

Practical Hints for Teachers

"Bright Ideas"

Being part of a letter to an ex-Student now Teaching

My Dear Anna: Do not think because you do not hear from me often that I do not often think of you. Indeed you are frequently in my mind. If you happen to have a small camera I know one way in which you could help me picture your situation.

I have a little idea of you between the hours of nine and four for five days of the week, so clear an idea that I feel it gives me a topic to talk about. When you wrote, you had sixteen pupils. Now that is not enough for the good of your soul. If they were a different sixteen every few days it might be all right. But I know the feebleness of human courage, and the depressing effect of routine on the teacher's cheerfulness and originality. A time table, in spite of all its advantages, is a deadly thing, most deadly where it is most easily possible to adhere to it and put it into practice. One remedy in part is to make a week the unit of time, and within that period to construct a time table which in some respects is different every day.

But that isn't what I set out to say. Did you ever hear of "Bright Idea"? Well, it's a kind of medicine, and you take a dose of it about twice a month. The ingredients are to be found anywhere and you mix them yourself. We use a good deal of it here. In fact I'm becoming quite an expert in gathering the simples for it, and my teachers are equally skilful in compounding the recipe.

Let me give you an illustration or two. One teacher said she could not teach drawing and had left it out of her time table. I handed her a book on geometrical design. She and her class set to work with ruler and compasses, and then shaded their borders and all-over patterns in tones of pencil grey. Then they began to experiment in color, and presently to tint their maps. Soon they began to prefer light tints to deep Indian effects. I sent them a poem about an April snowstorm to illustrate. The result was a treat.

This same class had finished studying certain countries. I proposed to the teacher that she make a little drama in which the children of these countries should take part. Weeks went by with no report as to what was going on, but the other day a messenger came round with daintily designed formal invitations to the whole staff to come and see the result. We haven't seen it yet, but the performance is to be public, so it must be good. "Britannia Entertains" she calls her play, and that sounds promising.

Another teacher has completed her Supplementary Reading in Grade Ten. I proposed a few weeks on Canadian poets and poetry. Now she has her class searching the magazines and papers for material and compiling a scrap book to be added to the library.

Several of the classes have put on the Health Plays published in the "Red Cross Junior," with delight and profit to us all.

In Grades Nine and Ten we do not study spelling. Instead we have "Word-Study," which covers all there is to know about words, their derivation, synonymy, antonymy, spelling, cognate forms, primary and secondary meanings, etc. In composition we put all worthy essays in a cover and add them to the library.

Lately we had another "B.I." and that was to invite all the rural teachers within reach to come in on Saturday, May 30th, for a little get-to-know-each-other gathering.

Now, Anna, how are you feeling inside? Do you feel sort o' dismal at times and as if you would like to climb into the first car that came by and

go as far as it would take you? Does Susie's touselled head annoy you? And Johnny's dirty hands disgust you? And the reading lesson bore you? And the number work get your goat? Try a dose of my "B.I." medicine. It never fails to effect a cure. One of my teachers came into the office after school one day looking as if she had lost her pet kitten. I divined her mood and challenged her. She admitted the charge, and said that was why she had come, because she knew I could exorcise the evil spirit that was in her. I gave her a dose of "B.I." and she went away cured.

Didn't I use to tease you in the old days about your "cheerful despair"? I detect a note of it even yet in your letters. Try "B.I." Anna, and whenever you discover a recipe that gives beneficial effects, pass it on. I might be able to use it on somebody here.

Faithfully yours,
W. CLARK SANDERCOCK.

On Taking Games Too Seriously

One of the bogies of middle-age is that so many people seem to believe that if they are not pompous they are breaking a tradition. But pompousness never really impresses anyone except the man who delights in appearing pompous. And women are, as a rule, so much less pompous, so very much nearer children as they grow older than men are—or, at any rate, than men pretend to be. That is why a mother is usually in far closer contact with her children than their father ever is. She has not forgotten how to be a child herself, or, at any rate, she is not ashamed of her childishness.

But men too often shape their manner to their age, and in putting away childish things mostly put away their understanding of children. And why we should be ashamed of childish things when we are no longer children I can never understand. We still act like children, no matter how much we try to rob our actions of their childish joy by making our games so difficult, and lending them so much importance that to "play" is to work as hard very often as if the whole universe depended upon our success.

Too many of our amusements have we robbed of their careless rapture by treating them as if they were of vital consequence—so that a game of bridge can quite easily make of our partner a life-long enemy; and to have a golf handicap of twenty-two is to keep us for ever mute with shame and disgrace, except in the company of those whose handicap is called "twenty-four," because the secretary has to call it something. Too many have forgotten that amusements are things which should amuse us—not something upon which our popularity, even our whole social reputation, may depend. Children are not half so childish as to look upon their games in that way.—From "Folded Hands," by Richard King (Hodder and Stoughton).

Charles Kingsley's Bi-Centenary

"Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time."
—Longfellow: "Psalm of Life."

On January 23, 1875, Charles Kingsley, an English clergyman, novelist, poet, of considerable ability, "turned on his side and never spoke again and before mid-day—without sigh or struggle—breathed his last breath so gently that his eldest daughter and the family nurse who were watching him could scarcely tell that all was over."

His Early Days

Charles Kingsley was born on June 12, 1819, at Holne Vicarage, under the brow of Dartmoor, Devonshire, and his early years were spent in the Fen district and Clovelly. "He was a precocious child, and his poems and sermons date from four years old. His delight was to make a little pulpit in his nursery, from which, after arranging the chairs for an imaginary congregation, and putting on his pinafore as a surplice, he would deliver addresses of a rather severe tone of theology." We learn also that he was a "delicate, nervous, and painfully sensitive child—he twice had brain fever—and was subject to dangerous attacks of croup." These facts of his early childhood are culled from "His Letters and Memories of his Life," edited by his wife, and dedicated "To the Beloved Memory of a Righteous Man."

His School Days

In 1830 his parents moved to Clovelly, and in the following year Charles went to Clifton to "Mr. Knight's Preparatory School," where he was described as an "affectionate boy, gentle and fond of quiet." From Clifton he went to Helston School. In 1836, Kingsley's father accepted the living of Chelsea. "It was," we learn from Mrs. Kingsley, "a bitter grief to Charles to leave the West Country, with its rich legendary lore, its botany and geology . . . and, above all, the beautiful natural surroundings of both Helston and Clovelly. The change to a London rectory, with its ceaseless parish work, the middle class society of Chelsea, the polemical conversation all seemingly so narrow and conventional in its tone, chafed the boy's spirit, and had anything but a happy effect on his mind."

Kingsley now became a day student at King's College, London, where, for two years, he had what he called "hard grinding work, walking up there every day from Chelsea, reading all the way, and walking home late to study all the evening." One of his tutors there speaks of him as "gentle and diffident to timidity." In the autumn of 1838 he left King's College, and went up to Magdalene College, Cambridge, where he soon gained a scholarship, being first in his year in the May examinations.

We come now to the latter part of his eventful life—a life that was largely devoted to hard parish work. He was much loved by his humble parishioners, for whose welfare, religious, intellectual, and social, he did much. We must devote the little space at our command to the outstanding events.

In the summer of 1839, he met his future wife for the first time. "That was my real wedding day," he said some fifteen years afterwards.

During the spring of 1841, he decided on the church as his profession instead of the law, and in February, 1842, he left Cambridge "exhausted in body and mind, having by six months desperate reading done work which should have spread over three years." Soon after he was ordained to the curacy of Eversley, in Hampshire, and two years later he was appointed Rector, and married "Fanny, daughter of Pascoe Grenfell and Georgiana St. Leger, his wife." Several times his health broke down under the strain of hard work, and he was compelled to go abroad for holidays to the West Indies and to America. In 1860 his name was mentioned to Lord Palmerston, then Prime Minister, for the Regius Professorship of Modern History at Cambridge—a post he accepted with "extreme diffidence," and which he resigned in 1869. He was made a Canon of Westminster during 1873.

He gained much fame from his literary work, amongst the most familiar publications being "Alton Locke," "Two Years Ago," "Hypatia," "The Heroes," "The Water Babies," and, what is generally considered his finest production, "Westward Ho!" His poems show his intense love of nature, and show, too, says one of his most intimate friends, "the pains he took to describe exactly what he saw, instead of running off into the vague generalities and commonplaces with which young versifiers often think to take poetry by storm"; his imagination was "graphic and lively."

Here are a few lines from his "Songs from the Water Babies":—

"When all the world is old, lad,
And all the trees are brown;
And all the sport is stale, lad,
And all the wheels run down;
Creep home, and take your place there,
The spent and maimed among;
God grant you find one face there,
You loved when all was young!"

—A. S.

A Spelling Exercise

This dictation exercise was given to the children of an Ipswich school some time ago and was referred to in the House of Commons:

While heaving yew Hugh lost his ewe and
put it in the Hue and Cry.
To name its face's dusky hues
Was all the effort he could use.
You brought the ewe back, by-and-bye,
And only begged the heaver's ewer.
Your hands to wash in water pure,
Lest nice-nosed ladies, not a few
Should cry, on coming near you, "Ugh!"

That School Clock or Your Watch

WILL RECEIVE EXPERT REPAIRING AT

STACEY BROS
QUARE DEAL JEWELER

BARRY HOTEL BLDG., SASKATOON

DIAMONDS

PHONE 3410

WATCHES