

gardener. New groups followed them, and soon in that desert waste rose an oasis of living green, orderly, neat and picturesque—the first Children's School Farm in New York City.

One hundred and twenty-five farmers cared for their plots during the first season, but in the following spring so many requests for "farms" were received that the Park authorities decided to enlarge the space allotted, so that nearly three hundred boy and girl farmers, varying in age from eight to eighteen years, were happily employed during the summer of 1903. Through the long hot days of July and August you might see them watering, weeding, hoeing, or quietly sitting around the central flower plot listening to a Nature Study talk by the attendant teacher.

Improvements upon the surrounding land followed rapidly in the wake of those upon the farm. Toward the east, the Park Department had placed a huge open air gymnasium and playground. Toward the west, a tiny country seat, with a 12 by 18 ft. farm-house. A green lawn and flower beds, a pavilion, a pig-pen and a chicken house had been added to the farm property. Still further west stood a sand tent, and a second canvas formed a resting place for tired mothers. A typical afternoon might have shown eighty or a hundred children busy in the gardens; in the pavilion a sewing class and a group weaving baskets for farm produce; in the tiny house tea being served by neatly aproned housekeepers; while on the lawn the boys played croquet. During September groups of children from neighboring kindergartens flitted through the garden in the mornings, while the proud owners appeared when school hours were over, basket or bag in hand, ready to carry home their harvest, and spade over their plots, leaving them clean and neat, prepared to defy winter's coldest blast.

As order emerged out of chaos, as stones and rubbish disappeared, the restless, careless horde of children grew daily more quiet and gentle. The wilderness that blossomed as the rose was not only the oasis in the desolate waste of ground, but also in the hardened little lives, now softened by God's wholesome sunshine, in the careless hands that grew so tender with the delicate blossoms, the wayward feet that learned to run the narrow paths