

The Child and the Garden.

Love of working with the land is by no means confined to as limited numbers as some people imagine. On the contrary, there seems to be a something about stirring up the warm, brown soil, freighted with pleasant odors and promise of coming fruitfulness, that appeals to nearly all normal people. There is a genuine pleasure in it, and if you are normal you dig, and hoe, and rake, and put in the curious little seeds of so many different shapes, with more satisfaction than you do most other things in the world. You are getting the exercise that is good for you, and the pure air of God's heaven; you are doing nothing that can ever rebuke you, and are lured on by visions of the goodly results that are to follow. Should you ever feel inclined to look contemptuously upon the work of "mucking in the soil," or those who are interested in it, you may take it for granted that there is something wrong with you, either with your training, your judgment, or some other branch of your mental make-up—you are abnormal, or else you have never given it a trial. Remember, the most eminent among men have been by no means ashamed to be interested in good old mother earth and her products. The King of England and the King of Italy are both enthusiastic agriculturists. Granted that they do not do the manual labor part of it with their own hands; they cannot despise that in which they are interested. Passing them, however, what of Thoreau, university graduate, philosopher, naturalist, writer and "farm hand"? What of Emerson, with whom he worked side by side in the garden? Of George William Curtis, who was "also a farm hand out at the Lowell Road, but came into town Saturday evenings—taking a swim in the river on the way—to attend the philosophical conferences at Emerson's house"? What of those other gifted idealists of Brook Farm—Hawthorne and Charles Dana? What of the British novelists, Haggard and Buchanan, practical farmers; of Tolstoi, the great Russian; and of Paderewski, the famous pianist at present touring Canada, who, on his estate in Poland, goes about in a rough suit superintending, and lending a hand here and there? A long prelude, yet useful, maybe, in establishing what we wish to establish, viz., that interest in the soil is normal, beneficial, and worthy of the greatest minds of our own or any day.

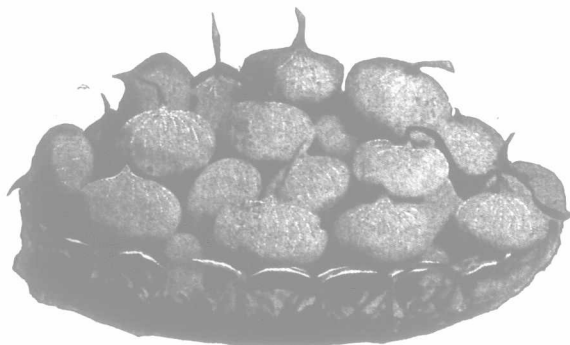
Now, to come to our more immediate subject, that of the "Child and the Garden": In many respects children are in no way different from grown people. They enjoy doing the same things that grown people do, so far as they are able; they like work that absorbs them; they receive the same sense of satisfaction as older folk in habits of diligence, order and economy, provided these be developed in them—not forced upon them. Now, few systems of discipline supply all these conditions more perfectly than the working of a little garden of the child's own. In the first place, he loves gardening because it is something that his father or mother does; he feels of some use and importance when engaged at it. In the second place, the work, if he enters into it enthusiastically, keeps him busy and interested, essential conditions to happy, progressive child-life. Last of all, the care and attention necessary, if wisely directed and encouraged, must, of necessity, train his powers of observation, and develop in him habits of industry, system and neatness.

Taking it for granted, then, that work with the soil is a good thing for the child, the next question is how he may be induced to begin it, and how he may be so directed and encouraged that it will be of positive benefit to him. In 99 cases out of 100 the chief burden of directing the child's development falls upon the school. Recognizing this, and the value of the garden as a "developer," the educationists of the day have not been slow to advance the claims of the latter. There have been, however, many drawbacks. In

so far as consolidated schools, with paid caretakers who will look after the plots during the long summer vacation, are concerned, the problem has been solved. But the ordinary rural school presents very different conditions. Let its garden be never so gay with flowers and vines, once the vacation comes, with its almost inevitable neglect, there is another story. Weeds grow up, flowers die out for want of water, a stray pig or cow breaks in and accomplishes disaster—little wonder it is that the children return to school discouraged, and with the determination never to try another school garden.

About the only way of obviating this difficulty in many schools, in so far, at least, as keeping the school-yard attractive is concerned, is to provide trees in plenty, and "plunge" (submerge in earth to the rim) flower-pots in the beds. When vacation time comes the pots of geraniums, etc., may be taken home and cared for until the reopening of school.

This species of gardening, however, is useful



A Dish of White Onions.

only to a limited extent. It provides for the child little opportunity of seeing the various kinds of seed sprout and grow from the first tiny leaflet to the mature plant, rich with flower or vegetable or fruit. There is a much better plan, which has been successfully carried out in several of the United States schools. The plan is this: The parents of each child are requested to provide him (or her, as the case may be) with a small garden-plot at his home. Each child is then given a list of names of flowers and vegetables which are known to be easily-grown varieties, and is given his choice of three kinds of seeds—flowers or vegetables, as he chooses. He is supplied with the seed at the school, and told how to plant and care for them. Stimulus to good work is provided by periodical visits of the teacher to the various gardens, and by the arrangement to have special exhibits from the children's gardens at the fall fair. Every child who exhibits is given an exhibitor's ticket, allowing free admission each day, and proud indeed are the possessors of these privileged passes. The accompanying cut shows the result of the children's labor at one of these schools, as shown at the Worcester, Mass., fair. The cut was printed originally in the Nature Study Magazine.

In the great majority of cases it has been found that the enthusiasm of the children did not flag throughout the season. In accounting for the few failures, one prominent teacher says: "The gardens which were indifferent belonged to the class of children who delight in beginning new things, but who have not the moral stamina to push on to a completed result. However, the lesson probably was helpful so far as it went." The same teacher also tells of the wholesome delight of the young gardeners in their work. "Mothers," she says, "told me their children did not wish to go away even for a few days, because the garden would need attention during their absence."

To some it may seem nonsensical that children

should be given charge of garden-plots on farms where there are already, as a rule, gardens filled with all necessary vegetables and flowers. It should be remembered, however, that these gardens are made, not for their material but for their educational value. They afford, in effect, a species of manual training, whose worth consists in its effect upon hand, mind and will.

Since so easy a solution of the school-garden problem presents itself, why should not our teachers in Canada introduce the scheme, and follow it up with the enthusiasm which alone will bring success?

The Onion.

By Mrs. Anna L. Jack.

Soon after the sowing and rolling of the onion-bed, weeding will be needed, and this process must be carefully done, so as not to disturb the rootlets by loosening the earth too much about them. If the land is mellow, a wheel hoe is the best implement, and it is easier to keep the weeds down by its early application than to have to pull them out after they grow large enough to have a firm hold of the ground. In regard to soil and fertilizers, this vegetable seems able to assimilate any amount of food of a stimulating nature, and will soon show the result in quickened growth, that puts it beyond the reach of its enemies.

When about three or four inches high, the onions should be thinned out, to two or three inches apart, and the ground must be constantly stirred to keep up growth until August, for after that season the bulbs do not ripen so well. The onion is a valuable vegetable medicinally, and acts on the system as an expectorant, diuretic, stimulant, and diaphoretic. It is highly beneficial in cases of asthma and oppressive breathing.

The onion has been known and cultivated as an article of food from the very earliest period. In Scripture we find it one of the things for which the Israelites felt a backward longing, during their wanderings in the wilderness, and at the present day the people of Western Asia are large consumers of this pungent vegetable. While some tastes repudiate its flavor, it was a pleasant sentiment expressed by Dudley Warner, who wrote, "Happy is that family which can eat onions together."

[Note.—Those who have been troubled with the onion maggot will be benefited by knowing that a good preventive is to change the onion-bed every year. Contrary to the too prevalent opinion, this will also conduce to a larger yield. During the growing season, remove any affected onions, recognizable from their sickly, yellowish appearance. These will have worms in them, which should be destroyed. Another remedy that has been recommended is to sprinkle kerosene emulsion near the onions.—Ed.]

Cellars for Storing Apples and Eggs.

A British Columbia subscriber, asks information how to construct a good, dry, properly-ventilated root cellar, as he purposes building such a cellar for apples, and another for eggs. Believing that the columns of the "Farmer's Advocate" are the best medium for collecting original and modern ideas on such subjects, we throw the question open to our readers, with invitation to send us plans, descriptions and specifications of the construction and elevation, as well as interior arrangements, of any such buildings in satisfactory use.

The Fruit Division, Ottawa, has received notice through its fruit crop correspondents, that apricots were in bloom in Lytton, B. C., the 31st of March. The peaches were just ready to bloom last week, and the prospects up to date in that section are all that could be desired. There is, however, yet a danger of a late frost, and, therefore, for a week or two the prospects cannot be very definitely estimated.



A Home Garden Planted and Cared For by a Girl of Twelve.



Fall Fair Exhibit of School at Worcester, Mass.