

must be mastered and understood to some extent. No doubt the chief impetus given to this kind of work, in addition to regular book learning, was owing to imported knowledge carried by certain teachers into school fresh from the farm, the workshop, the desk, and the laboratory. Among country children many things that they know and are familiar with need not be discussed in the country schools—but with city and town children this knowledge is a novel and an important acquisition from the fact that it is not common. Planting, growing, cultivation, harvest, and gathering in the crops—these are everyday affairs, and excite no great interest among children in the country; so the return of the migratory birds, the fishes in the streams, and the appearance of insect life, and all the manifestations of growth, maturity, and decay observed in the changing scenes of rural life, are matters of common occurrence. Besides this, the country child becomes, in one sense, “weather wise.” The very nature of the occupation in which his parents are engaged causes him to become a close observer of atmospheric conditions, and he learns to read these signs with as much facility and accuracy as he interprets her passing thoughts from his mother's face. He absorbs the workings of nature with hardly an effort, and whenever something new or unusual attracts his attention he inquires of those older than himself for the reason. Of city or town life he knows little. He has not learned much of the strength of combination, or of how business is conducted, and in this respect he is far behind his city cousin. The difference is in the surroundings and the opportunities, and not in natural aptitude. A little levelling up would help both, no doubt, and this is the opportunity for the progressive teacher to import the child from one phase of life to another.

To induct the city children into nature study on a small scale would not be a great task, and yet it would afford genuine pleasure as well as valuable information. It may be done in the following manner in many schools. Let there be set aside a plot of ground at the schoolhouse upon which vegetables, cereals, etc., are planted. Let the boys and girls, who are interested in these things, prepare the ground, procure the seed, and do the planting and the cultivating, to see the plant start from the seed and produce its kind. All the children then would become familiar with growing crops. A part of this plot should be laid off into flower beds. If such a piece of ground could thus be cultivated at each school wherever practicable, the city and town children would become tolerably well acquainted with agricultural and horticultural industry on a small scale. The ideal school, I should say in passing, with its walks, flower beds, shade trees, and little patches of grains and grasses, and properly equipped inside as well as outside, is what the teachers of this state should strive for. And, to go a step further in this direction, at the country schoolhouses there should be two or three acres of land for experimental purposes—on which the teacher and the pupils could experiment with all kinds of fruits, grains, vegetables, flowers, and ornamental shade trees. This is not an impracticable scheme, but one which lies clearly within the reach of every neighborhood having a schoolhouse.

Another phase of nature study which may be taught incidentally is that of the weather; and this is a subject that is very closely allied with the study of geography, and the animal and vegetable products of a country. The temperature, the moisture or the dryness of the atmosphere, the direction of the wind and its velocity, the amount of rainfall or of snowfall, the cloudiness