

The Country School Fair

ARTICLE III.

The Reasons Why

By Ira Stratton

A great many questions are asked as to the School Fair and the work which is being specially encouraged where the fairs thrive best. The educational value of competition in ordinary school work was admitted long before men were able to agree as to the rotundity of the earth's surface and it has scarcely been chal-

lenged since. Only how best to promote competition has been debated. As the regular school work should occupy a prominent place at the School Fair the case on behalf of the fair is already established. But why go out beyond the orthodox, hide-bound school curriculum? Let the answer be another question, "Why play?" The school gardening, agriculture, manual training, cooking, etc., etc., have a value if only as recreation. They are better than haphazard play in that there is a definite purpose and plan making towards an end which has been made attractive. They give the student a fair measure of relief from the monotony of book work.

As Recreation

If the idea that these vocational



Exhibit of Vegetables at Snowflake School Fair

exercises may serve as healthful recreations can be developed (and it can), is it not better that the future business man be trained to a keen relish for gardening and the fixed habit of seeking change

from his regular occupation in one decidedly different, but almost equally useful, than that he be left to seek variety thru avenues no more healthful, but often more expensive? How often the business man's recreation is all outlay and no income! A well cared for garden might be as health-producing as an automobile and hit the cost of living from an entirely different angle. Whether or not the garden work may be justly styled recreation is largely a matter of early training. Let the early training be wisely given.



DIRECTORS OF JUNIOR AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY OF STONEWALL SCHOOL
Iva Williamson, president; Caton Hill, secretary; Bert Mollard, treasurer; Alan McLeod, Jean Mason, Connie Stratton, Lucille Le Blanc and Edith Mason. Ed. Stinson and L. Rutherford are not in photo.

That which is to be learned for life's work is best learned when young. Who knows what life's work will actually be when the world has progressed for another twenty-five years? Losses due to inexperience are as well confined to the small plots as to be left to all but devastate the broad fields in after years.

In these days of stress the farmer is advised to have no idle acres. They study carefully to have no "boarders" in the dairy herd. This winter the earning power of each horse next summer is weighed against the high price of oats. They, the much advised farmers, are told to fill all of the months with some sort of productive effort; the mechanic is cautioned against extravagance.

If there is something which a boy or girl can do at a profit without arresting their mental or physical development why should they not be at it? Why not have every person on the farm in direct charge of some of the machinery of production or intelligently guarding the

channels thru which only expenditure must flow?

To Train Self Reliance

The writer once saw a man of 67 years come to town with his son, a hard working man of 26, to assist him in purchasing a pair of boots, lest a few cents be needlessly expended. In after years the world wondered why the younger man lacked judgment to handle properly the affairs of the estate. His judgment had not been developed by extending to him the priceless privilege of paying the cost of his own mistakes.

The pupil who goes into poultry raising or some of the kindred lines of activity will develop a faculty for business if allowed to reap the profits and re-invest the monies. About four miles from here is a young man who owns most of the herd of cattle on his father's farm as the outcome of being allowed to own a heifer a good few years ago and to continue to own the heifer and her offspring. That young man grieves to hear his father talk of leaving the farm and last year handed his father a sum of money to help renovate the home.

On September 19 we heard a speaker say: "When I was a boy in Ontario my father gave me a little red calf. I fed it morning and night for three years and gave it several hundred free lunches at noon. It turned three in fine con-

dition. It was sold and I never saw a cent of the money. I went out of the little red calf business right then and there. Since that time no man has been able to give me a little red calf. That

training is possible in the one roomed school. In the agricultural experiments much has been accomplished if only the pupils come to have some conception of what is possible in production and then begin the study of reconciling as nearly as may be the possible with the economically profitable. The boy in his teens is the better for knowing the possibilities of reproduction in standard grains, potatoes, etc., under the most favorable conditions. He is then ready to investigate the existing conditions. He is the better for knowing from his own personal experience just about how fast a well-bred likely pig can be made to grow. When this is known he may then study what number of pounds per month proves most profitable.

The School Fair is simply an organized form of giving stimulus and zest to the work.

Preparation for Life

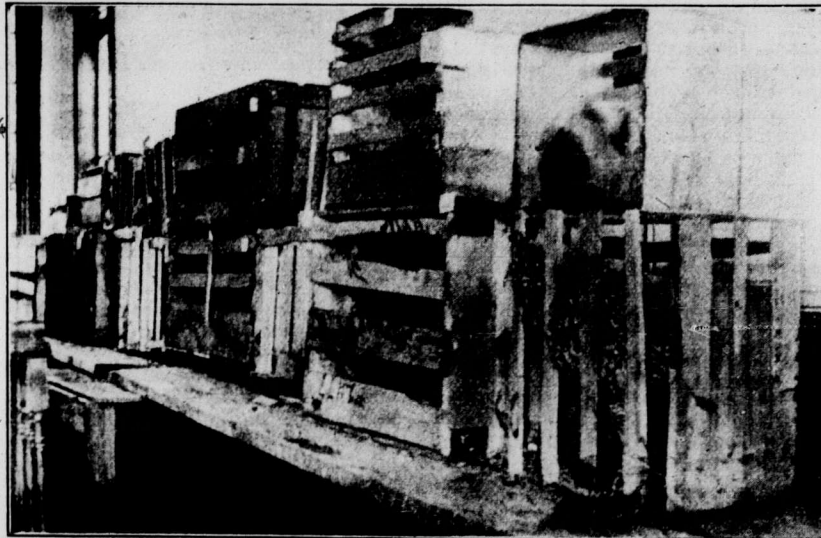
The work of the Junior Associations tends to fit the boys and girls for stepping right out of school into life. In past years the most highly trained product of our schools has gone into the professions and mostly worked for self until wealth or a competency has been acquired and often until the page has been turned down on life forever. What the country needs from its expensive school system is a generation of students armed with efficiency and stepping out into life prepared to assume its responsibilities and to lift at once their fair share of the common burdens.

Many a man has acquired some education and yet has been robbed of much of the satisfaction of living because he lacked the faculty of turning his education to account in helping his fellows in some movement. Forced to the chair in some meeting he spoils the business and suffers untold agonies because he had no early training in such work. He is asked to act as secretary, but is conscious that he would make a bungle of it. Sometimes this is true even after much schooling has been acquired.

Hundreds of men have the ability to do some things well, but were not trained to tell their fellows either by pen or by word of mouth what they have learned from the doing. They might have been trained to tell it in both ways without impeding their progress in school. The School Fair and its organizations help to give this training.

In real life fairs lose some of their usefulness because men of mature years are not game enough to enter a contest unless they feel that they have cinched the award. Very, very often they are poor losers.

The School Fair develops the faculty



Poultry Exhibit at Snowflake School Fair

experience, ladies and gentlemen, had much to do with my leaving the farm." Please contrast the two cases.

Being handy with the more common tools is a drawback to no one and manual

for doing both. It also develops the judgment which helps the juvenile or the adult to know when he is entitled to lose.

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