

NATURE WORK IN SCHOOLS.

L. A. DEWOLFE.

Nature articles are being published so often that one would think such topics were almost "second nature" to our school children. Nevertheless, very few teachers are making the proper use of them.

The formal nature lesson is scarcely necessary. The object is not to make scientists of our school children; but to make observers. Teach a child to enjoy the birds, the flowers and the insects. After that, he will teach himself. When the teacher has given her pupil the desire to know, her task is accomplished.

Occasionally, a teacher has more enthusiasm than good judgment; and, as a result, her class will have a positive dislike for nature work. She must learn to watch the effect of each lesson. Feed a natural appetite; but don't force it to the point of satiety.

Begin with the lower school grades. The first four grades are the most satisfactory ones for field observation. Young children have sharp eyes. To say they can ask questions that neither a scientist nor a philosopher can answer is putting it mildly. Encourage the questions. The answer may come sometime—from some unexpected source.

In case some teacher is struggling with this problem, I am enclosing extracts from one or two letters to show how other teachers are solving it. I also enclose two letters written by school children. These letters are, doubtless, compositions based on previous nature lessons or observations. If anyone knows a better way to teach English composition we should be glad to hear about it. Those who have not tried every day observations for composition topics, might get an idea from the following letters:

Last week we studied the robin. A few days before I told the pupils that I was going to have them write an essay on the robin on a certain day, and suggested that they find out all they could about it in the intervening time. I was surprised when the essays were written to find out that they knew so much about it. We had these read in school and one could get hints from the others. Then with a little alterations in some cases the descriptions were written in the nature booklets. I find these a great help in nature, English, writing, etc.

STELLA M. LOGAN.

I wonder if any of the Rural Science teachers are having "Bird Classes" this spring? My pupils are taking a great

interest in the birds. One of the citizens of the community has offered a prize for the best essays on birds. The pupils have handed in some excellent ones. We have organized a special class to continue for a few weeks, to study the birds in the early morning. Try it; you will be surprised to see how many of the pupils will assemble at 6 a. m. or 6.30 a. m. for a bird trip.

GERTRUDE M. CHASE.

A Story of a Yellowbird.

Once a little yellow bird built a nest in a rosebush near a window. The people of the house watched the little bird with interest. The little bird had the nest almost done one night but in the morning the lady looked out and saw that the English sparrow had been there and torn it to pieces. She felt so badly for the little bird that she got some cloth and raveled it out and spread it on the bush. The little bird came back and worked very hard and had it finished again at night. It laid its eggs and the little birds grew and at last flew away. Anyone could go right up to the bush while the bird was there and it would not move. This is a true story.

DOROTHY MORRELL,

Age 12 years,

Brooklyn School.

Grade VI,

Autobiography of a Spruce Tree.

I began as a little seed. I dropped off the mother tree in the autumn. In the spring I began to grow. I grew more and more every year until I was quite a size. Then I was taken up and transplanted in front of a house. Here I grew to be a big tree. When the visitors came they tied their horses to me. Their halters wore my bark, and this stopped my growth. A little while after that some boys came along and marked their initials on me, which stopped my growth some more. Still I kept on growing until I was a big log. My owner said he could get some money for me, so he cut me down and sent me to a saw mill, where I was sawed with some other spruce trees into lumber. We were then sent to South America and made into houses.

STANLEY MORRELL,

Age 11 years,

Brooklyn, Yarmouth Co.

Grade VI,

Point is given to Professor DeWolfe's advice and also to the suggestions in "With the Birds" by the news that several Scarlet Tanagers, rare visitors in New Brunswick, had been killed by thoughtless or ignorant boys.

The following comment from the *St. John Globe* of June 3 is most pertinent:

There never seems to be any excuse for the killing of a song bird, and now when a wider idea of the value of the birds from an economic point of view, if from no other, is supposed to form an elementary part of every child's education, the thoughtlessness that prompts the act is very hard to condone.