

BENSON SCHOOL, 1924

Esther LaBrie Writes a Most Interesting Article

The day had been warm and almost sultry. Lazy clouds floated across the sky. An occasional bit of song from some bird filled with the joy of living, floated in at the open window. Bees hummed drowsily by, pausing to sip the honey from the boquets on the window-sill.

The stillness of the air, the warmth of the atmosphere, and the drowsy hum of the insects almost lulled one into day dreams far more pleasant than work and study.

The children had gone home, glad of the freedom of school let out, and the building settled again into quiet.

A stack of note books not yet done. For a moment I dropped my head to the desk, then dull cares were forgotten.

A whirr, a buzz, and something resembling a huge bird, flopped against my window, then slowly settled to the ledge. A tiny fellow not unlike a kewpie, called in softest tones "Come with me, oh come with me!"

The delight of a ride in the air! In a trice I was beside him in the aeroplane and with a soft whir, we rose into the air.

We sped merrily along, chatting gayly, till presently we came to some very high mountains. As we neared the summit of the first one in the range, I noticed a huge sign board, one side of which was painted in dull colors, "The Past," the other side in flaming colors, "The Future."

"Choose," said my companion. "By all means let us go into the future," I said. My queer little companion gave an acquiescent nod and away we sped, into the future. As we flew along, I noticed large rooms or compartments with bright signs, 1915, 1916, etc. A fleeting glimpse of something caught my eye as we neared the section marked 1924. "Oh stop," I cried, clutching wildly at my companion's arm. He immediately complied with my request. To my astonishment, I saw the world, as a huge ball, suspended in the air.

"Where do you wish most of all to visit?" asked my guide. Without hesitation I answered Benson School in Roseburg. Whirr, buzz, boom, and I was standing on the corner of East Third and Commercial avenue. What was this bewildering sight which met my eyes? I stood for a moment in astonishment. Then I recognized dear old Benson school. Slowly I walked along East Third street. There were no cars on this street, and I later found, that all traffic was prohibited during school intermissions, allowing the street to be used as a part of the playground.

The grounds had been beautifully terraced and there was no longer the high steep bank which had been the horror of teachers and pupils alike in former years. Extending from the central door to the street was a long flight of concrete steps. I ascended the stairs and paused to look about me. Down on the third terrace a large fountain played on either

BOX SOCIAL

Box social at the Edenbower socialist hall, Saturday night March 28. A splendid program will be given, including the Edenbower orchestra, also good vocal talent and special program by the Edenbower Choral Club. Boxes will be sold at auction, proceeds to be used towards finishing the hall. 318-m28 COMMITTEE.

side of the steps. A lawn stretched in velvety greenness upon the north, shaded by large and beautiful trees beneath which were many swings and hammocks. Bright flowers nodded in picturesque flowerbeds. On the other side of the steps was a sandy play ground, well packed, with teeter-boards, merry-go-rounds and benches.

I saw a lady among the children, and calling a little girl to me I asked, "What is that lady doing?" "Why," she said in surprise "don't you know? She shows us how to play." Ah, if we could only have had something like that, for the children were ever begging us to come play.

On the boys' side of the building were horizontal bars, hoops, ropes and rings and active youngsters swinging gayly in the air. Below was a baseball field where a thrilling game was in progress, and the grand stand held a goodly audience, for here, interscholastic games were played.

The school grounds had been enlarged and now extended to 2nd Ave. south. Between the ball ground and E. Third Street were two double tennis courts. Here also, games were in progress. The "duck pond" was no more.

As I walked around the school, I noticed some buildings, or roofs, on the rear, where the hill had been graded down. "What is that?" I asked of a small boy who stood near. "Oh that's where we play when it rains," he said. "We don't have to stay in rain or dusty basement like the children used to do." Ah, another dream realized.

Not the same old school, I thought, and yet the same, for the plain bare building was covered with pretty clinging vines some blossoming here and there.

Having thus noted outward changes, I turned my footsteps inside. Here too, I found time had wrought a difference. A piano stood where once our graphanola played. Pictures hung upon the walls, and pretty chandeliers concealed the lights. Ah how pleased we had been when with much coaxing and a generous supply of stick-to-it-iveness the Parent-Teachers Association had secured the first electric lights.

A peep into the rooms, showed neat desks, well-filled book cases, several good maps, dainty curtains at the windows and several bright blossoming window boxes.

Now for a peep into the basement. On the girls' side, doors had been re-

arranged. In the old play room were tables and chairs, sewing machines in front of the windows and pressing boards with electric irons, at one side. On the other side of the basement was a neat kitchen, with cupboards, wood, gas and electric ranges, and shining rows of dishes and pans. Passing thru the door into what used to be the Seventh grade room, I saw it to be a dining room. Long tables were set as if ready for use. What could this be for? Hot lunches, of course, for those coming from a distance.

Ascending the stairs, I again came into the lower hall. I paused a moment to glance over the directory. With the exception of one or two, all the teachers' names were new ones, and with surprise I noted one or two who had been in the 8th grade in 1914.

Curiosity prompted me to revisit room three. I entered. Finding it vacant, for Auld Lang Syne, I sat down in the chair at the desk. How well, how faithfully must the Parent-Teachers Association must have BENSON SCHOOL GALLEY TWO worked, for, aided by the loyal support of the Board of Education, all their dreams had been fully realized. Terraces, steps, playground, play sheds, piano, hot lunches, and not a single fly buzzed about. I heard it whispered that every parent was a member of the Association, taking active interest in the work. For ever since the first evening social meeting March 16, 1914, the association had steadily gained in strength and membership under the able guidance of its president, Mrs. Eastman, and her worthy successors. Suddenly, my thought were interrupted by a loud peal of the gong.

With a start I sat bolt upright in my chair. The bright picture vanished as a bubble in mid air. I found myself sitting in reality in room 3, but not the room of my dreams. And the gong which had so rudely interrupted my dream, was the janitor ringing the bell to warn all to leave the building or else be locked in, and compelled to leave by the fire escape, as one or two of the teachers, in like predicaments, had been compelled to do.

ESTHER LA BRIE

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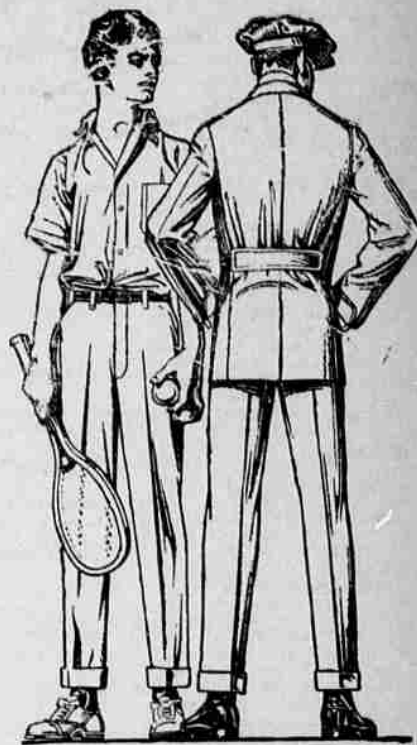
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Lower floor Masonic bldg. Roseburg, Oregon.

The Usual Result

Madison, Wis., Jan. 1, 1913. This is to certify that I have been a great sufferer from Rheumatism since 1894. Contracted the disease, while working with a snow plow on the railroad. For several years I have been obliged to use crutches a great part of the time. Having used three boxes of the



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