

Correspondence

A Plea for the Teacher

Dear Sir:—For several years my father has been a subscriber to the W.H.M. and I always enjoy the letters in the Correspondence Column to a great extent. I saw in the last issue a letter from a prospective school teacher, who wonders why more school teachers do not write. I confess that I do the same. I know for a fact that fewer people of that profession send in their views on various matters than people of any other class. The editorial in the last issue I read with keen interest and since then I have heard discussions upon it which have prompted me to voice my opinion of it. I liked it very much. There is no doubt about it that something is wrong with the management of the rural schools in this country. Probably the reason for it is the nomination of deficient trustees. Why should just any man in the district be selected for a trustee? No matter how ignorant of school affairs, no matter how little he cares for the education of the young, he is nominated as a trustee of the school in the district for a period of one, two or even three years. I have seen very deplorable conditions result from these men who do not send any children to school, show not the slightest interest in it, or the work of the teacher or the progress of the pupils. They do not even desire that school should be open. They say only "It increases my taxes". Every improvement in the school or outside it, pictures on the walls, the necessary space of blackboard, painting the school or washing the floor, the books required for the use of the children, reasonable increase in the teacher's salary—to them it means not the joy it will give to those who work there all day or the zest it will give to their work, but only, increased taxes. It seems to me that any land owner should contribute his share towards the education of the children of the land and gladly, because it is in his power to do that much. Therefore, a municipal school board would improve matters. The trustees would not be called upon to supply the school with necessary things, doing so complainingly and sometimes not at all. Then nowhere would the teacher have to suffer for some personal prejudice against her, so far as her work in the school room is concerned. A municipal school board would be more impartial and therefore fairer and squarer to the teacher. The tax question would not be the only one considered, but a reasonable salary would be paid without comment. I have thought of this for a long time and it in every particular appeals to me as a foundation for a better and sounder school management. One thing more I would like to mention—the teacherage near the school. On bitter wintry days, the only one that goes out and plods her one or two miles to school is a young school teacher. None of the farmers move one step from their homes, except on a team of spirited horses and with plenty of robes around them. They have the means of getting over the prairie in the least possible time. The teacher faces any blast, as you may say, and what is more no one thinks anything of it. For her it is nothing, for the rest of the family, impossible—unthought of. If she had a little house close to her school she could be her own mistress with a place to call her own. Instead of a cold bite at noon, she could have her warm dinner like everybody else in the district. She would learn to cook and keep house at the same time. She could keep someone, a sister or a little girl for company and be in her house as she best liked, not as sometimes an ill-endured boarder in a family where she is considered a bother and made to feel her loneliness keenly. Of course she is paying for her board and the work she causes. Thirty dollars a month is, to my mind, too much when she had a cold bite at noon especially and furthermore no conveniences of any description. She could live comfortably on that if she boarded herself. To her cottage she could bring her belongings, her piano (if she has one), her books and her other little effects and be happy. I must apologize

for the length of this, but it would be interesting to hear the views of some teachers on this subject. Wishing the W.H.M. every success, I will sign myself,
— A Reformer.

He Did His Bit!

Dear Editor and Members:—I have been a silent and interested reader of our W.H.M. for a number of years, the best in its class. The correspondence page certainly promotes friendship, just the thing we want on our lonely farms and ranches, especially in the winter time. I notice a new discussion with us, "The boys who stayed at home to produce food and the ones who fought." We were always led to believe the plow-pilot was unfit for overseas service and was the sole support. I joined up in '16, was over two years in the war, got a few "honors" which put me six months in hospital, but that was nothing. What I wish to say is, I was the sole support on the ranch, but that did not stop me. In my absence, however, the ranch went to pieces nearly. Father could do but very little on it and had to sell off a lot of the stock and, of course, the crops were not properly looked after, and labor one could not get. Since I came back I have been getting the place back into shape, but this I do not mind as many were in the same fix. What makes me so tired is that a large majority of the returned boys are expecting too much. They will tell you of all the hardships, etc., they had to put up with, but what did they expect, a picnic? I realized all these things were existing when I joined up, like a good many others did, but it didn't stop me, I was only doing my duty and expected the worst. Really some ought to be put in glass cases. "Ever a Jolly Kid," you write an interesting letter and in the right frame of mind. Certainly the farm is the place to be jolly and far from lonely. Do come again. Re a Farmerette's query, might say there are few women ranching "all on their own." In B.C. I know one personally, she having pre-empted 160 acres off the government in the wilderness and now she has a nice place. Of course, she had capital, about \$2,000. She had to employ labor and found it terribly hard work. Personally, I would not advise any woman to take up land. She would have to be very strong and with an iron constitution and do all sorts of man's work, unless, of course, it is a ready-made fruit or chicken ranch. I hope the editor and members will forgive me for taking up too much space. With best of good wishes to all.
True Canadian.

Suggests New Topics

Dear Readers:—Have been an interested reader of the W.H.M. for years and have decided to add to the quiet discussion on the correspondence page. I like the correspondence page as an opportunity to read the character and temperament of each individual writer. I often wonder how the members define that word "bachelor." Its intrinsic meaning seems to be "not full fledged" as in "Bachelor of Arts" in contradistinction to "Master of Arts." As we generally apply it, it means, an unmarried male adult of the genus homo. Personally, I don't consider a man a bachelor until he is a confirmed woman hater, or has passed up his last chance through old age. I have been "bacheling" myself for almost four years—of necessity—working an improved half section at the same time, with help in harvest only. I can eat my own cooking and wear the clothes I wash, but I'm not a good hand at it, and don't want to be either. We have not had a great variety of topics lately on our page. Dancing occupied a lot of space in some letters. My views on dancing are that it is a splendid form of physical exercise if practised in moderation, just as skating, but all-night dancing is anything but beneficial physically and much less morally. Dancing is really a legacy from our heathen ancestors. Then "Overalls for Women." Why not? If women must work, let them dress to suit the occupation. Let a man try to handle

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