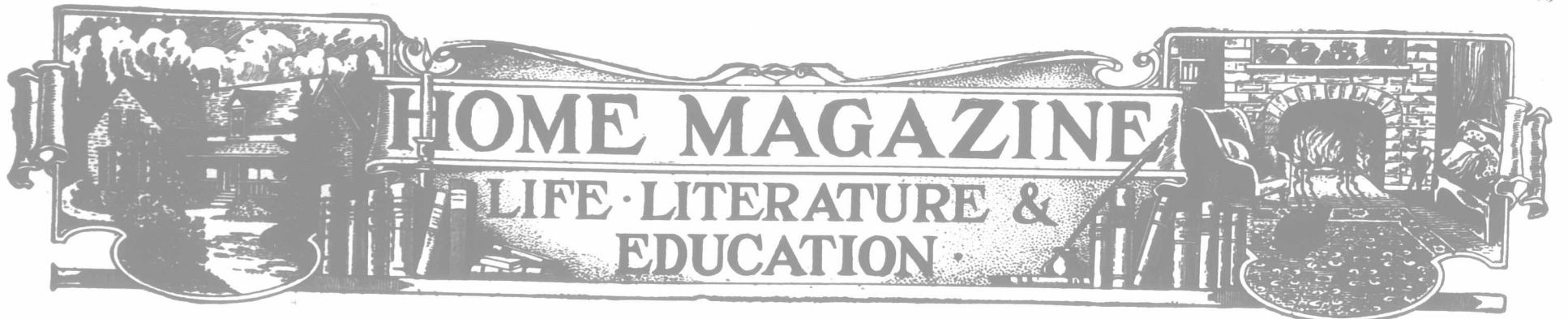




A Model Rural School for Canada.

[The Rittenhouse School, near Jordan Harbor, Ont.]

Not long ago, a well-printed and well-illustrated announcement, containing a full history of the work and development of the Rittenhouse School—probably the most notable rural school in Canada—found its way into the office of "The Farmer's Advocate." For a day or two it lay about on the desks; space had been given before to a notice of this school—why should it be necessary to repeat?

But the dumb appeal of that attractive pamphlet was insistent. The pictures were compelling, forcing, as they did, comparisons with the bare, uninteresting, lack-lustre halls of learning which practically all of the children of rural Canada are obliged to attend. Here was one, for instance, of the library; here one of the natural-history museum; here were others of interested boys and girls setting out plants, budding, making cuttings, working on the school-garden, in the manual training and sewing rooms, or sitting in school-rooms that looked at once well-lighted, comfortable, and attractive.

Then the question began to intrude itself, "Why not repeat?" Pestalozzi himself said that "Repetition is the secret of all true education," and are the trustees and other rate-payers of the various school sections throughout Canada not, like all men and women, merely "children of a larger growth," amenable, often, to the same influences, methods and laws that govern the lads and lasses, tripping, basket in hand, to school?

Could any trustee or ordinary rate-payer read an account of the Rittenhouse school without being inspired?—that was the question. And was there not need enough for such inspiration almost in every district? Was it not true that, in listening to the conversation of almost any group of men, one heard little but talk of the crops, of the stock, perhaps a little about politics or the events of the day? And that the conversation of a group of women was more than likely to be concerned with the butter-making, with details about chickens or turkeys, the style of new dresses, the neighborhood gossip, the latest recipes? How seldom a word in regard to the training and development of the children! Was it true, then, that the children were the objects of least worth in a district? If not, why so little attention paid to them? Why, the fact that, while money might be paid willingly for new buildings or stock, for new furniture or rubber-tired buggies, there was usually a grrouch at the least suggestion of a few dollars extra to pay for a better teacher, to equip a school laboratory, or to buy some extra land for a school garden? Assuredly, the Rittenhouse School might well be brought forward again as an example to an all-too-thoughtless thousand upon thousand of rural "sections."

"But how many rural sections have a Mr. Moses Rittenhouse to foot the bills?" True enough, yet the consideration is this—not that every rural school shall advance with a bound to the perfection of the Rittenhouse school, but that each rural section will do the utmost that it can each year to promote the educational facilities for the children who comprise its school. A little done

this year, a little done next, and so on, systematically, year after year, can work wonders.

In the old-time schoolhouse the teacher was obliged to scrape along with half a dozen maps—probably stretched across the windows, doing double duty as "blinds" also—a box of crayons, and eighteen square feet of blackboard, and often good work was done by the pupils, but it should be remembered that that good work was done in spite of, not because of, lack of facilities. With better equipment, bright pupils, as well as dull, might have done much better work—rather, one prefers to say, reached much higher development—the aim of all true education should be not, primarily, to show evidence of work done, but to bring about development of the whole child in such a way as to make him better equipped for all the duties and difficulties that he shall meet in life—to produce, in short, not especially most excellent students, but most excellent men and women. Is there any reason, then, why every rural school should not be equipped with at least a working complement of maps, globes, charts, number-apparata, weights and measures, reference books, and books for inspiration, sand-boards, etc., for the little beginners, and such equipment for nature study, manual training and domestic science as can be by any means obtained? Not all in one year, perhaps—but many years follow the one the other.

of land for a campus and school-garden surrounding the schoolhouse, and, in addition, five acres of park lot across the road, on which has been erected Victoria Hall, a fine building, in which Women's Institute meetings and assemblies of all kinds are held.

The wing to the north of the schoolhouse is used for a class-room and museum, in which are specimens of plants, an insect collection, a mineral collection, a large archaeological collection of Indian work, an experimental beehive, etc., while elsewhere in the building accommodation has been provided for manual-training and sewing classes. An open-air skating rink and toboggan slide assist to make play-time as profitable as may be during the winter.

Victoria Hall, it may be noted, is equipped with a stage, opera chairs, a piano, and fine projection lantern, and the purpose of the surrounding park-plot, mostly wooded, may be gathered from the fact that it is provided with a band-stand, benches, tables, swings, and a booth.

One acre of the school ground is devoted to the school garden, which has been established not as a show garden, but to assist in training the hands, eyes and minds of the children, to give them such an understanding of country life as will help to make them love it, and to bring them into touch with the work which will, in all probability, be the life-work of the great majority of them.

any school board would not be financially embarrassed or unnecessarily burdened for having conducted a school garden."

It should be comparatively easy, Mr. Gayman thinks, for most sections to have an eighth of an acre of ground for individual plots for the children to work in. At the Rittenhouse school, two spaces of 45 minutes, each Tuesday and Thursday, are devoted to garden work, and during the holidays the children take care of the plots.

The garden work practically begins in the winter, when lessons bearing on planting and germination are given, and each child is required to make out his plans in his exercise book. About Arbor Day the plots are prepared, each 6 x 10 feet for the older pupils; smaller for the little ones. Both vegetables and flowers are grown. "Most noticeable," says Mr. Gayman, "has been the influence of floriculture on some of the boys who seemed to have little taste for the beautiful. A few years ago they wished to grow vegetables exclusively; things that represented money and their living appealed to them. To-day the same boys are cultivating the larger area in flowers, which shows that the aesthetic is on the ascendant. Let us not forget how much of life's course is furnished by environment, and that its enrichment makes possible nobler tastes, more refined ideals. As Ruskin has said, 'What we like determines what we are; and to teach taste is inevitably to form character.'

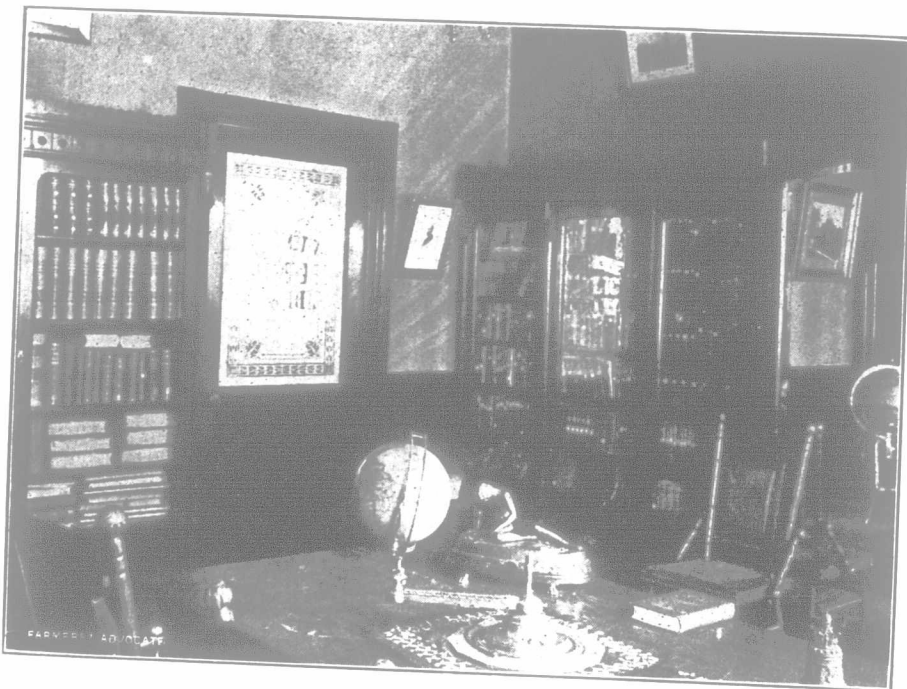
Practical experiments have, however, been carried out. Last year, thirteen varieties of tomatoes were grown, and it was found that, while "Earliana" gave the largest yield, "Marvel" and "Ignotum" were pronounced the best from the canner's viewpoint. Three hundred celery plants were also bedded out by the children last year; while, during four years, an average of 300 melons has been harvested. Fruit trees and grapevines have also been set out, and the boys trim and cultivate them.

Each autumn a fall fair is held, including, also, fruits from the homes.

No falling-off in book-work has been observable by reason of all these "extras." On the contrary, Mr. Gayman testifies, "Most gratifying have been the results in examination work. We feel that our garden work has improved our pupils, by making them more efficient both for manual labor and mental work." And again, "Both pupils and teachers are benefited physically by the change of air and sunshine, as the exercise and diversion from the general routine of schoolwork gives recreation, and intellectual development is aided by the planning of work. . . . We are convinced that garden work assists largely in forming the foundation for a firm will and self-reliant action, or, in other words, for moral character."

SCHOOL SEWING.

Miss Robins is evidently an enthusiast in regard to the incorporation of a certain amount of technical instruction with public-school work. "The school has failed in its real work," she says, "if it does not graduate pupils who can readily adjust themselves to the actual life they enter." . . . And she puts in a word for the girls: "Already much more has been done for the boys than for the girls of our schools. No wonder the girls have, in the past, shunned housework as a means of



Rittenhouse Public Library.

The present Rittenhouse schoolhouse, it will be remembered, was the inspiration of Mr. Moses Rittenhouse, the Lincoln County "old boy," who has become a millionaire lumber merchant, of Chicago. In 1890, when the school trustees of the section in which Mr. Rittenhouse lived when a boy, were talking about erecting a new school building, they were encouraged to make plans for a really artistic edifice, which might be an alma mater, rather than a prison-house, to the children, by Mr. Rittenhouse, who offered to pay a share of the cost. From this beginning, in the years that have succeeded, the millionaire has become an enthusiast in regard to this rural school. He has since purchased and presented to the section, four acres

Mr. Harvey Gayman and Miss Lilian Robins, who fill the much-to-be-envied positions of teachers in this school, are very enthusiastic in regard to the gardens, and very explicit in regard to their cost. "So often has our garden been misrepresented regarding the cost and labor done," says Mr. Gayman, in his report, "that we believe it to be to the interest of the garden movement that this error be corrected. More could have been spent, as we were not hampered for funds, but that we might be an example for other rural sections, both trustees and teachers have wisely played the part of economy. When we say our garden for 1910 cost only \$35, and \$30 of this is paid as a Government grant, you can readily see that our section, or