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W E E D S

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*Plate I*



**Invasion by Weeds**

This place was a potato-patch five years previously. It now supports a dense population of weeds, mostly native plants. Ox-eyes and Purple Loosetrife predominate, with Wild Angelica (in front on left), Field Thistle (behind on left), Sow-Thistle (in front of figure), Marsh Thistle (on right of figure) and other species. Photographed by R. Welch near Cavan, Ireland.

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# W E E D S

SIMPLE LESSONS FOR CHILDREN

BY

ROBERT LLOYD PRAEGER

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY

S. ROSAMOND PRAEGER AND R. J. WELCH

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## PREFACE

THE question of weeds, and how they can be kept in check, is one of the most important which has to be faced by the farmer or gardener. Agriculture is an eternal war against weeds, and by neglect of cleaning his land, the careless cultivator may lose one-fourth or in extreme cases even one-half of the yield which might be his. The preaching of the crusade against weeds cannot be begun too early. In order to fight weeds, we must know how they grow and how they spread; to these points particular attention is given in the following chapters.

Apart from their importance as agricultural pests, weeds are, as such, a fascinating study. The history of weeds is the history of agriculture. Ever since the peoples of the Stone Age first began to till the ground, weeds and crops have gone hand in hand; and man's migratory movements, his wars, and later on his trade, have all played their part in assisting the spread of his enemies the weeds.

Again, our weeds include many beautiful and interesting plants; this study is most instructive; the structure of flowers, the dispersal of seeds, the function of the different parts of plants, and indeed all the lessons of elementary botany, can be studied to full advantage among our common weeds. In the pages which follow I have attempted to make clear the great interest of weeds, and the romance which attaches to

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*Preface*

them, just as much as to set forth the serious injury which they inflict when they are not kept within bounds.

While these lessons will be found applicable to any portion of the British Isles, I have preferred to draw particular illustrations from the area with which I am most familiar; hence the frequent mention of Ireland in the following pages.

Within the limits of so small a book, it has not been possible to deal with the practical side of the question of weeds—their enumeration, description, the methods used or suggested for their extermination, and the principles of seed-testing—save by a few examples and suggestions; but the book is intended for the use of school children, not of farmers. For the latter, Long's excellent work<sup>1</sup> is available; and Pammel's treatise<sup>2</sup>, though dealing with American agriculture, is full of suggestion for the European cultivator.

To my friend Prof. James Wilson, M.A., my thanks are due for some useful suggestions.

R. LL. P.

DUBLIN,  
*August, 1913.*

<sup>1</sup> HAROLD C. LONG: *Common Weeds of the Farm and Garden*. 8vo. London: Smith, Elder & Co. 1910. Price 6/-.

<sup>2</sup> L. H. PAMMEL: *Weeds of the Farm and Garden*. 8vo. New York and London (Kegan Paul). 1911. Price 7/6.

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