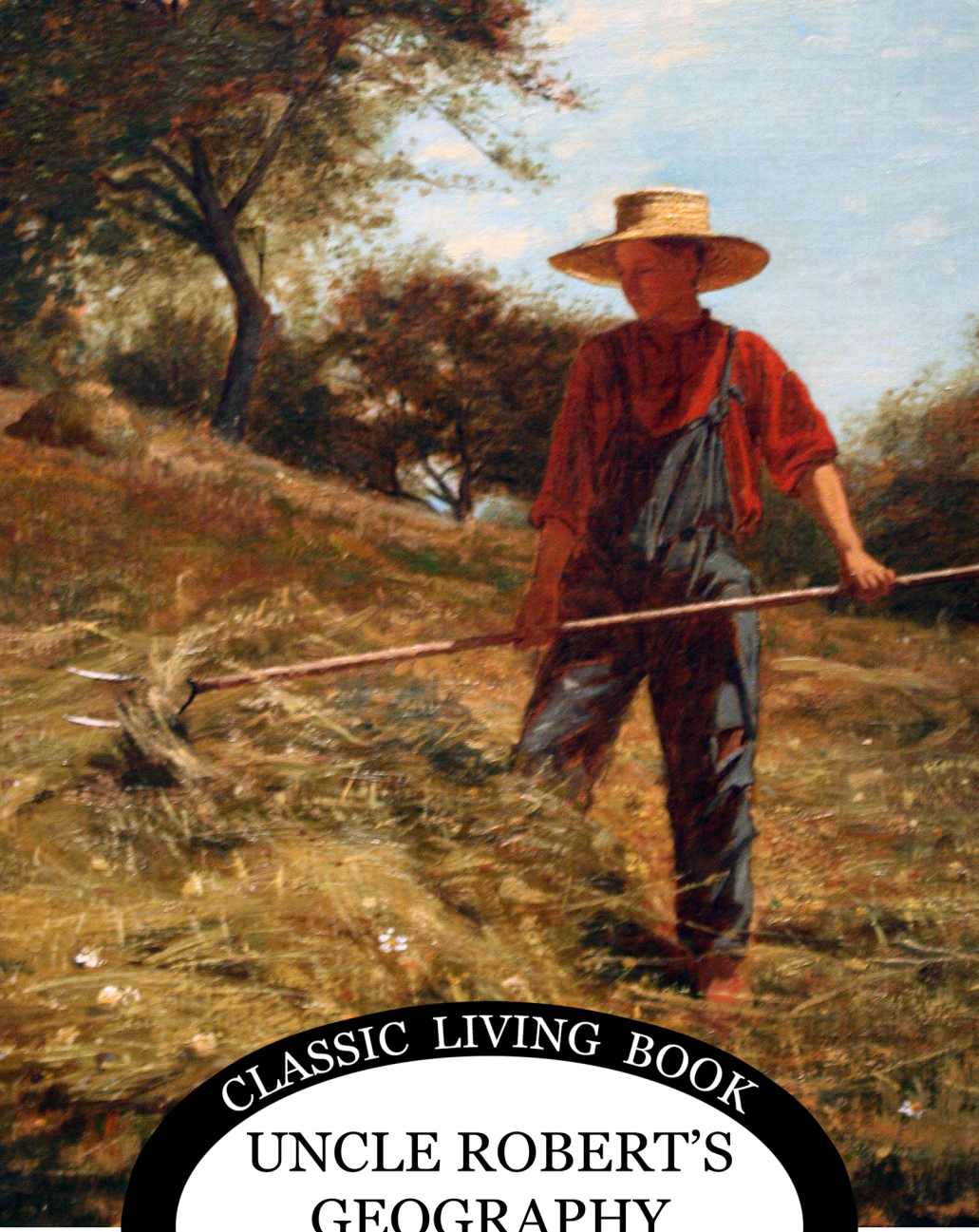

CLASSIC LIVING BOOK

UNCLE ROBERT'S GEOGRAPHY

Francis W. Parker

COMPLETE AND UNABRIDGED

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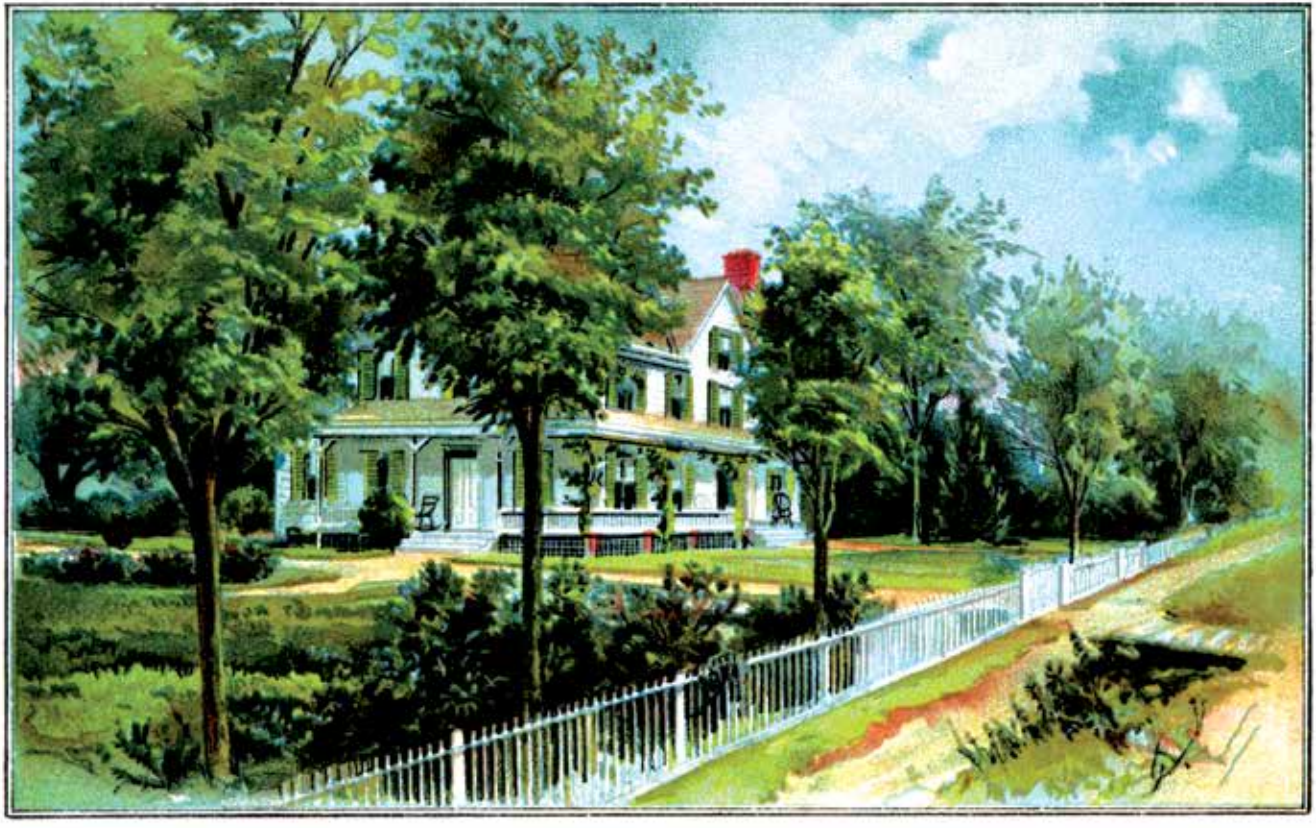


THE FARMHOUSE.

Contents

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

Fortunate are the children whose early years are spent in the country in close contact with the boundless riches which Nature bestows.

Amid these environments instinct and spontaneity do a marvelous work in the growing minds of children, arousing and sustaining varied and various interests, enhancing mental activities, and furnishing an educative outlet for lively energies.

Most fortunate are they to whom, at the moment when the unconscious teachings of Nature need to be supplemented by thoughtful suggestion, wise leadings, and judicious instruction, there comes one with a deep and loving sympathy with child life, an active interest in all that interests them, and a profound respect for all that children do well and for all that they know.

Such an one is Uncle Robert. He comes to the children at just the right moment. He directs the sweet strong streams of their lives onward into a channel of earnest inquiry and exalted labor, which is ever broadening and deepening.

Uncle Robert's aim in education is to fill each day with acts which make home better, the community better, mankind better; to take from God's bounteous and boundless store of truth and convert it into human life by using it. His method is simple and direct, founded upon the firm rock, Common Sense. It may be briefly stated as follows:

1. A strong belief in the sacredness of work—that work which inspires thought, strengthens the body as well as the mind, and develops the feeling of usefulness.

2. The images the children have acquired and the inferences they have made are used as stepping stones to higher and broader views.

3. So far as it is possible, each child is to discover facts for himself and make original inferences.

4. He understands the limits of children's power to observe and the demand on their part for glimpses into, to them, the great unknown. So he tells them stories of those things which lie beyond

their horizon, in order to excite their wonder, intensify their love for the objects that surround them, and make them more careful observers. In this way a hunger and thirst for books is created.

5. He watches carefully the interests of each child, adapting his teachings to the differences in age and personality.

6. Some questions are left unanswered in order to stimulate that healthy curiosity which can be satisfied only by persistent study—the study that begets courage and confidence.

7. He makes farm work and farm life full of intensely interesting problems, ever keeping in mind that the things of which the common environments of common lives are made up are as well worthy of study as are those which lie beyond.

Uncle Robert's enthusiasm has for its prime impulse a boundless faith in human progress, brought about by a knowledge of childhood and its possibilities.

He believes that every normal child, under wise and loving guidance, may become useful to his fellows, moral in character, strong in intellect, with a body which is an efficient instrument of the soul; in other words, truly educated.

Those who read Uncle Robert's Visit should read through the eyes of Susie, Donald, and Frank. The reading, so far as possible, should be accompanied by personal observation, investigation, and experiment.

FRANCIS W. PARKER.
CHICAGO NORMAL SCHOOL,
August 31, 1897.

TOPICAL ANALYSIS OF UNCLE ROBERT'S VISIT.

NOTE.—The direct study of earth, air, and water involves the study of plant, animal, and human life. Popular opinion has given the name of geography to these correlated subjects.

CHAPTER I.—UNCLE ROBERT'S COMING.

The value of the children's knowledge of the farm is warmly recognized by Uncle Robert. The children feel his sympathy for their work, and through it are led to closer study and investigation. The feeling that everything they may see and do is of importance, exalts their daily life.

Encourage children to describe the farms on which they live. In such descriptions should come plant and animal life, and the means and processes of farm work. Extend these descriptions to other farms and to any landscapes which the children have observed.

CHAPTER II.—FRANK DRAWS A MAP OF THE FARM.

All children love to draw, and they will draw with great confidence and boldness unless their critical faculty outruns their skill. Modeling and painting may be very profitably introduced at an early age. Frank's efforts in drawing strengthened his images of the landscape.

Arithmetic has a very important place in farm life. It may be used in many ways in forming habits of accuracy and exactness.

CHAPTER III.—THE NEW THERMOMETER.

The children have their first lesson on the agent of all physical movement and change in organic and inorganic matter. The simple experiments suggested should be continued and enlarged, thus beginning a life study of a subject which is practically unlimited in its importance to man.

CHAPTER IV.—WITH THE ANIMALS.

Children look upon animals as their particular friends and acquaintances. They talk to them and believe that the animals understand them. A desire to know the habits and habitats of animals is among their strongest interests. By a little wise direction, this interest may be so enhanced as to form a substantial beginning of the study of zoology.

CHAPTER V.—IN THE FLOWER GARDEN.

Children worship flowers. Probably there are no objects on earth so universally loved by little folks as buds and flowers. Children seek eagerly for flowers by the roadside, in the pastures, fields, and woods. This love, like all instincts, should be carefully cultivated.

Children may easily be led to study the forms, colors, and habits of plants. They will always take the keenest interest in the mystery of seeds and shoots, of roots and growing leaves, *if there is a teacher to direct them*.

CHAPTER VI.—SUNLIGHT AND SHADOW.

We have heat again, and now as an elementary lesson in the distribution of sunshine. Children love to observe continual changes. The shadow is an object of interest. It has an element of mystery about it which borders upon the supernatural.

Children observe spontaneously the long shadows of morning and the lengthening shadows of the descending sun. Most farm boys can tell the moment of noon by their shadows.

These are all steps in the more difficult problems of lengthening and shortening shadows that mark the changing seasons, and that lead to the theories of the earth's rotation and revolution. Day by day children should note the changes of slant upon the shadow stick which they can easily make for themselves.

CHAPTER VII.—THE BAROMETER.

Our little friends have their first lesson concerning one of the three great envelopes of the earth—the atmosphere. The knowledge that air has weight does not often come by unaided intuition. The initial experiments may be made very interesting and profitable. The United States Weather Reports are an excellent means for the home study of geography.

CHAPTER VIII.—A WALK IN THE WOODS.

"There is pleasure in the pathless woods" and "The groves were God's first temples" are lines which appeal strongly to those who have spent hours in the shadows and flickering sunlight of the forest. Trees well arranged make many farmhouses beautiful. Trees by the roadside add much beauty to the landscape and afford places of rest to the traveler.

Forests mean moisture to the soil. Their leaves and roots make the best reservoirs for water, to be given out when needed by the growing crops. The forests are full of lessons for the children and the experienced scientist.

CHAPTER IX.—THE BIRDS AND THE FLOWERS.

The knowledge of a farm child is quite extensive, and generally neither the child nor the parent has any suspicion that such knowledge is of any appreciable value in education. It is clearly within the bounds of possibility for every farm boy and girl to know every bird that lives on the farm in summer or winter, and those who rest there in their migrating flight; to know also the names, the plumage, the habits of all the birds; and to know the nests and nesting places of those who make the farm their summer home.

All this study cultivates the child's sense of the beautiful. There is no better color study in the world than that which springs from discriminating love of flowers and of the plumage of birds. Such study creates a kindly feeling toward both animals and plants on the part of the child. It exercises a strong moral power over him.

CHAPTER X.—THE THUNDERSHOWER.

A thundershower is always a phenomenon of interest and often of fear on the part of children. The clouds of the cumulus form, the rolling of thunder, the lightning flashes, the rushing wind, and the pouring rain are full of important lessons. Fear vanishes as knowledge comes. In the thundershower is the question of the distribution of moisture over the earth's surface, the question of the nature and use of clouds, the movement of the air and wind, the condensation of vapor, and the marvelous powers of electricity.

CHAPTER XI.—THE VILLAGE.

Geography should ever be in the closest touch with the human side. Nature does a marvelous work, but Nature without society is like a vast storehouse of treasure without a demand for its use. The one weak point in farm life is the lack of opportunity for contact with society.

CHAPTER XII.—A DAY ON THE RIVER.

A river, creek, lake—in fact, any body of water—is a source of perpetual delight to children. Frank, Donald, and Susie have had the river and creek before them all their lives. Now, under Uncle Robert's teaching, the river will mean very much more to them. They take their first lessons in the work of streams in carving and shaping the earth's surface. The pebbles on the beach and the large, rounded stones will soon have stories of the distant past to tell them. The "Big Book" is opened to them, and they read the stories directly from its pages.

CHAPTER XIII.—A RAINY DAY.

The children get closer to the question of moisture, its use, and distribution. The rain gauge helps them to measure the rainfall. Then comes the problem of where the water goes after it reaches the ground. "How far down does some of it go?" "When and where does it come out of the ground?"

Arithmetic is brought in in measuring the rainfall and its distribution.

CHAPTER XIV.—THE WALK AFTER THE RAIN.

The problems in Chapter XIII move toward their solution, and new questions are opened. The gully tells of the wearing of the water, and foretells a river valley. The spring helps in the

question of underground water. The flowing river quickens the imagination in the direction of the great ocean.

CHAPTER XV.—THE BIG BOOK.

This chapter should be read by parents to the children, as many sentences need expansion and explanation. Hints are given of great things which lie beyond the child's horizon. Discoveries that have changed mankind are referred to.

Children's permanent interests are the keynotes of instruction and the infallible guides of the teacher. To continue and sustain their spontaneous observation and desire for investigation leads directly to the study of the best books, and lays the basis for a thorough and profound study of God's universe.

CHAPTER I.

UNCLE ROBERT'S COMING.

Uncle Robert was coming. His letter, telling when they should expect him, had been received a week before. Every day since had been full of talks and plans for his visit, and now the day was come. Everything was ready.

Frank and Donald had harnessed Nell, the old white horse, to the little spring wagon, and had driven to the village to meet the train which was to bring Uncle Robert from New York.

Susie, in her prettiest white apron, ran out of the house every few minutes, to be the first to see them when they should come along the road.

Mrs. Leonard was putting finishing touches here and there. She went into the kitchen to give Jane a last direction about the supper. Then she went to the east room upstairs, Uncle Robert's room, to be sure that everything was just as she knew he would like it.

Susie followed her mother, to see if the violets in the glass on his table were still bright and fresh. She had gathered them herself in the woods that morning.

"There they come!" she cried. "I hear the wagon crossing the bridge at the creek!"

She ran quickly downstairs and out upon the piazza. A moment more, and the wagon turned in at the gate.

"Mother, mother," called Susie, "they're here!"

But Mrs. Leonard was already beside her. Her pleasant face glowed with a happy smile as Frank drew rein before the door.

Then such a time!

Uncle Robert sprang from the seat beside Frank, hugged Mrs. Leonard, then Susie, then both together.

Donald, who was seated in the back of the wagon on Uncle Robert's trunk, turned a handspring, landed on his feet somehow or other, and stood grinning at Susie.

Mr. Leonard had also heard the sound of the wheels. He hurried from the barn, calling Peter to come and help him carry Uncle Robert's trunk upstairs.

Jane came to the door of the dining-room, eager to see the Uncle Robert of whom she had heard so much. Then, with a nod of her head, she ran back, slipped the pan of biscuits into the oven, and put the kettle on to boil.

Uncle Robert had come! Everybody was happy. No one more so than Uncle Robert himself.

"Now, this is good," he said, when at length they were seated around the supper table. "I feel at home already. Susie, did those violets on my table grow in your garden?"

"Oh, no," replied Susie. "I found them in the woods by the creek. And the buttercups, didn't you see them in the glass, too?"

VIOLETS.

"Buttercups so early?" asked Uncle Robert. "Oh, yes, the low ones do come early. You must take me down where they grow some day."

"We'll go to-morrow," said Susie.

Uncle Robert smiled at the eager little face, and, turning to Mr. Leonard, said:

"Frank tells me the farm is looking well this spring."

"Yes, it looks fairly well," replied Mr. Leonard. "The seed is all in but the corn. That is a little late. The water on the bottom land stayed longer than usual this year."

"Peter thinks we can start the planting to-morrow," said Frank.

"Yes," replied his father, "I think so, too."

When supper was over they all went out on the side porch. The sun was setting. The air was soft and spring-like. The lilacs along the fence filled the air with fragrance.

"Don't you want to see Susie's garden, Robert?" asked Mrs. Leonard,

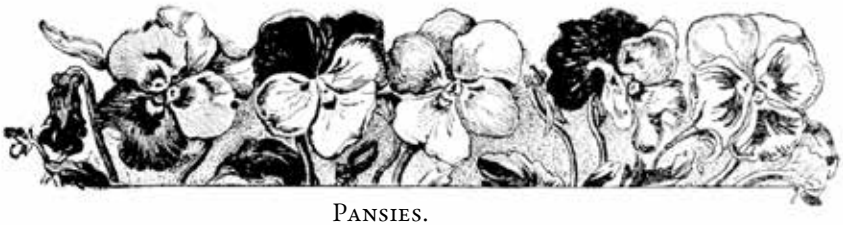
"Yes, indeed," said Uncle Robert. "Susie wrote me some nice little letters about that garden."

As they walked along the narrow paths Susie showed him where the seeds were already planted, and told him what she thought she would have in the other beds.

"This is phlox," said Susie, leading Uncle Robert by the hand; "and marigolds are here, and sweet peas over there by the fence. That place between mother's garden and mine is filled with rosebushes, syringas, and hollyhocks."

"I still call the vegetable garden mine, but the boys do most of the work," said Mrs. Leonard. "That big bush at the end of the row is an elder."

"This is to be my pansy bed," said Susie. "The pansies are



Pansies.

not set out yet. They are growing in a box in the kitchen window. I love them best of all. Don't they look like funny little faces in bonnets?"

"That is what the Germans think, Susie," said Uncle Robert, laughing. "They call them 'little stepmothers.'"

"I think it will be safe to put them out soon, Susie," said Mrs. Leonard.

"Mother," called Donald from the vegetable garden, "the lettuce and radishes are growing finely, and here's a bean. Oh, there are lots of them just putting their heads through!"

They all went over to look at the beans, and then walked down to the end of the garden where the currant and gooseberry bushes grew.

"Oh, uncle," exclaimed Susie, "I wish you had come in time to see the trees in blossom! They were all pink and white. It was just lovely! only the flowers stayed such a little while."

"I think Susie lived in the orchard those days," said Mrs. Leonard, smiling. "If I wanted her I was very sure to find her there."

Apple Blossoms.

"I don't blame Susie," said Uncle Robert. "I would have stayed, too. There is nothing sweeter than apple blossoms. But you have other fruits besides apples, haven't you?"

"Oh, yes," said Frank, who had just come from the barn, where he had gone after supper with his father. "There are pears and cherries and a few peach trees. But peaches don't do well here."

"The blossoms are lovely," said Susie.

"I believe Susie cares more for the flowers than she does for the fruit," said Donald. "I don't. I like the fruit, and plenty of it."

"How many kinds of apples have you?" asked Uncle Robert.

"About ten," replied Frank. "But father budded quite a number last year. The twigs came from Kansas."

"They have fine apples in Kansas some years," said Uncle Robert. "I wonder if the budding is done as it was when I was a boy on the farm in New England."

"This is the way father did it," said Frank. "First he cut a little piece of the bark off the twig with the bud on it. He had to do it very carefully with a sharp knife. Then he cut the bark on the branch of the tree like the letter T. He laid it back, and slipped the piece of bark with the bud on under it. Then he bound it all up with soft cotton, and left it to take care of itself."

Budding

"Did it?" asked Uncle Robert.

"Yes," answered Donald. "In a few weeks we took the binding off, and the bark had all grown together around the little bud."

"There were ever so many of them," said Susie, "and they were all alike."

"I wish they would hurry up and have

some apples on them," said Donald. "If they're better than some we had last year, they'll be pretty good.

"Come, children," said Mrs. Leonard. "It is getting damp. I think we'd better go in now."

CHAPTER II.

FRANK DRAWS A MAP OF THE FARM.

After the lamps were lighted and they were all gathered in the sitting-room Uncle Robert began asking the children about the farm.

"What do you raise besides corn?" he asked.

"Wheat, oats, rye, and potatoes," said Frank. "Then we have the hay fields and the pasture. The woods we drove through coming from town belong to us too."

"The house faces east, doesn't it?" said Uncle Robert. "That would make the woods north. Where are all these other fields?"

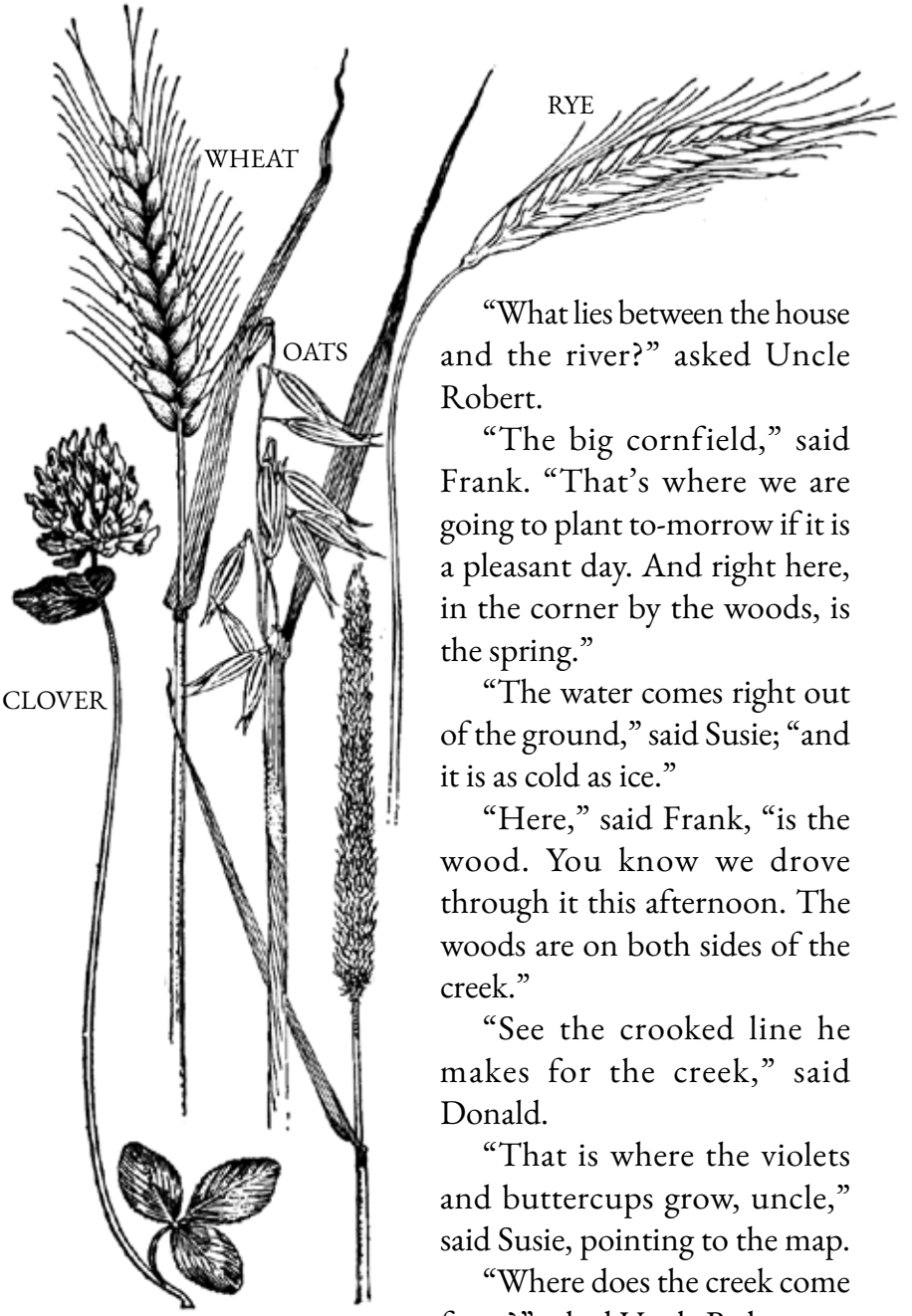
"Back of the barn and the other side of the orchard," said Donald.

"Can't some one show me on paper how it is?" asked Uncle Robert. "I don't mean make a picture, but just a plan of it."

"Well, I can try," said Frank. "I know just how it is really, but I don't know that I can get it right."

Frank found paper and pencil and set to work, while the rest gathered eagerly around and looked on.

"This is the river," he said. "There's a big curve in it along our farm. The road runs along the top of the slope, and this is where the house is."



"What lies between the house and the river?" asked Uncle Robert.

"The big cornfield," said Frank. "That's where we are going to plant to-morrow if it is a pleasant day. And right here, in the corner by the woods, is the spring."

"The water comes right out of the ground," said Susie; "and it is as cold as ice."

"Here," said Frank, "is the wood. You know we drove through it this afternoon. The woods are on both sides of the creek."

"See the crooked line he makes for the creek," said Donald.

"That is where the violets and buttercups grow, uncle," said Susie, pointing to the map.

"Where does the creek come from?" asked Uncle Robert.

"There's a pond away back

in the woods," said Donald. "It comes from that; but it is a swamp part of the year."

"The cat-tails grow there," said Susie.

"Well," said Uncle Robert, "the house, the cornfield, and the woods—is that all of the farm?"

"Oh, no!" said Frank. "It is low along the river, but back of the cornfield it gets higher, and that's where the grapes are. On this side of the road is the orchard; and here, between the orchard and the woods, come in the yard and garden."

"Don't leave out the barnyard," said Donald.

"What's back of the barn?" asked Uncle Robert.

"The field of timothy; and next to it is the clover field. That is as far as the farm goes that way."

"The wheat field is on the other side of the timothy, Frank," said Donald, "and the oats between that and the road, beside the orchard."

"Put in the potatoes along the road," said Susie.

"Now all we have left is the rye field over in the corner," said Donald.

"That is the way it is this year," said Mr. Leonard, who sat with his paper in his hand. But the paper was unread. He found the group around the table much more interesting.

"Now it is all done," said Susie, hopping about on one foot. "Isn't it fun? Let's draw the garden. I can do it."

"All right," said Uncle Robert, "you shall; but I think we'd better finish the farm first. Who can tell how many acres there are in each of these lots?"

"I know there are twenty in the timothy meadow," said Donald, "because father always calls it the twenty-acre lot."

"Write it down on the map, Frank," said Uncle Robert. "How much in the clover field?"

"It seems about half as large as the timothy meadow," said Frank.

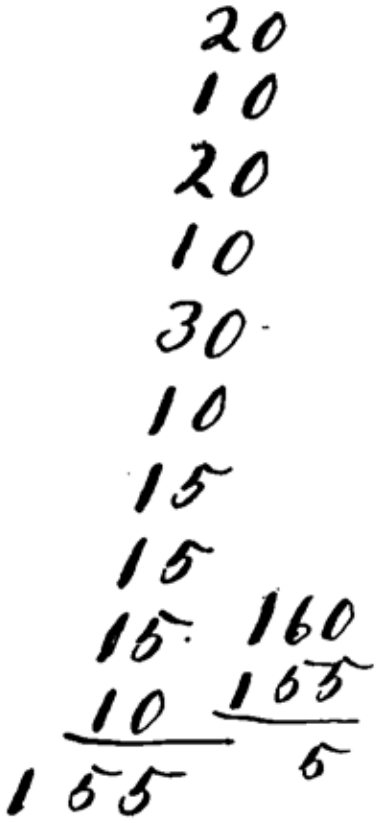
"That's right," said Mr. Leonard; "it is."

"There are twenty acres in the wood lot, aren't there, father?" asked Frank. "It isn't quite so wide, but it is longer than the timothy meadow."

"Yes," said Mr. Leonard, "there are twenty acres there; and it is as fine woodland as any I know."

"There are ten acres in the orchard," said Frank; "and the cornfield is the largest of all."

"That must be thirty acres," said Donald. "I remember when father made the pasture smaller, so that we could have more corn."



"Yes," said Frank; "and that left ten in the pasture. I remember. And there are fifteen acres each in oats, wheat, and rye; but I don't know how large the potato field is. It is smaller than the others, though—it must be about ten."

"Right again," said Mr. Leonard.

"Now we have it all but the yard and garden," said Uncle Robert. "Does any one know how much land they cover?"

The father and mother looked on smiling, but said nothing.

"It's all the rest of the farm, anyhow," said Susie.

"Oh, I know how to find out," said Frank. "We know the whole farm is one hundred and sixty acres. We can add all these figures, and the difference between that and one hundred and sixty will be what's in the yard and garden."

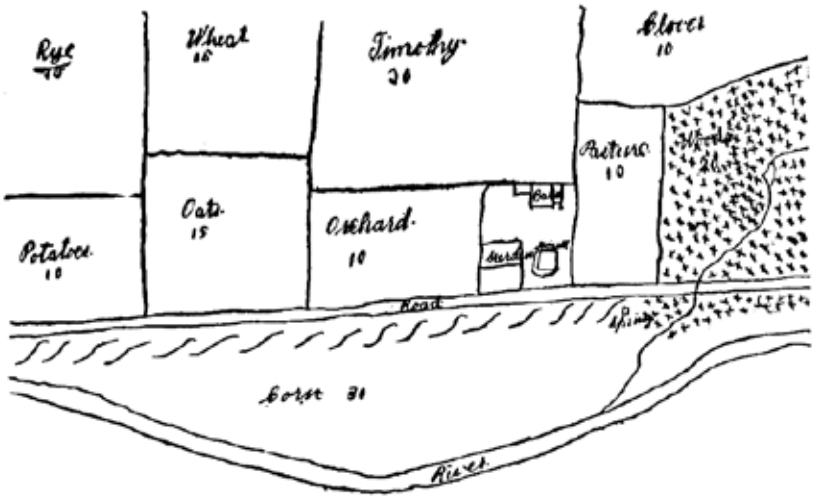
So he added all the numbers together and found them to be one hundred and fifty-five.

"Yes," exclaimed Donald; "and five more would make it one hundred and sixty."

"Then there must be five acres in the yard and garden." said Susie, "Write it down. Frank."

"There," said Frank, looking at his work with some pride. "It's all in. Now shall I draw it again and make the lines straighter?"

"Oh, no; this tells the story very well," said Uncle Robert. "The next time we will measure it off, and make it more carefully."



Map of the farm.