

weary traveller when beholding those flowers; and to the station agent and his family, in many an out of the way place, in tending and caring for them. If the C.P.R. is alive to the necessity of those things, surely we, the teachers of this province, should not be left behind. What an opportunity there is to give such a training by raising flowers in connection with our schools! Perhaps the most valuable lesson that has been given in this city in this connection was that given last fall by His Excellency, Earl Grey, when he had some hundreds of the school boys take part in the planting of bulbs at Rockcliffe. The animal nature is evident in us all; let us check it by cultivating the emotional and æsthetic side. For this purpose nature study has the same claim on our curriculum as art, music, or even good literature.

While the educational value of the subject is pretty freely admitted there are some imaginary objections to its universal adoption. The chief of these is the lack of time; it is quite true that teachers are, as a rule, pretty busy. So far, however, as our urban schools are concerned I need scarcely remind you that overteaching is one of our greatest weaknesses. Too much is done by the teacher and too little self-effort or self-investigation is demanded from the pupil. I am old-fashioned enough to champion the three R's. These, in my opinion, must continue to form the basis of our school work. Is it not possible, however, that we are spending too much time in grinding them and that equally good results might be obtained in a shorter period? I have every faith too in giving our boys and girls a taste for the right kind of reading; and the teacher, who is succeeding in doing this, is doing a work of the highest educational value. I am well aware that some of the advocates of nature study are apt to speak slightly of books and to maintain that our pupils must become original investigators. While it is important that we, as teachers, should encourage, as far as lies in our power, the spirit of self-discovery, the great majority of mankind must ever depend upon books for the bulk of their knowledge. There is, however, no quarrel between nature study and the three R's. Those teachers who fly in the face of nature study in defence of the three R's are not always the ones who are doing the best work in the latter; as a rule, the teacher who does the three R's best will also do nature study best and will find time to do it. Let me repeat, nature study, if properly taken up, will prove an assistance to the rest of the schoolwork; and the three-quarters of an hour or hour devoted to it each week will prove a delightful recreation from the ordinary school grind. I am satisfied too that many of the lessons we give in nature study