

surroundings in life, and find their daily duties less irksome, and gather information that will be helpful to them in overcoming difficulties and in working for a share of the necessities, comforts, and luxuries of life.

The materials for nature study are everywhere,—the soil, the plant, and the animal; and the judicious study of soils and soil formation, or useful and troublesome plants, or noxious and beneficial insects—first, as objects of beauty or interest in themselves, and afterwards as things which are useful or troublesome to man—opens up a field of unending pleasure and profit to the average boy or girl.

The eyes, ears, and other organs of sense in children are wide awake and keenly attentive; and the one thing needed is nature-loving, well-trained, competent teachers in the Public Schools, to direct and develop the love for natural objects which is so strong from infancy to twelve or fourteen years of age.

One of the best aids—in fact the ever-necessary handmaid—of nature study is drawing. Nothing contributes more to exact and reliable information, say in the study of plants and insects, than an attempt to draw a representation of the object or organ under examination. All parts and the arrangement of parts, with every angle, curve, and peculiarity, must be noticed and represented in some way; and I regret to say that there is nothing in which our Canadian teachers and schools are more deficient than in this important branch of elementary education. Boys from England are far more proficient in drawing than Canadian boys and girls; and those who have given any attention to the subject, know what excellent work is being done under this head in some of the leading cities of the United States (say Boston, New York, and Philadelphia), where every teacher, in almost every division from the kindergarten up, teaches drawing. The children at school in these cities are taught to describe by some kind of diagram or drawing nearly everything they look at or read about; and the results are very satisfactory, far beyond what one would think possible in a Public School course.

Those who have had experience, almost without exception, say that nature study, properly pursued, does not interfere with ordinary school duties. On the contrary, it breaks the monotony of school routine and increases the interest in the regular school studies to such an extent that the most and best book-work is done where a little time is given every week to the examination and study of some portion of the great world of nature around us.

This Bulletin is, we think, the first formal attempt in the Province of Ontario to present items of information and simple, common-place incidents regarding natural objects, in the hope of interesting some of our young people, and inducing teachers to undertake such work in the Public and High Schools of the Province. These simple stories are, no doubt, very imperfect; but they constitute a beginning,—the opening up of a very wide and interesting field for observation and study; and with more time and a careful selection of writers according to their special tastes and aptitudes, we may be able to furnish something nearer what is required in this important department of educational work.