

the natural pasture grasses of the country than is possessed by farmers of our time. Again, it is well known that many of the youthful cattlekeepers and shepherds of the future (more especially in lowland districts) are, in virtue of School-Board regulations, in a great measure dissociated from the animals, the habits of which it should be their first duty in life to study. The result is a perfectly natural one,—youths are being reared with a deplorably imperfect knowledge of the business by which they are to live.

The advantages of the new departure are not, however, to be summed up in the one word *observation*. There are numerous generally accepted agricultural principles which can be explained, and many to be discussed, besides the results of valuable experiments which demand consideration and attention.

I believe that an immense amount of useful elementary knowledge can be disseminated by school teachers if they will confine themselves to principles, leaving the practice entirely to those who have spent their life in it. Where a doubt exists, it should be the duty of teachers to state both sides of the question, and they should at all times rather convey information from acknowledged authorities than personally advise from their own opinions.

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AGRICULTURAL INSTRUCTION IN IRELAND.

In the course of their reports on the advisability of introducing manual work into Irish schools the Commissioners on Manual and Practical Instruction in Primary Schools, make the following extract from a recent publication by the Government on "The Teaching of Elementary Ideas of Agriculture in Rural Schools."

Instruction in the elementary principles of agriculture, such as can be properly included in the programme of primary schools, ought to be addressed less to the memory than to the intelligence of the children. It should be based on observation of the everyday facts of rural life, and on a system of simple experiments appropriate to the resources of the school, and calculated to bring out clearly the fundamental scientific principles underlying the most important agricultural operations. Above all, the pupils of a rural school should be taught the reasons for these operations, and the explanations of the phenomena which accompany them, but not the details of methods of execution, still less a *resume* of maxims, definitions, or agricultural precepts. To know the essential conditions of the growth of cultivated plants, to understand the reason for the work of ordinary cultivation, and for the rules of health for man and domestic animals—such are matters which should first be taught to everyone who is to live by tilling the soil; and this can be done only by the experimental method.

The master whose teaching of agriculture consists only in making the pupils study and repeat an agricultural manual, is, on the wrong path, however well designed the manual may be. It is necessary to rely upon very simple experiments, and especially on observation.