

Sol fa certificates, issued to teachers in the public schools should include an examination in voice culture, and that a teacher should be expected to teach her class how to produce pure tone, and how to sing the simple school songs intelligently and expressively, and without that hard mechanical ring so generally heard among school children. If this plan were adopted in our schools, hundreds of voices that now grow to be harsh and unpleasant, might be preserved in all the purity of childhood, and school singing would no longer be the misnomer it now is, but would be enjoyable and pleasant to listen to, as children's voices ought to be. *M. Stead in N. Y. Vocalist.*

Love of nature should be inculcated in the schools. It is not. We talk much of science, and flatter ourselves that it is claiming its rightful place in the schools, but it is not. The teaching of science has steadily decreased in ten years, in twenty years, even in twenty-five years. This is all the worse, because city life has deprived children of the knowledge of nature. All the investigations that have been made have proven conclusively that city children are lamentably ignorant regarding nature. Nor is this the worst of it. What science we do have has taken a miserable, mercenary, or commercial tone. We choose the sciences that mean the most financially, and we teach these in the way that will make them mean most commercially. Astronomy is the grandest of all the sciences. It reaches outward and upward with a majesty that no other science does, but it has no appreciable commercial value, and so the universities—even Harvard—have dropped it from their courses. Geology has largely gone from the universities to the special institution at Washington, because there is more probability of making the knowledge acquired "pay." The phase of geology that is most emphasized is mining, because it pays best. The phases of chemistry that the universities—some of the highest—teach most enthusiastically are those that the students sometimes the professors can make the most profitable. This makes the love of nature through the sciences an impossibility. There is less and less time given to science, less and less love of nature through science, and less and less real teaching of science. *Stanley Hall.*

PRIMARY DEPARTMENT.

Closing Exercises.

Do not, I beg of you, give the last of your energies and these glorious June days to a wearisome drill for closing exercises. It needs the perfection of health, patience, sweetness, and every cardinal virtue under the sun for teacher and children to "get up" a school "occasion" with its everlasting *drill, drill*, and not show the worst side to each other. Don't undertake it. It yields no return worth the effort. I wonder if it would be a dangerous suggestion to allow each child to do what he likes best for the closing exercises. Child

ren never get tired of doing the things they do well. It is the teachers who become tired of the well-worn grooves. It is an old suggestion, but we make it right over again, that school work shall form a large part of the final exercises when parents are invited. You cannot please them so well as to show them what their children can *do*. A smile, a deferential spirit and a courteous manner from the teacher (do we always remember that?) will warm their hearts and make them ready to enjoy everything they see. *Primary Education.*

A Proposition.

Come let us reason together. For the last year or two most of the reading prepared for little children has been crowded with nature stories. There is no objection whatever to such stories. But one particular feature of them has become so prevalent, as to be wearisome, silly, and absolutely injurious in its influence. What is it? It is the habit of "making believe" that all nature is discontented and ready to quarrel. The oak tree wishes it were a pine, and the pine tree is fretting because it is not an oak. The lily wants to be a rose and the rose is "dying" to be a pansy, and so on and on *ad nauseam*. Here and there a story teller has grown zealous and ambitious enough to have these nature nihilists refuse to grow at all till they could have their desires granted. Every weakness and passion of humanity has been ascribed to these products of Nature till they have wept, moaned, scolded, been jealous, and "made up" like a lot of wayward school children. The object of this sort of a story has been to put Nature into harness to do ethical work—a kind of practical correlation that has called for a showy moral attachment at the end of each story.

In the first place such nature stories are not true to science. Plants don't "get mad" and stop growing, or spend their plant energies in idle wishes and speculation. What must our children think of a nature realm where everything is in a ferment of dissatisfaction? Anything elevating in such a "make-believe" as that!

Now for the proposition. Let us stop all this abnormal sort of story telling. That does not mean that our nature stories shall be without imagination. Let all Nature talk if you want to, but let it be of the sensible kind. Let us eliminate the discontent and the malcontents and find some other way of showing that vice is always punished and virtue is always rewarded. It will not be easy to give up such stories, for they are everywhere, and so interwoven with the beautiful and the artistic that it will be a sore temptation to keep along with them. And while we are about it let us see if we cannot speak of the wind as the *wind* simply, and not *Mr. Wind*. Let us call our birds, *birds*, and not *Mr. and Mrs. Bird*. Some things are better as they are than loaded down with human titles. *Primary Education.*