

Needs of Country Schoolhouse

JUST now, when we are thinking of what "the folks" or the house need or want and what we can get them for Christmas, why not give a thought to your district schoolhouse? Is it well supplied with the things needed to make it a sanitary, comfortable, attractive place for the children and teacher? If not, why not get people of the district interested in doing something to improve it, as a Christmas present to the district, the teacher, and the pupils.

Even though the room may be fresh and clean as to woodwork and walls, and well equipped with modern desks for pupils and teacher, with a good blackboard, properly placed, a bookcase and museum cabinet, a jacketed stove, etc., there may be other essentials lacking.

Drinking Water Equipment.

How about the drinking water equipment? Does it consist of an open pail and a rusty dipper? This unsanitary condition is far too common in the country school. The ideal drinking fountain, with water piped from a spring or tank, is not always feasible. But the absence of this convenience is no excuse for the unhygienic use of the open pail. Stone crocks with cover and faucet are not expensive, nor are the many water-coolers and tanks that are advertised on the market. These may be obtained in quiet, neutral grays, or even painted with enamel paints to match the general color scheme of the room.

A stand, on which the drinking water should be set, may then be made of plain boards or boxes, stained to suit the color scheme of the room. In front an enamel funnel may be inserted in a circular opening in the table, through which waste may run into a pail below. Placed in direct view of the teacher at the back of the room, with the open side toward the wall, such an arrangement has the appearance of a small cabinet and is in harmony with its surroundings. Each child should have his individual drinking cup in his desk or hanging on a hook under the bench. Needless to say, great care should be taken in thoroughly cleaning crock, faucet, funnel and pail at regular intervals.

Cleaning and Garden Tools.

If possible, every school entry should have a tall closet in which brooms, garden tools, and other equipment may be kept. In lieu of such a convenience, hooks may be placed under a projecting shelf, four to eight inches wide, each hook being labeled. It should then be the duty of one of the pupils to be responsible for each tool for a certain period of time. The shelf should be high enough so that the longest garden implement will not touch the floor and interfere with clean sweeping. A plain curtain of burlap may be hung from the shelf in order to exclude the tools from view. This should hang at least six inches from the floor and not lower than the end of the longest tool. The top of the shelf can be used for supplies.

Window Shades and Curtains.

Good roller shades of a green-gray or ecru color, according to the general color scheme adopted in the room, should be obtained if possible. The ideal arrangement for the sunny side at least is to have two rollers fastened across the middle of the window. These may be drawn half to the top or half to the bottom, at will, or the whole window may be shaded. If it is not possible to obtain double curtains, the next best arrangement is to have one curtain at the bottom. Thus the strong light from above need never be cut off. In case there are no shades, curtains of muslin, scrim, cheesecloth, voile or curtain madras, preferably plain or else with small, dotted figures, may be stretched from the middle sash to the bottom of the window. Royal B. Farnum says that while these may be run on rods, it is better to catch them in place at the four corners over small, brass-headed tacks. The flat-hanging curtain is considered to give a softer, better light. By attaching the rods or rings to the sash itself, the lower half of the window may be easily raised or lowered, carrying the curtain with it.

The Bulletin Board.

An otherwise well-decorated room may be completely spoiled by the display of school work and of penny prints hung in rows above the blackboards. Presumably this material is intended to be seen, but when hung so high it is certainly difficult to see it. Moreover, the papers are usually fastened at the two upper corners only, and the lower half curls in an unsightly manner. There should be

a school bulletin board for the display of this sort of material, and papers on exhibition should be securely fastened to the board at the four corners with thumb tacks or pins. A sheet of artificial board many kinds of which are advertised, serves as an excellent bulletin board. It is light and inexpensive, and it may be tinted to suit any color scheme. If possible, it should be framed like any picture, but without glass. If framing is impracticable, a dark band two or three inches wide may be painted around the edge of the board, thus giving the appearance of a frame.

If the composition or manufactured board is not obtainable, a wide, smooth and flat piece of soft pine, or two pieces carefully joined together, may be used instead. These may be stained, or covered with a soft colored denim or monk's cloth. The advantage of a covering is that the holes do not show.

No room is complete without some fine pictures. Modern processes of reproduction have reduced their cost to a minimum, and the latest inven-

tions in printing have made possible the most faithful copying of the finest works of art, both in monochrome and in color. The masterpieces of the early painters are not the only good pictures to be secured. Many fine illustrations in the magazines and lithographic reproductions of modern painters offer fine examples for schoolroom decoration.

No picture should be chosen solely for its subjects, says Royal Farnum. "Unless it has the merit of beauty for its own sake, it should never be hung as a permanent decoration. Poor prints of a popular subject do not make fine pictures. Pictures with fine detail are seldom suitable for wall decoration. Large, simple masses should predominate, with good contrast of light and dark.

In the average rural school of mixed grades, the pictures should appeal happily to all ages. The best subjects are those that appeal to the sense of real living and to a wholesome interest in the pictorial elements. Strong action, animal and child life, and daily occupations are best suited to the usual child. For this reason Dupre's "Dignity and Impudence," Reynold's "Age of Innocence," and Lerolle's "By the River," are especially good. While many portraits and Madonnas are among

the world's greatest treasures, they are not, as a rule, especially well adapted to the schoolroom.

Frames.

Pictures should be framed in plain, comparatively flat molding. When the elements of the composition extend to the edge of the picture, a mat may be required. "At the Watering Trough," by Dagnan-Bouveret, is of this type. Corot's landscapes, and such a picture as Whistler's "Little Rose" have plenty of space around the subject and do not need a mat. Where there is a mat the lower margin should be slightly wider than the other three sides and the color should blend well with the general color of the picture. It should be darker than the lightest parts and lighter than the darkest parts. The frame should then be slightly darker than the mat. For a colored print, the frame may be similar in value and color to the predominating hue of the picture. Often when the color is rich a gold frame is suitable. It is not difficult to stain a natural wood frame any color.

The width of the frame depends on the size and character of the picture, but under no circumstances should the frame be too wide, or it will overpower and destroy the general effect of the picture.

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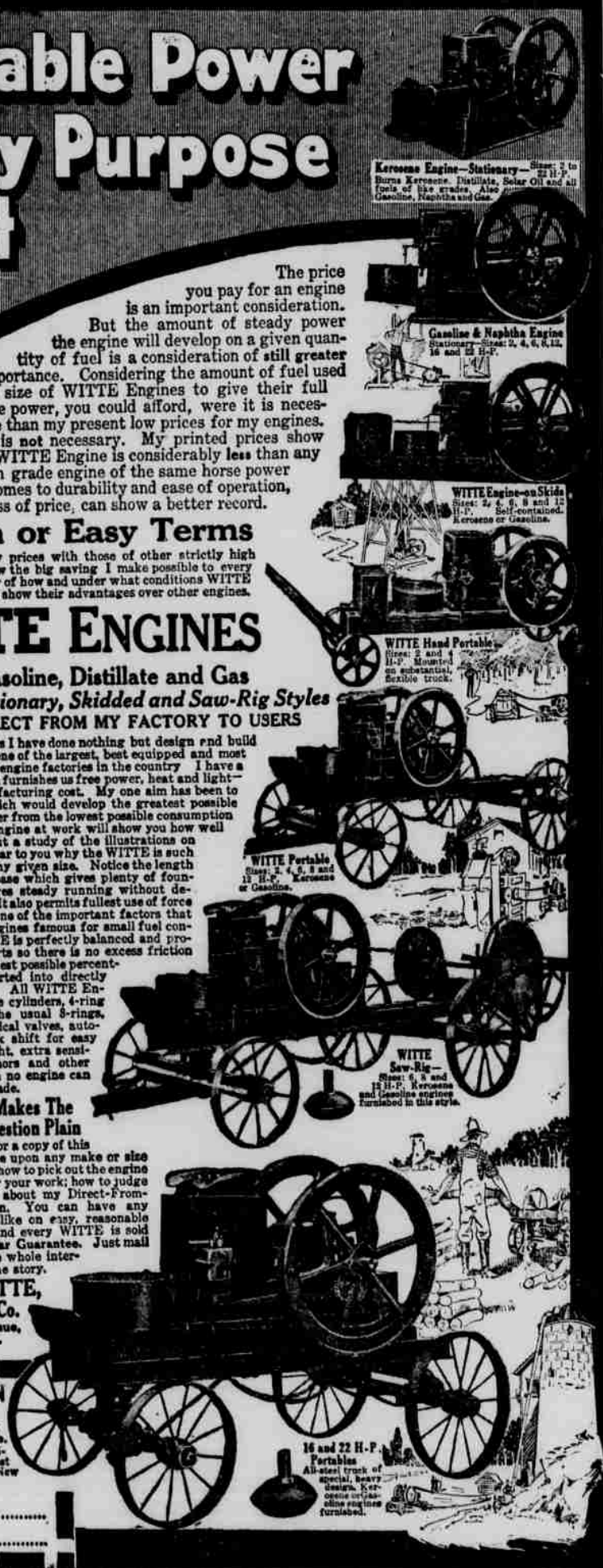
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