

says good-bye to the class of '99.  
 May we come through the exams.  
 like Dewey's men at Manila. Let  
 there be not even the smell of fire  
 upon our clothes. Then will come  
 the great Afterward. Whither are  
 we tending? Let it be where glory  
 awaits us.

**Observation :—A Soliloquy.**

How slow the minutes drag around to-day,  
 As on my wooden chair inflexible  
 With tired eye and buzzing ear I sit  
 Amid a crowd of noisy kids. Methinks  
 Old Daddy Time is snoring by the way,  
 With broken hour-glass and with scythe  
 unsharped.  
 And in an empty void of timeless sleep  
 An atom helpless. I am mooning here.

The teacher talks, and eke the scholars all  
 Converse in tones subdued among  
 themselves.

Like to the rustling of a chestnut-tree,  
 Whose falling fruit the rattle of the slate  
 Doth vocalize. How truly was it said  
 That life is but a vapor—would that now  
 These benches and this blackboard would  
 vamoose  
 To other spheres of greater usefulness  
 Than to my gasping corpse they e'er can  
 have.

And can it be that once the mighty brain  
 That works and seethes within this skull  
 of mine

In mystic process psychological,  
 Was trained in such a place as this?  
 Gadzooks,  
 What lofty works our public schools  
 produce!

Full truly should I reverence after all  
 The embryonic learning that pervades  
 The atmospheric content of this room.  
 Hallo! There goes the bell—recess at last.

*(After recess: moral song by pupils)*  
 "And if I have a piece of cake  
 And with the others play,  
 I will not keep it all myself  
 But give a part away."

Again the chair—and harder than before.  
 With lusty lungs refreshed the children  
 now

Spell o'er a list of words. Ahai! the crash  
 Of letters shouted hardily, the crash  
 Doth beat into my skull, the roll and crash  
 Of breakers shattering on a stony beach,  
 O'erwhelming me, a mute Demosthenes.

It ceases: but within the vaulty caverns  
 Of my auricular anatomy,

A murmur, like the sea-shell's ghostly  
 voice,  
 Whispers and dies away.

Dictation now.

My jaded ear receiveth gladsomely  
 The teacher's even accents. I am here  
 To observe, to criticize, to catch the grains  
 Of education falling from the board  
 Where mighty Paedagogia slingeth grub.  
 Hither, my note-book! Let me place in  
 thee  
 Some record of these precious hours. Of  
 course

The chair is rigid and the hour is long,  
 Of course my limbs are cramped with  
 many cramps,—

*Sed patendum est.*—The sun is shining  
 Full pleasantly outside the window there:  
 I would 'twere summer.

Summer! I am sitting  
 Upon the gunwale of a skiff that sails  
 'Mid windy waters, heeling bravely over,  
 And dancing swift along the white-capped  
 hills

That lie between her and the distant isle.  
 The sun of afternoon shines free, the splash  
 Of parted waves sounds merrily 'neath  
 the keel,

And ever blows the wind a muffled song.  
 Full soon I'll lie upon the breeze-swept  
 grass

Beneath a friendly tree, my haven won,  
 And breathing deep and gazing at the sky  
 Chew meditative straws. Blow, North-  
 West wind!

Beat stormily against the stout old sail  
 That's fought with me through many a  
 wild adventure,  
 That's been my comrade many a dreary  
 day.

Roll the waves higher, higher still.—

"Clean Slates!"  
*Ting Ling!* What here again?—The  
 blackboard looms

Before my blinking eyes, and on my knee  
 My note-book lies untouched. A sigh as  
 deep

As Adam's at the clash of Eden's gates,  
 And once again I turn to books, to methods,  
 To finding new positions on my chair.  
 And ever smuglier smiles the smooth-faced  
 clock.

And ever slower crawl its sleepy hands—  
 The longer hand a meditative tortoise,  
 The shorter hand a dead one. I am here  
 To observe, to criticize; and I shall do it.

With resolution stern my mind I bend  
 To education's wholesome tasks, and see  
 The wondrous patience and the foresight  
 long

Of those whose silent, unrewarded toil  
 Has given our children freedom. So I lose  
 Remembrance of slow-moving Time, and  
 come