

NATURE STUDY—No. XXI.

NATURE STUDY IN THE SCHOOLS OF NOVA SCOTIA.

(A Historical Sketch.)

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A systematic course of oral and objective study was outlined in the first conspectus of a course for the schools of the province, which was presented to the Provincial Educational Association at Truro on the 14th day of July, 1880, by the Principal at that time of the public schools and Academy at Pictou. This was done on the invitation of Dr. David Allison, then Superintendent of Education for the province. After due discussion the conspectus was referred to a committee for simplification and presentation at the convention held the next year, where it was further discussed and passed, practically in the form in which it was soon after prescribed by the Council of Public Instruction for the first eight grades of the public school system, known as the common school grades, in the year 1881.

In 1887 "The Educational Review," which has ever since been continuously published at St. John, N.B., was started with the object of developing the Nature Study side of the course, as well as serving incidentally as a teachers' organ for the Atlantic provinces of Canada. Illustrated lessons on natural objects were prepared, the most continuous being the series under the title "Ferndale School." The whole environment of common school life was more or less covered, instruction for teachers on various subjects, including even the evening sky, which was illustrated by a series of star maps. The Ferndale series dealt with the biological side mainly; but other pages covered mineralogy, physical phenomena of common range, and so forth, before any general effort appears to have been made in the educational press of the other provinces of Canada.

A little later, 1901, a Science building was erected in connection with the Provincial Normal School; and the Provincial School of Agriculture founded by the Government a few years earlier, was then more completely affiliated with it. An extra course of two years in the sciences underlying the art of agriculture was