



Life, Literature and Education.

[Contributions on all subjects of popular interest are always welcome in this Department.]

The more thou learnest to know and enjoy, the more complete and full will be for thee the delight of living."—Platen.

PEOPLE, BOOKS AND DOINGS.

Mrs. Humphrey Ward, the noted English authoress, is at present on a visit to this country.

Prof. Kauser, of the Kaiser Friedrich Museum, has discovered a painting by Rembrandt, underneath a picture which had been sent to him for restoration by Humphrey Ward, the husband of the novelist. The portrait is that of an ugly young man in reverie. Ward paid \$1,000 for the picture in London. It has been purchased by Privy Councillor Koppel, a wealthy steel manufacturer, for \$25,000.

There is at present in one of the workhouses an ex-member of the Royal Scottish Academy, who has been reduced to poverty through drink. Before his admission to the workhouse he had made a miserable living by selling paintings of local scenes on cardboard. On admission to the "house," he was relieved from manual labor, and, having been given painter's materials, set to work on several landscapes, which now adorn the walls of the workhouse hospital.

James Souter, the original of Ian Maclaren's character of Jamie Souter, the cynic, in "The Bonnie Briar Bush," is dead at Santa Monica. He was eighty years old. Souter was born in the Scottish parish around which the story was written. Soon after his marriage he came to this country on a visit, and was so pleased that he remained.

Allan Bennett Macgregor, a Scotsman, who, on account of asthma, was compelled to live for years in the East, has become a convert to Buddhism, and has returned to England under the name of Bhikkhu Ananda Metteyya, to preach the faith of Buddha. He is the first Buddhist priest who ever set foot in England. His entire possessions consist of eight objects: a small filter, a rosary, a razor, a begging-bowl, and an umbrella and three parts of the yellow robe. He is bound by 272 rules, one of which compels him to be a vegetarian, and to subsist on one meal a day. He must meet no woman eye to eye, and when addressing mixed audiences must conceal his face. He must be drawn by no animal, and is compelled to travel barefoot wherever he goes.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT AT VINELAND.

The photogravure of the Vineland public school, Lincoln County, Ontario, published herewith, and the accompanying notes, illustrates what may be accomplished by the energetic efforts of a teacher imbued with ideals, coupled with the enthusiastic

co-operation aroused on the part of the pupils and parents. "The Farmer's Advocate and Home Magazine" records, with pleasure, from time to time, instances of this character, indicative of educational progress and improved conditions in rural education. The moving spirit in the work at Vineland has doubtless been the teacher, Jas. E. Painter, in charge during the past 3½ years, and the results attained have been due to much effort, devoting spare moments at recess and noon hours, getting around occasionally before nine o'clock, and remaining, say, an hour or less after four o'clock p.m.

Interiorly, the school has been adorned with pictures, and window plants flowering pretty well the year round. The school campus proper consists of one acre, with two-thirds of an acre acquired by the section for school-garden purposes. The entire space of the former is mowed, as a carefully-kept lawn area, and is adorned with 62 shrubs, 26 trees and 10 flower-beds. Then there is the school library of over 300 volumes, purchased by the section. In a general way, the aim has been to pervade the school with the air of homeliness inside and out, so that the scholars will like to come, and be stimulated to corresponding efforts at home. Who can estimate the far-reaching value of impressions like these, received in early childhood?

By resolution of scholars and teacher, it was decided three years ago to mow the entire school plot,

etc., baseball being played on a miniature diamond, according to regulations.

Each flower-bed has a committee of say three, with a responsible fourth-class girl as chairman. These go over the beds once a week to pick off old blooms, stir up the soil, or do any other work needed, requiring 20 or 30 minutes a week. In this way, all have a part, which they appreciate, from the youngest pupil up. A yard superintendent (or two) makes a final trip over the grounds, and reports to the teacher, if satisfactory. Many will coax the teacher to share in the mowing. It is said that those who care to do the least in this line of work, generally do the least in their school lessons.

In the direction of regular school-garden work, the section board of school trustees this season purchased two-thirds of an acre of land, which, as far as weather would permit, has been under preparation. Prior to this there had been sufficient interest awakened to cause plots to be cared for last year at the homes, and this year many will continue this work and share in the work at school as well. Quite extensive plots are worked by some of the older pupils. In several cases, reports of spring garden work for 1908 have been in, with vegetables, etc., well advanced.

With regard to interior adornment, the pictures are usually of patriotic, religious and general subjects, and are used in the basement as well as in the classroom proper. The black-

boards in the morning coming to school, on the subject of flowers, birds, etc. Some of the larger scholars are able to identify from fifty to eighty-five varieties of birds, and smaller ones from fifteen to fifty. Flowers much the same. Wild flowers are brought to school in bouquets in season (May and June), committees of three having charge of this feature in turns. The teacher has collected and mounted over two hundred varieties of plants and seeds, and some of the older scholars from forty to fifty. The basement is trimmed with rare specimens of birds' nests, and the scholars keep lists of birds and flowers seen.

The wholesome effect of all this, in interesting these young folks in nature, and in training their faculties in observation, will readily be apparent. Bright nature-study pupils are found to be equally bright, if not more so, than those interested only in academic subjects. The attendance is about 40 in summer, and 55 in winter.

As conducted, the expense has not been great, nor have there been any serious difficulties to overcome, though these features, being to a certain extent new, do not appeal to the more conservative few, who are, therefore, not disposed to aid in this enterprise. However, the child's deep interest and the results attained will betimes bring about a modification in the adverse views of these parents. The work has been found a distinct help to other subjects of the academic nature, and, with tact and good judgment, little time need be taken from the latter. Of course, it would be a mistake to think that the pupils could acquire all this modern, practical instruction without any special effort. If this were expected, and everything else memorized, crammed, etc., as under the old method, it would be absurd. However, leaving out much of useless material formerly crammed, and forgotten, having no bearing on the child's career in after years, the above fits in and supplies a very needed change. To feel that teachers going into this method of teaching are practically neglecting everything else, is both erroneous and absurd.

Speaking generally, the work appears to have a broadening and beneficial effect upon the educational views of the community.

THE DAUGHTER'S PORTION.

Editor "The Farmer's Advocate":

To begin with, I love and admire "The Farmer's Advocate," though I am no longer a farmer—or, I should say, a farmer's daughter—but I see it sometimes yet, and happened to see the letter on "The Daughter's Portion," also the reply by M. E. B., which I read with strange feelings of disgust and scorn. M. E. B. claims there are many farmers' daughters who do not deserve more than board and clothes. I never knew one who, if she had good health, would not do her share and work fully as hard as her brothers, if not harder; certainly longer each day to help on the work of the farm from year to year.

He speaks about poultry-raising, making of butter, gardening or sew-



Vineland Public School, Lincoln Co., Ont.

and so pleasing were the results that the practice was continued, and the contagion of example was evident through the increased time devoted to home decoration, in the way of lawns, flowers, etc.

The school lawn is mowed weekly. The teacher and five or six of the more trusty scholars commence by cutting around the borders, shrubs and flower-beds, where more skill and strength is required, leaving the centre in little "plots," to be mowed in turn by the school in general, from the second class up. Three committees, each with a "chairman," of the little "tots" (who do not mow) go over the yard once a week to keep it free from sticks, stones and other litter. The rear half-acre of the campus is kept free for games,

board is bordered the year round, colored to correspond with the tints of the plants in the room. Flags and patriotic paper are used for trimming, more being employed on special occasions, such as Easter, Empire Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas, etc.—but always some.

In nature study, the teacher takes a deep interest, and, naturally, the pupils follow in his footsteps. There is a nature-study society, organized with new officers yearly: president, vice-president, secretary, superintendent bird department, superintendent wild-flower department, and so on. Occasional meetings are held, and frequent nature-study trips taken on Saturdays (a) by groups of scholars, and (b) by teacher and scholars together, with occasional short chats