

NATURE STUDY—No. III.

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(The following is the concluding summary of Dr. S. B. Sinclair's lecture on "Nature Study in American Universities," delivered to the Club on February 10th. A *full* report is given in the May and June numbers of the Educational Monthly of Toronto.)

It may be said that experimentation and investigation have established the following general principles regarding Nature Study.

1. Nature Study should not be considered the be all and end all of education. The humanities and mathematics must always be prominent subjects in a rationally constructed school curriculum. It is probable, however, that with wiser selection of subject matter and method in every department, better results will be secured with less expenditure of time and energy than formerly, and that the introduction of Nature Study will not prove an additional burden to the student.

2. Nature Study should have a place in the curriculum of every grade in every elementary school. The work in early years should consist of that comparatively spontaneous, non-technical and undifferentiated study of surroundings which develops in later life into a scientific study of Nature with a definite problem and by careful and accurate laboratory methods.

3. The aim of such study in the elementary school is not so much information as character. The purpose is not at the beginning to furnish a scientific laboratory training or to fill the mind with scientific facts, but to develop an attitude—a power of interpretation and appreciation of Nature and also a power of self-expression, which will enable the child to gain better control of himself and of his surroundings, to live a fuller life and to be of greater service in society than he otherwise would be.

4. In the selection of materials and methods, this aim should be kept in view. For example, the study of the various processes by which the wool of the sheep is worked up into cloth, is usually of greater value educationally to the city child than to the country child, who may already be fairly familiar with the facts. Thus, it is impossible to lay down a definite course of study which will be adapted to different school conditions. The material studied should be closely related to the problems of child life experience