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Our School Department.

Some Garden Seeds.

Aim.—To interest the pupils in the sizes, shapes, and colors of the seeds of some common garden plants, and the uses of seeds to the plant and to people.

Materials.—Seeds of the parsnip, carrot, bean, pea, nasturtium or other garden plants.

Method.—1. Give a specimen of each kind of seed to each pupil. What part of the plant are these objects? What part of the plant produces them? How many circles has a flower? In which circles are seeds borne? How can we tell by the appearance of the flower when the seeds are ripe? How do seeds differ in shape, size, and color, and of what use are they?

2. Notice the different shapes. Describe the shape of each kind. Is there one very flat and thin? What is the name of it? What color is a parsnip seed? How big is it? Is it smooth or rough? Blow on it? How could it be carried easily? Smell the parsnip seed and then taste it. Has it any smell or taste? Look for the "meat" in it. Find a round, smooth seed. What color is it? What plant produces it? How big is it? Taste it. Does it taste good? What use is made of peas at home? Find another smooth seed. How does it differ in shape from the pea? What is its name? Has it any odor? What use is made of beans at home? Do you like cooked beans? Find a round, rough seed, and find another rough seed, which is small and narrow? How can you tell them apart? Smell each. Taste each. Which is a beet and which is a carrot seed? Are these seeds ever used for food? Look for a seed shaped like a beet seed but lighter in color? What is its name. Discuss the uses of seeds in the garden and in the house.

3. Compare the different seeds as to size, color, roughness, smell, taste and shape. Which seeds are smooth? Tough? Thin? Round? Which one has the strongest odor?

4. What part of the plant produces seeds? Of what use are they? Why do we plant seeds in the garden? How can we tell the different kinds of seeds apart?

5. Mix the different kinds of seeds and pick out each kind when named. Mix several of each kind with several of another kind and then sort the different kinds. At home plant some seeds in the garden, or in boxes or pots, water them, and watch for the appearance of little plants.

6. Count the number of seeds of each kind. Try to count all the seeds on the desk. Draw each seed.

We have learned that a plant is made up of different parts such as—the root, stem, leaves, and flowers; and that a flower has many parts, some of which are brightly-colored and sweetly-perfumed, and others small and not very pretty. It is the small inner part of a flower, however, that makes the seeds. That yellow dust called pollen must be in every flower before seeds can be produced. Bees and other insects help to carry the pollen from one flower to another. At the bottom of the flower, usually in a pod or vessel of some sort, the seeds grow and become ripe. When the flower has lost its beauty and color, and the parts have fallen off, we know that the seeds are nearly ripe. By making and scattering many seeds the mother-plant hopes to have many children when the seeds grow. We can help by planting and caring for the seeds and the young plants in a garden. Seeds differ from each other in many ways. Some are very small and others are quite large; some are rough and some are smooth; some have a pleasant odor and taste, and others have a bad odor or taste; some are flat and thin; some round like a ball; some long and narrow, and others of different shapes. A pea seed is round, very smooth, nearly white or yellow in color, and has a pleasant odor and taste. A beet seed is about the size of a pea seed, has a very rough, dark coat and is not good to eat. A bean seed is smooth like a pea seed, but much larger, and shaped like a saddle on one side. Like the pea, however, it is good to eat. A parsnip seed is very thin and flat and has an odor. Carrot seeds

also have an odor; they are smaller than a beet seed, yellowish in color, rough, and longer than wide. Nasturtium seeds look like beet seeds but are lighter in color, smoother, and a little longer. Radish seeds are very small, smooth, and reddish in color. Lettuce seeds are nearly white, very small, and much longer than wide.

The above lesson is from from "Nature Study Lessons," by D. W. Hamilton.

School Oratory.

BY AL PEA.

Reading is not likely ever to be disturbed from its position among the fundamental three R's of common school education. In the first place, it is the open sesame to the world's knowledge as expressed in language, and also to the pleasures of literature. Then, oral reading is a training in the world-wide medium of communication—speech. If young people of the farm are in due course, to share effectually in the affairs of the community and state it follows that they must be qualified to express themselves publicly with cogency. Vocal reading, should, therefore, be carefully cultivated in the school courses, and to the extent of declamation upon special occasions, which should not be infrequent if a keen interest on the part of parents and friends in the local place of learning is to be maintained. An excellent typical example of such an event occurred recently when pupils of the Belmont, Ont., continuation school took part in the third annual oratory contest.

There were other features in the entertainment, the proceeds of which went toward the school piano fund. Six boys competed for the honors of the occasion, which included a gold medal for the first prize winner (John Campbell), with a camera for the second (Wm. Moore), donated by public spirited friends of the school. The Elgin County Public School Inspector and two outside ministers acted as judges, voting by points. The subjects (chosen by the competitors themselves) of the two farm boys who won were respectively, The Farmer in Politics and The Natural Resources of Canada as Contributing to the Making of a Great Nation, both of which were handled with commendable ability. As showing the interest manifested in the affair, the large auditorium of one of the village churches was crowded to the aisles by people, including ex-students, from the village and surrounding country, which the school serves so that it might well be described as one of the events of the year. Belmont village is part of a union rural section, and "without fuss or feathers" has developed a successful combination public school and continuation school, at present under the general direction of Principal Oliver McKillop with one assistant in the higher department, which carries the students on to junior matriculation and Normal School entrance work, and three teachers in the lower public school grades. There is an attendance of approximately 110 pupils in the public school-rooms, and about 60 in the continuation school. Any public school pupils attending from outside the section pay a fee of 50 cents per month, and the continuation school pupils, whether resident in the section or non-resident, pay a uniform fee of \$10 each per year. By means of these fees and the Government grants the levy upon the ratepayers of the section is stated by the secretary-treasurer to be very little more than that of an ordinary rural public school section in adjoining districts. A school garden is carried on and pupils take an active share in autumn school fair work. It might be added that pupils of the continuation department have for several years in succession taken a remarkably high standing compared with similar educational institutions, doing the high school type of work. It illustrates very aptly what a local village and rural community can jointly accomplish, achieving substantially the consolidated school idea without the name and, of course, without conveyances. Some of the continuation pupils drive themselves in a distance of about four miles. Incidentally, they often act as messengers to and fro, the village being a considerable business centre for farmers.