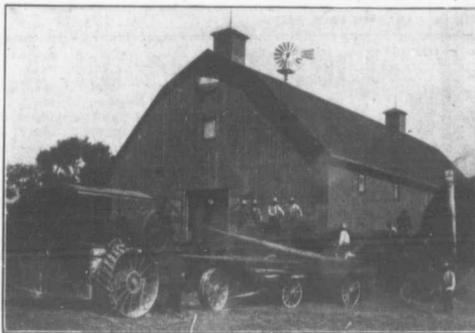


flower beds. A couple of acres behind the building formed a school garden for the younger pupils, and still farther back was three or four acres for simple agricultural and horticultural experiments. In this space were also to be found several little groves of forest trees. The rest of the ground was occupied by teachers' and caretaker's houses, out-buildings, etc.

I was fortunate enough to find the principal in



An Annual Event with Which We Are All Familiar

The illustration shows an up-to-date threshing outfit at work on the farm owned by T. E. Bush, Westworth Co. Ont. The self-feeder and the wind stacher have become favorites, as they save much labor and relieve the hired men of the disagreeable task of cutting bands and of working behind the carriers. This farm was formerly owned by Professor Shaw.

his office with no pressing duties, it being after school hours. He kindly consented to show me around and answer questions. He was a middle-aged man of distinctly winning personality, very unassuming in manner, but speaking with that quiet firmness which betokens largeness and clearness of vision and wide information. I surmised that men of his stamp would be paid a pretty large salary. In fact one of my first impressions was that of astonishment and perplexity as to how the community could stand the enormous expense which the whole institution must involve. As we walked around and examined the different features of this remarkable school my wonder grew, and, when we had returned to the principal's office and I had complimented him upon such excellent equipment, I asked him how it was that this community of farmers, none of them millionaires, could afford to maintain an institution of this character. He laughed.

"Did you see any evidences of oppressive taxation as you drove around our neighborhood?" he said. "Do not the farmers look as if they could stand the expense?"

"I have, indeed, been surprised and delighted of the farms in this locality," I replied; "nevertheless I do not see how they can stand it. Certainly the farms must be more productive than ours."

"Perhaps they are," said he. "Did you ever realise how great an element in production the 'man factor' is? Our idea is to give the boys and girls the very best education possible, right at their doors so to speak, and to develop in them a love for, and understanding of, rural life. You have seen the work in the fields and buildings in this vicinity. That is largely the outcome of our school, and it pays for the school even in hard cash, besides bringing enjoyment and health that naturally escapes valuation in money."

"Well," said I, "seeing is believing. I am anxious to know how you have done it. We have yet the single room, one teacher, isolated country school. Most of our boys and girls never attend the secondary schools, these being practically inaccessible. Intellectual degeneration often en-

sues, I fear, after our children leave school with the scanty rudiments our system affords."

"I do not doubt it," said the principal. "I am a native of this district and I remember things when they were very different. Our people had to face the same difficulties that you face and we concluded that it would never do to let things drift. So here we are. We have made mistakes, but we have gained knowledge, and we have proved that this sort of education pays."

"In your school work," I asked, "What ground do you cover?"

"Much the same as your primary and secondary schools, with the addition of manual training, domestic science, and more elementary natural science relating to agriculture. But our work is not exhaustively classified into 'subjects,' and we therefore do not suffer from an overloaded curriculum. For example the arithmetic of mensuration is a natural outcome of constructive work in manual training, and written and oral composition

are natural vehicles for the expression of ideas connected with any department. They are implicitly a part of all our work. Moreover we do not hold systematic examinations. In fact we have practically wiped out the examination system, as setting up false ideals and cultivating unduly the competitive spirit. Our teachers hold written or oral examinations at their discretion, but are expected to take many other things into consideration in making their recommendations for promotion. Then you should know that we have a good many 'occasional' students. Boys of from fifteen to twenty, whose duties keep them at home part of the year, are allowed free entrance to classes, laboratories, library, etc., to pursue whatever work their natural bent inclines them to. In this way we often discover latent genius which would otherwise remain undeveloped. So, too, girls whose circumstances do not permit regular attendance have all the facilities of our institution at their disposal, of course under certain regulations. Such 'occasionals,' since they come only because they are interested in some line of study, are no trouble, and practically look after themselves. The people of the neighborhood also, young and old, find a welcome in our library during certain hours, and have access to all the best periodicals and standard works of reference, besides being able to obtain other books for home reading."

"How do your pupils reach the school?" I asked.

"By electric car, covered van, or otherwise, according to circumstances," replied the principal. "Our school-board makes whatever arrangements seem most desirable. We draw pupils from within a circle of four or five miles radius, and the facilities we provide for our children's transportation are available for adults in the evenings and on special occasions when our school is a social, political or religious center."

"Do you have large public meetings in your school?" I asked.

"Certainly," he replied, "farmers' conventions, women's meetings, political meetings and even religious meetings. Our people have learned to co-operate to a greater extent through the large

school. They have also cast off the shackles of political partisanship. They now realise that their interests are best secured by union, not by at the generally thrifty and well-to-do appearance division; and, although this does not prevent the sharp collision of opposing views, there is practical unanimity as to the ends sought. Discussions on public questions are more interesting in a large gathering, and with us each farmer does not have to drive long distances through bad roads to attend a meeting. Then, you must remember that we all have telephones and get our mail delivered daily. In this way our people are kept well informed, and in close touch with one another, and can act untidily with ease. These things do not cost much if everybody joins in."

"Well," I said, "Your school seems to have a good many ramifications. But to return to the teachers and teaching. Where do your teachers live?"

"Those of us who are married have houses provided on the school property if we wish, and some of the unmarried teachers board with us. Others live elsewhere, with no inconvenience; for, you must recollect, there is no difficulty regarding transportation."

"You have quite a number of teachers, I suppose?"

"Yes: Eighteen. Some deal with the young children, some take up the secondary school work, and others have charge of special departments."

"Do you pay large salaries?" I asked.

"Fairly large, but there is much in the work that attracts besides money. Our position is relatively permanent; we live amidst healthful and inspiring rural surroundings; and we have also the benefits of community life. We have many of the advantages of both the country and the city, which compensates for any slight deficiency in money."

"I noticed a number of children in charge of a man, over on that road by the river this morning," I said. "Were they pupils from your school?"

"Yes," replied the principal, "that is another phase of our work. On fine days some of our teachers take classes on little excursions to some interesting place in the locality. Perhaps it is a river bank where the geological action of water can be examined, and interesting plants collected; perhaps a visit is paid to one of our best farms where crops and live-stock constitute the chief points of interest; and perhaps the children simply go out to get some fresh air, and to watch with keen interest the ever changing face of Mother Earth. These excursions supply excellent subject matter for oral and written compositions, and are of special value in training the powers of observation."

"How do you manage to keep such extensive school grounds in order?" I asked. "Is it not very expensive?"

"Not at all," he replied. "Apart from the school gardens and experiment plots which are under the care of special teachers, a committee of the older pupils, in consultation with myself, have charge of the grounds, and nearly all the work is done by the pupils themselves. They take a pride in it, and, as you see, do it very well. This work also reacts very helpfully on the landscape gardening of our farm homes. I mentioned the grounds committee. That leads me to say that the government of our school is very democratic. Outside the class rooms discipline is maintained largely by the older pupils, who are both honored and benefitted by being called into co-operation with the staff. They have their own little parliament, where regulations governing their own behavior are discussed and enacted, subject to the approval of the staff. Moreover, they enforce these regulations fairly well through the strength of public opinion. It is not hard to enforce a rule that the children themselves judge to