

centre and the teacher a leader in rural progress is not a mere Utopian dream. It is already an accomplished fact in the most progressive rural communities in the province. Is the teacher in your community progressive? Or is she one of the kind that are ready to "die of loneliness" in a rural school?

And, furthermore, the rural school teacher who wishes to "keep alive" must have interests that have to do with her own personal development. But what chances of self-development are there in a country school section? In the first place there is no rural school section in which the teacher has not free access to Nature,—birds and flowers, insect life, trees, wild fruits, a whole world of living, growing things crowding in upon her to the very school-house door. In the section in which the die-of-loneliness tragedy was almost staged I knew one bit of woodland close to the school, which was simply thronged in springtime with wild birds—field sparrow, indigo bird, towhee, oriole, thrasher, catbird, cuckoo, vireo, and a score of others, a little bird-lover's paradise at the bend of the road; but of all the bird songs that went up from that bit of woodland in May and June none reached the ears of the lonely school mistress as she passed night and morning along the country road to and from her school.

She was not a reading girl or I might have suggested books,—David Grayson for instance, whose "adventures" provide a wholesome panacea for the ills of a lonely country life. I have some idea that even if she had read a chapter of David Grayson aloud every evening in her boarding house the quiet old couple with whom she boarded might have shared her enjoyment; for in reading more than with most other things the greatest pleasure comes from sharing it with others.

As for music, she could play passably well, but none of the half dozen pianos in the section ever felt the touch of her fingers. I remember when I first taught in a rural school, one of my best-prized possessions was a cheap violin. Many a time the old violin helped to put me on good terms with myself and with the rest of the world; and even if in the years since then I have forgotten how to play "Money Musk" and "The Fisher's Hornpipe," the old violin was in a rude sort of way something of a musical education. If I were back in that school section now I should have a phonograph in the school,—I should raise the money somehow,—and every morning and evening I should put on a fine piece of music,—Schubert's *Ave Maria*, let us say, or a nocturne by Chopin, or an overture from one of the operas. There is nothing like the haunting memory of a beautiful melody to keep one in his loneliest moments from being too lonely.

The walls of that country school room are bare,—plain bare, plastered walls, with no adornment whatever! And yet, for the expenditure of a few dollars they could be tastefully covered with good pictures,—not with tawdry prints, but with cheap reproductions of the finest things in the history of art,—The Old Temeraire, The Horse Fair, The Gleaners, and other pictures that have stood the test of time. Along with good music and good books there are few things that supply the lack of companionship better than good pictures.

And then at night there are the stars! "Why did not somebody teach me the constellations?" cries Carlyle, "and make me at home in the starry heavens which are always overhead and which I don't half know to this day?" There is some one, I forget who, who says of