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DAVIDSON

Our School Department.

Make Use of the Fall Fairs

BY GEO. W. HOFFERD, M. A.

What an opportunity at the fall-fair for the teacher of agriculture! There the best products of the local farm, garden, orchard and household are on exhibition. They are all arranged, named and judged according to rules by competent judges. Try to take advantage of this educational opportunity by having a school period of one to two hours with your older pupils in the fair grounds. There will be plenty of concrete material for teaching and observation, if well managed, and willing attendants to give information.

These fairs last two or more days. Arrange to close the formal work of the school-room for the day. Visit the grounds early that you may size up the possibilities from an educational standpoint. Know the location of the various exhibits and some essentials about them, which you should lead the pupils to see. Plan to have the third and fourth book classes meet you at the entrance of the fair grounds at say 10 o'clock or at 2 o'clock, ready for a lesson. The forenoon would be the better time, because the crowd will be small, and there will be more freedom generally to make careful observations. Escort the pupils to the pens and stables of the various farm animals which you can make use of in teaching. Direct them to observe their names and a few outstanding characteristics of the different breeds. The same applies to exhibits of vegetables, fruits, grains, dairy products, etc. After these have been judged pupils will be much interested in the red, blue and yellow tickets, and investigate why the judges awarded the prizes as they did. Follow up the ideas and impressions later in the class-room teaching.

Such a use of the fall fair as this, made by teachers, would form a very favorable impression on parents, and train the rising generation to see the real function of fall fairs. At present children all like to go to the fair, but they are tempted, with the noise and jazz of the rougher features, to see the less profitable opportunities. They may report a good time, but how much has been the real gain towards making an efficient citizen?

The soft-ball game seems to have had its beginning in the successful attempt to take baseball indoors. For some time it has been played in gymnasiums.

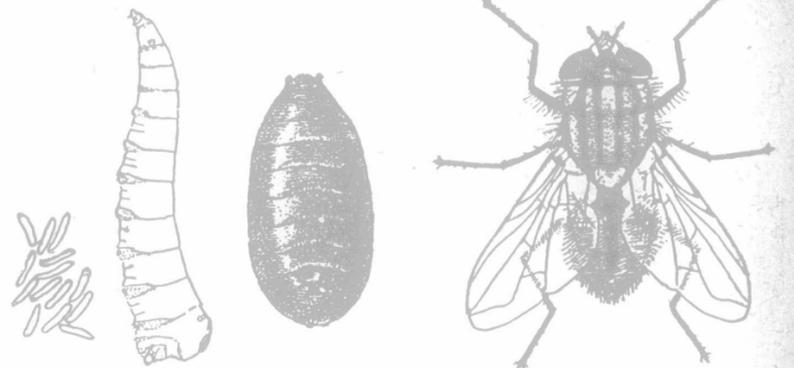
It can be played anywhere out of doors where the ground is level and there is space enough for the players to move about without fear of being in one another's way. It embodies most of the qualities and ambitions of baseball; but because it requires no previous training or physical fitness, and no elaborate organization, it makes an ideal sport at picnics and similar outings, where a small boy may be in the pitcher's position, his sister at bat and his grandfather in the catcher's box. Nor does that mean that the game is dull or slow. On the contrary, it is full of excitement and lively exercise.

The only equipment necessary is a ball and a bat. The ball—known as an indoor baseball or a playground ball and by other names—is similar in appearance to an ordinary baseball, but softer and larger. The regulation size is seventeen inches in circumference, though there are smaller sizes. The price is not high, and the ball will last a good while. It is "lively" enough to bring out the intricacies and technique of regular baseball, but not hard enough to hurt the hands. The bat is somewhat like a regulation baseball bat but smaller; the standard size is thirty-three inches long and one and three-quarters inches in diameter at its thickest part.

The diamond may be of regulation size or smaller, as the players wish.

The teams line up as in ordinary baseball, and the game is played in the same general way; but there are some exceptions that must be carefully observed; the pitcher must really pitch the ball, with a straight-arm underhand motion, and a baserunner must not leave his base until the ball has reached or passed the catcher.

The largest team that could play the game well would consist of ten players, but that number is not necessary; nor need there be nine players on a side, as in ordinary baseball. If each team is short three players, the outfield positions should be left unfilled; if there are only five players on a side, the shortstop's place, as well as the outfield positions, will remain vacant. The fielders do not



Life History of the House Fly.

From left to right the various stages are: eggs, larva, pupa and adult.

Baseball For All The Family.

Baseball is the American national game. The interest in it comes to life in the American boy about the time he is five years old and continues long after gray hairs and baldness come. But the period during which the ordinary game can be played without undue risk is virtually that of the decade from fifteen to twenty-five—the period when serious attention to athletics is possible, during the years of high school and college. It takes training to play with a hard baseball. The physical demands of handling the ball are too great to make the game altogether safe or pleasant for the young, the unathletic or the man who is out of practice—to say nothing of the girls and their mothers, who perhaps have a liking for the game.

Fortunately, there is coming more and more into use a modification of the favorite game that has none of its drawbacks and nearly all of its advantages. That modification of soft, playground ball

play far out, as in regular baseball, but if the team is small, players must arrange themselves to cover the field in the best way.

Players will get out of the game as much or as little as they put into it; they can make it as lively as or easy as they wish. That it was immensely popular with the American soldiers at the cantonments and at the rest camps in France is sufficient evidence that it is good fun—"The Youth Companion."

The Deadly House-Fly.

The accompanying illustration of the various stages in the life history of the house-fly will prove useful in connection with the lesson plan which appeared in last week's issue. The house-fly usually lays its eggs in horse manure, a single female laying from 120 to 160 eggs. The larvæ become full grown in from 5 to 7 days, having molted twice. The pupa stage lasts from 5 to 7 days. After this comes the adult again which starts a new brood on a similar course.