

A Graded School at Cooperstown

A feature noticeable to all strangers who visit Cooperstown is the activity, energy and enterprise of its citizens. When the country was first settled many found it difficult to tide over the first few seasons till a crop could be harvested. Soon some man, more enterprising than the rest, found a means of gathering a harvest nature had deposited on these prairies before the advent of the gang plow and claim shack, and hundreds of carloads of buffalo bones brought bread and money into the county. Cooperstown business men were among the first to engage in this traffic. Then our wheat crops began to fail and men commenced to look around for some other means for obtaining at least the necessaries of life. A creamery company was organized and though \$4500 had already been sunk in the plant, a subsidy of \$600 was subscribed to enable those at present in charge to run it without loss. It would be idle to claim that this has been done from a spirit of benevolence. It is simply business. Our business men know that if people can be kept self-supporting and to bridge over the present hard times, they will not be the losers in the long run. This method of showing people how to help themselves—even at the risk of a present sacrifice—must be adjudged far superior to that of a wholesale production of paupers, pursued in other parts of the state. Well, enough of this. What we wish to bring out is that our business men are able and willing to come to the front when there is anything to be done which is clearly for the best interest of the town and the community.

The question is just being agitated: Shall Cooperstown have a graded school? We claim it ought to have one and shall proceed to give our reasons why. There are now enrolled in our schools 120 pupils, at least 90 of which are above school age. This leaves 45 pupils to each of our teachers—a by no means excessive number, provided the pupils are properly graded. The only proper method of grading children is according to age. If school work means anything, it means a progressive development from year to year. As a general rule, children of different ages cannot be crowded together without injury to one or the other; it will either cramp the older, or bring the younger beyond his depth. Now, 45 pupils, divided into two grades, would make a very nice room for one teacher—but instead of that, each of our teachers has between six and seven such grades, allowing the age of the pupils to be between seven and twenty. Allowing from five to six recitations a day to each grade, we would have from thirty to forty recitations a day for each of the teachers. You say this absurd—of course it is—but if there are fewer recitations—it is at the expense of the right and rational development of the children, and