

AMONG
COUNTRY SCHOOLS

BY

OF J^Y KERN

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS, WINNEBAGO COUNTY
ILLINOIS



GINN & COMPANY

BOSTON · NEW YORK · CHICAGO · LONDON



FIG. 1. An Old New England Schoolhouse

COPYRIGHT, 1906

BY O. J. KERN

--

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

66.8

The Athenæum Press

**GINN & COMPANY • PRO-
PRIETORS • BOSTON • U.S.A.**

**THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED TO ALL THOSE WHOSE
FEET HAVE WANDERED OR MAY WANDER
ALONG COUNTRY ROADS, OVER FIELDS,
THROUGH WOODLAND, TO THE
COUNTRY SCHOOL**

What is thus offered is the result of seven years of very earnest thought and hard work in an endeavor to secure for the country child his rights so far as an educational opportunity is concerned. The country school should have that freedom which country life affords. This book has but little to say about the mechanics of school management.

In the training of children and the development of character no greater opportunity can be offered than that now belonging to the teacher in the country school. The author hopes these pages may prove helpful in the way of making the teacher a greater inspirational force in country life. Likewise no such opportunity was ever presented to a school officer as is now before the county superintendent of schools. It is his privilege to become a real leader in an educational way and to do original constructive work in the evolution of the country school to meet the new conditions of country life.

In the development of the country school discouragements will come and seemingly insurmountable obstacles will block the way. It is no time, then, to become despondent or cynical. Go out under the stars and breathe the resolve in prayer to be true to right ideals. The reward is to the one who remains steadfast to the end.

O. J. K.

HIGHLAND, ROCKFORD, ILLINOIS
July, 1906

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

THE NEW COUNTRY LIFE

	PAGES
Improved farm machinery.— Methods of communication. — Spiritualization of country life.— Period of settling down. — Country school and progress.— Exodus to the cities.— Statistics.— Right Honorable James Bryce in America, 1904.— Relation of country school to new age in country life.— New educational ideal	1-14

CHAPTER II

THE RIGHTS OF THE COUNTRY CHILD

An educational creed.— Educational progress in cities. — Country and city contrasted.— Equality of educational opportunity.— A "square deal."— A Teacher's Creed.— Beauty in country life.— Attendance in country schools of Illinois.— Chart No. 60.— Three great movements.— The problem	15-33
---	-------

CHAPTER III

OUTDOOR ART: BEAUTIFYING SCHOOL GROUNDS

Influence of environment.— Inoculation for school im- provement.— Conditions in Illinois.— Factors in the prob- lem.— Planting and programmes.— Some material.— Seven agencies for the beautiful in country life.— Literature on trees and forestry.— President Roosevelt and the man who "skins" the land.— Consolidated school grounds.— Plea for wild flowers, etc.— Excuse no longer valid	34-55
--	-------

CHAPTER IV

SCHOOL GARDENS

PAGES

An experiment in country schools. — A modern school. — Education not limited to the "three R's." — Contrast of city conditions and country conditions. — Effects of garden work in Philadelphia. — "Do-nothing" policy. — Twofold purpose of school garden in country schools. — A further plea for the wild. — Literature on planting. — How to have a school garden. — Outline of work for institutes. — Bibliography. — The Macdonald school gardens. — Other school gardens	56-84
---	-------

CHAPTER V

INDOOR ART AND DECORATION

Aim of chapter. — Present and future. — Ideal school board. — Waste of school funds. — School improvement society. — Responsibility of teacher. — Sanitary commission. — Work of the twins. — Cure rather than endure. — Stove polish and jacket. — Water tank. — Ventilation. — Theoretical art interest. — Work of Art Education Society of Cleveland. — Traveling art exhibits at teachers' institutes. — Course in art reading. — List of books. — Suggestive programme for school social. — Studies of Millet. — Gifts of an art friend. — Work of Illinois Congress of Mothers. — The old country schoolroom	85-102
--	--------

CHAPTER VI

SCHOOL LIBRARIES

Growth of libraries. — "Everybody." — School libraries in various states. — Do country children need good books? — Plea of poverty on part of school officers. — Teachers and right use of books. — Twentieth-century library movement.	
---	--

CONTENTS

xī

PAGES

— Traveling school libraries. — Township exercises as one means. — Sanitary regulations for traveling libraries. — Contents of boxes. — Library work at annual teachers' institutes. — List of books on United States history. — Results. — School libraries in New York, Massachusetts, West Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, South Carolina, and Texas	103-128
--	---------

CHAPTER VII

A FARMER BOYS' EXPERIMENT CLUB

Country-school extension work. — Large pupils in school. — One object. — Machinery of organization. — Relation of school to a boys' club. — Work of boys. — Sugar beets. — Growing high-bred corn. — Circulars of Illinois Agricultural Extension Department. — Corn and regular school work. — By-products of corn. — Reports from boys. — The work in various states. — Account of contest and banquet at Lincoln, Nebraska. — Widespread interest in boys' clubs . . .	129-157
---	---------

CHAPTER VIII

EDUCATIONAL EXCURSIONS TO THE COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE

Excursion a factor. — Value of a trip. — Education for the country child. — Things. — Four annual excursions. — Character of excursions. — One way of reaching people. — Inspiration to boys. — Secret of success. — Programme at Wisconsin College of Agriculture. — Illinois Experiment Station. — What one boy saw. — Visit to Iowa. — Breeding corn. — The "Blue Grays" at Ames. — The corn train. — Testing seed corn. — Bulletins	158-174
---	---------

CHAPTER IX

THE COUNTRY SCHOOL AND THE FARMERS' INSTITUTE

PAGES

Who attend in Illinois. — Who do not attend. — Coöperation of county superintendents. — Educational sessions at state round-up. — Need of enlisting the young people. — Boys' session of Winnebago County Farmers' Institute. — Some reports and papers. — Prize giving. — Boys study score card. — Announcement to boys. — How to secure reports from boys. — Girls' club. — Prizes. — Score card for bread. — Useful bulletins	175-200
--	---------

CHAPTER X

THE NEW AGRICULTURE AND THE COUNTRY SCHOOL

"Spasmodic theorization." — Work of previous chapters. — Fundamentals. — Country child and environment. — "Ways and means." — Hodge's <i>Nature Study and Life</i> . — Attitude of the "educator." — Dean Bailey. — Report of Committee on Industrial Education for Country Communities. — Bulletins in country schools. — Lectures. — Books in traveling libraries. — Agriculture at St. Louis. — Secretary Wilson on value. — Appropriations by Illinois. — Dr. Hopkins on breeding corn. — Funk Brothers' seed farm. — Soil investigations. — <i>Prairie Farmer</i> editorial on "fads." Who is to fit? — "Prophets in Israel." — An educational campaign. — Dean Davenport on the consolidated country school. — A summary	201-225
--	---------

CHAPTER XI

THE FINANCIAL PHASE OF THE COUNTRY-SCHOOL
PROBLEM

	PAGES
Increased usefulness of country schools. — Hard to realize change. — Small schools in various states. — Small school not necessarily a poor one. — Dollars-and-cents argument. — Some statistics in one county. — Some observations. — Amount to be increased. — Better salaries for better teachers. — Per capita. — Assessed valuation and rate of taxation. — Salary list. — Small schools in one county. — Financial phase fundamental	226-239

CHAPTER XII

CONSOLIDATION

Some preliminaries. — First stage. — Consolidation not to cheapen. — Views of Honorable Henry Sabin. — Progress of consolidation. — Indiana. — Ohio visit. — Illinois. — Art at Seward School. — High-school possibilities. — Advantages and objections — Transportation. — Assistant Secretary Hays on course of study. — What claim? — Summary of Superintendent Graham's bulletins	240-281
---	---------

CHAPTER XIII

THE TRAINING OF TEACHERS FOR COUNTRY SCHOOLS

Spirit of criticism. — Fitting teachers to teach. — Country-school conditions not fully recognized. — Superintendent Gilbert on course of study. — Department for country schools. — Normal scholarships in Illinois. — High school at the normal school. — Country-school programmes. — Model country school with Indiana State Normal School. — Charman's report on work. — Illinois making a start. — Wisconsin county training schools. — Work in Dunn County. — Work at New Paltz, New York. — Bibliography. — Work in Michigan	282-308
--	---------

CHAPTER XIV

MANUAL TRAINING IN THE COUNTRY SCHOOL

PAGES

Manual training and manual labor.— Table showing number of pupils in each grade.— Progress in manual training in country schools will be slow.— Opportunity for the school to cooperate with the home.— Account of Cottage Hill School.— The work in Hancock County, Georgia.— Manual training in state normal schools.— Report of Committee on Manual Training for Rural Schools to the Illinois Manual Arts Association.— Work in Mower County, Minnesota.— Mr. Harvey G. Hatch's work in Winnebago County, Illinois.— Possible kinds of hand work.— Reference list	309-341
---	---------

CHAPTER XV

A LAST WORD

Not a final word.— The University of Illinois and the country school.— Resolutions at special conference.— Forward step in Wisconsin.— Educational campaigns.— Work of the School Improvement League of Maine.— Progress in West Virginia, South Carolina, Georgia, Missouri, Minnesota, Virginia, North Carolina, Massachusetts, and other states.— The last word	342-366
--	---------

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

FIG.	PAGE
1. An Old New England Schoolhouse	<i>Frontispiece</i>
2. A Two-Row Corn Cultivator	1
3. A New Country Road	3
4. A New Means of Communication for the Farm	4
5. A Steam Roller and a Road Scraper	5
6. A Farm Scene	7
7. A Country Road	10
8. A Country Schoolhouse	11
9. His First Day	13
10. Among the Oaks	16
11. Among the Oaks	17
12. An Old Schoolhouse in Winnebago County, Illinois	18
13. A New Schoolhouse in Winnebago County, Illinois	19
14. Crab Apple Blossoms beside a Country Brook	21
15. Where the Water Lilies Grow	23
16. A Country Road	25
17. A New Schoolhouse with Trees	26
18. Work in the New Schoolhouse	27
19. Down on the River	29
20. An Old Schoolhouse	30
21. A New Schoolhouse	31
22. Noble Elms spared by the Telephone Company	34
3. Trees should go with the Flag	35
4. The Four Oaks	37
5. A Real Playground	38
6. Standing by their Colors	39
7. A Shrubby Detail	41
28. The Treeless School Grounds	42
29. Why not on the School Ground?	43
30. Treatment of Outbuildings	45
31. Treatment of Outbuildings	46
32. Improving Grounds of Consolidated School	47
33. Vines on the Schoolhouse	49
34. At the Well	50
35. A Design for the Improvements and Planting of the Seward School Grounds between 50 and	51
36. A Row of Hard Maples	52
37. The Results of Tree Planting	54
38. Where the Wild Crab Apple, Plum, etc., are Saved	55
39. A School Garden in Winnebago County (1903)	57
40. A School Garden in Winnebago County (1903)	59

FIG.	PAGE
41. A School Garden in Winnebago County (1903)	61
42. A School Garden at Home (1904)	63
43. A School Garden at the Seward Consolidated School (1904)	65
44. A Desolate Schoolhouse	68
45. A Farm Home near the Desolate Schoolhouse	69
46. A School Garden in Winnebago County (1905)	70
47. A School Garden in Winnebago County (1905)	74
48. A School Garden in Winnebago County (1905)	76
49. Outline Plan of a Macdonald School Garden, Bowesville, Ontario, Canada	77
50. A Model for a Country School	79
51. Another Model for a Country School	81
52. Trees set out in 1905	83
53. Nature Study	84
54. A Stove Jacket	87
55. A Water Tank	89
56. Studying a Traveling Art Exhibit	91
57. An Improved Interior	93
58. Pictures and Books	95
59. A Room in the Seward Consolidated School	98
60. A Room in the Seward Consolidated School	99
61. A Room in the Seward Consolidated School	101
62. A Country-School Library	105
63. Library Case and Reading Table	108
64. Traveling Libraries for Country Schools: Plan of Disinfection	112
65. The Winnebago County Board of Supervisors	122
66. Some Prize Winners, Members of the Winnebago County Farmer Boys' Experiment Club	131
67. A Prize Winner, Eleven Years Old	132
68. A Prize Winner, Twelve Years Old	133
69. With High-Bred Corn	135
70. With High-Bred Corn	136
71. A Sugar-Beet Grower	137
72. Sugar-Beet Growers	138
73. Brother and Sister among their Beets	141
74. This Boy Hopes Soon to Take a Course at an Agricultural College	142
75. Some High-Bred Corn	147
76. Bottles showing Chemical Analysis of Corn	147
77. Testing the Germination of Corn with Plates of Sand	151
78. Some Prize Winners of the Winnebago County Girls' Home Culture Club	152
79. The Excursion of Winnebagoes (1903) in front of the College of Agriculture, University of Illinois	158
80. The Illinois College of Agriculture	159
81. The Cattle Barn, Illinois College of Agriculture	161
82. Looking at the Live Stock, Ames (Iowa) Experiment Station	165
83. At the Oats Breeding Plots, Ames, Iowa	167
84. Inspecting Alfalfa at Ames, Iowa	168
85. The Famous "Blue Grays" on Experiment Farm, Ames, Iowa	169
86. Winnebagoes "on the Trail" to Madison, Wisconsin, June, 1905	171

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

xvii

FIG.	PAGE
87. The Arrival at Madison: in Front of the New College of Agriculture, University of Wisconsin	173
88. Country Children in School	176
89. A Boy at his Desk in an Old-Fashioned Country School	179
90. Country Children in School	181
91. The Boys' Session of the Winnebago County Farmers' Institute, 1904	183
92. A Subject for Consideration at the Farmers' Institute	186
93. A Subject for Consideration at the Farmers' Institute	187
94. Studying Corn	189
95. Studying Corn	192
96. Pure-Bred Cattle	193
97. Studies in Corn	193
98. A Cross Section of a Kernel of Corn	196
99. The Cooking Class, Macdonald Consolidated School, Middleton, Nova Scotia, Canada	199
100. Root Growth of Corn at Time of Tasseling	200
101. Corn and Soy Beans on Experiment Field, Winnebago County, Illinois	203
102. Soy Beans on Experiment Field, Winnebago County, Illinois	205
103. A Traveling Library for District Schools: Works on Agriculture and Country Life	209
104. An Exhibit of Corn and Oats at the St. Louis Exposition	214
105. A Little Literary Man studying Corn	217
106. The Teacher's Corner in an Old-Fashioned Country Schoolhouse	221
107. A Type of Small School in Winnebago County, Illinois	227
108. Another Typical Country Schoolhouse	233
109. The First Consolidated School Building in Illinois: Seward Township, Winnebago County	240
110. The Buildings abandoned for the Consolidated School	241
111. Transportation in Indiana	244
112. Transportation in Indiana	245
113. Going Home from School in Illinois: Temperature Twelve Degrees below Zero	246
114. The New Way in Ohio	247
115. A Centralized Country-School Building, Green Township, Trumbull County, Ohio	252
116. School Building at Kingsville, Ohio, where Centralization of Schools began in 1892	253
117. A Map of Ohio showing Centralized Schools, 1905	256
118. A Map of Wayne Township, Clinton County, Ohio, 1905	258
119. Transportation Routes, Gustavus Township, Trumbull County, Ohio	259
120. The Centralized School at Gustavus Township, Trumbull County, Ohio	261
121. The Centralized School at Lee's Creek, Wayne Township, Clinton County, Ohio	263
122. An Abandoned Two-Story Brick Schoolhouse in Wayne Township, Clinton County, Ohio	264
123. Abandoned One-Room Schoolhouse in Wayne Township, Clinton County, Ohio	267

FIG.	PAGE
124. An Old Schoolhouse at Snow Hill, Hancock County, Georgia . . .	268
125. A New Schoolhouse at Snow Hill, Hancock County, Georgia . . .	270
126. An Old Academy at Snow Hill, Hancock County, Georgia . . .	271
127. New Schoolhouse at Snow Hill, Hancock County, Georgia . . .	273
128. Old Schoolhouse, No. 2, at Williamsburg, North Carolina . . .	275
129. Old Schoolhouse, No. 3, at Williamsburg, North Carolina . . .	277
130. New Building for Nos. 2 and 3 Consolidated, Williamsburg, North Carolina	278
131. The Interior of Schoolhouse, District 99, Winnebago County, Illinois	279
132. The Wisconsin Training School at Menomonie	285
133. A Model Country School connected with the Indiana State Nor- mal School	291
134. An Interior View of the Model Country School connected with the Indiana State Normal School	295
135. Teachers' Training School at Menomonie, Wisconsin	299
136. Teacher and Pupils in a Rural School in Dunn County, Wisconsin	305
137. The Beginning of Manual Training in a Country School of Winnebago County, Illinois	310
138. Manual Training in a Winnebago County District School	311
139. Manual Training Products in Cottage Hill School, near Spring- field, Illinois	314
140. The Workshop of Cottage Hill School. Workbenches used for Lunch Counters	315
141. Articles made in a Rural School in Dunn County, Wisconsin . .	318
142. The Manual Training Class at Work in a Rural School in Edgar County, Illinois	319
143. Plan of Workbench for Country Schools	323
144. Plan of Tool Rack to accompany Workbench	325
145. Manual Training in a Country School of Winnebago County, Illinois	328
146. Manual Training in a Country School of Winnebago County, Illinois	329
147. Winnebago County Teachers doing Tool Work at the March (1906) Annual Teachers' Institute	333
148. A House constructed by Grammar-School Boys, to be furnished by the Children of the Primary Grades	335
149. Learning to Cook. Manual Training for Girls	336
150. Macdonald Consolidated School, Guelph, Ontario, Canada. Manual Training Room	337
151. A Schoolhouse built in the Early Fifties	344
152. Bare and Uninviting	350
153. Pleasant to Look Upon	353
154. Such a Tree as this Ought to be in Every School Yard	356