

## NATURE STUDY—No. XXII.

---

S. B. SINCLAIR, Ph. D.

## THE SCHOOL TIME REQUIRED FOR NATURE STUDY.

One of the most serious objections urged against the introduction of Nature Study in Public Schools is that there is "no time for it."

Let us first consider ONE HOUR PER WEEK, the amount of time required. One of the most historic responsible pronouncements on the subject, is that made in 1892, in the report made by the famous Committee of Ten, p. 139, where the Natural History section recommend that "No less than one hour per week, divided into at least two periods per week, should be devoted throughout the whole school course below the High School to the study of plants and animals: that in this study no text books should be used, and that these observation lessons should, as far possible, be made the basis of or correlated with work in language, drawing and literature."

Twenty years ago the writer of this article made a somewhat careful observation and study of a number of schools in the United States, England and France, in which courses in Nature Study similar to those recently prescribed for Ontario Schools had been for years and still are in operation.

Since that time he has had opportunity for more extended observation and experiment, and his opinion is that an average of one hour of school time per week for Nature Study during the entire Public School course forms a satisfactory working hypothesis. Many of the most successful teachers of Nature Study give but few set lessons on the subject and vary the time and emphasis to accord with external conditions. For example, in the Spring when Nature seems to awaken from her winter sleep, more time may be devoted to the subject than during the winter months. Then too it is necessary to adjust the lessons to the school room conditions. For example, in a large rural school with many classes in charge of but one teacher, most of the work must be taken with combined classes or incidentally in connection with