

NATURE STUDY—No. VII.

IT IS THE SPIRIT WHICH GIVES IT EFFECT.

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So many children leave school at the age of ten or twelve, or even earlier, that it is important to have a well devised plan of nature-study for the elementary schools. Every healthy child is an observer of his surroundings. Before he enters school at all, he is familiar with a great number of material objects, and his questions show that he has thought about them. How important it is then to cultivate this attitude of the child toward his surroundings, lead him to acquire the habits of a naturalist, to find joys, as he grows older, in the country lanes and meadows—joys often denied to those who have superior mental equipment but who have not "eyes to see." Happy are the children who have parents and teachers intelligent, sympathetic and enthusiastic, who will enter with zest into the child's happy world, and will illustrate the lessons in reading and arithmetic, geography, history and drawing, by materials drawn from the child's own environment and resources.

In the charming story of "En Glad Gut" (A Happy Boy) by Björnson, the famous dramatist and novelist of Norway, Oyvind, the hero of the story, is shown at home in the world of nature around him. "His mother came out and sat down by his side. He wanted to hear stories of what was far away. So she told him how once everything could talk: the mountain talked to the stream, and the stream to the river, the river to the sea and the sea to the sky. But then he asked if the sky did not talk to anyone. And the sky talked to the clouds, the clouds to the trees, and the trees to the grass, the grass to the flies, the flies to the animals, the animals to the children, the children to the grown up people; and so it went on until it had gone round; and no one could tell where it had begun. Oyvind looked at the mountain, the trees, the sky, and had never really seen them before."

And "the mountain talked to the stream." Now what did the mountain say to the stream, any curious boy or girl will ask? Did it not say: I have pushed my cool head into the misty clouds, and gathered around it the drops of moisture which give