

been made in the public schools for imparting to the pupils as part of their regular instruction some knowledge of the common objects which surround them on every side, and this has been found successful to a marked degree in stirring up that interest in all their school studies, which is so essential to advancement.

In education, no progress can be made until an interest is aroused in the subject taught, and nature study, above all things, stimulates mental activity. Its very essence is a spirit of enquiry and a desire for knowledge—to want to know about everything seen, what it is, why it is there, how it got there, and what are its uses. A thirst for knowledge is an instinct, too, which can be cultivated and developed to a wonderful degree. An illustration of the practical value of these studies is to be found in the North-West Territories and Manitoba, where remarkable results are now very apparent in the improved condition of the whole country as a direct outcome of the simple instructions on plant life (illustrated by the commonest plants found in each locality), which have been given in the rural schools during the past five or six years. This has been in connection with the vigorous campaigns which are being annually waged against noxious weeds. Good work has also been done by teaching the boys and girls of the country what is the true nature of hawks and other birds of prey, and how important a part they play as friends and not, as is generally supposed, as enemies of the farmer.

The usefulness of nature study has been recognized not only by the teaching profession, who are making use of it in schools, but also by those important educational institutions, the Exhibition and Fair Associations, which have done much, by offering small prizes, to draw the attention of farmers and their children to the value of a knowledge of the common, beneficial, and injurious plants, insects, birds, and animals of the country.

Let us then consider briefly what Nature Study is. Prof. Bailey, of Cornell University, one of the best known leaders in this work, says that it is "training the eye to see correctly what it looks at, and the mind to draw the right conclusions from what is seen." It is, in fact, a means of bringing about an equal and simultaneous working of each one of our senses—sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch—with our minds, by which the perceptions