

“18. Agricultural education, and perhaps that alone, seems likely to prove the salvation of the South, and especially of the negro, who above all else needs to be given self-respect, and a higher code of morality through self-support.

“19. Practical ethics are best insured by making every citizen, at least potentially, a producer. For example, a small, well-managed farm school has proved more successful than any other means for reforming boys with criminal tendencies.

“20. The study of agriculture has its important artistic side: the problems of the farm and of farming demand as true and as artistic expression of well-ordered thought as do the ‘arts and crafts,’ whose artistic value we have recognised ever since the work of Morris.

“21. All these effects must bring a changed social status in their train. We have good reason to believe that one of the most important among them will be a lessening of the influx into the cities from the country, if not a setting of the tide in the other direction. This beneficial change is already under way in France and Belgium, and it is believed that giving the people an agricultural education has had its part in bringing this about.

“22. An agricultural education, better than any other, makes men, enables one always to fall on his feet, fills him with a lasting confidence that in any stress of circumstances he can obtain a comfortable livelihood from the earth.

“Finally, our rural communities need, and have a right to demand, a good, practical, and scientific education in agriculture. This must come largely through the secondary schools, since our agricultural colleges have assumed the important task of training agricultural experts. Nature-study should be taught in conjunction with gardening in every school, and agriculture should form a part of the curriculum of at least every rural primary school.”

Speaking generally, it may be said that, in spite of not a few difficulties, hindrances, and disabilities, most of them unavoidable, matters relating to manual instruction are progressing satisfactorily in the several education districts. Experience is showing what forms of manual instruction are best adapted to the requirements of elementary education, and how best to use them as instruments in the all-round education of the child. In conclusion, it may not be out of place to quote here some remarks made by Sir Philip Magnus, President of the Educational Science Section of the British Association, in his presidential address last year. Speaking on the errors into which civilised countries have drifted in elementary education and how to correct them, he says,—

“If we are to avert the consequences that must overtake us through having equipped our children for their life struggle with implements unfitted for their use, we must consider afresh the fundamental ideas on which a system of elementary education should be based. Instead of excluding the child from contact with the outer world, we must bring him into close relationship with his surroundings. It was given to man to have dominion over all created things, but he must first know them. It is in early years that such knowledge is most rapidly acquired, and it is in gaining it that the child’s intellectual activities are most surely quickened. It is unfortunate that we failed to realise this great function of elementary education when we first essayed to construct for ourselves a national system. The three Rs, and much more than that, are incidental parts of elementary education. But what is needed is a *leitmotif*—a fundamental idea underlying all our efforts, and dominating all our practice, and I venture to think that idea is found in basing our primary education on practical pursuits, on the knowledge gained from actual things, whether in the field, the workshop, or the home. Instead of fetching our ideas as to the training to be given in the people’s schools from that provided in our old grammar schools, we should look to the occupations in which the great mass of the population of all countries are necessarily engaged, and endeavour to construct therefrom a system with all such additions and improvements as may be needed to adapt it to the varied requirements of modern life. By this process—one of simple evolution adjusted to every-day needs—a national system of education might be built up fitted for the nation as a whole—a system founded on ideas very different from those which, through many centuries, have governed the teaching in our schools. In the practical pursuits connected with the field, the workshop, and the home, and in the elementary science and letters incidental thereto, we might lay the foundation of a rational system of primary education. These three objects—the field, the workshop, and the home—should be the pivots on which the scheme of instruction should be fixed, the central thoughts determining the character of the teaching to be given in rural and urban schools for boys and girls. The problem of primary education is to teach by practical methods the elements of letters and of science, the art of accurate expression, the ability to think and to control the will; and the ordinary school lessons should be such as lead to the clear apprehension of the processes that bring the child into intimate relations with the world in which he moves.”

The attached circular relating to local nature-observations, issued by the Superintendent of Education, Nova Scotia, is appended for the information of teachers and others interested in nature-study.

“FORM EMPLOYED IN THE PROVINCE OF NOVA SCOTIA FOR THE RECORD OF NATURE-OBSERVATIONS BY SCHOOL-CHILDREN.

“[To be handed promptly on its receipt by the Secretary of every School Board to each teacher employed within the school section.]

“Local ‘Nature’ Observations.

“This sheet is provided for the purpose of aiding teachers to interest their pupils in observing the times of the regular procession of natural phenomena each season. First, it may help the teacher in doing some of the ‘nature’ lesson work of the course of study; secondly, it may aid in procuring valuable information for the locality and province. Two copies are provided