

The Quest of the Arbutus.

For days the drench of noiseless rains,
Then sunshine on the vacant plains,
And April with her blind desire
A vagrant in my veins!

Because the tardy gods grew kind,
Unrest and care were cast behind;
I took a day, and found the world
Was fashioned to my mind.

The swelling sap that thrilled the wood
Was cousin to my eager blood;
I caught the stir of waking roots,
And knew that life was good.

But something in the odors fleet,
And in the sap's suggestion sweet,
Was lacking one—thing everywhere
To make the spring complete.

At length within a leafy nest,
Where spring's persuasions pleaded best,
I found a pale, reluctant flower,
The purpose of my quest.

And then the world's expectancy
Grew clear: I knew its need to be
Not this dear flower, but one dear hand
To pluck the flower with me.

—Charles G. D. Roberts, in *April Century*.

Country versus City Schools.

Observation has convinced me that it is a fact that the pupils of country schools, from twelve to fifteen years of age, who came into the city schools to complete their education, are better qualified to do work in those studies which require thought than the pupils of city schools of the same age. They will attack and conquer a difficult example before the city pupil can decide whether he has ever seen one like it from which to work as a model. Comparatively, the city pupil is helpless. The country pupil has been obliged to work out by himself the examples in a new topic because the teacher, with her numerous classes, had no time to assist him. He had studied twenty minutes and recited ten. The city pupil has studied twenty and recited forty.

The country teacher has no time during the recitation to do more than briefly assist and direct. The pupils soon become aware of the fact that they must help themselves through all but the very greatest obstacles, and they became self-reliant and thoughtful. In the city schools, on the contrary, does not the long recitation period work to the disadvantage

of the pupil by affording time for so much assistance in completing the assigned but unfinished tasks?

Of course city pupils can do many things country people cannot. They can draw a little. They can name, perhaps, more African hamlets than Stanley. They can tell the exact dates of more events and the names of more bones in the body. In short, they can do all things except the thing they should be able to do, namely, to think. They study too little and recite too much. What they study, and not what the teacher develops for pupils, give them independent thought power.

Would not every city school be more efficient if the recitation periods were shortened one half, or at least one third? Pupils have often said to me when a lesson in arithmetic was assigned, "I cannot work those examples. We never had them before." This remark shows that they depend too much on the teacher, and are helpless in the face of new processes. They should expect, from their past experience, to learn their lessons alone, with only a rare exception. They should take pleasure in mastering principles and their applications.

One object of recitation is to find out what the pupil has not done. It is wrong to assume, as teachers often do, that the pupil has done nothing, and then help him through all. Teachers are too kind to pupils, too fatally kind when the power of thought, the exercise of which at first is not pleasant, is allowed to lie dormant. Is this stupefying kindness so common because teachers fear that if their pupils fail in examinations they will be blamed by parents, school boards, and saddest of all, by some who ought to know better, such as principals and superintendents? If a teacher has led her pupils to think, she should be forgiven many mistakes, and her pupils should be promoted, for even if they have failed to memorize a few minor geographical names, and have learned only a few classes of adjectives and conjunctions, they have power to do the work of the next grade.—H. S. Baker, in *Journal of Education*.

As to subjects for reading, I recommend in general all kinds of books that will give you real information about men, their works and ways, past and present. History is evidently the grand subject a teacher will take to. Never read any such book without a map beside you; endeavor to seek out every place the author names, and get a clear idea of the ground you are on; without this you can never understand him, much less remember him. Mark the dates of the chief events and epochs; write them; get them fixed into your memory—chronology and geography are the two lamps of history.—Thomas Carlyle.