

it with a view to increasing the amount of information he has upon that subject.

Oral lessons should precede the text-book study. Here, then, is the order—oral teaching with specimens, pictures and illustrative stories; text-book study followed by study of any good books in that line. Oral lessons to stimulate—text-book lessons to feed.

The greater amount of our knowledge comes from books, but the greater impulses, for the beginner at least, must come from oral teaching.

The ideal method of teaching nature lessons is, of course, by field excursions. We have already mentioned some of the drawbacks to this method. Then there are difficulties connected with discipline. All teachers have to make some effort to maintain it, or at least have to be on the *qui vive*. To many, however, it is the really serious problem in their daily work. For such, the chances are the difficulties will be augmented. The boy who is a terror behind the desk is not an angel in the woods; the girl, who is assiduous only in schemes to avoid work, will not always be an enthusiastic plant hunter.

But if proper preparations are made, and the appetite of all pupils previously whetted for knowledge in this line, an enthusiastic teacher may reasonably look for good results. But we must not mistake their love of a ramble for a love of science.

But it is often extremely inconvenient to take a class or whole school for such an outing. One can often by himself go through fields by the fences, through thicket and woodland, without feeling that he is trespassing; but to take a bevy of noise-making school children along will often be resented. Keeping to the public roads or streets will do for one or two trips perhaps, but one does not there find such a variety of birds and flowers.

To obviate the necessity of going in a body I adopted the following plan of teaching names and habits of native birds:

I began early in the spring to attempt to arouse an interest in bird-life. The pupils were asked questions about some very common birds as to their habits and their personal appearance.

They were surprised themselves to find that they could but loosely describe what they saw nearly every day. We talked also of birds that remain with us during all the year, and of the migrations of others.

They were asked one afternoon to make lists of such birds as they had ever seen and would know again. These were a little larger than

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