

and thus the world is filled with ignorance, poverty and crime.

The first important question for philanthropists to solve is how to be brave and honest themselves. Then if they are equal to the task, the next thing is to introduce into the world what they think is the best substitute for the old idea of fear, and fear not to push their ideas to the front.

True Secularists believe in freedom of thought, in right living, in science, in everything that makes men and women better and happier here and now. We call this the religion of Humanity, and we hope that we can become brave enough and honest enough in our generation to push these ideas a long way toward the front before the event that must happen in common to all the creatures of earth comes to us. Yes, Secularists, let us try to be brave and honest ourselves, and while we yet have strength, let us throw our mental arms around all the dear children of earth we can reach and help them to fear not the threats of popes, priests and preachers, the loss of reward nor the scoffs and ostracisms of society, but to trust in the higher powers — love, judgment and reason.

#### Nature Studies.

Nature! great parent! whose unceasing hand  
Rolls round the seasons of the changeable year,  
How mighty, how majestic are thy works!

—THOMSON.

Mrs. Minnie Preston, our kindergarten teacher, read the following excellent paper on "Nature Studies" at a teachers' meeting in Chippewa Falls, Wis.:

When I was assigned this topic I think I had about the same feeling that the pupils have when we give them a lesson to learn that is beyond their comprehension, and I fear you will feel like the teacher does when she hears such a lesson recited. . . . I have not thought much about the upper grade work, although I fully realize, as do all the first grade teachers, that my work must be the foundation upon which all the higher work is builded.

There is nothing the children love to talk about or listen to as well as subjects from nature.

The three great objects in nature study are: interesting the children, inspiring them with a love of nature, and telling clearly and truthfully what they have learned. Charles Scott gives us one more object: To lead the pupils to see the higher side of nature, and to think the thoughts of nature.

If we lead them to see the beautiful in the most common things about them, in water, sky, in field and forest, will not the beautiful in their nature be developed?

There is one thing we must guard against in this work, that is we must not tell the pupils too much.

We are in such a hurry for them to know, that we are apt to forget that we are only to lead the child to Dame Nature and leave him there. We must not deprive them of the joy of discovery there by weakening the force of the lessons.

Some one has said nature is a great mutual co-operation society, each part with its work to do. Everywhere are lessons of mutual dependence and mutual helpfulness.

But what have we taught? What shall we teach? and how shall we teach it? are the questions that are confronting us.

First we must remember that it is of great importance that the child gain knowledge in the best way. That is, in the way that trains him to right habits of study and thought. Therefore the objects studied should be studied by the child himself.

George Brown, of the Oshkosh normal, says: "All natural objects studied during the first three years should be the basis of language lessons." This being the case the work must be talks about objects—little stories told and written, getting pupils to use correct language if it is but simple words and short sentences. They can read easy stories and commit to memory short selections.

I wish I knew just what the other teachers have done, but I do not so I'll try and tell what I have done.

During the fall term we gathered leaves, pressed and mounted them. Of these we made a book. Pupils were very anxious to bring all the different kinds of leaves. (Here Mrs. Preston exhibited a portfolio of pressed leaves, roots and flowers.) I did not go into detail and teach all the technical names. We examined each leaf, learned the common name, noticed the shape, found if it were a perfect leaf, looked at its veins, learned the name petiole, stipules, blade, mid-rib, base and apex.

The pupils wrote short stories about the leaves. I have two about the lilac leaf which I will read to you. The leaf is drawn in the upper left hand corner.

#### A LEAF.

I have drawn a little leaf. The leaf has a mid-rib and an apex and a base. This is a lilac leaf.

OTTO HANSON.

#### A LEAF.

This is a lilac leaf. This little leaf has a mid-rib through it. The leaves come off the tree in the winter, and in the summer the nice flowers come on the lilac bush. I like the flowers of the lilac bush. This little leaf has feather veins and it has a base and apex. The lilac leaf is an ovate leaf. It is a pretty little leaf too.

CLARA COYLE.

We talked about the seeds, roots, trunks, branches, and uses of the different trees and shrubs from which we had gathered the leaves.

We noted the different plants which we use for food. The child-

Continued on 6th page.

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