



## Life, Literature and Education.

### Macdonald Institute and Hall.

Guelph is a picturesque little city, set down in the heart of a splendid agricultural district, and owing its existence largely to the farming industry. It has some very handsome buildings, including the hospital, the cathedral, and the new Carnegie library, a gem of a building and but recently opened. The streets are a tangle; there is no north or south, no east or west, and the bewildered stranger, losing all knowledge of the points of the compass, wonders how anyone but a follower of Neal Dow ever finds his way home o' nights. But the Mecca towards which the eyes of all pilgrims naturally turn is beyond the city—on a hill overlooking it—and thither turn the willing feet of the visitors, that they may see one of the most important institutions in Canada—the Agricultural College.

The Ontario Agricultural College has done and is doing great and good work along many lines of importance to the farming industry, but perhaps its greatest accomplishment has been its vindication of the honor and dignity of life on the farm. It has been teaching a needed lesson to those who considered "rural" a synonym for "uncouth," and farm life only another term for narrowness and drudgery. It has demonstrated beyond dispute that a man cannot be a farmer when he has insufficient brains to be anything else, that agriculture is not a degrading task but one of the noblest forms of toil, that it is a science requiring a man's best powers to understand, and that there is no work which makes greater demands upon the intellect or is so capable of broadening the mind. The College has not only elevated the industry of agriculture, but it has opened the eyes of the blind to perceive the elevation.

What the Agricultural College has done towards enlightening the general public in regard to farming, the Macdonald Institute is now doing in connection with the College, along slightly different lines, yet the work of one is the complement of that of the other. If farm work has been despised by the ignorant, domestic service has been still more despised, and honor seems to be given to labor in inverse proportion to its usefulness. The tilling of the soil to produce the world's necessities of life, and the ordering of the home so as to make that life worth living—is there anything really better than these? The Macdonald Institute is existing to help answer that question.

In January, 1902, Sir William C. Macdonald, of Montreal, offered his assistance most liberally to provide a building where instruction and

training in domestic economy might be given to young women, that they might know the relation of knowledge to health and comfort, and might observe those methods which make for good living in simple, clean and well-kept homes in the country. The result of this generous offer, and of the guiding genius and energy of Prof. Jas. W. Robertson, and the executive ability of Mr. James Mills, late president of the O. A. C., who undertook the responsibility of planning the buildings and disbursing the funds, was the erection in connection with the Ontario Agricultural College, and alongside the same beautiful grounds, of the Institute, a place of instruction for women in home economics, and the Hall, a residence for them while taking the course, both buildings being given the name of the founder.

These two buildings are splendid structures, solid, handsome and dignified, as befitted the industry for whose welfare they were erected, and the view from the outside is most impressive and educational. Inside, the equipment of both is ample, yet simple; nothing is elaborate, but everything is good, from the beautiful reception room to the laundry, whose completeness must make washing almost a delight.

The Director of Home Economics, Miss Watson, who kindly gave some time to the answering of my numerous questions, said that a man who visited the Institute preparatory to entering his daughter as a student, complained that after living in such surroundings she would never be satisfied at home again. Of course, the furnishings are the best of their kind, for this is an institution open to the public always, and articles have been chosen for their durability as well as their appearance, but there is not an unnecessary thing from cellar to garret. Perhaps the girl may be dissatisfied when she returns home, but it will be a wholesome dissatisfaction with things that she will know then how to remedy. She will not be satisfied any longer to live in an airless study house, with few windows and with an over-supply of carpets and rugs, tidies and cushions, cheap and gaudy pictures, and a general assortment of useless bric-a-brac. She will remember the airy, sunny rooms, the polished woodwork, the daintiness, the lack of "fripperies" that require so much time and strength to keep dusted, and she will go to work to reproduce, as far as possible, the reign of cleanliness, convenience and simplicity which has so commended itself to her; and you, father, if you are wise, will help her with cheerful alacrity, and will consider that the money saved from little trifling adornments is well spent on something good and simple.

There are four classes in the Domestic Science Course. The first is the Normal class, extending over two years, and especially intended for those who wish to become teachers of domestic economy. Applicants for this course must have High School Junior Leaving or Matriculation standing. Then there is the Housekeepers' class, which is limited in number, and is open only to mature women with a fair education who wish to become professional house-

keepers. This is also a two-years' course. There is a short course, lasting only three months, for those who cannot afford any more time. Naturally, this does not cover the ground of the longer courses, but the work is largely practical and very useful. Candidates for this course must be at least seventeen years old, and have a good public-school education.

But I have reserved until last the class in which I thought you would be the most interested, and it deserves a paragraph to itself. This is the Homemaker's class, and commends itself particularly to the girl who does not have to earn her living outside, but whose work and interests are in her home. The girl who wants to do her work in the best, the most thorough, and yet the easiest and most enjoyable way, should take this course, which lasts one year. To be admitted, she must be at least seventeen years old, must have passed the Entrance examination, or be able to give evidence of a good elementary education, ability to express herself in good English, and a working knowledge of elementary arithmetic. The subjects studied in this course are physiology, hygiene, foods, sanitation, dietetics, child-study, and home-nursing, each of these getting one period a week; household economics, two periods; laundry, three; sewing, four; plain cooking, six; and practice work, seven.

The sewing is divided into four grades—plain sewing, underwear, shirt waists, and skirt-making—and the girl goes into the grade she is found to be fitted for. For instance, she may not need instruction in the first one or two of the grades, and then she will have some spare periods to devote to some other study. (There are optional courses in horticulture, poultry-raising, dairying, literature, millinery and manual training.) The materials used in the sewing lessons are supplied by the students, and made up for their own use.

The cooking came next. There was a most savory smell of apple-sauce in one of the kitchens when I entered, where seven or eight girls, dressed in a simple, washable uniform, were working. The working tables were a combination of table and cabinet, with drawers for materials and for some of the utensils always needed. Other utensils, not commonly in use, were kept in cupboards on the sides of the room. But, again, I could see nothing in the way of equipment that was unnecessary, or that any farmer's wife or daughter might not have at home, with little expense, except, of course, the gas stove and the electric oven. There were a few expensive articles of granite-ware, but these have been purchased mainly to see if their quality was such as to warrant the added cost, but most of them were obtainable at moderate prices, while the table and cabinet could easily be made by a handy man or ordinary carpenter.

The practice work, which covers seven periods per week, means that the girl has some actual housework to do every day, and to do in the correct way. While I sat in the office, a girl came in whose work for the day was dusting. She handed

to the Director a slip with her name and her task upon it, and returned the card of printed directions which she had followed in doing the work. Another girl showed me the freshly-cleaned pantry shelves, the scrubbing of which had been assigned to her that morning. They were well scrubbed, too, and she had every right to the look of pride which she wore.

In one corner, on the first floor of the Institute, is a small apartment, consisting of a kitchen, pantries, living-room, bathroom, and two bedrooms—a home within a home—and occupied by two of the staff. In this home the girl actually keeps house for a week or more before her term ends. She buys the food, cooks and serves the meals, sweeps, dusts and cleans the rooms, and, in short, does everything she would do in a house of her own. Thus she has the opportunity of seeing her work for the year as a whole, and of knowing just what she has accomplished.

Before leaving the Institute for the Hall I went in to see the Nature-study class, whose instructor is Professor McCready, B. A., and whose students are gathered from the four older Provinces of the Dominion, mostly teachers from rural schools who were chosen as worthy of a free three-months' course. I found the class in tears, and ere long wept with those that wept, for the study for that day was the onion. I was impressed by the earnest seeking after information, the desire to investigate rather than get their knowledge ready-made from the professor, and the indifference to the amount of trouble such a course of investigation entailed upon them, and I thought that this short course, important to the teachers themselves, would prove of greater importance to the pupils under their charge when they return home.

Macdonald Hall is conveniently close to the Institute, and is situated on the highest point of land in the College grounds, giving a most magnificent view of the surrounding country from its upper balconies. Here, again, the visitor is struck by the wide halls, high ceilings, and the number of windows. The ground floor contains attractive reception rooms, the dining-room and offices, and also a few bedrooms; the first floor has the students' sitting-room, the gymnasium, and more bedrooms, while the second floor has bedrooms only. The furniture is supplied for each bedroom, but the lighter furnishings are left to the girl herself—her own pictures and photos adorn the walls, and her own couch-cover and cushions turn her cot into a cosy corner of the most comfortable type.

In every establishment, particularly where there are many inmates, there must of necessity be some rules, and the more carefully these are kept, the fewer will be necessary. At Macdonald Hall the rules are few and not severe, the students being trusted to exercise the self-restraint essential to the comfortable dwelling together of so many persons, whose only common tie is a desire to acquire knowledge. Punctuality and methodical habits are inculcated through regular hours for rising and retiring, for meals, study and play, and the good health resulting from this regular