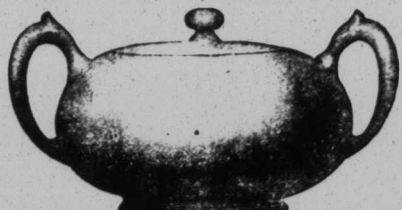


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Woodstock Summer School of Science

Three Valuable Papers Read by Northumberland County Teachers Here Reproduced

At the public closing exercises of the Woodstock Summer School of Science at which 65 teachers, many of them from the Miramichi, were enrolled, several very valuable papers were read by Northumberland teachers, including Manual Training, by Principal W. L. Edmund of Blackville; Plant Study as an Agent in Civilization, by Miss L. M. MacDonald, of Gray Rapids, teacher of Bryerton school.

We reproduce these papers, as follows:

Plant Study As An

Agent in Civilization

From time immemorial both writers and speakers have been by deprecating their own efforts and confessing their inability to do justice to their subject. Following many illustrious examples, I must do likewise. The time given to the course has been so short; the facts gleaned from the excellent instructions given in all the classes so many, that these could not be properly sifted, and so they lack that stamp of individuality which is so essential. I therefore, claim no originality for the following remarks.

It is a favorite theory of the present time current among educators, that the child passes, in a mild way, no doubt, through the different transitions of the human race, from the savage state to modern culture. If we accept this theory, in however slight a degree, we can easily see what an important position, plant study should have in any school course.

This decision will follow the knowledge that the cultivation of plants has been one of the greatest advances of the race and the chief reason for its transition from a wandering nomadic tribe to civilized communities. In the stability of the landhold we have the beginning of the home, as distinguished from the casual camping place. With the home is founded commerce, arts, literature, philosophies and sciences, as well. The domestication of plants has fostered elements of character that are fundamental to civilized life—willingness to work for daily bread, intelligent provision for the future, courage to fight for home, love of country. So far-reaching is its effects that an eminent author has declared that a system of education without soil lore is a relapse to barbarism and that to allow a child to grow up without planting a seed and watching its development is a crime against civilized society. Plant study is pre-eminently one that keeps in mind that spirit of research under which the child has made such astounding progress in learning the great unknown nature around him during the first four or five years of life.

In our school this spring, a short period was devoted each morning to inquiring from every child what he had observed on his way to school. After the first no trifling answers were given, but our desks were always covered with the results of the labors of the busy little investigators. The infection spread to the High School and the lower grade teachers were often approached by these pupils with specimens and questions. Paradoxically we concluded that this subject was at once the most difficult and yet the easiest to teach. The most difficult because the field is so vast, the easiest because we have the children with us, eager and willing to work.

Lastly the esthetic value of plant study. After the necessities of life are secured, man has instinctively turned toward the beautiful to complete his satisfaction in nature. Hence we should turn for real education on the esthetic side to the prettiness of the beautiful in nature and not content ourselves with merely talking about it, for talking it and

explaining it often detracts from its best appreciation and enjoyment. Plant study should fill and surround the home and the school with the most beautiful things obtainable. And thus we see that the school garden should become not only a vital part of the child's education, but the great centre, the heart of vitalizing influences and interests that radiate in every direction.

Domestic Science

Progress is the watchword of this twentieth century. Along every line we are progressing and perhaps more along the educational line. We have done away with the Rule of Three, and the three R's are no longer of the most important part of our school curriculum. We learn by doing rather than by others doing for us. Manual labor as well as brain labor is being carried out and one subject which demands both is Domestic Science.

This is a study pertaining to our home and ourselves. It includes the study of foods and the many branches of study allied to it. Food study tells us the use of foods in general, why we need those foods and the particular kind of food which is suited to the growth of a particular part of the body. Food chemistry tells us the chemical composition of the different kinds of food we eat. The knowledge of this is very essential because if we know what a certain food contains we know how much of it we should eat. The cooking of food is another very important thing. Improperly cooked food is about half the cause of sickness and ill-health and a little practical knowledge in cooking food properly and eating it properly after being cooked would save half our doctor's bills. The general management of the household is probably the most important branch of this study. Every housekeeper knows that getting the housework done depends on careful planning and a good system. In fact this is true of any kind of work. We cannot have good results without a system and stopping a little while to consider and plan instead of rushing headlong without thinking, will save both time and labor. The planning of meals too is a necessary part of our system. Good substantial food is what the body needs and with a little careful forethought a meal consisting of simple food can be prepared much more easily and cheaper than a very elaborate meal, which might not contain the same amount of food material or too much of one kind. The high cost of living compels us to choose foods which are most economical. What to serve, when to serve, and how to serve are all to be considered. There are very few of us who do not look forward to having a home to look after and of course we shall want to apply the very best methods. Well-trained and responsible servants are not always obtainable and on the other hand circumstances do not always permit of having servants. These and many others are sufficient reasons for having a knowledge of domestic science.

But when should a girl acquire this knowledge? Should she wait until she finds herself face to face with the housekeeping problem? No! certainly not, but even then would not be too late if she has had no other opportunity. At home is the right place to begin this study. From the time the child is able to run errands, and do small chores she can be taught neatness and promptness. But is the home the only avenue through which these can be reached? No! It is not. There is a certain avenue open to all and that is the public school. In some cases the girl may not have had an opportunity to learn these things at home. Either the parents are careless with their children or else there is so much work to be done that the easiest way is the best, and here is

where the school can have a great influence. When we speak of the teaching of Domestic Science in school we usually think of a separate class room for it with up-to-date utensils and trying to crowd it in along with the ordinary work. If a rural teacher undertakes anything like this she might meet with a great deal of opposition and rightly so because it would mean much additional expense to the people. Perhaps it would be a better plan to call it cooking and the people would be more sympathetic because they all would like to have their children taught to cook. Then do not try to make it a separate lesson but teach it along with other subjects. For instance, in the teaching of physiology, which is a very important subject, talks could be conducted about food, its composition, best kinds of food, harmful food, etc. The practical side too could be worked out very well. At Christmas as a special treat it might be possible for them to bring sugar and other ingredients to school and make candy. This would be a pleasure to them and they would learn something as well. Some children live a long distance from the school and must bring their lunches. How often we see them with a lunch wrapped up in a newspaper and jammed into their book-bag, and at dinner time take it to a far corner, eat it as quickly as possible and run out to play! Right here a lesson could be given in domestic science. Every country school has a square stove and the teacher could arrange to remain at noon and with the children make a hot pleasant meal out of those solitary lunches. Each one could bring something different from another and each could have a share in serving it according to the teacher's directions. Besides they would be taught cleanliness, sanitation, usefulness and manners.

Another method would be to give them a recipe for cake or pastry and have them try it at home, and bring their results to school. Then the parents would see what the child was actually doing at school and thus bring the home and school into closer connection. There are many ways by which to teach cooking alone. The most necessary requirements are interest of the teacher in the pupils and their homes, the desire to strengthen the bond of sympathy between the home and the school, tactfulness in doing it and skill in making it successful. Sewing could also be taught. A Girl's Club might be formed. Have each member pay a small fee, have them meet once a week and teach them to make useful articles. A Boy's Club might be formed in the same way and have them make small articles for the school and interest them in improving their home conditions as well. The school garden would be found interesting to both the boys and girls in this respect.

There are many, many ways of introducing this subject into the public schools; and it will be found that better results will be attained in everything. The child will be more interested both in the home and school and will have a feeling of responsibility and individuality which would not be gained by grinding away at the usual lesson of the day.

Manual Training and the Rural School

Our Summer School of Science promotes and specializes that one and all important method of learning and teaching—the practical view of education. The proper correlation of these three things, the eye, the brain, and the hand, forms that natural and practical means of teaching which should be the source of all elementary education. What subject of the course could more illustrate this viewpoint than Manual Training, which deals with the proper use and care of tools, in such a way as to prove a most potent factor in the farmer boy's education?

Let us touch briefly upon the progress of civilization from primitive man. Some of us may recall a few of Dr. Macintosh's interesting illustrated slides on our ancestors, and we must realize their great struggle for existence. But place at their disposal a knowledge of tools, and their ignorance becomes science, their misery becomes contentment, their poverty becomes wealth the uncivilized savage becomes a civilized being.

Do we notice a taint of primitive man when we view the wretched condition of some of our farm buildings and apparatus, or is it because

(Continued on page 3)

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