

Let me make an appeal for more natural teaching in our rural schools—teaching that will look to the pleasure and comfort of the child, and also that will tend to prepare him for the life he is to live. This can be done best, as already stated, by the proper use of Nature Study and the School Garden.

If, then, the rural school is to fulfil its mission to the community, as the handmaid of agriculture, it must be a school adapted to the needs of the community. *It must be an adaptation of education to need.* Whose needs? The farmer's. To meet these he must have the advantage of the best schools; and the best schools for him are those which teach him the things that he needs to know. What does he need to know? What are his educational needs? As a man and a citizen, he needs to know just what other people do—no more, no less. He needs to know how to read, to write, to compute, etc. As an agriculturist, his needs are more special. He deals with the natural world. His enjoyment and his livelihood depend largely upon his understanding of the laws that control the world about him. He must therefore know Nature. He can know her best by becoming interested in her. When he is young is the time to engender an interest that will continue throughout life. The farmer above all others should be a thorough nature student, and one of the purposes of the public school should be to help and direct him in these studies.

One of the great aims of Nature Study is to interest the child in agricultural problems. The School Garden more than anything else will achieve this purpose. Such a garden will be indispensable in the schools of the future. Ere long it will be as much a part of the regular equipment of the school as books, blackboards, charts and apparatus are. The making of a School Garden is an epoch in the life of each school; it marks the progress of the school in pedagogical ideas. Its prime motive is not to be ornamental, but to be useful. In many parts of England and Germany it is rapidly becoming the "school"—the place where most of the instruction is given. This is the ideal method, "a school in the country, where hardihood of life can be cultivated, and where life is simple and varied; a school where masters lead a common life with the boys, working at gardening or plowing, as well as with books. In such a school, work consists of interchange of occupation—continuous but varied; some lighter, some severer, some taxing muscles and some brain. In such a school there is established a collective, corporate life, in which each member learns self-reliance, individual responsibility and constant adjustment of the relation of self to other people. The virtue that here grows up, will not be negative—constrained by external forces—but active virtue that springs from having lived in a well-organized community.