

NATURE STUDY—No. XIII.

NATURE STUDY IN THE WINNIPEG SCHOOLS.

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For some years there have appeared on the Programme of Studies for Manitoba a number of suggestions as to subjects which might be classed as Nature Study. Such was Agriculture, which took the forms of a small box of chemicals and of colored plates of some common Manitoban flowers and weeds. These had a definite value; but the teachers did not know exactly what was required of them, and too often the experiments in agricultural chemistry were allowed to degenerate into an hour's amusement; and the colored plates were put away in a drawer, or were used to decorate the school walls. It is safe to say that Nature Study as we know it to-day, had then no place in the work of the schools. In a few cases, a teacher, herself enthusiastic, would arouse the enthusiasm of her pupils about Nature; but, even then, it was usually done with little thought of the curriculum. The trouble was, the work was too indefinite; and it remained for the committee which completed its labors last year, to place on the Programme of Studies a series of definite topics which covered the whole range of the subject as understood by its most advanced advocates.

Even then, the troubles had by no means all disappeared. The teachers were frightened of the work. Arithmetic, history, etc., they could teach; but this new work, which they were not to *teach* was, even with its assigned topics, something altogether different.

The Winnipeg School Board realized this, and appointed a supervisor of Nature Study for one year. In that time, they considered the subject should be on a firm basis and the teachers all able to continue the work without further supervision.

The plan was inaugurated last September, and a valuable fortnight was taken up in finding what had already been done in the schools and what material was within reach. Programmes were drawn up, meetings of teachers held and the topics and purposes of the work explained. The main purposes kept in view