

The Country Homemakers

CONDUCTED BY FRANCIS MARION BEYNON

TREE PLANTING TIME

When I was a little tike, Arbor Day meant scratching up the schoolyard with a rake and bonfires. The real object of Arbor Day, the planting of trees and shrubs about a school, was completely lost sight of. Perhaps the parents and teachers in our district had never heard such a straight from the shoulder lecture as was given to the women's section of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' convention last February, by Dr. Wilson, who spoke on the matter of beautifying our schools.

Dr. Wilson described a school that had been standing up bare and bald and treeless for a matter of ten or fifteen years. As I looked over the audience I could see that a good many of the women present recognized the description as fitting their own country schoolhouse and they began to feel uneasy about it.

But Dr. Wilson didn't stop with generalizations. He urged every woman there to go home and see that something was done about planting trees about the home school, not next spring, or a year from next spring, but right away this year, for trees grow while we wait.

For the encouragement of his audience Dr. Wilson told of other schools, where a beauty-loving teacher had sojourned for a time and left as a souvenir of his residence thriving rows of trees which are now tall and stately.

As we listened it seemed such an enormity not to have trees about a school that I am sure many of the audience went home determined to do something about it at once. I hope they have lived up to this resolution and that many country schools are in the process of being beautified as a result of Dr. Wilson's address.

In the districts where there is a river with maple trees along the banks, the transplanting of them is a comparatively simple matter, and after all is said and done, there are few trees that give as much all round satisfaction in this country as the Manitoba maple. In other districts it may be necessary to send to the nearest nursery or experimental farm for the young trees and shrubs.

But whatever the cost in time and trouble, it should be borne in mind that this planting is not merely being done for the children who are at school now, nor for the children who follow them there, but for generation after generation of children, all of whom will be better for having spent their school days in beautiful surroundings.

FRANCIS MARION BEYNON.

A SUCCESSION OF HARD LUCK

Dear Miss Beynon:—In The Guide of February 17, I noticed a letter signed by "Canadian," which I would like to answer, as I believe it was written in a kindly spirit. I agree with Canadian that underwear will last two years with care, but I would like to explain the case to Canadian as it is with ourselves, as well as I can. To begin with, very few have any more than they need when they start homesteading, and it is such slow work starting without any capital. There never seems to be money to buy needed clothes and it is surprising how little is spent on new clothes the first years of homesteading. We ourselves live in the drought-stricken district, so I speak from experience. Two years ago the crop was almost a total failure, but we struggled on, still patching the old clothes. When spring came nearly every settler in this district had to buy seed grain, but we hoped for big crops, only to be disappointed again, as very few in this district had a bushel of grain. We ourselves hadn't any. I might say there are hundreds in this district that have not handled a cent of ready cash for one year, so I think Canadian can readily see that our little ones would be entirely without clothes if it were not for a little outside help.

Our children have had very little education since we came to the homestead, and now that school has re-opened they are unable to go for want of boots and rubbers, also stockings, as they have nearly three miles to walk. I would be very glad of any help, especially foot-

wear, boots, size 9, for five-year-old girl; boots, size 1, for ten-year-old girl; boys' boots, size 4 and 6, for boys fourteen and sixteen years; or overalls for boys, sizes 14 and 15½; baby's boots, size 3 or 4, also stockings for all; also dresses for the two girls, as they are badly in need, and men's shirts, size 16½. Anything in the way of bedding would be greatly appreciated, as we have very little. I need hardly add that overalls or pants for the boys would be very acceptable, but there are so many things I could mention, as I also have two small boys, age one and three years.

Dear Editor, I hope I have not made this letter too long. I trust that Canadian will be satisfied with the information. With best wishes to you for success in your work, I will sign myself,

MOTHER OF SIX.

RELATION OF THE HOME TO THE SCHOOL

In selecting this topic for my letter, I do so as one who has obtained a good deal of knowledge on both sides of the matter, from experience and observation. I am a rural school-teacher and have spent most of my life on a farm. I believe I can lay some claim to motherhood too, tho my only child died at birth. And when my home was broken up thro trouble, I again turned

if not altogether false, as most children have lively imaginations and cannot distinguish between what really happened and what they imagined. This habit if encouraged may cause great injustice to the teacher and other pupils, and teach that despicable habit of gossiping.

Do not send children to school at too early an age. It is injurious to the health of young children to sit still too long. Even if the child is engaged in kindergarten work, he or she would be better to have liberty to use the limbs. Seven years is plenty young enough for a child to start to school. They will be physically stronger then, than if sent at five or six. While still at home, simple lessons may be taught. Even a busy mother can find time to teach simple rhymes, tell stories, and teach the numbers and A, B, C from blocks. Thus the average bright child of seven, when he or she starts to school (preferably at the beginning of a term) will be ambitious to learn, and no doubt will make good progress.

And parents, when they do start, do not keep them out on every trifling excuse. Co-operate with the teacher by encouraging your children in habits of cleanliness, obedience and truthfulness at home. Send them to school regularly and on time. Provide them with the necessary books and materials to work,

sympathy in whatever plans she forms in connection with her work.

So let home and school co-operate. Let parents, teachers, pupils and trustees work together for the benefit of all concerned—in union is strength and progress.

"MOTHER-TEACHER."

POSSIBILITIES OF THE SANDPILE

(By Myrtle Erwin, in the Mother's Magazine)

Having a precocious boy of four who is determined to learn and who absorbs readily almost everything he sees and hears, the task of teaching him was thrust upon me. I had never been a teacher, there was no kindergarten in our little town of four thousand, and I had no books on kindergarten work, but I had always read everything pertaining to the child that I could lay my hands on, adapting it as best I could to suit the needs of my two children.

The outdoor and Montessori methods of teaching appealed to me particularly as my boy is very active and a lover of the open air. So the idea came to me as I saw him making mounds in his sand-pile, "Why not teach him a little geography and history by means of the sand?" So our first lesson was the hill, the mountain and the valley. I instructed him how to build, giving a simple geographical definition for each of them. He was delighted, carried away with the idea. Next I told him about the oceans and islands, using the sand scooped out in places for waves and letting him build islands. Then we learned about volcanoes and he enjoyed scooping out the crater of Mt. Vesuvius and hearing about the wonderful cities lying buried at its foot, and it surprised me how much of the story he could tell and explain at the supper table that evening.

Another day, to vary the course, we built a high coast with rocks along its shore, one larger than the rest, and had a wooden pickle tray come sailing across the ocean. The name of this wonderful ship was the Mayflower, and the big rock was Plymouth Rock, and when I had finished the story of the Pilgrims he said, "Some day I'm going to see Plymouth Rock."

Then we built a canal and learned about the Panama Canal and the Isthmus. The Great Sahara desert was not a bit hard for us. A toy camel made the trip across with safety, carrying his cargo safe from the bandits, stopping to rest in an oasis green with bits of grass and tiny weed trees. A description of the camel and its habits added interest.

The Alps are rather high, but imagination helped out and a loyal army of tin soldiers bravely marched after an imaginary general named Napoleon, with the slogan, "Beyond the Alps lies Italy."

Another day three ships sailed out from Spain and discovered America.

We are going to build capes and harbors, one of which will be Boston, with the shipload of tea, which we will bravely toss overboard; Washington crossing the Delaware, with a story of the hardships of Valley Forge will also prove very interesting. Even a few Bible stories can be woven in. For instance, it was a lot of fun to build two dams and put water back of each of them and use sticks and box carts for the hosts of Pharaoh and then push down the dams and walls of the Red Sea and drown them all. Moses in the bull-rushes in the River Nile is an easy story to illustrate, using dolls for the princess and Miriam.

It is better to have the sand-pile boxed up at the sides in order to keep the sand in place and to hold water, but most of the lessons can be carried out by merely forming waves of sand with a scoop. When the snow covers the sand-pile we shall build snow huts and have lessons about the Eskimo, the reindeer and the grizzly bear, with stories of seal and whale fishing and voyages to the North and South poles.

Britain will never know her strength, and her enemies will not know it either, until she is clear of the drink traffic.



DINNER TIME

to teaching, that is mothering other people's children.

First, let me say that I believe in hearty co-operation between home and school. It is the duty of the patrons of a school to elect fit men as officers of the school board, who will engage only teachers of good moral character, and who will see that the school and its equipment are the best that their means can provide.

I would urge the parents to uphold the teacher's authority. Do not criticize her methods before her pupils. Enter into her plans for beautifying the school and school grounds, making school gardens and having concerts and picnics. Remember these plans are for the benefit of your children and thus will have an influence on your home and on the social life of the community.

Discourage the habit in children of carrying tales home from school. They are likely to be very much exaggerated,

and cheerfully comply with the necessary regulations of the school authorities. Encourage your children in the habit of reading good books, have a home library as well as one in the school. Take an interest in their studies, and if it seems wise, assist them with their home-work.

Thus far I have said little about the teacher. She should have a conscientious attitude toward duty. For we know that a teacher's personal influence is a very important factor in forming the characters of her pupils.

She should take an active part in the social life of the district, and be a leader in every cause which tends for the benefit of its members. She should visit the homes of her pupils, as only by doing so will she be enabled to understand their temperaments, and know how to deal with them individually. Also by making friends of their parents she can be sure of their support and