

**THE COUNTRY SCHOOL, A
STUDY OF ITS FOUNDATIONS,
RELATIONS, DEVELOPMENTS,
ACTIVITIES, AND POSSIBILITIES**

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The country school, a study of its foundations, relations, developments, activities, and possibilities by Homer H. Seerley

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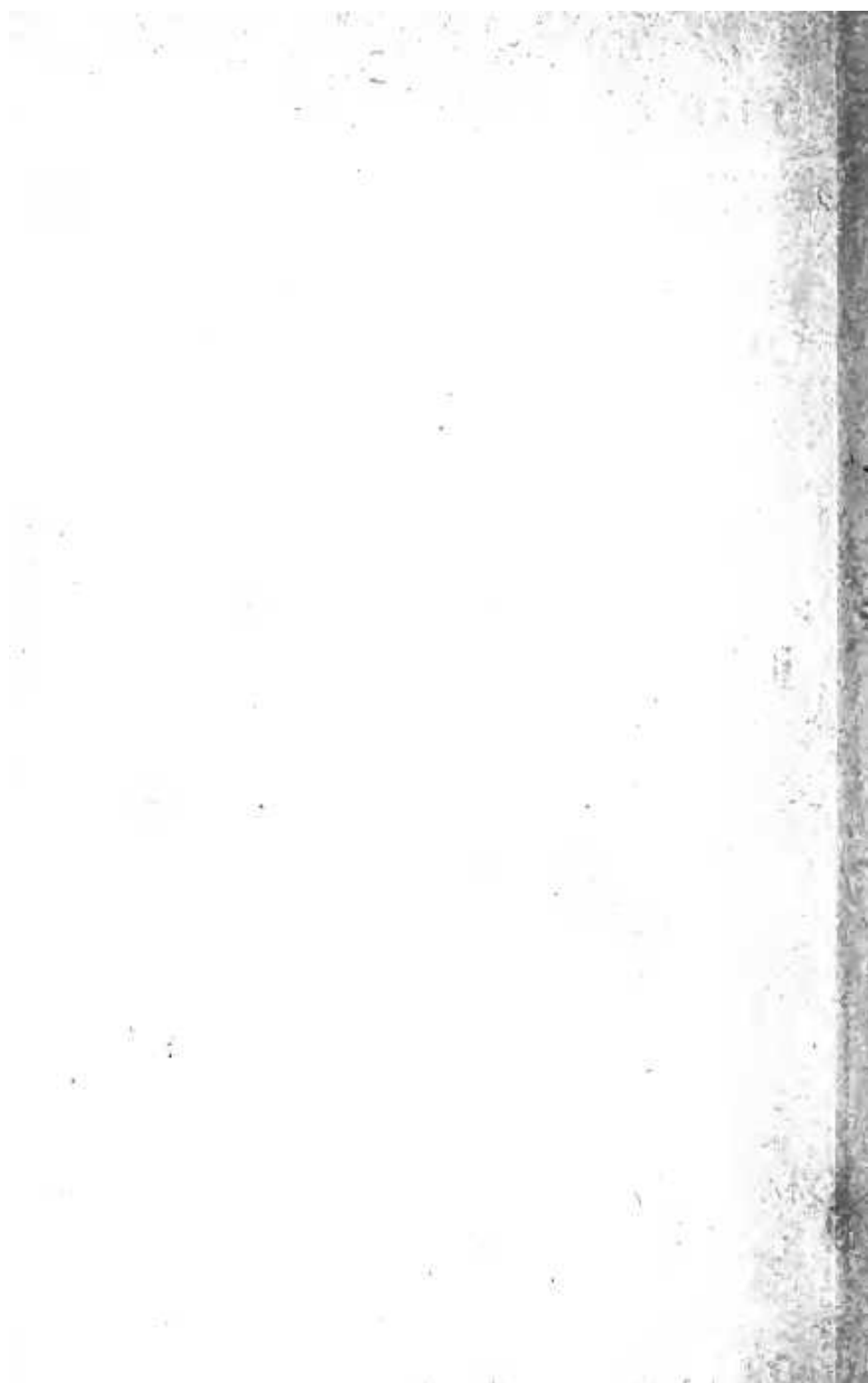
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BY

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FIRST WORDS

THERE are few modern educational discussions that have reached such proportions and have developed such a diversity of conclusions as have those that have attempted the problems of the country school. College education is simple compared to the education that deals with the instruction and the training of the masses. To secure the solution of college problems the best-trained minds of the generation have given time, thought, and investigation. As a result, definite organization has been secured, notable standardization has resulted, and the profession of educators has been recognized. In this field are found the higher salaries, the greater emoluments, and the most attractive distinctions. Whenever men conclude to make education a career they naturally prepare for some specific department of higher education, as they readily conclude that there is enough of sacrifice, of lack of recognition, and of limited service in this more honored and better esteemed field of public activity.

These conditions have left the greater problems of popular education in the hands of public officials and teachers who have but short, indeterminate, changeable terms of public service, and have made the whole organization and management tentative and evolutionary. Such individuals as short-term legislators, limited-service State superintendents of public instruction, temporary county superintendents, short-time boards of examiners for teachers' certificates, and three-year members of school boards control the destinies, decide the policies, determine the expenditures, and regulate the standards that such huge efforts represent. Most of the improvement plans which have been formulated have appeared in the form of recommendations to legislatures by State superintendents or in the form of resolutions adopted by State and national teachers' associations, representing the stand-points of administration, of expediency, and of modification rather than the stand-points of social efficiency and of actual capability for the masses.

These pages have been written by one who arrived at the opinions here presented by actual experience with the life of the farm through all its varied hardships, pleasures, struggles, and suc-

cesses. The country school was his educational institution during his elementary school-days. Its vantage-ground as a place for effective work, its field of opportunity for the largest and most successful usefulness to society, its remarkable chance for the greatest results that any kind of educational endeavor can give, are well known to him through an accurate acquaintance with the men and women of the farm. They possess a competency in doing things that is unusual, they have a reliability that cannot be appreciated until it is tested, and they have a sanity of view in regard to public affairs that has made them progressive and self-reliant. Three years' work as a teacher in these country schools renewed his experience with the boys and girls of the farm and confirmed his former opinion that they were, as a class, of superior quality, character, and disposition. Of his many years of experience, none gave him more assurance of the future prospects, or of the earnest sincerity, or of the superb willingness to realize the best things of life than did the boys and girls that were his pupils in those remarkably interesting winter terms. The school-day was never too long, the tasks assigned were never too heavy, and the requirements of the school management were never