REAL VEGETABLES GROWN BY SCHOOL CHILDREN

IN actual numbers about 75, in noise fully 500, in enthusiasm a whole regiment of boys, armed with shovels, kitchen and garden variety, broom handles spiked with nails, rakes and pickaxes, started out at 2 o'clock last Wednesday from the Sutro school to attack the debris on the land that is to be their new nature study field. Each soldier pushed before him, or hauled behind him, or even carried in his arms, the vehicle designed for the dead enemy. From a large, coffin shaped affair on wheels, that once did duty on a newspaper route, down through wheelbarrows, much too large for the human horse attached, regulation coasters, soap boxes, nailed between sticks and carried like sedan chairs, every possible machine for holding tin cans, old paper, scraps of stoves, wire mattresses, and, as one small boy explained with most expressive gestures, dead cats, every convenience within blocks of Twelfth avenue and Clement was in use.

This tremendous display of energy was the result of a recent gift from the board of education to the Sutro school of a piece of land 150 by 240 feet, also an appropriation of $500 for fencing it and piping in the water. But before this can be done, the lot, which has been used as a dumping ground since the fire, must be cleaned, leveled and fertilized for planting. The park commissioners have offered to level, scrape and manure, but it rests with the children to clear away the rubbish. If enthusiasm is of any value, that lot will be the cleanest piece of earth in the city. Of course tidying up one's own back yard is work, very tiresome work, but getting off an hour from lessons in a school room, getting out into the country, for that is what it is almost like, with a soft, salty wind blowing in from the bay over the green, sweet hills, that is just fun. The girls thought so, too, and were quite ready to help, only when it came right down to the point, so few of them were able to get wagons, owing, no doubt, to the eagerness of brothers, that these few lost their courage.

This enthusiasm of the children of the Sutro school is not the usual excitement at something new, for they know perfectly well the work they are in for. Practical nature study, planting and growing vegetables and flowers have been going on here for three years. In the comparatively small back yard successive crops of lettuce, radishes, beets, potatoes, cauliflowers and spinach have been grown. If that has been done in a back yard, what will they not be able to do in a space that really is a space?

PUPILS OF SUTRO SCHOOL ON THEIR WAY TO THE GARDEN

The whole thing will be under the direction of Miss Karatar, who has always had charge of the gardening. Miss Karatar will have general supervision, instructing the teachers, who will have immediate charge of the classes. The lot will be sectioned off into class divisions, each child having a row about four feet long. Two periods a week will be given to the work, planting, watering, weeding, and then one proud day, harvesting the crops and carrying the produce home. The children have always had exclusive rights in their own products and many a dinner in the Richmond district has been partly composed of Sutro school vegetables.

The wonderful benefit of this work out of doors is so self-evident that it needs no commentary. If by any chance there are those who think this growing things is a fad, one of the new fangled fads unheard of in the good old days of reading, writing and arithmetic, let them take the car as quickly as possible to Twelfth avenue and Clement street and watch proceedings for an hour or so. Let them look at the bright eyes and the pink cheeks, the interest shown in the work and the pride in the results. If there is still a doubt ask any of the teachers if they would like to give it up. One and all are most emphatic in their approval, claiming for the system not only an actual knowledge of gardening and the bodily benefit gained from working with the soil out of doors, but a moral effect as well.

Give a child something to manage—that is, give him authority, responsibility, and whatever is honorable and manly in him responds instantly. No matter how careless and slipshod a boy may be by nature, when he can see with his own eyes how inferior his work is to some one else's that boy will soon begin to sit up and take notice. No boy or girl wants to have a weed grown bed and poor vegetables when the row next is weedless and promising a great crop. If you fail in your lessons, well, that kind of slip is unnoticed, but everybody, even your father and mother, if overcome by annoying curiosity, can take a walk along by the garden and see your row, the worst in the lot. Such a disgrace is not to be risked. Besides, it has been found, after long experience, that there is some hidden connection between character and manual work. Give the children something to do with their hands and discipline will be easier. Give them authority, within limits, and it is even easier. Give them exercise and fresh air, and it is easier yet. No wonder, then, that the open air garden is blessed by the school fortunate enough to have it, for it combines all three—work with the hands, responsibility and exercise in the open.

It is a great pity that all the schools in the city can not have the advantages of the Sutro school. But in time, perhaps, matters will be so arranged that even if all can not have 150x240 feet of real earth, each will have a space where the children can get "back to the soil," even if there is only a square foot apiece.

CLEARING THE LOT FOR PLANTING

SHORT STORIES FROM THE LIVES OF FAMOUS MEN

RALPH ALLESTREE

One day Ralph was out on Lake Superior. There had been a heavy storm and a haze still hung over the horizon. The boat was going 10 or 15 miles an hour. All of a sudden Ralph heard a loud scream from a woman forward. Without a moment's hesitation he jumped up, threw the stool he was sitting on overboard, ran to the stern of the boat and jumped head first into the foaming white trail of the boat. The next moment he rose not 20 feet away from the little boy who had fallen in. The latter was just going down for the second time when Ralph reached him. Holding the boy, Ralph got to the floating stool and held on. In five minutes they were both safe on board again—two lives saved by the boy's ability to think quickly and act bravely.

Israel Putnam

The following story illustrates the kind of courage that has made Israel Putnam known to every American boy and girl. It is an account of how he captured a wolf.

"Startled at the sight of fire, she gnashed her teeth and gave a sullen growl. As soon as he had made the necessary discovery, he kicked the rope as a signal for pulling him out. Those waiting outside, frightened at his danger, pulled him out so quickly that his clothes were torn, and he was badly scratched by the rocks. But he stayed above ground only long enough to adjust his clothes, light a torch and load his gun with nine buckshot. Then he descended a second time. When he drew nearer than before, the wolf, assuming a still more fierce appearance, howling, rolling her eyes, snapping her teeth, and dropping her head between her legs, was evidently ready to spring at him. At the critical moment he leveled and fired at her head. Stunned with the shock and suffocated with smoke, he was drawn out of the cave. But having refreshed himself, he went down again. Once more he came in sight of the wolf, who, appearing very passive, he applied the torch to her nose, and seeing she was dead, he took hold of her ears, and then kicking the rope, he and the wolf were dragged out together.

The Chevalier Bayard

When Bayard was only 13 he was presented to Charles, duke of Savoy, the ancestor of the present king of Italy. The king was pleased with the boy and made him one of his pages. He was in company with the duke when they met the king of France. This king liked him also and asked the duke to give Bayard to him, just as he would have asked for a dog or a parrot. The duke did so and the young fellow entered the service of one of the greatest princes of his time.

When he was only 16 a Lyonese gentleman gave a great tournament in honor of the king. The page, Bayard, was determined to be there, but he had no horse, no arms and no money to buy them. A boy friend of his advised him to go to his uncle. The uncle was good natured and sent the two boys to his own "furnisher," with a note that he should do whatever they asked. The boys did not spare. They spent 400 crowns each. But the money was well spent, for both of them made a great success, Bayard winning the approval and highest praise of the king himself.

Napoleon the First

Napoleon tells this story of himself:

I remember the mischance which befell me and the punishment I received. We had some fig trees in a vineyard; we used to climb them; we might meet with a fall and accidents; our mother forbade us to go near them without her knowledge. One day, however, when I was idle and at a loss for something to do, I took it into my head to long for some of those figs. They were ripe; no one saw me or could know anything of the matter. I made my escape, ran to the tree and gathered the whole. My appetite satisfied I was providing for the future by filling my pockets, when an unlucky vineyard keeper came in sight. I was half dead with fear and remained fixed on the branch of the tree. He wished to seize and take me to my mother. Despair made me eloquent. I told him of my distress and promised to keep away from the tree. He seemed satisfied. I congratulated myself and thought that no one would ever hear of it. But the next day some figs were wanted and I was sent to get them. There were none to be found. I had taken them all. The exposure followed.

Think Before You Act

Elizabeth her frock has torn,
And pricked her finger, too;
Why did she meddle with the thorn,
Until its use she knew?

Because Elizabeth will touch
Whate'er comes in her way;
I've seen her suffer quite as much
A dozen times a day.

Yet, though so oft she feels the pain,
The habit is so strong,
That all our caution is in vain
And seldom heeded long.

I should not wonder if at last
She met some dreadful fate;
And then, perhaps, regret the past,
When sorrow comes too late.

—Mary Elliot.