

## NATURE STUDY—No. XXXI.

## MOTHER NATURE AND HER BOYS.—AN INSTITUTE THAT BRINGS THEM TOGETHER.

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Nature Study at the Broadview Boys' Institute, Toronto, begins with the study of boy nature. It finds that the unnatural surroundings and conventionalities of city life dwarf the boy physically and narrow him mentally, and that to have the boy at his best they must counteract the influences of man-made environment by getting him back to Nature. The annual summer camp assists in this. For a few weeks the boy lives under canvass in the wildwood; he is next door neighbor to the squirrel and the chipmunk; he breathes the aroma of the pine and the hemlock; he eats the fish he has caught in the lake and the berries he has gathered in the thicket, writes letters home on birch-bark, becomes tanned and seasoned, but best of all he is unconsciously listening to the wonderful whisperings of Nature and becoming broader in mind and sympathies.

Camp experiences are excellent, but all too short. An experience that calls out more labor, effort and thought, is required. This the Institute has found in its Miniature Township. This is a boys' world, with its disappointments and losses, as well as its successes and achievements. Boys soon learn that they can tickle the earth with hoe or spade and it will laugh with bright flowers and delicious fruits; that Mother Nature rewards diligence and punishes neglect; that what a boy sows, that shall he also reap—multiplied manifold—if he cultivates faithfully in the meantime. The Miniature Township consists of a portion of land divided by section lines and cross-roads into 86 little farms and 10 flower gardens. The farms are 10 x 40 feet, and flower gardens 10 x 8 feet. These are cultivated by individual boys or partners, who style themselves "farmers" and delight to don overalls, top-boots, and broad-rimmed hats. To be called "hayseed" is an honor, because it implies that they are landed proprietors and yeomen of the commonwealth.

The farms are leased to the boys, a regular printed form being