

the surroundings in which the child is placed. The surroundings are more potent than we think, and they are usually neglected. It is probable that the antipathy to farm life is often formed before the child is able to reason on the subject. An attractive playground will do more than a profitable wheat crop to keep the child on the farm."

Too long have the trustees left the improvement of school yards to the teacher. Arbor Day has for many years been a day dedicated to cleaning up the school premises and tree-planting has been carried on with various degrees of success. In spite of many discouragements some teachers, with the co-operation of the pupils have accomplished much. The improvement of school grounds is, however, a duty of the trustees. The District looks to them to care for the equipment of the school house, their obligation includes the grounds, as well. Beautiful school grounds require care in the summer. In the majority of rural districts the teacher does not spend the summer in the community. The obligation of keeping up the premises, therefore, should be a duty of the Trustees. The community values which result from beautiful school grounds, such as, the increased value of the property and increased sentiment in favor of caring for home surroundings, also places the obligation for attractive school surroundings with the direct officials of the community, the Board of Trustees.

In most cases the school site is already determined by long use and neglect. In the majority of cases the allotment is far too meagre to provide for the needs of an up-to-date rural school. All are agreed that school gardens are an absolute necessity in a progressive rural community. The love of play which is a natural, healthy desire, finds too little opportunity for exercise in the restricted school grounds of many rural districts. An up-to-date country school should provide ample play grounds for the boys and girls. These should be equipped with simple, inexpensive apparatus. Of course it may be true that John can get all the exercise he needs at the wood-pile, or the potato-field, but is not the lack of fun one of the arguments John uses when he leaves the farm for the town?

The Bulletin, "Improvement of School Grounds," sent out by the Ontario Department of Education, suggests plans for the beautifying of school grounds. These plans provide for school premises of half-an-acre, an acre and two acres. This bulletin affirms that for the average rural school grounds of two acres are best. "This size affords ample space for separate play grounds for boys and girls, provides for the introduction of school gardens, which are now generally recognized as a necessary part of the equipment in every up-to-date rural school, gives room for a varied collection of trees and shrubs, and allows an open lawn in front."

The school ground should be plowed and prepared for seeding with suitable grasses. The play grounds should be made fairly level with only a slight grade to insure good surface drainage. It is said that in a good season the grass should form a fairly good sward in two or three months. The Trustees should provide to keep the grass cut. It is a good plan to make the school grounds an object lesson in the care of home grounds.

The trees planted about the school should include as many different varieties adapted to the locality, as possible. A great assistance in beautifying unattractive school grounds can be obtained by the wise use of ornamental shrubs. They are most "satisfactorily arranged in irregular groups or clumps in nooks or corners about grounds or buildings." The aim in collecting shrubs should be to cover the season with bloom as nearly as possible from early to late. Some of the shrubs mentioned in the Ontario bulletin are, golden bell, golden currant, lilacs, spiraea, snowball, weigela, syringa, hydranges. A very common error is scattering shrubs over more or less open, in order that the building may stand out as the central feature in a pretty landscape picture, the trees and shrubs at the sides and rear forming a beautiful background."

Vines may serve a useful purpose in the attempt to make an attractive school ground. Such hardy ones as Virginia Creeper and Boston Ivy may be used to cover the buildings. The fence may form a trellis for the trumpet flower, climbing honeysuckles and clematis.

The children must be taught to love flowers and must have the opportunity of becoming acquainted with them, so every school ground should have its flower beds. An attractive arrangement of flowers is to have a perennial border of three to six feet in width about the school house. The ground should be carefully prepared and made as rich as possible. The children may co-operate by bringing plants from home. Often they can spare roots of bleeding hearts, iris, lily of the valley, paeony, phlox, from their home gardens. As the plants increase the school border may in its turn become a distributing center to the homes. The annuals should find a place in the children's gardens.

In a shady spot at the back of the grounds should be placed the wild flower garden, containing a collection of the flowers and ferns of the locality. This garden should be stocked by the pupils under the direction of the teacher and may serve as a field of botanical study.

The playground should be equipped with a few pieces of inexpensive apparatus. For a rural school of thirty-five pupils, three graded swings, a sand-box, horizontal bar and giant stride with space for baseball will provide excellent opportunity for directed physical exercise and play. All the apparatus mentioned above can be made in the community. For a larger play-