

Springtime Studies.

In the early spring days when the leaves come back to the trees and the birds return from the South, what can be done to bring into the school-room some of the new life and freshness of nature's resurrection. Many children in our city schools have little or no opportunity for observing the beauties of nature unless presented with suggestive examples by the progressive teacher. Nothing will develop thought more rapidly than the opportunity to observe the growth of a plant, the unfolding of the fern leaf, or some similar phenomenon, and thought power will lead to thought expression. The stimulation of the æsthetic sentiments will surely help to make each child happier, his view of life broader and more significant; his observation more accurate, his entire range of thought keener and more elevated.

Peas, beans or other seeds, planted in the school-room, will be the best method of showing the growth of plants and the value or needs of the various parts. Full directions in reference to this can be found in "Outlines in Nature Study and History." If some seeds are planted in moist sawdust they can be pulled up at intervals to show the successive stages of growth. Have each child make drawings at specified times to illustrate the continuity of growth. In order to enlarge the scope of the lesson use a selection that presents the same thoughts in poetic form. By combining these correlated topics, the subject will be flooded with a new light and an appreciation of good literature can be initiated. The following selection is simple and intelligible, and, therefore, well adapted to the purpose:

"In the heart of a seed
Buried deep, so deep,
A dear little plant
Lay fast asleep.

"Wake!" said the sunshine
'And creep to the light',
'Wake!' said the voice
Of the raindrops bright.

"The little plant heard
And it rose to see
What the wonderful outside
World might be."

Use the selection also as the basis of language lessons. The observation of plant life with all its necessities will assist in making real the thoughts contained in the poem. A booklet made of draw-

ings illustrating the growth of the plant from the seed, with the poem written on the cover, will be a valuable and seasonable accompaniment to this series of lessons.

Other appropriate lessons can be taken in connection with branches of the pussy-willow, or apple, peach, or cherry blossoms. If these be brought into the school-room and placed in water, as the blossoms unfold, they will be a delight to the children and they will also afford an opportunity for observation that many of the pupils will not have elsewhere. Calendars can be made and decorated with sprays of the buds and blossoms.

Bud life and habits, the annual migration in the autumn and returning in the spring, the connection of this with the food supply, will furnish much interesting material. The blue-bird and robin, whose welcome notes announce the approach of spring, should receive special consideration. If a bird's nest can be procured and combined with the branch of apple-blossoms, there will be obtained excellent material for drawing and language lessons in connection with the following poem:

"Two little robins made a nest
'Twas in the warm spring weather;
They built it out of sticks and straws,
And little bits of feather.

"It was upon an apple bough
With blossoms all around it,
So neatly wove and fitted in
That no one ever found it."

The drawing may also be used to decorate the cover of a booklet, within which is written the poem, reproduced by the pupils in their own words.

There are many other suitable poetic selections that will be most valuable in these lessons which combine language and drawing in a form that will inspire in the child a desire to seek and to know more of the life of the great outside world,—

"The world's so full of a number of things
That I'm sure we should all be as happy as kings."
—The Teacher.

A Secret.

(Recitation for three tiny girls with gestures).
I know of a cradle, so wee and so blue,
Where a baby is sleeping this morning,—do you?

I think he is dreaming the dearest of things—
Of songs and of sunshine, of tiny brown wings.
I'll tell you a secret,—don't tell where you heard,—
The cradle's an egg,—and the baby's a bird!

—Selected.