

the building, and from them to the closets screened by the evergreens.

When the school building stands a short distance from the street these walks may wind around oval plats where flowers and shrubs may be grown. In various parts of the grounds beautiful trees may be planted, like the maple, or the elm, or the oak. Between these plots of ground, of whatever form, oval or otherwise, should be sown seeds of the most beautiful and hardy grasses adapted for lawns so that there shall be formed a smooth and handsome turf, which must be often rolled and carefully cut. In some shaded corner native ferns should be planted, and elsewhere some of the many elegant native shrubs should find a cherished home. The suggestion of State Superintendent Sabin of Iowa, is worth adopting: "To teach children the kind of trees which flourish best in that section; which of them are best for timber; which for shade; and which for fuel. Specimens of each will then be found on the school grounds, and referred to for purposes of illustration. In the same connection we must teach how to plant and care for them, and cultivate in each an honest respect for a thriving growing tree."

In the rear of the school buildings the playgrounds should be located, where trees also may be planted to afford shade and pleasure, but not to interfere with the sports of the children. If in the planting of the trees in the grounds the children are permitted to take part, and name them, there will be a feeling of interest and ownership in the trees on the part of the children which will go far toward securing needed care for them.

The plots devoted to flowers and shrubs may have many varieties in the passing years. The children often have plants they would gladly place in the school grounds for the summer. Others have seeds which they would sow, so that each summer the grounds would disclose the taste of the pupils as well as of the teachers. Different plots might be assigned to different rooms or classes of pupils, and a wholesome rivalry excited as to which should be most neatly kept, and show greatest improvement in the summer.

Great variety might be given the grounds from year to year by training hardy vines and creepers over the walls of the buildings, and around the windows, or by planting them beside arches and trellises over which they would grow. The comparatively trifling expense needful to make the required arches and trellises would gladly be met by the parents when once the children proved their interest in such methods of beautifying the grounds.

It may not be amiss in this connection to speak also of beautifying school rooms as well as school grounds. It may prove a helpful suggestion to teachers to say that a large flag or a number of small ones will do much toward decorating a school-room. When pictures and mottoes may be had also the otherwise unattractive walls assume a very cheerful aspect and the pupils profit largely thereby. Many school-rooms would be greatly improved if the walls were painted in some soft neutral tint which would relieve the eyes of pupils and make the room more attractive. Potted plants and flowers will be a great addition to the flags and pictures and mottoes in decorating the school-room. Especially do these give

pleasure in the winter months when the view out of doors is cold and bleak. Even four or five beautiful plants growing in the school room give a cheering and wholesome suggestion of the spring and summer that are on their way with their sunny skies and bright flowers, which children love so well.

One element to be taken into account in discussing the question "How to beautify school grounds" is the indifference of a great majority of parents and tax payers respecting it. "What is the use?" they say. Because there is no lowering of the tax rate, because no immediate pecuniary advantage accrues to pupils or parents, many districts continue, as in years past, to neglect the school buildings and grounds, never caring whether they are pleasant or unpleasant, attractive or disagreeable. Often in the same districts may be found barns and outhouses far more neat and orderly in appearance than the school buildings, and grounds, men caring more for a suitable place in which to keep their horses and cattle than for seemly and inviting premises where their children spend so large a proportion of their waking hours.

"How to beautify school grounds" involves in substance the education of parents and tax payers respecting the value of the beautiful in human life. This education must be carried on by the determined effort of those interested, by inviting the men in every district to give up "Arbor Day" every year to making the school building and grounds as attractive as possible. If in the entire neighborhood only one building with its accompanying grounds can be made light, clean, pleasant, and beautiful, that building ought to be the public school.

It must not be expected that all can be done in one year. It may be too much to hope that every man in the district will help in the first effort to beautify the school grounds, but if persisted in by those interested year after year, "Arbor Day" will come to be distinctly "The Children's Festival." It will teach parents also the value of trees and shrubs, and flowers and lawns, and the entire district will soon become more attractive in appearance. What Governor Morton wrote for "Arbor Day" in New York in 1896 is well worth repeating: "Beautifying school and home grounds with trees emphasizes obedience to that higher law which adorns character and life with whatever is pure, noble, and of good report."

It is an encouraging sign to note the increased attention now being given to this subject. Hitherto too little thought has been given to it. The influence of their surroundings is felt far more by children than by adults. Impressions made upon their tender susceptibilities are deeper and more enduring than impressions on men and women. The element of beauty appeals to the child nature most powerfully. A picture, or flower, or plant, or tree awakens interest and calls forth expressions of delight. Why not minister to this from the very beginning of school days, and make this innate sense of beauty contribute to the child's education and happiness, and leave its powerful impress on character and life? The world has been fashioned by its Divine architect in forms of wondrous beauty. "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament sheweth