

The Farm Home

Collectors and Students.*

By Alice Hollingworth, Beatrice, Ont.

(Continued from last issue.)

I have given a brief history of two common objects to illustrate my statement that we live in a world of wonders, and it is the same with everything we touch. It always seems such a pity to me to see how little pleasure and satisfaction the majority of people take out of Nature's gifts. It is not merely enjoying the beauty and admiring the perfection of her methods; there is the material gain in knowing how to make use of the natural elements that surround us. It is the knowledge to do this that we call science, and all the comforts, all the advantages of civilized life are due to science. It has given us our artificial light and heat, our means of rapid communication and rapid travelling to distant places, it has given us the delights of art and music and our wealth of literature, its benefits are beyond numbering, it has raised us from savagery to a state of civilization. This is what comes of people collecting to study instead of collecting on the jackdaw plan. I think we may safely say that to collect is human, and therefore, it would be well for those who have the training of children to teach them to be students as well as collectors, to help them by all possible means to step into that world of knowledge and beauty that the unobservant pass by and never see or dream of, and most surely they will make better men and women and future generations will be benefited by the care that is bestowed upon the children to-day. They may never progress so far as to startle the world with new discoveries, but if they only travel along the road that is already made and learn no more than others can teach them, it will be immeasurably better than to remain forever stuck in the mud of ignorance. Why are not school lessons made attractive instead of repugnant to children? Many like to go for the sake of the companionship of their playmates, but few are drawn there by the love of their books. I remember when I went to school the prevailing sentiment among the children was to resent compulsory education as a bitter injustice in which parents and teachers figured as conspirators. Yet it would not be so hard to make it otherwise. I know one teacher who used large sheets of bark as trays, which he covered with sand, and in this he marked out the divisions of land and water and marked where great battles have taken place with bits of paper, thus

*A synopsis of an address prepared for Farmer's Institute meetings in Ontario, condensed for publication by the Superintendent.

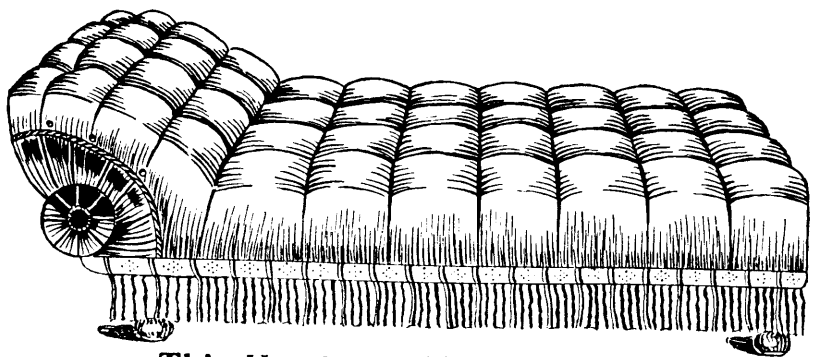
blending geography and history and illustrating it in a simple way that pleased and interested the children and made them always eager for the next lesson. Now, what would be easier in a country school than to teach botany and geology on the same plan? I know of one school where the study of these two branches of science is compulsory, and prizes are awarded for the best collections of botanical and geological specimens. The result is highly satisfactory. One of the pupils who graduated last year and took the prize for her geological collection writes to me most enthusiastic letters concerning her studies at school, her collections, her long rambles and her interest in tracing out the geological formations of the country. She is a thorough child of nature and free from the sickly sentimentality and the desire to ape the manners and conditions of older people, that we witness so often in young people whose mental training has been neglected and who have never been taught to appreciate the boundless wealth of beauty and the field of knowledge that leads us into a veritable fairyland of wonders which Nature has spread before us.

What Women May do in Agriculture.

The following is a summary of the address delivered by Prof. Robertson at the meeting of the National Council of Women upon the above subject.

At the outset he pointed out that half the world's population earned their living from agriculture, and everything that would affect beneficially the daily labor of half the world would exert a wonderful influence for the upbuilding of humanity. Canada's yearly agricultural wealth was \$600,000,000 as against \$37,000,000 produced from mines. It was especially women's province to develop intellect in their husbands or fathers or brothers. An intelligent people could make a good living off poor land, while the people who farmed the richest land of the world, the delta of the Nile, had been poor for thirty centuries, because they lack intelligence and their womankind were a dead issue when it came to any assisting of their male relations. Women should endeavor to develop skill in the men; cultivate the personal market for everything raised on the farm, which was worth 30 per cent. more than any other. Women could impart knowledge to men, not the letter of knowledge, but that better part, the spirit of it. The value of praise of any little advance in farming methods, especially from women, had had more to do often with the progress of an entire farming community than anything else. Already the co-operation of women with men in the essence of farming, the acquiring and using of knowledge advantageously in the selection of seeds, the preparation of dairy products and even the care of cattle, had had a very marked effect on the agriculture of Canada. Encouragement from the fair sex was

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