

English.

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SPRING LESSONS.

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The joyous spring is come again; the moth flutters its feeble wings, and leaves its deserted winter home, the catkins hang their grey, yellow, and red fringes forth to the breeze, and happy children bring in the treasures of the woodland to adorn their teacher's desk. Every schoolroom window-sill, we hope, is like our own, full of boxes and pots of plants and seeds, and every school blackboard is blooming with trillium, hepatica, marsh-marigold, and trailing arbutus. On our wall hangs a large-leaved calendar, on which are the records of observations of weather, birds, insects, and plants, made by the children since the first of March; the observations, which, by the way, are very numerous on Saturdays and Sundays, are written around the dates on which the observation was made, as, "First robin seen by J.H.," written on March 10th. We have kept our eyes upon the budding trees, and have noticed that the "chestnut buds are sticky," and further on have seen the bud-wrappings unclose and the taper fingers of the leaf peep out of its winter glove, so softly lined. To-day we have the branches "that just begin to feather with their leaves," this time next week the chestnut will have all its tassels hanging greenly in at our windows. What grander lesson can we teach our pupils than the charming story of spring's renewals, so like the mystery of life after death? What care has been taken, ever since the last withered leaf fell from the tree, that there should be the myriad leaves of to-day ready to greet the May-day! No fairy tale can interest and charm like this story of the awakening of the flowers. And what a power we give our pupils, when we lead them into enjoying the everyday beauties of the world! What Jean Ingelow says in her poem, "Dominion," they may realize:

"When found the rose delight in her fair hue?
Color is nothing to this world; 'tis I
That see it.

..... I will step
On the ledges of this world, for it is mine;
Consider it,

(This outer world we tread on,) as a harp—
A gracious instrument on whose fair strings
We learn those airs we shall be set to play
When mortals hours are ended. Set the wings,
Man, of thy spirit, move on it as wind
And draw forth melody."

"I take the land to my breast,
In her coat with daisies fine;
For me are the hills in their best,
And all that's made is mine."

"I grant to the wise his meed,
But his yoke I will not brook,
For God taught me to read—
He lent me the world for a book."

To this end, the wise teacher will use the material so lavishly brought to her these spring days, and teach the children lessons whose value they can have no estimate of. Besides the botany, simple as given in the Reader, "The Flower" being the lesson taken, a search may be instituted for references to springtime and its beauties. The Readers having been searched, other books of poetry may be examined. Tennyson, Longfellow, Moore, Burns, and any others convenient to get may be searched, the children writing out or memorizing the extracts they find. It is wonderful how interest is shown in such a search, by the parents as well as the children.

Wordsworth gives us some rare flower notes, truthful to nature, as, for example, this little gem:

"I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

"Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay;
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in stately dance.

"The waves beside them danced; but they
Outdid the sparkling waves in glee;
A poet could not but be gay
In such a jocund company;
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought.

"For oft, when on my couch I lie,
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils."

Longfellow is especially attentive to the growing flowers, noting them with true poet's eyes and tongue. His "Birds of Killingworth" makes a fine reading for an Arbor Day celebration, also "Flowers," "An April Day," and "It is not Always May," while "Hiawatha" and "Evangeline" are full of rich nature-touches. Nothing can surpass "The May Queen" for the beauty of its references to flowers. There are many gems of Tennyson's that are quite within the range of young children. There is a child-song, "The City Child," which would be sure to please:

"Dainty little maiden, whither would you wander?
Whither from this pretty home, the home where
mother dwells?"

'Far and away,' said the dainty little maiden,
'All among the gardens, auriculas, anemones,
Roses, and lilies, and Canterbury bells.'

'Dainty little maiden, whither would you wander?
Whither from this pretty house, this city house
of ours?'

'Far and away,' said the dainty little maiden,
'All among the the meadows, the clover and the
clematis,
Daisies and kingcups, and honeysuckle flow-
ers.'

"The Grasshopper," "Nothing Will Die," "Mariana," "The Flower," are all poems suited to children's capacity, and any of them would help a child to a broader and more intelligent view of nature; though "Mariana" might have a morbid effect upon a sensitive mind, its fidelity of description entitles it to notice in this connection.

So our spring lessons may grow, perhaps beyond our time-limit, for time is truly short so near the midsummer examinations. But we are building, the children are growing as the flowers themselves are growing, and

"We must not tear the close-shut leaves apart;
Time will reveal the calyxes of gold."

We need the patience of the seed-sower and the gardener, who wait for the slow growth of the plant until it reaches, by degrees, its full perfection.

CORRESPONDENCE.

G.L.—Burns' Highland Mary was Mary Campbell, who was probably in service at the house of Gavin Hamilton, in Mauchline, when the poet wrote the songs, "Will ye go to the Indies, My Mary?" and "My Highland Lassie, O," in 1786. In October of that year Mary died. Three years later the touching lines were composed, "To Mary in Heaven." There is difficulty in associating Highland Mary with the Mary of "Afton Water." The poem was written, it is believed, in 1791, five years after Mary's death, and seems to arise from "a reverie of retrospective admiration of her sleeping image enshrined 'within his bosom's core.' Did he, in that still valley, amuse his fond fancy by reflecting what might have been his fate had not death seized her as his prey? And did he there, in imagination only,

'Wander as moon rises high,
My flocks and my Mary's sweet cot in my eye?'"
"It is there," "there" is an adverb of place, modifying the action of existence expressed by the verb "is."

J.W.A.—"Historic" differs from "historical" in suggesting, possessing the distinction given by the events of history; while "historical" suggests connection with history, without reference to any prestige. Quebec is an historic city, because rich with the charm of momentous actions. Chatham's speech on the American Revolution is historic, because of its great import. A book may be historic, epoch-making, but historical books are usually merely books concerning history; deeds are historical when capable of authentication by history, etc. Similarly, "poetic" denotes the possession of the quality that makes poetry—a poetic child, the poetic muse; while "poetical" usually means pertaining, connected with,—poetical selections such as show the characteristics of the work of the poetic mind. "Classic" denotes the presence of general characteristics that bring a work of art, etc., up to the highest standard of artistic judgment; "classical" rather pertaining to the classics; a classic passage, but a classical atlas. These distinctions are not always strictly kept with these words, and in many words the double forms do not differ in meaning, but have only a preferred form. In other words only one form is possible.

SUBSCRIBER.—The volumes known as "Open, Sesame" (I. and II.), contain excellent selections in prose and verse suitable for children's reading and recitation. They are published in Boston by Houghton, Mifflin & Co., we think.

M.R.—The analysis of the first two stanzas of "As ships, becalmed," will be made clearer by putting them in prose order. As ships, becalm'd at eve, that lay with canvas drooping, side by side, two towers of sail at dawn of day, are scarce descried long leagues apart; when the night fell, the breeze up-sprung, and they plied all the darkling hours, nor dreamt (they) but (that) each was cleaving the self-same seas by each, side by side; e'en so [those are who, etc.]. The first clause calls up the comparison to ships in a dependent adverbial clause of manner—"As ships . . . descried." The subject of the clause is "ships"; it is modified by (1) "becalm'd at eve," (2) by the adj. clause "that lay . . . side," (3) "two towers of sail at dawn of day"; predicate, "are descried"; modified by (1) scarce, (2) long leagues apart. Then follows an explanatory parenthesis in independent clauses: the three co-ordinate principal clauses, (1) "the breeze up-sprung," (2) "they plied all the darkling hours," (3) "dreamt but each was cleaving . . . side," are modified by the dependent adverbial clause, "when fell the night"; making up, therefore, a compound-complex sentence, of which "dreamt (they)" is the principal, and "each was cleaving . . . side" the subordinate part. Then follows the suggested principal statement "e'en so," which the poet does not finish.

ARES.—

"How many things by season season'd are
To their right use and true perfection!"

The sentence is principal exclamatory sentence. "Things" is the subject, modified by "how many"; verb, "are season'd," modified by "by season" (cause), and by "to their right use and true perfection" (purpose). It is supposed that the Public School Grammar, properly taught, will cover all ground necessary for the Public School Leaving Examination. So with the Public School History.

T.H.B.—The term "grammatical function," as applied to words, denotes the force, value, and use of the words in a particular sentence. E.g., in the sentence, "He went *with great haste*," the grammatical function of "with great haste" is that of an adverb (cf. "very hastily"). By "grammatical relation" is meant the relation of the word(s) to that part of its sentence to which it is most closely connected. In the case of the sentence quoted, grammatical relation of "he" is subjective nominative to "went," of "with great haste" is adverbial to "went." "Grammatical duty" is synonymous with "function." By "idiomatic" is meant a construction that is characteristic of some special language or languages, not always capable of logical justification. For example, while we say, "He *is* right," the French say, *Il a (has) raison*, which constitutes, from our point of view, a French idiom. Similarly we say, "I *had rather* be a dog and bay the moon," etc., in which the construction *had rather be* constitutes a phrase peculiar in construction to English, and is, therefore, termed "idiomatic."