THE VISITOR

Devoted to the Interest of Agriculture and Manual Training in Minnesota High Schools

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GREETINGS

With this issue The Visitor desires to extend to all its readers the best wishes for a happy and profitable new year.

Never before has any group of teachers entered upon a new year of work with such great opportunities for service and with such hopeful prospects for the future. May each one appreciate his possibilities, realize his responsibilities and be abundantly rewarded for his every laudible effort.

MORE EFFECTIVE SERVICE

Readers will readily discover that the central theme in this issue of The Visitor is "Making Classroom Work More Effective." Subsequent issues will likewise have some central thought and we trust it will be more helpful than a more general distribution of topics. It is also to be noted that much space is given over to contributions from men in the field. This is not a new departure but a feature which we believe will be appreciated.

FOR THE TEACHERS' LIBRARY

In accordance with the request made by the agricultural instructors who attended the intensive training course last summer, The Visitor submits the following list of books which should prove helpful to those who desire to grow in the teaching profession. Every teacher of agriculture should aspire to build up a professional library that will furnish ideas and inspiration leading to greater efficiency in the classroom.

The following books are merely suggested for a beginning and will be added to from time to time.

General

Douglas—The Little Town. Macmillan Co., Chicago, Ill.

Butterfield—The Farmer and the New Day. Macmillan Co.

Davenport—Education for Efficiency. D. C. Heath & Co., Chicago, Ill.

Lewis—Democracy's High School. Houghton, Mifflin Co., Chicago, Ill.

Snedden—Problems of Secondary Education. Houghton, Mifflin Co.

Hummel—Materials and Methods in High School Agriculture. Macmillan Co.

Stimson — Vocational Agricultural Education. Macmillan Co.

Nolan—The Teaching of Agriculture. Houghton, Mifflin Co.

Moore—What Is Education. Ginn & Co., Chicago, Ill.

Smith—An Introduction to Educational Sociology. Houghton, Mifflin Co.

Methods

Betts—The Recitation. Houghton, Mifflin Co.

Betts—Class Room Methods and Management. Bobbs, Merrill Co., Indianapolis, Ind.

Sears—Classroom Organization and Control. Houghton, Mifflin Co.

Colvin—An Introduction to High School Teaching. Macmillan Co.

Earhart — Types of Teaching. Houghton, Mifflin Co.

Strayer—A Brief Course in the Teaching Process. Macmillan Co.

Psychology

Starch — Educational Psychology. Macmillan Co.

Klapper—Principles of Educational Practice. D. Appleton Co., Chicago.

DISPLAY OF GRAINS

The following article was prepared by E. A. Coe, agricultural instructor at Henderson. Mr. Coe has an unusually complete outfit of illustrative material.

Because of the many comments made about the display of grains and grasses that I have collected and am using in my farm crops work, I will answer the question that has been asked of me by all who have visited my department, namely—"How were you able to get them?" There is no better source of crop material than the man in your county who has charge of the county exhibit at the state fair or of the local booth at the county fair. By helping

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him to collect his exhibit and arrange his booth, you may earn for your school the use of the exhibit after the show, as well as having the opportunity of getting acquainted with the community. Most of the exhibits of Sibley county were grown on duplicate plots for that purpose, the rest were assembled from the improved farms. This gives one the opportunity to collect at first hand better samples than can be found in the field.

If one will always collect a larger sample than he can use, he has an opportunity of trading with an instructor in a neighboring school for varieties he himself may be short of. This method will nearly double the collection. In this way I have collected head and threshed samples of all the grains, about 50 varieties of grasses, the eight standard varieties of potatoes, and a good quantity of seed corn.

The problem of keeping such a collection is almost as great as that of collecting it. I find that the easiest and cheapest means is to arrange the sheaf samples in artistic order on the walls so that the mice can not reach them. They add to the appearance of the walls and are in sight where they can be used when you need them. One should not neglect to dust them occasionally in order to keep them in good order and to keep the room sanitary.

As a permanent addition to the school, I have followed the example of Mr. Knoblauch, of Norwood, by having the boys make frames in the shops as a beginning job. Each frame is made to hold a piece of glass 10 by 12 inches and this gives a mount that will be permanent for diseased specimens, species of weeds, and for pictures of the leading animals of the different breeds of livestock. While the boys are starting their shop work and making these frames they can learn the elements of work with tools and it gives them time to plan out their large shop projects and to get the materials necessary for this work. The manual training room now looks like a factory with two hayracks, a self-feeder, a wheelbarrow, a work table, eveners, and other large and practical projects under way.

In collecting materials for a department, I think we should pay more attention to the permanency of the work and should tear down our artistic work annually at least, so that graduates as they return to the school after several years can not say that "it looks just as it did when I took work here." Variety is the spice of life. Let's use it.

TO TEACH HORSE-JUDGING

The following notes taken from a reply of one of the agriculture teachers in the state to the question, "How would you teach horse judging to high school students?" is interesting and we pass it on to other men doing similar work.

What is the object in teaching a boy how to judge a horse? Do we have in mind preparing him so that he may compete in the stock judging at the county fair? Are we training him so that he may earn his livelihood as an expert whose services will be in demand at state and international expositions? Or are we training him to be able to know a good horse when he sees one?

It seems hardly necessary to state definitely the aim of instruction in judging. Briefly, as I see it, the work is given so that ideals may be formed which will function in the selection of animals for use in the business of farming. Because no two animals are exactly alike, it will be necessary to train the student in the observation of specific details of equine conformation, disposition and other indications of form and function.

It is evident that a study of types and breeds should precede judging. With this work as a foundation and with the class further prepared by the formulation of an aim as stated above, actual judging practice may begin.

Draft horses are usually the best to start with. All boys are somewhat familiar with them, many have driven and cared for them and most boys like them. Type may be shown by bringing before the class a roadster and a drafter. By comparing the two animals as to weight, size of bones and muscles, quality and temperament, the students will readily

see the bearing of these upon function. Enlarging upon this with an animal of the type desired before the class, an ideal may be built up. The class should see, first of all, the best possible animal to be secured and the preliminary discussion should be based upon this animal. Should it be impossible to secure a good horse, large pictures of champions may be used. Pictures in good farm papers will be found extremely valuable in getting the ideal in mind.

At all times during the judging period the correlation of form and function must be kept before the students. Lead them to try to systematize the method of inspectng the animal and if possible to make out a simple score card. Then provide each with a copy of the score card as used at the State College and spend a period in scoring. The value in the score card is in giving system to the work and in showing the relative value of the various points to be considered. All the work so far should have been done on the one horse, provided he is an extremely good animal.

The class is now ready for comparative judging. It is best to have only two horses for the first period. Each should be plainly numbered. Allow the students to get a general idea of the animals first from a distance, where they can compare the larger features such as height, depth, length, standing position, carriage, and so forth. The animals should be carefully held and aligned, first in tandem and then side by side, so that back, front and side views may be compared. By this time the animals will be differentiated in the minds of the boys and should be moved, to compare action. Action in both walk and trot should be viewed from rear, front, and side. Students should be encouraged to keep notes and be individual. The class is now ready for the more particular inspection, including the estimation of age and weight. Unnecessary movements should be discouraged and students should be urged to form their judgments quickly. Brief written reasons should be handed in and used as a basis for class discussion later.

The most of the period should be devoted to discussion, after judgments are formed. In giving reasons the pupils should avoid the terms such as "better" or "not so good" and should comment on the larger points of difference.

With a little training the class will conduct itself during this part of the lesson, altho the instructor should at all times be ready to direct the work into profitable channels. Through this discussion, ideals of action, feet and legs, conformation, quality, muscling, and temperament will be formed that will carry over into the later work of the student.

The judging practice should not end with the periods regularly devoted to it. At all times possible, informal judging should be encouraged and expected. On the road, in pastures, in town, wherever boys and horses are together, arguments should arise as to the comparative merits of the animals. A carefully worked out system as outlined above will result in much interest on the part of the students and a retention of the principles learned.

EFFECTIVE CLASS WORK

In making classroom work effective, two of the most important factors are a properly organized body of subject matter and an effective teacher. In order that the teacher may be effective he must have the proper native ability, practical experience, and educational preparation. This preparation must include the subject matter to be taught and the principles and processes of teaching it. These processes may be for the present purpose divided into fundamental and accessory, or subordinate. The present article will be devoted to what many persons might be disposed to classify as accessorial processes.

A teacher with a favorable personality and sound in the fundamental processes of classroom instruction may meet with passable success even tho his accessory processes are open to severe criticism. One with an unfavorable personality or unsound in the fundamentals may fail even with the most approved accessorial processes. One with mediocre personality and average efficiency in the fundamental processes may be saved from failure or may meet even with commendable success through the superiority of his accessory processes.

The little things connected with classroom instruction may thus be responsible for the difference between failure and moderate success or between moderate success and unqualified success. Every teacher regardless of the quality of his subject matter or of his native ability or teaching power can well afford to give due attention to the accessories of classroom instruction.

Let us consider a few of them.

The members of the class should be concentrated into as small a space as is consistent with health, comfort, and the character of the work to be done. This brings all pupils within the easy range of the teacher's eye, intensifies the effect of the teacher's personality, and through these makes order and attention easier to obtain and retain. The

feeling of unity, coherence and solidarity resulting from being a compact group rather than a number of widely scattered individuals makes for interest and intensity of application to the work of the recitation.

The members of the class should be located properly in relation to each other, the light, the blackboard (or other means of visual instruction) and the equipment to be used. For recitation work, and wherever practical, for laboratory work, they should be so seated that the vision of all can be directed at one point so that at any moment during the period they may be taught collectively from the teacher's position without the pupils having to move from their places. Neither in recitation seats nor at laboratory tables should pupils be placed facing each other. It tends to disconcert attention, to destroy class interest, and to make good order more difficult to maintain.

It is scarcely necessary to call attention to the necessity of so locating pupils that the light will not injure their eyes and also that the light may conduce to the success of their class work.

Shiny blackboards, angles of reflection from certain windows, ill-adapted crayon, poor writing, and ill-kept boards discount the efficiency of learning on the part of pupils having normal eyes, and practically destroy the effectiveness of instruction when given in this manner to those whose vision is defective. Insist upon sound, clean boards, good crayons, clean erasers, window shades that will enable you to reduce bright reflection to the minimum, and careful, legible writing.

Common defects of charts are that the letters and figures are too small and crowded. Teaching efficiency in a chart demands that there shall be few ideas, tersely worded, in letters easily distinguished, and with topics plainly separated from each other.

In all visual instruction that which is to be seen, whether object, picture, chart, or blackboard work should be placed in the natural line of vision of the class and not at such an angle as will decrease the educational efficiency or disturb the concentration of the class.

Objects, apparatus, and equipment that are to be used in a recitation should be made completely ready before the class assembles. If they are to be used by the teacher they should be ready to be used in starting on the teaching process without waiting for preliminary procedure which contains no instruction for the class. If they are to be used by the pupils, they should be sufficient in quantity, correct in kind, and with all preliminary preparation made. There have been many classroom recitations that would have been improved one hundred per cent if the proper objects had been used and if they had been properly prepared previous to the assembling of the class.

Agricultural instruction lends itself readily to improvement through the aid of objective teaching. Many agricultural teachers are satisfied to conduct recitations of twenty-five or fifty per cent efficiency when they could improve them to ninety per cent efficiency through objective teaching or visual instruction if it were well planned and made ready before the class assembled.

Classroom work can be made more effective by having the room so planned, arranged, equipped, and cared for that it approaches the ideal of an orderly "teaching shop." Few agricultural class rooms even remotely approximate this. With all the wealth of inexpensive material readily at hand, few rooms are supplied with a sufficient quantity and variety of materials, fewer still have it properly arranged for effective teaching. Some departments are as bare as the conventional academic classroom; some have a "display" arranged for exhibition purposes but not arranged particularly well for teaching; some have a supply of indifferent materials, scattered about in disorderly fashion, today's being confusedly mixed with some left from week before last's class work; and some have a well-selected supply of materials and equipment for the teaching of each subject, arranged for teaching purposes rather than for display, made ready each time before the class assembles and neatly and tidily put away as soon as it has served its purpose.

There is probably no single thing which the three kinds of departments first mentioned can do that will improve more the effectiveness of their classroom work than to emulate the kind of department last mentioned in providing materials for objective teaching, laboratory work, and visual instruction and then using them properly in the teaching process.

Departments should obtain a full supply of laboratory supplies, illustrative materials, and equipment, renewing each as needed; apportion and arrange them for teaching purposes; have in readiness before the class assembles everything necessary for that period; put away in a neat and orderly manner, ready for use the next time, all materials as soon as they have served their purpose for that time. If this were done in every classroom where agriculture is taught the effectiveness of the work in that subject would be increased almost immeasurably.