

#### EDUCATION IN RURAL DISTRICTS.

The improvement of the rural schools is one of the important public questions in Canada to-day. In our educational progress not much has been done for the boys and girls in rural schools compared with what has been given to and made possible for the children in towns and cities.

The after-life of the boy who leaves the country school, to follow some occupation in the locality, does not readily join itself to the school life which he then leaves behind. In nearly every case the school life has been an experience apart from, different from, and only in a very remote way leading up to, the mental or bodily labours and social duties which are to occupy him afterwards. It becomes necessary, since the school house absorbs so much of the time of the boys and girls, to adapt rural schools to rural life.

In educational Manual Training the advance has been one from books to benches as a means of mental culture. In rural schools the advance should be from books to benches, and from both to plots of ground and various objects, as a means of mental culture. This sort of thing is being carried on most successfully, particularly in the schools of Nova Scotia and those of the North West Territories. A piece of ground attached to a rural school should be utilized, each child having his own small plot, which he can use like his slate, putting things in it and on it, and rubbing them off again—not for the sake of the things, but for the sake of the child's growth in knowledge and mental ability. I hope that ere long we shall have many schools in Canada, where boys and girls will have an opportunity of getting this better sort of education. For instance, suppose a boy should plant ten grains of wheat in a row, ten grains of Indian corn in another row, ten sets of potatoes in another row, and ten clover plants in another row. Suppose, further, that he should pull up one of these plants every week, and find out for himself, under the guidance of a competent teacher, all that had happened in the meantime. Suppose, further, that as far as he was able he should make drawings of the plants and a written statement of the progress of growth as he was able to observe it from week to week, would not such a course for ten weeks, occupying only half a day per week, give an intelligent boy or girl not only a great amount of exceedingly useful information, but also habits of investi-