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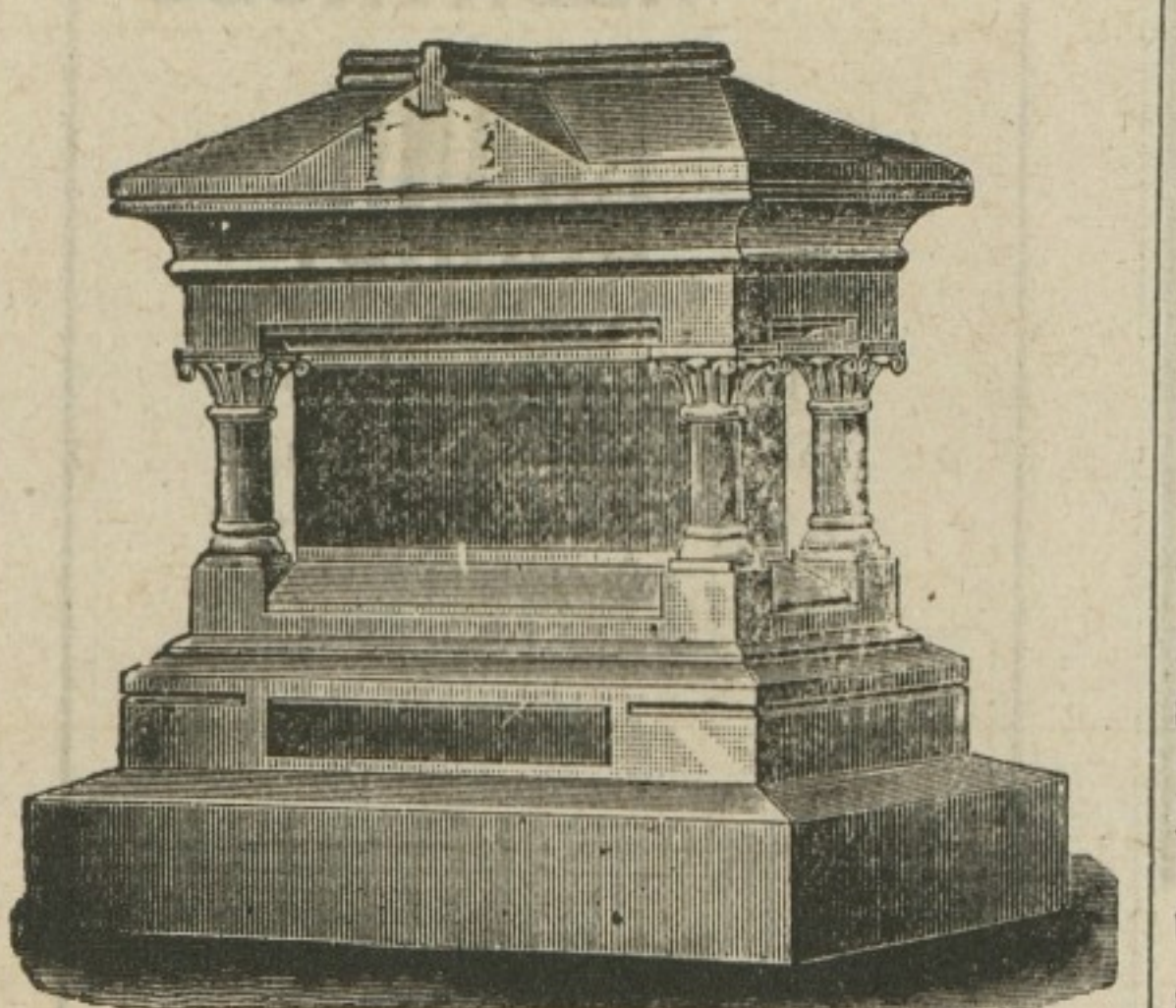
Will often feel compelled to stop the
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her. In such a nervous condition the
woman needs a building up of the entire
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along. I weighed 125 pounds, when I began
taking your medicines (in August) and now
I am up to my usual weight 165. I am as well
and feel as good as ever."

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COUNTRY SCHOOLS—THE NEW PLAN.

BY CLARENCE H. MATSON.

Imagine an old-style country school-
house—a small, one-room building in the
center of a cheerless playground, with
interior walls bare and dingy, windows
curtainless, ventilation of the worst
imaginable, stove in the center of the
room, with no way of producing a uni-
form temperature. The pupils range
from the little tot of five who is sent to
school to be out of the way of her
mother, a busy farmer's wife, to the big
husky boy of sixteen or eighteen, who
goes to school a few weeks in midwinter
when the farm work is slack. The
average attendance runs from ten to
twenty. There are from one to four
pupils in a class. The teacher is com-
pelled to teach everything from the
primer to higher arithmetic. No two
pupils are of equal proficiency, and the
work is necessarily haphazard to a great
degree. Some of the pupils walk two
miles or more to school, and when the
weather is bad they arrive late, with
garments damp and shoes coated with
mud. Sitting with cold wet feet all
day often undermines the pupil's health.
The term is only five or six months
long. The ambitious pupil learns all
that that the country school can teach
him by the time he is fifteen, and if he
advances further he must be sent away
to the high school in town.

Then imagine a modern school building
of perhaps four rooms, properly heated
and ventilated. The walls are adorned
with suitable pictures. The school is
graded, giving the teacher a better op-
portunity to do effective work. Each
teacher has from thirty to forty pupils.
There is apparatus of different kinds
and a library to help with the school
work. Larger classes and competition
stimulate interest. The pupils are
brought to and from school in covered
spring wagons, and there is little cause
for wet feet and resultant ill health. A
high-school course is established. The
term is eight or nine months. The
teachers are better paid than the one
teaching only ten or fifteen pupils and
consequently more capable instructors
are secured.

Such is the change that is being
wrought in many communities in the
United States through the consolidation
of rural schools. In this age of central-
ization the country school has been
caught in the popular trend and is being
greatly benefited by it. The rural
schools of the twentieth century will be
far in advance of those of the nineteenth,
but there will not be so many of them, for
the consolidated district will embrace
as much territory as is now included in
from three to six average districts.

"Rural consolidation," as the move-
ment is termed by educators, is the re-
sult of experiments and discoveries, and
nearly every State in which the plan is
now authorized had to make the discovery
for itself. In my own State, Kansas, for
instance, a number of years ago the pa-
trons of the schools in four districts in
Green Garden township, Ellsworth
County, thought it would be economy
for them to unite in building a central
school-house in which a graded school
might be conducted. A feature of the
plan was for some of the more distant
farmers in each direction to make daily
trips to the schoolhouse and pick up all
the children along the way, the district
paying them a proper remuneration for
their work. The Kansas Legislature
passed a special law authorizing these
four districts to take this action, but
little attention was paid to it outside of
the district interested. The school was
called Lorraine. The plan for the trans-
portation of the pupils evolved into the
employment of persons with properly
covered spring wagons for that work.
The plan proved a great success, but it
was four or five years before the rest of
the State found it out. Then other dis-
tricts wanted to try it, and the Legis-
lature passed a general law authorizing
the consolidation of school districts
upon a vote of each district concerned.

Kansas was about to announce her dis-
covery to the world when she found
that seventeen other States had made
the same discovery, some of them a few
years previously, but the majority about
the same time as Kansas. That was two
years ago—just as the twentieth century
was dawning. Since then the movement
has gained great impetus, and within a
very few years hundreds of school dis-
tricts will be abolished in their present
form and central consolidated schools
will take their place.

The seventeen States besides Kansas
in which rural school consolidation is
authorized are Maine, New Hampshire,
Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island,
Connecticut, New York, New Jersey,
Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Wisconsin,
Iowa, Nebraska, North Dakota, South
Dakota, and Florida. In Ohio the plan
was first tried ten years ago under cir-
cumstances similar to those in Kansas,
but not till 1898 was it authorized in
the entire State.

The rural schools have by no means
kept pace with those in the towns in ad-
vancement in the past quarter-century.
While the town schools use up-to-date
methods and are able to employ teachers
who have received special training for
their work, the methods used in the aver-
age country schools are much the same
as they were two or three decades ago.
One of the disadvantages of country life
is the lack of the best school facilities.
The rural school problem has been a dif-
ficult one for educators to solve, but the
consolidation idea seems to present the
solution. There are, however, objections
urged against it, and it is quite probable
that it would not be applicable to all
communities. Those who object to the
plan are, as a rule, persons who are op-
posed to progress. People who would

be at a distance from a proposed central
school fear that the distance may cause a
depreciation in the value of their farm
lands. Then they dislike to think of
their children four or five miles from
home, and it is sometimes urged that the
driver may be objectionable. Experi-
ence, however, largely does away with
these objections. It has proven that a
farm from which children are transport-
ed in a comfortable conveyance four
miles to a well equipped school is more
valuable comparatively than one from
which the children walk a mile to a poor
school. The introduction of the rural
telephone is rapidly annihilating fear of
distances in the country, and it is as easy
to secure a driver of good character as to
secure a teacher.

The chief advantages to be gained by
consolidation are: First, better teachers;
second, reduction of the cost of educa-
tion per capita; third, a better classifica-
tion of pupils, which is of advantage to
both teachers and pupils; fourth, easier
supervision on the part of the County
Superintendent, as the number of schools
in a county is vastly decreased; fifth,
larger enrollment, larger daily atten-
dance, and far greater punctuality, as all
children are brought in by the transpor-
tation wagons by nine o'clock in the
morning; sixth, larger classes, more
competition, and greater interest and
enthusiasm among the pupils; seventh,
better school buildings, well ventilated
and heated, and far better equipment;
eighth, a short high-school course.

The high-school course, especially, is
an important consideration. Under the
old system, after a pupil has "gone
through" the Fifth Reader, little remains
for him to learn in the average district
school. For further education it is ne-
cessary for the pupil to leave home and
go to some town high school. This fact
has caused many an American farmer to
leave his farm when his children have
arrived at an age when the district school
could no longer benefit them, and move
to the town or city, that his children
might have better educational advanta-
ges. Rural consolidation does away
with this necessity. It brings the high
school to the farm instead of compelling
the farmer to take his children to the
high school. It will aid in stopping the
rush from the farms to the cities, for
there will no longer be the incentive to
move to town to secure ample educa-
tional facilities—and when the boy and
girl once get a taste of city life the farm
often becomes distasteful to them. And
as a common district school adds to the
value of every farm within the scope of
its influence, so the consolidated school
will add a still greater amount to the
value of every farm within a much larger
radius.

At first thought one would naturally
suppose that the betterment of the
schools to such an extent, and the cost
of transporting the pupils to and from
school each day, would materially in-
crease the school tax; but actual experi-
ments prove that this is incorrect. In
fact, in a large majority of cases, the op-
posite has proven true. The fact that
the number of teachers is usually reduced
brings about an economy in wages, even
though high salaries are paid. There are
also little economies in other directions.

The consolidated school at Buffalo
Centre, Iowa, was organized in 1896.
Last year it employed nine teachers, and
347 pupils were enrolled. Only 115 of
these had to be transported, however,
and six teams and drivers were employed
for this purpose. The drivers were
paid \$34 per month for their work, and
the average cost of tuition per month
for each pupil is \$1.41.

At Terrill, Iowa, the enrollment in
the consolidated school is 165, nearly all
of whom were brought to school in
wagons. Seven drivers are required
and the average distance the pupils are
brought is three miles. Four teachers
are employed in the school. The aver-
age cost of tuition per month per pupil
is \$1.53.

In the Lorraine school in Kansas,
which was the experimental school in
that State, the financial showing is not
so good, owing to the few districts
which combined; but the advantages
which have been secured through con-
solidation are so many and of such great
importance that nothing could induce
the patrons of the school to return to
the old district system. When the four
districts were first consolidated, only
three teachers were required, but since
the addition of a two years' high school
course another teacher has been ne-
cessary, so that the aggregate amount
spent for the school is considerably in-
creased over that spent on the old sys-
tem. Notwithstanding this, the average
daily attendance has so largely increased
that the cost per pupil, based on the
daily attendance, has been slightly re-
duced, as the following comparison will
show:

	Before consoli- dation.	After consoli- dation.
Cost per year.....	\$1,081 00	\$1,791 00
Cost per month.....	167 69	288 80
Cost per capita of school population.....	1 27	1 70
Cost per capita on enroll- ment.....	1 76	2 15
Cost per capita on average daily attendance.....	2 33	2 27
Population (school).....	132	140
Enrollment.....	46	111
Average daily attendance.....	72	105
Average school year.....	6 1/2 mos.	7 1/2 mos.

Frank Nelson, State Superintendent
of Public Instruction in Kansas, has
made the consolidation of rural schools
his special work during the past year.

[Continued on Seventh Page.]

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