

HINTS FOR APRIL AND MAY.

April and May bring their special days of observance, and these days offer opportunities for the little change of work and stimulus, which both teachers and pupils need at this time of year. Do not be satisfied with making them merely occasions for a little display and recreation. If they are observed in the school-room at all they should be made really educational; some solid information should be gained, and some enthusiasm engendered.

St. George's Day and Shakespeare's birthday both fall on April 23. St. George began to be regarded with special honour by Englishmen during the third Crusade. In 1222 it was ordered that his day should be kept as a national festival, and ever since then he has been regarded as England's patron saint. The stories told of him are legendary, and vary greatly, but he is always represented as wearing, or carrying on his shield, the red cross, which is the symbol of Christianity, and conquering a dragon, the emblem of sin. His is the upright red cross in our flag, and the red and white roses worn on St. George's Day show the colours of the cross and its field. Shakespeare and other poets have many references to him. King Henry V. calling on his soldiers to attack Harfleur, tells them to cry, "Heaven for Harry, England, and St. George."

Even the lower grade children ought to know that Shakespeare is the greatest of all English poets, and that he lived in the time of Queen Elizabeth, before this country was discovered; and something, according to their understanding, about the matter of his plays. Read them one of Lamb's Tales from Shakespeare: let them learn one of the songs: "Hark, hark, the lark," or "Fear no more the heat o' the sun," or, "Orpheus with his lute," or "Thorough bush, thorough brier;" and one or two patriotic quotations, such as:

This England never did nor never shall
Lie at the proud foot of a conqueror;
But when she first did help to wound herself.

or,—

Let all the ends thou aim'st at be thy Country's, thy God's
and Truth's.

Perhaps if you tell your pupils that the Germans say that Shakespeare is really their poet, because they have studied and honoured

him more than we have, it will stir them to a resolve that this boast shall not be true, and that they, at least, will learn to honour him as one of our most glorious possessions.

Arbor Day needs a good deal of planning for. Do not degrade it into a mere housecleaning day. Have the spring cleaning, both inside and out, done beforehand, and devote the day itself to its proper purpose. Plant trees and shrubs if you can do it with enough knowledge and skill to ensure their growth. The sight of a few dying shoots brings the day into contempt. But in these days of Rural Science Schools, there is little excuse for such helplessness. The Directors in the different provinces stand ready to aid all who appeal to them.

If, for any good reason, there can be no tree-planting, give lessons on the uses and conservation of trees. Prepare these well beforehand; get the children to name the trees in the neighbourhood, and any use that they know of their being put to. Tell about the value of the forests of Canada, and of your own province. Dwell not only on the value of the timber, but on the value of trees for protection and for beauty. Point out that in the days of the early settlers the first necessity was generally to cut away the trees, but that many districts were unwisely cleared, because nothing but trees would grow in them, and that now the great need is to plant trees and preserve them. Appeal to the pupils' pride in the beauty of trees in their own town or village, and point out places where trees would be an advantage. Tell them that in 1914, Canada had over 1,400 forest fires. Let them discuss burnt lands that they have seen, and the ways by which forest fires might be prevented. If you can get it firmly fixed in the heads of even a few of your pupils, that they must do all they can to increase and preserve our forest wealth, you will have done your country true service.

Readings and recitations about trees will be of interest. For your opening exercises read the parable of the trees in Judges xi: 8-15, and the story of the barren fig-tree in St. Matthew xxxi, 17-22. Read the laws about trees in the Old Testament, Leviticus xix, 23-25; xxvii, 30, Deuteronomy xx, 19.

Empire Day will be dealt with more fully