

and friends, the members of the school board, and the local clergymen take seats on the platform or in other parts of the room.

The teacher then directs the children's thoughts to the trees they have brought. He does not tell them much, but leads them to discover many things they had not noticed before. They will learn that the leaves of the evergreens really fall off, since dead ones are found in large numbers in the baskets containing earth and moss gathered beneath them. They will explain why, notwithstanding, they are always green. They will find that there is a layer of leaf-mould under the dried leaves of the deciduous trees, and that this rich mould is produced by the decay of these leaves, and that the evergreens do not enrich the soil in this way to nearly the same extent. They will notice that the evergreens generally bear cones, but that all our cone-bearers trees are not evergreen—the larch or tamarack being the exception. They will find both staminate and pistillate flowers upon the branches of the tamarack, and will conclude that the cones are ripened clusters of pistillate flowers, from which seeds may be obtained in autumn for planting. They will learn to distinguish the species of cone-bearing trees by their foliage and cones, and will place them all in the pine family.

In order that the foregoing exercise may not be prolonged to the point of weariness, the examination of the deciduous trees is postponed.

Next a few appropriate recitations and songs are given by the pupils, and a short address by one of the trustees or by a gentleman designated by them.

It is now two o'clock. The boys repair to the school grounds, where, under the direction of the teacher, assisted if necessary by some resident who has been a successful tree-planter, they carefully set out the young trees they have selected.

The girls, meanwhile, put the school-room in order and adorn the windows with potted plants brought from their homes or presented by friends. The leaf mould which they brought from the woods is laid away to dry that it may be mixed with sifted garden soil for re-potting the plants when necessary.

The clock has struck four, so all gather in the school room, sing a song of spring, another of friendship, and close with the National Anthem.

A perfect system of public education seeks to make a good citizen, an intelligent and right-minded man, and takes into account the whole of his prospects and faculties, and his opportunities in the world, and therefore needs the co-ordination of intellectual and manual effort.

NATURE LESSONS.



THE AMERICAN ROBIN.

"Welcome little robin
With the scarlet breast;
In this winter weather
Cold must be your nest."

S. "But our robin has not a scarlet breast. It is more chestnut or reddish orange."

T. "Correct. The robin of your reader is the English robin, which is a smaller bird, and belongs to a different subdivision of the singing birds. The 'red-breasted thrush' is the common reddish breasted bird coming about our fields and houses in spring, so that it is not very strange the people from the old country should name it after their own very interesting bird which it recalled to their minds."

S. "Then the poetry in our books is about another robin altogether."

T. "Yes; but then we have a bird about which poetry may be written. It is a new subject, and poets are always looking for new subjects; therefore there is a new chance for any of you who are poets. Not exactly a new subject after all, for Lowell alludes to

"The sobered robin hunger-silent now,
Seeks cedar-berries blue, his autumn cheer."

S. "But how shall we know that it is a thrush?"

T. "First, you know from its general appearance that it belongs to that great order of the *passeres*, sparrow-like birds, or perchers as they are sometimes called. Second, the tarsus or 'leg' is flattened to something like a knife edge behind; therefore it is not one of the 'fly-catchers.' Third, it has evidently ten primaries, that is strong wing-quills in the first joint of the wing, although the first one is very often not half the length of the second; therefore it does not belong to the sparrow group of families. Fourth, its tarsus is 'booted,' that is, covered with one continuous plate instead of a number of small scales, and it has little bristles near the angle of its mouth called 'rectal' bristles; it may therefore be an 'old warbler' or a 'thrush.' Fifth, it is of a moderate size, having a wing of more than three inches in length, and its young are spotted, therefore it must be a thrush."