

THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE AND HOME MAGAZINE.

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DOMINION.

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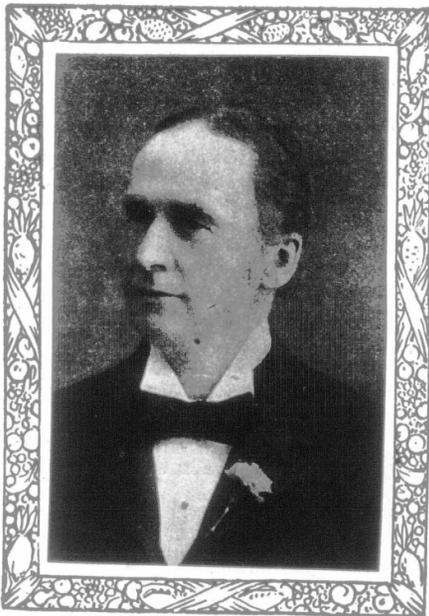
real. As we stated in last issue, nature studies can be, and should be, correlated with most of the other studies. For example, many of the experiments performed by the children will furnish practical problems in arithmetic—a problem solved to meet a need and for a definite purpose is worth a dozen aimless theoretical ones. There is no better material for descriptive composition than the reporting of the observations and investigations made by the child. As in arithmetic, so in drawing, the best lessons are those in which the pencil is used to express an idea which the child desires to record or convey. The pupil called upon to stand before the class and read his composition, it may be, upon the building of a particular robin's nest or the digging of a drain through his father's field, receives excellent training both in composition and reading.

The proper correlation of studies fully meets the second difficulty named above, but the third—that the teachers are not qualified—is a very real one. We believe that this difficulty will not be overcome generally until the academic training of intending teachers in the High Schools and the professional training in the Model and Normal Schools are better adapted to the ideal work of teachers in agricultural communities. In this essential particular the proposed school at Guelph, as per the plan outlined in the memorandum, is likely to count for little. In Ontario, from 750 to 1,000 teachers annually give place to as many beginners, the great majority of whom are in the rural schools. It is proposed to admit, at Guelph, classes of about thirty teachers for a two or three months' course, in all about 100 a year, or only about one-seventh of the recruit. With their present academic attainments, in so short a time as three months they can acquire only a superficial acquaintance with the sciences that underlie agriculture, and further, as we pointed out in last issue, and cannot too strongly emphasize, there remains the more difficult but indispensable feature—the learning to use this nature study in the way best suited to the individual child. This point was emphasized by a prominent educator in the Boston Transcript the

other day, who showed that it is not an easy matter to make clear the wide difference between making nature-study minister to the child and subordinating, if not sacrificing, the child to nature-study,—between the development use of nature and the mere information use of it. That the teacher should be trained in the development use of nature studies is the essential thing.

A difficulty not mentioned in the memorandum, but nevertheless a real and serious one, is the fact that the people are not prepared for the ideal school. Were the necessary equipment and the competent teachers immediately available, we have many people who would not welcome them. Have we a reader who does not know of neighbors—are they in the majority?—who would say: "We send our children to school to learn reading, writing and arithmetic, and we don't want their time wasted over bugs and flowers and whittling?" Even many who see and deplore that the tendency of the country boy is cityward will be slow to admit that the introduction of what they will call newfangled notions and fads will arrest the lamented tendency. Up-to-date school inspectors, teachers and lecturers at Farmers' Institutes should use every opportunity to educate the people up to the best and highest aims and possibilities of education. Sir Wm. Macdonald's gift and the uses to which it is to be applied make the opportunity to introduce a discussion on the improvement of educational aims.

Schemes Nos. 1 and 2 outlined above propose



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Member of the Manitoba Agricultural College Commission.

to offer examples of model graded and ungraded schools for public inspection and instruction. We could wish that it had entered into the plan of our magnanimous benefactor to offer, instead of a merely academic nature-study school at Guelph, a model training-school which would be capable of turning out not only the travelling instructors referred to in scheme No. 2, but also regular teachers thoroughly competent to teach the traditional subjects as well as nature study and all by the best methods.

DOMESTIC ECONOMY.

Sir Wm. Macdonald's plan also proposes that the institution at the Agricultural College at Guelph shall provide residence for a hundred female students, not teachers alone, of domestic economy, with all the class-rooms, kitchen furniture and laboratories necessary for instruction in household science. The courses to be offered and provided for include dairying, poultry-keeping, beekeeping, fruit-growing, general gardening of flowers and vegetables, cooking and serving food, sewing, dressmaking, household decoration, and the proper care and hygiene of rooms, sinks, etc. The end in view is that our wives and daughters may know how to make and keep healthful, comfortable clean, and beautiful homes.

J. H. Livingston, Simcoe Co., Ont., writes: "The boys would rather do without their Christmas goose than the Christmas 'Farmer's Advocate.'"

Canadian Art.

It is a matter of very great satisfaction to the "Farmer's Advocate" to record the enthusiastic reception accorded especially to the reproductions of the paintings of Canadian painters given in our Christmas number. Soon after the paper was issued, an enquiry came from an American reader desirous of securing one of the original pictures. From several publishers requests have come for the privilege of reproducing the engravings, and one of the foremost magazine publishers of the Dominion has arranged for the use of over a score of them. Let us all do our share in keeping Canada and her gifted sons and daughters in the foreground of the popular esteem which they so well deserve. In this connection, the following note from Mr. Pettit, the well-known apiarist, will be of interest:

"I thank you for extra copy of Christmas number, which has been sent to a friend in Japan. The excellence of your paper, and especially of your Christmas numbers from year to year, is so firmly established that it seems superfluous for me to add a word of praise. But I am particularly pleased with the idea of making this an art number, and that of Canadian artists, and with the manner in which it has been carried out. In the matter of art and literature, our country is rapidly coming to the front. The farmer, from the very nature of his business, has not the best opportunity of keeping in touch with this progress except through such magazines as reach his home.

MORLEY PETTIT."

Elgin Co., Ont.

Mr. G. W. de Green, of Toronto, writes: "Long experience has taught us to expect something good in the shape of the Christmas number of the 'Farmer's Advocate,' but this year you have greatly surpassed all previous efforts. Recognizing the loyalty which all true Canadians feel towards the motherland, you very properly place on the frontispiece an excellent picture of His Majesty, as keen an enthusiast in stock-breeding as can be found anywhere, in connection with which the engravings of and article on the Royal herds at Windsor come very timely. The reproductions of the excellent paintings by Canadian artists show that we have here plenty of capable wielders of the brush whose tastes lead them to depict the beauties of rural scenery and live stock. Your engravings of animals and of breeders and others interested in agriculture are all very good."

Advantages of Graded Rural Schools.

BY WILLIAM IRWIN, I. P. S., PERTH CO., ONT.

The system of consolidating rural schools by forming one school district out of the whole or part of a township, and having one large school building centrally located, containing several rooms, to and from which the children in the district are conveyed in vans, has been in practice in parts of several States of the Union for twenty years, and it has been found to work with satisfaction. With us the introduction of the system, therefore, need not be by way of experiment. We can safely adopt a system that for twenty years has commended itself to the intelligence of the people where it has been practiced, and can graft it upon our own with whatever improvements and changes experience would suggest and different conditions demand.

The advantages claimed for this system are many. Improved school buildings, with better equipment, heating, lighting, ventilation and sanitary arrangements would be provided. It insures the employment and retention of better teachers, and thus secures more permanency in the teaching profession. The pupils can be better classified and placed where they can work to the best advantage. It results in better attendance of pupils, and affords the broader companionship and culture that comes from association with large numbers. The children escape the bad effects of inclement weather and bad roads, and are under the supervision of responsible persons when on the roads, and thus the morals of the children are guarded.

It provides in the higher grades a High School course, and thus parents are saved the expense of sending their children to a High School, while at the same time they have their children at home under their own control, and the boys and girls remain in touch with the home life.

After the system has been instituted, the expenses of management are no greater, as fewer teachers are necessary, only one building to look after, and not so many sets of equipment are needed. In the higher grades, special work, under competent teachers, can be taken up to meet the requirements of agricultural life, and thus create a greater interest in farm work among the boys. This will counteract, to some extent, the present tendency of boys to leave the farm and go into professions already overcrowded. It is a fact which we regret that a two or three years'