

are brightened to a wonderful degree and the individual becomes more alert, self-reliant, and useful. Nature study, to be successful and take its most useful place in education must deal with the beginnings of things. It imparts an elementary knowledge of all the commonest things about us, which, from their very commonness, are of importance to us, because they touch us so frequently and enter so much into our everyday lives. Nature study is particularly suitable for training the young—even the lowest grades of scholars—whose senses are always keen to observe anything new or strange, and whose minds are always in a receptive state; but, also, it equally commends itself to the observant and thoughtful student whatever his age may be. It is essentially kindergarten work, and kindergarten work is essentially nature study.

The scope of nature study, as stated, should as much as possible be confined to the simple elements of knowledge. It is simply a means to an end. Its object is not to teach any branch of natural science, but to train the mind to acquire knowledge in any direction to which it may be specially directed. It should not be taught by the teacher to the scholar, but studied by the teacher with the scholar—the teacher merely using his superior knowledge and experience in directing and encouraging the scholars to strive to learn for themselves something about all things which come before them. In this way they will become self-dependent, and will not trust blindly to what is told them or what they find in books, but they will examine, consider, and confirm everything for themselves.

Wrong ideas about many things in nature are very widespread, and there is an inexplicable lack of knowledge on the part of a large proportion of the community with regard to many things concerning which some easily obtainable information would be of great benefit to them. All the foolish things, and nearly all the wicked things done in the world, are due to people not knowing many simple things which they ought to know. There is, perhaps, no such widespread and unnecessary cause of unhappiness or actual misery as the fear of being in the dark, which is felt by so many children, and even by many grown-up people, and, yet, if one will only think the matter out carefully, he will have to acknowledge that it is an almost unheard-of thing in Canada for any injury to