nurture them, supplying their every want, and converting their puny stalks into giant forms, until

"They stand mossy, and tall, and dark,
Fit shrine for humble worshiper to hold
Communion with his Maker."

But trees cannot grow in a day, neither are they more valuable than those shrubs and flowers which are at once, and in such diversity of form, and tint, within our reach. Plant trees, most certainly; and

wherever they would be a beauty or a refreshment, let their roots begin to pierce the mold above which their branches may, year after year, wave with a fascination of grace and variety, like which there is nothing else in nature. But while making provision for these more enduring and imposing improvements which must be the work of time, do not forget

"That delicate forest flower,
With scented breath, and look so like a
smile."

In their influence over the feelings, to refine and soften the nature, to elevate the thought, and to imbue with that love of the beautiful which must always precede the practice of virtue, flowers have a value peculiar to themselves. Their gay colors attract the eye, their exquisite forms chain the observation, and with the odors exhaled from the scent-chambers of drooping bell, or golden chalice, there comes a soul of piety, a sense of sweetness, a something that finds its way into the very recesses of the youthful nature, winning it to goodness, and exalting it to beauty,

"Ere it is aware."
"It is my faith that every flower
Enjoys the air it breathes."

And it is a truth founded no less on observation than philosophy, that every child reflects, to a fearful extent, the spirit of its surroundings. Flowers are the most beautiful, the most suggestive, and the most available ornaments with which we can adorn the school premises. Let it be the business of parents and friends to supply the means, and a no less faithfully performed duty of teachers to see that the culture of flowers is not neglected in the embellishment of school house grounds.

THE BEGINNING OF NEWSPAPERS.

The first newspaper was issued monthly, in manuscript form, in the republic of Venice, and was called the *Gazette*, probably from a farthing coin peculiar to Venice, and which was the common price at which it was sold. Thirty volumes of it are still preserved in a library at Florence. It was long supposed that the first newspaper published in England was at the epoch of the Spanish Armada, but it has been discovered that the copies of that bearing the imprint of 1588, in the British Museum, were forgeries.—There was no doubt that the puny ancestor of the myriads of broad sheets was not published in London till 1622—one hundred and fifty years after the art of printing had been discovered, and it was nearly one hundred years more before a daily paper was ventured upon.—Periodical papers seem first to have been used by the English, during the times of the Commonwealth, and were then called "weekly newbooks." Some of them had most whimsical titles. It was common with the early papers to have a blank page, which was sometimes filled up, in the paucity of news, by selections from the Scriptures.

The first newspaper in North America was printed in Boston, 1690. Only one copy of that paper is known to be in existence. It was deposited in the State Paper Office in London, and is about the size of an ordinary sheet of letter paper. It was stopped by the government. The *Boston News Letter* was the first regular paper. It was issued in 1704, and was printed by John Allan, in Pudding lane. The contents of some of the early numbers are very peculiar. It had a speech of Queen Anne to parliament, delivered one hundred and twenty days previously, and this was the latest news from England. In one of the early numbers there was an announcement that, by order of the Post Master General of North America, the post between Boston and New York sets out once a fortnight. Negro men, women and children were advertised to be sold; and a call was made upon a woman who had stolen a piece of fine lace worth fourteen shillings a yard, and upon another who had conveyed a piece of fine calico under her riding-hood, to return the same or be exposed in the newspapers.

CHARACTER IS POWER.

It is often said that knowledge is power, and this is true. Skill or faculty of any kind carries with it superiority. So, to a certain extent, wealth is power, and rank is power, and intellect is power, and genius has a transcendent gift of mastery over men. But higher, purer, and better than all, more constant in its influence, more lasting in its sway, is the power of character—that power which emanates from a pure and lofty mind.—Take any community, who is the man of most influence? To whom do all look up with reverence? Not the "smartest" man, nor the cleverest politician, nor the most brilliant talker, but he who, in a long course of years, tried by the extremes of prosperity and adversity, has approved himself to the judgment of his neighbors and of all who have seen his life, as worthy to be called wise and good.

HAPPINESS.

Tillotson truly says that man counts happiness in a thousand shapes, and the faster he follows it, the swifter it flies from him. Almost everything promises happiness, to us at a distance—such a step of honor, such a pitch of estate, such a fortune, or watch for a child—but when we come nearer to it, either we fall short of it or it falls short of our expectation; and it is hard to say which of these is the greatest disappointment. Our hopes are usually larger than the enjoyment can satisfy; and an evil long feared, beside that it may never come, is many times more painful and troublesome than the evil itself when it comes.

IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION.—All who have meditated on the art of governing mankind, have been convinced that the fate of empires depends on the education of youth.