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WM. B. CARTER, A. M., . . . . . ASSOCIATE EDITORAll remittances should be sent in a registered letter,  
addressed "JOURNAL OF EDUCATION, St. John, N. B."**ARBOR DAY.**

Nothing should be left undone to have an Arbor Day appointed for the spring of 1887, and to take measures to have it generally observed in the schools of the Province. At the Carleton County Teachers' Institute, which meets to-day, reports are to be read from the schools that observed an Arbor Day last year. These reports will show what has already been done in ornamenting school grounds. And the enthusiasm with which the work was entered upon in many districts in Carleton, York and Charlotte, is most encouraging to those who planned and aided in carrying out so excellent a work. The success they met with will stimulate others to do likewise.

A contributor in another column gives some valuable suggestions on decorating school grounds, and these, we hope, will be followed by others from the same pen. It is the first step that costs, but if the inertia be once removed and an interest developed in this matter of ornamenting school grounds, we feel sure that the results will be satisfactory in many ways. Not only will the children take more interest in the schools, but teachers will find that it can be made a powerful means of securing better discipline if they and their scholars can have something in which they may be mutually interested during play hours. Many an obstreperous pupil has been reduced to docility by getting him interested in some pleasant task, which will serve as a channel for diverting and turning to good account the mischief which must seek an outlet. Many useful hints on the propagation of plants, how to preserve them, how to guard them against the ravages of insects, what soils are best suited for certain plants, what uses they are put to—with many other facts that can be taught better by practice than theory, point out that the ornamentation of school buildings and grounds is no mean factor in an educational course.

Preparations for an Arbor Day next year should not be left until spring. They may begin now. School grounds may be levelled off, stones and unrightly objects removed, good trees selected and marked while the foliage is still upon them, and if a few be planted this fall it will serve as an earnest for the fuller accomplishment next spring, and keep up in the minds of children a livelier anticipation of Arbor Day.

The entire length of railroads of the world, up to the end of 1884, as recently published by the Prussian minister of public works, was 291,000 miles, an increase of twenty-seven per cent., or over sixty thousand miles, during the preceding five years. Of the entire length, very nearly one-half is that of the American railroads, mainly in the United States.

**ORNAMENTING SCHOOL GROUNDS**

There are, no doubt, many country school-houses set down on a little patch of cleared ground by the side of the public road, neat little buildings enough, but looking utterly desolate to an artistic eye, because of the neglect of their surroundings. Now I do not advocate calling in a landscape gardener or a tree agent, these are all very well in their way, but let us see what can be done by the exercise of a little taste and the expenditure of a little time and trouble.

One of these bright autumn days, just before school is dismissed, let the teacher ask the boys and girls to bring some roots of vines or shrubs when they come to school to-morrow. We will say that out of twenty scholars only five will take any interest in the matter, but let not the teacher be discouraged. The main thing is to make a beginning. The interest will soon grow, and by next year you will find the children eager to carry the improvements still further. Next day at recess let one of the boys borrow a spade from the nearest neighbour and let those most interested plant the vines under the windows and near the door, each undertaking to take charge of his or her plant. In this way the work will not be too much for any one to attend to, and the teacher's care will be to see that they are not neglected.

A few words on the subject of the most desirable plants might not be amiss.

If any one in the vicinity has a Virginia creeper, she will be willing to spare a few slips in such a good cause, and these have only to be set in the ground and watered a few times and you will be surprised at the rapidity with which they grow when once established. In the neighbourhood of Fredericton and St. Stephen the beautiful *Clematis Verticillaris* is found, and more abundantly throughout the province the *Clematis Virginiana*, both of which are pretty creepers. Hops are not difficult to obtain and are of very luxuriant growth. Though it is best to have perennial plants, still some pretty annuals are not to be despised, such as canary creeper, nasturtium, and others. We have now adorned the outer walls of the school-house, what else shall we do?

To attempt too much will not be wise. It is best to "make haste slowly" and do well what we undertake. An oval bed each side of the door would be enough to begin with, unless the children are very enthusiastic, and they will do so if the teacher is enthusiastic and goes the right way to work. An oval bed is prettier than a square one or a straight border against the house, and has the advantage of being easy of access from all points for weeding and watering. It would be well to arouse in the children a spirit of generous emulation in reference to "stocking" the garden. Some can bring slips of geranium, etc., from home, some will bring a few cents to buy seed. You can do very well with one packet of pansy and one packet of mignonette, costing five cents each; others may search the woods and bring roots of our native wild flowers, which are lovely, and many of them improve greatly under cultivation.

If every day at recess a little care is bestowed upon these few flower beds, they will soon become the source of a great deal of pleasure without interfering with home or school duties.

One point more and I have done. Having made and planted the flower beds, you will need some protection against that enemy of gardens—the cow. A wire fence is the best, but a cheap rustic fence can easily be made. Stakes of spruce or cedar

driven into the ground about six feet apart, connected with small poles with the bark left on, and cross pieces at intervals.

The above hints have been given merely to show what can be done as a beginning, but I hope others will improve on these suggestions and carry them out more fully. It is impossible to over estimate the refining influence which the love of flowers exercises upon the youthful mind, especially when aided and directed by a teacher who has an intelligent appreciation of the beauties of nature. I know of no purer source of pleasure to old and young alike, than is experienced in watching the growth of plants and seeds upon which they have expended care (for we lose much if we leave our work to a gardener); it excites the curiosity and cultivates the taste of the children, and the teacher, weary with mental toil, derives, like Anteus, fresh benefit from every contact with mother earth.

As we pull up the weeds, we think how we will eradicate the weeds of idleness, ill-humour, etc., from the hearts of our pupils. As we train the plants, we shall think how all good and pure affections shall live and grow in them, and in the painful, but necessary, pruning, we shall see another analogy which our great Teacher has brought out for us—Every branch that beareth fruit He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. If we make our pupils sharers in these thoughts who can tell what the result may be?

I do not speak thus from mere theory. This plan has been carried out with success in the family of the writer, and boys and girls alike have received many a lesson which I am fain to believe was sown in good ground, that is, virgin soil, to bring forth fruit a hundred fold. If, as Dean Swift says, "he is a public benefactor who causes two blades of grass to grow where before there was only one," what must he be who "makes the wilderness like Eden, causes the desert to blossom like a rose," and plants a love of the beautiful in the hearts of those who in a few years will occupy our places on the stage of life.

I will conclude with a simple little poem by Wordsworth, with which probably all your readers are not familiar.

Who fancied what a pretty sight  
This rock would be, if edged around  
With living snow-drops, circlet bright,  
So glorious to this orchard ground;  
Who loved this little mound, and set  
Upon its brow this coronet?

Was it the fancy of a child,  
Or rather of some village maid  
Whose brow, the day that she was styled  
The shepherd queen, were thus arrayed;  
Of man mature, or matron sage;  
Or old man toying with his age?

I asked, 'twas answered, the device  
To each and all might well belong,  
It is the spirit of Paradise  
That prompts such work, a spirit strong  
That gives to each the self-same bent,  
Where life is wise and innocent.

St. John, N. B., Sept. 13.

*La graphologie*, a French journal, describes a new method of reading character, known as "scarpology." It consists in a study of the heels and soles of shoes. If these are worn down evenly, the wearer is a good business man, energetic and quick in decision; if the outer side is worn more than the inner he is of an adventurous turn of mind. Weakness of character is indicated by a heel and sole worn most on the inner side.