

After some such study as this, in which children of ten or eleven may readily be interested, let the sonnet be memorized.

Professor Gayley, of the University of California, speaks thus forcibly of the memorizing of poetry: "If fewer things were despatched, and if more were entrusted to the memory, *there would be something to assimilate, and time to assimilate it.* In our apprehension lest children should turn out parrots, we have too often turned them out loons. While we insist, properly enough, that youth is the seed-time of observation, we seem to have forgotten that it is also the harvest-time of memory."

According to the pupils' ages and capacities, more study may be given both to the matter and form of the poem. With lines 1 and 2 compare the "Oh dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon," in *Samson Agonistes*; with lines 13 and 14, the last line of the Hymn on the Nativity and *Faerie Queene*, Bk. 2, Canto VIII, stanzas 1 and 2, beginning "And is there care in heaven."

With the whole poem, compare Whittier's "Waiting" and Browning's "The Boy and the Angel." Notice how far the thought in these differs. Note the personification of Patience, the construction in lines 7, 11 and 12, and the character of the vocabulary.

With older pupils draw attention to the sonnet form, letting them discover as much as possible for themselves from this and other sonnets, as to the number of lines, syllables, accents, and rhymes and the arrangement of the latter.

A counsel of perfection, insisted on by many teachers, is "never tell a child anything he can find out for himself." In literature, at least, a good deal of discretion may be used in applying it. Certainly, if the child has access to a good dictionary, it is foolish to tell him the meaning of a word, and it is encouraging laziness to explain the connection or force of a sentence that a little study will show, but when references and allusions are to be looked up, a good deal of help should be given at first, and the children gradually accustomed to using reference books and finding parallels, else much time may be wasted and the literature lesson made a weariness, which is above all things to be avoided.

Do not try to make the children see all that you see in a piece of literature; you have a head start of some years and of some experience.

Do not moralize over the poem, let it speak for itself.

Do not make them paraphrase it as an exercise in composition. The writer ran aground on this rock years ago, when a matter-of-fact child wrote as follows: "Milton had only one talent, that of writing poetry; if he could not see to write poetry he could not earn his living, and he would starve to death." That was her version of "that one talent which is death to hide."

Paraphrasing was useful that time to show the teacher her failure, but one would prefer to learn one's failures in a less painful way.

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### Methods of Teaching Botany.

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"Most young people find botany a dull study," says John Burroughs, the great naturalist. "So it is," he continues, "as taught from the text-books in the school, but if studied in the fields and woods, it is a source of perennial delight." There is no doubt but that, studied as it used to be, botany *was* dull, for then, as one writer says, it stood for "a science of diagnosis, of herb gathering, of petal pulling, of herbarium making;" but studied as it now is, under modern methods, it has become one of the most delightful and profitable of all studies. Now the laboratory reveals continued surprises; the microscope presents the infinitely small; the communion with Nature even in the walk by the common wayside shows that "the world we live in is a fairy-land of exquisite beauty," that we have only to *know* Nature to enjoy and appreciate the beauties and wonder which surround us.

Every flower has its message or mystery; every bee or butterfly, or small insect, which alights on the blossom tells a truth which cannot be learned from books; and literally every flower lives in a color atmosphere of its own creation, quite different from the colorless one we breathe. Can we, then, who love nature render her better service than by striving to inculcate in our school children the habit of carefully and closely observing nature in its varied form? How can we arouse an interest in even the commonest plants and flowers?

The task is not an easy or a rapid one. It is argued by some that botany, in connection with other sciences, should not be taught so early as the primary and intermediate grades. It is a question if bringing small children into the realms of science does not take away much of the pleasure and enthusiasm of later study and cause them to grow tired of science before they can fully appreciate it. But surely botany should not be one of the neglected studies. Observation is one of the most natural powers of children; train this carefully and teach botany in the simplest way, and the children's love for flowers, together with their early enthusiasm, will not only be retained, but also increase. We have then to show how botany need not be a dull study, how step by step through the different grades new interest may be aroused, how observation may be cultivated and new knowledge gained — and lastly how the text-book used in our schools may be made practical and interesting.

Since the text-book, until the ninth grade, is practically useless, let the children in the primary and inter-