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THE SCHOOL GARDEN AND THE COUNTRY SCHOOL.

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The place the school garden is to occupy in connection with the country schools of Canada is yet an unsolved problem. We are told of its advantages and are beginning to realize something of its possibilities as a field for nature study, as the laboratory for the student of natural science, and as a training school for the progressive farmers of a coming generation. Certainly its advantages are great, but there are many difficulties to be surmounted before the school garden can become recognized as a necessary part of the equipment of every rural school.

The solution of this problem has been begun in a systematic way in the Macdonald Rural schools, which have been endowed by Sir William C. Macdonald, and are being directed by Prof. Jas. W. Robertson, and perhaps there is no better way to indicate the progress made, to tell of the difficulties encountered, and to enlist the co-operation of others, than to describe one such school garden and tell what it has done for one country school. Such an account may point the way to teachers who wish to test the benefits of a school garden and may help them to surmount the difficulties and avoid some of the failures others have encountered.

In the spring of 1903, at Brome, Quebec, a little red school house, dull and dingy, seated with hard plank benches, was occupied by a teacher and some 25 pupils. Although in the country surrounded by large farms and farm houses with attractive grounds, the school yard was only four rods square, so that the wood shed crowded the school house almost into the road. For play ground there was the smooth, well travelled road. The poorest houses in the vicinity were less bare and uninviting. Fortunately the soil was fertile, well cultivated and with good natural drainage, so that the problem was not complicated by the question of moving to a locality where soil suitable for a garden could be obtained.