

The knowledge of Canada, either in its history, resources, beauties, scenery, birds, wild flowers, etc., etc., is ignored in our Public Schools, and the time of the pupils is spent in gaining intimate knowledge of every other country.

I have three boys who have been devoting spare time to the study of Natural History, and have been encouraged to contribute to the pages of two or three juvenile magazines, such as 'School, Work, and Play,' was.

They are very fair botanists, and are great friends of the leading botanist of Canada. One is a fair sketcher with his pencil, and draws outline flowers. The other writes descriptions of them in the untechnical language of boys.

It was thought that if a Botany Column, or a Bird and Egg Column, was to be part of the interesting contents of THE YOUNG CANADIAN, they might be able to assist in developing or sustaining an interest in these columns among the boys and girls who read it.

They could also write about 'pets,' such as guinea pigs, and such like.

I have yearly taken up for their sakes, one subject in Natural History, and encouraged them to write, the aim being to develop their faculties of observation and description—two very needful and enjoyable qualities for anyone to be equipped with.

Should you feel disposed to accept of my suggestion, you may depend on a material supply for these columns. Of its quality you must be the sole judge.

With best wishes for your prosperity.

Sincerely yours,

T. E. W."

Could anything have been nicer? To think of two real young Canadians coming to the rescue in this fashion! And to think of the rescue being in all probability the very happiest solution, as after all, it would lead us into the kind of help that is the surest of all—the help that Providence gives to those who help themselves.

So I wrote at once. I wish I had kept a copy of my letter. It could not have been so kind and delightful as I meant it to be, for I had a hundred and fifty others to write that day, and the mail-bag was waiting. But it was worthy of an answer at least—a sweet answer from my two little boys, and from their kind father. Here is the boys':—

"Papa read us your very kind letter, and I wish to tell you that my brother Otway and I feel it is quite an honour to assist you in the columns of THE YOUNG CANADIAN.

We have talked it over with papa and mamma, and will do our best to deserve your kindness.

The plan that strikes us as being the best is, to send you every week some clear, plain advice to the boys and girls how to collect and press the flowers, and then before the flowers come, to make it interesting by telling something curious about some flowers—one short story—papa says, that will be like the sugar-coating of the pill.

Every week, through the spring and summer, describe the flowers likely to be found, and anything curious about them. Papa thinks that if we do our best in the wild-flowers we may be satisfied for this year, and the only thing we are afraid of is that our letters will require a good deal of your time to make them good enough. We will try to get some of our friends to take an interest as well.

I am fourteen years old, and go to the Collegiate Institute. My brother Otway is twelve, and goes to the Dufferin School, and Conrad, he is only six, but has his own collection of plants. He is a great boy, and says he is going to write for you when he gets big.

About butterflies, moths, and insects, you ought to get papa at that. I am sure you could get the cuts to borrow from Mr. Fletcher, at Ottawa, or Rev. Mr. Bethune, Port Hope, the editor of the *Entomological Journal*. They are both nice gentlemen, very kind, and wanted Otty to draw some bugs for their paper, but they were too hard for him.

Your letter is very kind, indeed, and we thank you very much for the welcome it gives to us. Will you tell us what day of the week you should have anything that we send, so that we may be regular and punctual.

And oblige,

Your sincere friend,

E. H. W.

P.S.—I send with this letter the first of the series.

E. H. W."

Accompanying this charming epistle, there was one from the boys' father, mentioning points that I had

entered in my Suggestion Book, and putting them so clearly, that I hope the writer will excuse me if I quote them in his own words:—

"Those two verses of Longfellow's address to the great Naturalist Agassiz, on his fiftieth birthday, would make a capital heading to the Wild Flower Column."

"The boys will send you copy every week with instructions for beginners. . . . Along towards Spring they will give some simple key to assist in distinguishing flowers. . . . Then every week they will give half a dozen little illustrations of the flowers expected to appear, briefly describing all in juvenile language. . . . I will take care that, scientifically, there will be no error. . . . Teach the Club to preserve and transplant the flowers. . . . Let Saturday be the outing day, and let a list of all that have been found be sent into the Editor in charge of the Club, with descriptions of those that the little members cannot name. . . . Let us have an Exchange and Identification Bureau for the benefit of the Club. . . . I may tell you that the boys' collection is the only one here with modern names, and many plants are sent to us for identification. If packages are marked *Botanical Specimens*, one or two cents postage is sufficient. . . . I will be very glad to give your readers the proper names for their plants, if mailed to me.

Sincerely yours,

J. E. W."

YOUNG CANADIAN WILD FLOWER CLUB.

AMONG OUR WILD-FLOWERS.

And Nature, the old nurse, took
The child upon her knee,
Saying, "Here is a story-book
Thy Father has written for thee."

"Come, wander with me," she said,
"Into regions yet untrod,
And read what is still unread
In the manuscripts of God." —Longfellow.

"DEAR BOYS AND GIRLS,—

Spring will soon be here with its lovely warm days and the singing of birds, the budding of the leaves, and the peeping out of the first little tiny flowers, pure and white as the driven snow, bright and cheerful as the smiling morning.

It is time now, before the first little beauty comes, that all of you will make up your minds to 'ramble, roam, and botanize' this summer, and learn something of our lovely Canadian Wild-flowers, make preparations to preserve them in all their beauty and grace of form, for 'A thing of beauty is a joy forever.'

For those who have never gathered or preserved our wild-flowers, a few directions may not come amiss.

You must know that to preserve wild-flowers it is necessary to take them up by the roots with an old kitchen knife, carrying them home in a tin can made specially for the purpose, called a Botanizing Can.

Our cans cost 50c. each. They are eighteen inches long, with oval ends seven inches by five, with a common pail-handle on the top, and a large door made in the side. This door opens in the top, and is fourteen inches long by five wide.

Into this you carefully put the specimens that you collect during your tramp.

At home, in a spare corner of your room, where the plants are to be pressed, have all the old newspapers you can get. Cut them twelve inches by eighteen. Each plant must have half a dozen of these papers, so that their moisture will be absorbed by the dry paper. Arrange them carefully, spreading out the leaves and flowers gracefully, and put half a dozen sheets between each flower.

Where the flowers are small, several may be put on the one sheet, but never have one leaf touching another if it can be helped. When the flower stem is longer than the paper bend it up.

After you have them all covered, then place a board the same size, or a little larger, and a heavy weight—a big stone—on the top. They need not be changed until the next or second day, when fresh papers must be used and the others spread out to dry.