

ingly described. And when I could not finish the book for want of time (my third reading of it, I think), the librarian bade me bring it home and return it at my leisure. But I made a point of finishing the book before leaving town. I have always been so well treated by librarians and other book people that I dread the slightest approach to imposing on their good nature.

The point I intended to make in the last few paragraphs is (will the reader pardon my explaining it?) that books and homes (and schools) are not made inviting enough. Our boys and girls need to be taught the companionship that is to be found in good books and in natural scenery; they need the wholesome social element which is rarely found in country places. They seek the city with its attractions, or they find their way to other countries. The enchanting scenery around the Bras d'Or Lakes may draw many tourists thither, but it is not sufficient to keep the Cape Breton youth at home. The scanty husbandry, poorly tilled farms and sparsely settled country, are not attractive to the youth; and this may be said of many other sections of these provinces.

I was not prepared for the statements I heard about the unproductiveness and backward state of agriculture in the island of Cape Breton. The products of the farm, garden and dairy are supplied to such large manufacturing and mining centres as the Sydneys from outside—chiefly from Prince Edward Island. The milk which supplies the town of Sydney, so a fellow traveller assured me, is brought daily from Colchester County—260 miles away. And yet much of the island of Cape Breton is fertile and should supply the needs of its inhabitants, with something left over for the outside world. But other places and other pursuits afford more remunerative employment and greater advantages than the hillsides of Cape Breton; and the fortunes that await the skilled agriculturist are still hidden in the soil.

The song birds leave us at the summer's close,
Only the empty nests are left behind.

—H. W. Longfellow.

"Yes," said the student of digestive economics, "there is one part of the doughnut that wouldn't give you dyspepsia."

"And what part is that?" we ask in astonishment.

"The hole in the middle."—*Baltimore American*.

English Literature in the Lower Grades.

BY ELEANOR ROBINSON.

I drew attention in my last paper to the mistake of thinking that children cannot enjoy, or be interested in what they do not fully understand. Sir Walter Scott, in his *Autobiography* says: "I derived a great deal of curious information from George Constable, both at this early period (his eighth year) and afterwards. He was the first person who told me about Falstaff and Hotspur, and other characters in Shakespeare. What idea I annexed to them, I know not; but I must have annexed some, for I remember quite well being interested on the subject. Indeed, I rather suspect that children derive impulses of a powerful and important kind in hearing things which they cannot entirely comprehend; and therefore, to write *down* to children's understanding is a mistake; set them on the scent, and let them puzzle it out."

It is plain that Scott is speaking here of really great literature; and it is great literature that we can trust to take its hold upon the child's mind, without too much interference from us. But among the selections in our school reading books, there are many that cannot be classed as literature at all. There are prose extracts, for example, that have been chosen, not to give pleasure by their beauty, for they have no beauty, but to convey certain useful information, or moral lesson. In relation to a piece of literature, we may compare them to maps, or diagrams in relation to a great picture. They have their uses, just as a map has; we may even admire their fitness for their use, as we admire the accuracy and neatness of a map. But when we have received the information they have to give us, they are exhausted; we have no further use for them; whereas, as I said before, a bit of true literature is inexhaustible. It would be an encouragement to inattention and carelessness to let such an extract as "The Stolen Peaches," or "A Far Distant Country," in N. B. Reader No. 3, or "Ax Grinding," or "The Soldier's Reprieve," in No. 4, be left without thorough understanding, because there is nothing in them beyond the easy comprehension of an ordinary child. But take "The Death of Nelson," from Southey. Here we have a narrative written with such force and beauty as to raise it into the rank of literature. We can read it for the tenth time with greater pleasure than we feel on a first reading. The teacher should know the book from which the extract comes, (one of the really great biographies in our language) and