

ber 16th, at two o'clock. The chairman of the Reunion Committee was Miss Mary R. Davis, and the members of the Committee Miss Anna M. Hunter, Miss Ella Keith, Miss Emma Klauser, Miss Anna McDonough, Miss M. R. Lounsbury, Miss Edith Patterson and Miss Margaret Shannon.

The subject of the Chancellor's address was "What has this generation in America done for education by establishing schools after forms not here before known? And in comparison therewith, what has it done for education by strengthening the forms of instruction that already existed thirty years ago?"

After the beautiful violin solo, Commissioner Hurlbut, without whose presence no college gathering would now be quite complete, consented at the request of the President of the Association to speak a few words. His short speech was witty, as always.

After other short speeches the Alumnæ repaired to the new gymnasium on the topmost floor, where refreshments were served.

Among those on the platform were Mrs. Esther Hermann, Miss Katherine D. Blake, Mr. Wright, Principal of the High School, Commissioner Hurlbut, Dean Ashley and Prof. Russell, of the New York University Faculty of Law, and Prof. Aubert, of the Normal College Faculty.

Letters of regret were received from Mrs. Wm. A. Montgomery, President, and Mrs. F. J. Tanner, Secretary, of the New York State Federation of Women's Clubs; Mrs. Chas. Russell Lowell, Miss Emily James Smith, Dean of Barnard; Rev. Lyman Abbott, Prof. Nicholas Murray Butler, of Columbia University Faculty of Philosophy; Commissioner of Education Bannard, and ex-Commissioner Dewitt J. Seligman.

Nature's Seed-Sowing.

The procession of flowers has almost passed; only a few belated stragglers are left; an aster in the meadow, a stray golden-rod in the field or a courageous dandelion or clover here and there by the roadside. The witch hazel alone, the last flower of the year, shines in undiminished glory. A wayward plant, it seems, that all through the summer days stood sedate in its mantle of green, and now, when skies are gray and winds are chill, decks its leafless branches with hundreds of close-set, starry yellow blossoms. As we shall see later, too, its fruits are quite as eccentric as its flowers.

Because the day of the flowers is over you must not think that the book of nature is therefore closed. The pages may not be as

gorgeously illuminated, but the careful observer may read therein just as many wonderful and beautiful tales as when fields and woods were gay with blossoms. The flowers have gone, but their fruits and seeds are with us still. Make a collection of the commonest of these, and see how full of interest they are. After a walk through the autumn fields or swamps you will doubtless find that in addition to the fruits you knowingly collected, your skirts will show another, a motley collection of kinds that you did not notice at all.

You will be more than likely to find the rather vicious-looking little black pitchforks, known as beggar's ticks or Spanish needles (*Bidens*). Of course there are several species, varying in the number of prongs to the fork. Interspersed with the beggar's ticks will probably be some of the persistent and ubiquitous Burdock. If, however, you find your skirt artistically decorated in arabesque patterns with little flat, rounded or triangular bits of green, either separate or five or six in a row, you may feel sure you have gone through a patch of some species of tick trefoil (*Desmodium*). On examination you will find that each section has its own single seed. Or you may find tiny green twin fruits bristling with barbs, that to a botanist are circumstantial evidence of a visit to one of the small cleavers or bedstraw (*Galiums*). These are only the most common of these "stick tights," and do not by any means exhaust the list. As you are removing these unsought additions to your collection you may find food for meditation in the thought that nature has only pressed you into service to help her with her fall planting. Is it any wonder that these plants are so common, when their fruits are so beautifully adapted to being transported by every passer-by? Examine these barbs and retrorse hairs minutely and you will see that they are all "warranted to stick."

This plan by no means exhausts Nature's resources, however, High up in the trees—pitchforks would be of no use—but wings would! So we find that many of our commonest trees have either their fruits or their seeds equipped in this way. The twin "keys" of the Maple and the paddle-shaped fruit of the Ash flutter far and wide, and nurseries of young ashes and maples are promptly started in all directions. The elm and the *Ailanthus* are furnished with wings, too, and the linden has a curious leaflike scale attached to the stem of the flower cluster that serves the same purpose. In the pines, the seeds only are winged.

You will find that many plants have their fruits or seeds surmounted by tiny parasols, or diminutive feather dusters, that catch the wind and are carried off for miles. I remember one

fall that a tiny white fluff was quite noticeable in certain parts of the city. On examination it proved to be the minute fruit of a composite then common in the Jersey meadows. A strong west wind had sowed the city with these tiny parachutes. Many of the plants belonging to the great order Compositæ (the sunflower family) are equipped in this way—as the thistle, dandelion, golden-rod, asters. Sometimes these fairy brushes are tawny as in the ironweed (*Vernonia*), and in the hawkweeds (*Hieracium*), or are white and silvery, as in the fireweed (*Erechtites*), or the groundsel tree (*Baccharis*).

The composites have no exclusive rights in this contrivance, however, for the seeds of the milkweeds have as dainty a tuft of silk as could well be imagined. They are all packed away in such beautiful rows, too, within the horned pod. Some of the grass seeds also float away on feathery wings, as does the Clematis with its beautiful waving plume.

I can only suggest the fruits in which a hard shell protects the sweet seed or kernel, and those in which a hard, indigestible seed is inclosed in a brightly colored, fleshy pulp. This is the bait that tempts the birds and makes them most efficient helpers in the line of seed sowing.

Some plants—perhaps those endowed with an unusual amount of independence—actually shoot their own seeds to a distance, instead of depending on outside agencies. Go through a patch of touch-me-not, or jewelweed (*Impatiens*) in fruit, and see how the seeds shoot out in every direction. Touch a fruit and watch the sudden upcurling of the elastic pod that throws the seed. The garden balsam, or so-called "Lady's Slipper," does the same thing. The witch-hazel capsules, though, spoken of above, are the best marksmen. By the sudden contraction of the inner coat the seeds are shot out as straight as if from a gun, and to great distances. Some I had in my room, the other day, sent the seed a distance of eighteen feet or more, but Mr. Gibson says he has known them to go forty feet.

You will see that fruits and seeds have a great deal to tell us in regard to even this one point of distribution—and that I have briefly touched upon. In addition the variety and beauty of shape to be found among fruits seems inexhaustible, and the arrangement of the seeds is often most interesting. Take some of the commonest garden flowers, for instance, the seeds of the Portulaca glisten like cut steel, and are packed away in the daintiest little box with cover and all complete. The hollyhock fruits are little "cheeses," and the seeds are the slices already cut that fall off at the appointed time, while the poppy seeds live in a dear little

house with sculptured roof, overhanging eaves, and a row of tiny upper windows.

All these fruits I have mentioned are so common that each child in the class room could easily be furnished with one. I have no doubt but that a wide-awake class would discern all sorts of wonderful things in a collection of our common weeds. Will you not give them a chance to try?

A. R. NORTHROP.

New York State Federation of Women's Clubs.

Dr. M. Augusta Requa, President, New York.

Dear Madam—Among the many good things planned for the third annual congress of the New York State Federation, to be held at Syracuse, November 10th, 11th and 12th, is a club exhibit.

Will the Alumnæ Association of the Normal College of New York kindly loan such of its belongings as seem particularly illustrative of its work and progress? Pictures of club houses and rooms, officers and members, insignia, banners, calendars, year books, copies of the Alumnæ News, or other printed matter will be gratefully received, carefully protected and returned in good condition by the Social Art Club of Syracuse, under whose auspices the exhibit will be held.

The President of the State Federation particularly requests that each club donate as many copies as can be spared of its last program or year book, for distribution among sister clubs.

Hoping that I may have the pleasure of welcoming you to Syracuse in November, and begging for a favorable reply at your earliest convenience, I am

Very cordially yours,

LOUISE VAN LOON LYNCH,
Business Manager and Director General of Congress.

The House by the Side of the Road.

"He was a friend to man and lived in a house by the side of the road."—HOMER.

There are hermit souls that live withdrawn
In the place of their self content;
There are souls, like stars, that dwell apart,
In a fellowless firmament;
There are pioneer souls that blaze their paths
Where highways never ran—
But let me live by the side of the road
And be a friend to man.