

## Selected Articles

### HISTORY OF THE RURAL SCHOOL

Said a bright young lad of fourteen to me one day, "I am very fond of history. I know that book almost word for word." "Good," said I, "Can you tell me whether North Dakota was one of the thirteen original colonies?" His brow clouded, he hesitated a moment and then replied, "I don't believe we have had that!"

Many a pupil in ungraded schools, where no definite course has ever been outlined, upon arriving at a certain period, begins United States History with hardly an idea that there is any other.

The poor child approaches the study of the story of our America, a sturdy young tree whose roots extended all over Europe, with an idea somehow that Adam was the first man and George Washington the second.

United States history can be approached intelligently only after some idea has been gained of those things which occurred long before our country was on the map.

The very smallest pupils will be interested and their minds enriched by stories of great men and great things.

Bible heroes should have a place as early as the third grade and simple stories of England and America in the fourth. In the fifth, stories from Greek and Roman history should be given.

In Grade VI should come England and France after stories of the Middle Ages, and in the seventh and eighth, with this broad foundation, the history of our own country may be approached intelligently. "Westward the course of Empire takes its way," does not mean that we can trace the frontier of the United States from the Eastern coast to the Alleghenies, thence to the Mississippi valley and beyond to the Rockies and finally to the coast of the

Pacific. It means Cathay, Phœnecia, Egypt, Greece, Rome, the valley of the Danube, Gaul and Britain.

The pupil can understand the period of exploration and colonization in America only when he understands conditions in Europe at that time. He can understand the Pilgrims and Puritans in America only when he understands Cromwell, the Church of England, and Henry VIII.

He can understand the American Revolution only when he understands the characters of George III and Lord North. He can enjoy the tale of the victory of Jackson at New Orleans far more if he knows that the defeated British soldiers were Wellington's veterans.

Conditions in Cuba at the time of our war with Spain can be explained only by a good general knowledge of long years of Spanish misrule at home and among her colonies.

Sir Francis Drake and his expeditions become as interesting as any of Henty's stories when we know what led to the destruction of the Spanish Armada and how Drake was regarded by both Spanish and English.

Innumerable illustrations may readily be called to mind to show the necessity of a broad general knowledge of world history before attempting to grasp the details of the story of our own country and a little careful planning will enable the teacher in even the rural school to thus enrich the minds of those who, perhaps, will never attend school after leaving the "Little Red School-house," which can and should stand for as broad and deep a preparation for life as some of our larger, better equipped and more notable temples of learning.