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Book Learning and Book Farming.

We hear a good deal in these days of the cry of "back-to-the-land", and read much in over-drawn stories of the unparalleled success of some city dweller who has heeded the call, and getting on a small or perhaps a larger farm he has with the knowledge learned from books been able to attain such success as has caused the practical men in his locality either to admire or ridicule according to their various dispositions. His success they attribute to "book learning." What then is wrong with the intensely practical man? Has he too much practical knowledge, or is it that he has not enough of the business knowledge from "book learning" and keen observation to make a well-balanced practical man? We do not believe that a man can get too much actual practical experience in the business in which he is engaged and above all farming requires this to no limit but with the practice it is well to get some of this "book learning." There is some good in it, and common sense based on practical experience will enable the reader to pick out the meat and cast the hulls to the winds. But is there not a tendency now-a-days to push theory and "book learning" ahead of practical knowledge based on experience? It looks easier to delve in the pages of books, than to dig in the kitchen garden or cultivate the back ten acres, but it would take a big library to make a successful gardener or farmer.

There are a good many places to put the blame for the thirst for knowledge from books and the school has recently been getting its share. "The Saturday Evening Post" recently made some startling statements from a survey of country schools in a large region in the Middle Western States: Here is what they found: "In all the schools linear measure is taught, yet in only one-fifth of them are tapelines found; they all teach avoirdupois weight, yet less than one-

tenth of them have scales; they teach liquid measure, but only one-fifth have any measures. In a third of the schools geography is taught without maps, and in more than two-fifths without globes. All of them seek to teach children things about this fruitful and wonderful earth, yet more than two-thirds of the teachers never stir outdoors to vitalize a point by the fields, flowers, woods, rocks and streams near at hand." And this is how the editor sums it all up "That is the blessed old educational recipe: Get everything out of a book; reduce it as far as possible to a parrotlike exercise of memory; make it all as dry and repulsive and remote from actual life as possible."

It may be that an investigation of some of the schools in Canada would reveal some conditions almost as ridiculous as those cited. One of the greatest problems as recognized by our educational authorities is to make the rural schools efficient. Children should be taught more by observation and practical work, and given less memory work from books. The "book farmer" after all learns by experience much of which is generally costly and the intensely practical farmer is greatly aided in his work by good reading. Canada's young people should have every chance to be practical and by their practical work be encouraged to read more not as a mere memory exercise but to aid them in the affairs which really count.

Nature's Diary.

By A. B. Klugh, M.A.

In the woods are many voices, and among them all few are sweeter than that of the White-throated Sparrow. The Indians called the White-throat, Killolet—the sweet voice of spring, and this bird is beloved by all who sojourn in the woods of the north.

Whenever we hear the song of the White-throat Sparrow it calls up visions of camps in the forest, of the rush of the rapid rivers of the north, of campfires, of sunny days and cool nights. When Killolet sings from a fence along the road we are no longer in the land of civilization, but are transported to the wilds of the northland. Such is the power of a bird song to call up visions of by-gone days.



Spring Beauty.

Writing of the birds of the north Stewart Edward White, a forest lover to the backbone, says, "The north speaks, however, only in the voices of three—the two Thrushes, and the White-throated Sparrow. The White-throated Sparrow sings nine distinct variations of the same song. He may sing more but that is all I have counted."

The song of the White-throat is a clear minor whistle—first two long notes, the second pitched higher than the first, then three sets of triplets. This is the type song of the species, but just as White says it is varied in a great number of ways, and I have heard birds which uttered four, five or even six sets of triplets. In the fall it is interesting to hear the young males learning to sing. They usually get the first two notes correctly, but after that their song wanders very much.

The White-throated Sparrow breeds from Labrador to Alberta and northwards to Hudson Bay and the MacKenzie River. The nest is placed on the ground, in a low bush, or in the roots of an up-turned tree-stump. It is built of grass, lined with finer grass and hair.

The White-throat is a common migrant in spring and fall throughout Canada except in

the extreme west. The white throat is present in adult birds only, but the yellow spot in front of the eye is characteristic of this species in all plumages.

During the summer the food of the White-throated Sparrow consists of insects and berries, among the latter its favorites being those of the Strawberry, Blueberry, Elder, Wild Black Cherry, Wild Sarsaparilla, Dogwood, Smilax, and High-bush Cranberry. In the winter, when it is in the middle and southern States it feeds largely on weed-seed.

A springtime plant which has a grace and daintiness quite at variance with its somewhat ludicrous common name is the Dutchman's Breeches. The white, yellow-tipped, spurred flowers swing gracefully from the stem, and the leaves exhibit a delicacy of cutting which is exceeded by very few of our plants. This plant is also termed White Hearts, a name which is quite as expressive of the form of the flower as the appellation mentioned above and is at the same time far more euphonious.

This flower is pollinated by Bumblebees. Two canals lead into the spurs, in which the nectar is held, and as the bee presses into the flowers to reach the nectar her hairy underparts come in contact with the stamens of the younger flowers, and with the later-maturing stigmas of the older flowers to which she carries the pollen. The flower-stalks and leaves spring from a cluster of little tubers, crowded together to form a scaly bulb, and which contain the nourishment stored up for their development.

A plant which at first glance resembles the White Hearts very much is the Squirrel Corn. The leaves of the two plants are exactly similar, but the flowers of the Squirrel Corn have short, rounded spurs instead of long, divergent ones, they are pinkish instead of white, and they have a delicious fragrance which is lacking in the White Hearts. The tubers are entirely different from those of the White Hearts, being rounded and yellow like grains of corn, whence the common name of the species.

Another dainty little plant which comes into bloom early in the spring is the Spring Beauty. It grows from about six to eight inches in height, and bears flowers which are large considering the small size of the plant. The petals are white or pink, with darker pink veins. The underground part is a fleshy tuber, from which spring numerous roots.

We have heard of men who could get "American" and "Canadian" coal oil out of the same barrel, by having a tap in each end, but when it comes to getting four varieties of mangel seed out of one bag of bulk seed, with opening one end only, it seems very nearly the limit.

Bonds secured by farm mortgages and the indorsation of the Government should sell readily and furnish farmers with money that could be repaid in four, six or ten years on the amortization plan. No skyscrapers would be necessary to domicile this modest institution which, as a result, could advance money on reasonable terms.

THE HORSE.

A getter of good foals is a pretty safe horse to breed to. It pays to go out of one's way to find him if necessary.

When the horse has been deprived of the clothing which nature gave him, do not neglect to protect him from the wind and cold.

Try the bran mash on Saturday night and Sunday morning. When so fed there will be no Monday morning troubles with the team during spring work and heavy feeding.

The stallion's number on the Enrolment Certificate, furnished by provinces having such a law, should dissipate all incredulity on the part of the breeder. It must be bona fide.

When navel-ill is prevalent, eternal vigilance is the price of a foal. Take every precaution and so far as disinfectants and skill will assist, forestall the fatality which is too common during the foaling season.

Regular normal labor will be beneficial to the pregnant mare, but it is cruel to the dam and detrimental to the offspring to put her at once into the harness after foaling. Her physical condition is temporarily impaired through parturition, and she must provide for the new-born foal.