

NATURE STUDY—No. XIX.

NATURE STUDY AND THE CAMERA.

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As we understand the term, popularly, to-day, Nature Study is primarily and essentially the study of the out-of-doors. Therein lies its great fascination and charm. It takes us out into the sunshine and fresh air—and that is wherein it differs from our ordinary scholastic work. Away—body and mind—for the time from bricks and mortar and books and desks to learn what we can of the form and life and habits of plants and animals, to consider the meaning of the rocks and the soil, the clouds and the rain, but what is of far higher value, to realize as we have never done before the beauty of form, of motion and of color in the things about us—that, in part, is the essence of Nature Study and what it helps us to do. Forest and field, river and stream, the earth and the sky, all may be made to contribute towards this knowledge and all looked at aright may help us in the recognition of the beautiful and thus add much to the enjoyment of life. Our eyes and our mind are opened to the beauty of the things about us. There is created or developed within us a new sense—the realization of the beauty that lies in form and color.

Now, it is evident that the first step in Nature Study is to correctly observe. This is by no means such an easy matter as many may suppose. It is a rare art, though a fascinating one. It not only requires time—one might say, leisure—and concentration of thought, but also practice. To a certain degree it is a gift, born in us, *i.e.*, that we differ, naturally, in our ability to see clearly and accurately and take note of the things about us, but like all gifts it must be developed and trained before it can reach its highest attainment. Moreover, it is an art that can be acquired even by those who by nature are in a large measure unobservant—and we believe that to such, especially, is this study one of great value. How many of us go through life without making a clear mental concept even of the trees and plants passed and repassed almost every day, so much so, indeed, that some have never recorded (mentally) the difference in contour between an elm and a maple!