

throughout the world as one of the major causes of death, showed a drop of one thousand cases in six years, from 1914 to 1921. All in all, in the five years from 1916 to 1921, we cut down the number of deaths in North Carolina a total of 4979 per year, although during these five years the population was rapidly increasing.

Cradles vs. Coffins

You have no doubt heard, my friends, that in proportion to her population there are more cradles and fewer coffins used in North Carolina than in any other State in the Union. In the twenty years from 1903, the date of the first outburst of indigestion against hookworm disease, the yearly appropriation for public health and money raised by public taxation increased from \$2,000 per year to \$387,000 per year, or a multiplication of the expenditure of public money for public health of 193 times. So far as I have been able to learn, there has not been found a single intelligent voter in North Carolina seriously opposing this expenditure of public money. Experience has shown that for every death in a population group there are seven hundred days of sickness, and economists have calculated the average sickness at \$2.00 per day and the economic value of the average life is \$4,000. By a little calculation some idea may be obtained of the economic saving to the State brought about by the reduction in the death rate and the prevention of sickness in North Carolina during the past five years. Is it worth while to save for the State the lives of 5,000 of its people every year? Is it worth while for the State to save its people from 3,500,000 days of sickness each year? Is it worth while for the State to expend \$387,000 to make a saving each year of \$27,000,000? Is it worth while for any state to organize itself for action and lav the strong arm of the State on every school girl and on every school boy of the State and, as near as possible, safeguard him from disease and guarantee to him a sound mind in a sound body?

JOHN SPRUNT HILL

One of every 10 members of the faculty of the Pennsylvania State College is devoting virtually all of his time to research work.

VERSIFICATION IN THE CLASSROOM

WHY, of all things under heaven, teach versification?

That, I imagine, is a question which many of the readers of the title of this article will ask. They will protest that versification can scarcely play even a small part in the lives of boys and girls; that it has no bearing upon their future vocations; that it is, in brief, another of the "frills" of education, pleasant perhaps to the teacher, distinctly the reverse to the student, and of no practical use to anybody.

However, I believe that there are sound reasons for including the writing of verse in our curricula. Examine books of literary selections, such as we use in our literature classes, and you will find that a very large percentage of these selections are poetry. Versification, therefore, should prove a distinct aid in the teaching of appreciation, for it is a well established fact that we come to recognize the successes of others when we ourselves have tried the same things. Even though our trials have been failures, the result is the same. All over the world, for instance, boys and girls are studying music, instrumental or vocal. How many of these will attain a platform popularity? How many parents, as optimistic as parents are, hope for such popularity for their offspring? Very few. But they do hope that the most rudimentary knowledge of music will provide opportunity for a certain degree of self-expression and a genuine appreciation of one of the great arts. If this reasoning be logical for music, why is it not logical for poetry which Matthew Arnold calls "the most perfect speech of man"? The young person who struggles with the problems of meter and stanza, form and figure of speech, may never become a poet. He may even—and here is a possible danger—thoroughly detest the task before him. But I have found that, generally speaking, he comes more quickly to a love of poetry and an understanding of it by reason of his own experiments.

Another reason, corollary to the first, is the possibility of the development of an artistic sense in the young writer. We are hearing so much these days about education being

a preparation for life. Good! but the average person who repeats that magic phrase means one thing, and one thing only, by it: that the education should prepare the boy and girl to make money or fame or success. That same average person sees little in the schoolman's contention that preparation for life includes the wholesome enjoyment of leisure.

To me one of the most striking passages in "The Americanization of Edward Bok" is Bok's criticism of the American business man, whose sole aim is to amass wealth and who gives no thought to a period of retirement. "Grow old along with me; the best is yet to be, the last of life for which the first was made" has little place in the philosophy of American business, and this pitiful fact is the more pitiful when we realize that a period of retirement to our same average person would prove only a period of unrelieved boredom. Why? Because there is no refuge of the mind to which the retired worker can go; all his life he has refused to store up for himself food for the future. His only music has been the clink of the coin; his only sculpture the head on the dollar; his only poetry the announcement of dividends; his only drama his own life's spiritual failure. To develop, then, an artistic sense, be it ever so small in degree, is no inconsiderable part of our educational plan to "prepare for life."

Any teacher who has experimented knows that versification creates in the student a new feeling for words. To say a thing in the easiest and most obvious way is not always the way of poetry, and the novice learns quickly to distinguish between the commonplace and the unique. The requirements of rhythm and rhyme send the young versifier scurrying off on a breathless hunt for new words and phrases. Unconsciously he is, at once, building his vocabulary and discovering the fine distinctions between words. I know of no other form of composition that so readily challenges the originality of the student.

And then, of course, there is always the possibility of discovering a genius. This may never happen; yet again—? At any rate, the teacher who will try out a little versification has the surprise of his life in store for him, for now and then he will be astonished at the depth of emotion, the sense

of beauty, and the feeling for technique which his students possess. More and more I am coming to the belief that our young people need only a little sun to make them grow into flowering plants—but they must have the little sun.

How is this versification to be taught?

First, the teacher must love poetry and know poetry. It is axiomatic that no teacher can lead students into the field of successful versification without such love and knowledge. Lacking these, he would do best to confine his instruction to the medium of prose.

The first step must naturally be on the mechanical side. The students must be taught the kinds of feet, the structure of stanzas, the forms of poems. They must know how variation of meter is attained. They must be familiar with such devices as onomatopoeia, assonance, refrain, and the rest.

When once these necessary rudiments are fixed, it is a good practice to have the class experiment with meter without words. Using *te tum* for unaccented and accented syllables, respectively, let them see the difference between

$$\begin{array}{cccc} X - & | & X - & | & X - & | & X - \\ & & X - & | & X - & | & X - \end{array}$$

and

$$\begin{array}{cccc} X - & | & X X - & | & X X - & | & X - \\ & & X X - & | & X - & | & X - \end{array}$$

A few exercises in this sort of thing are usually sufficient to acquaint the embryo poet with the principles of meter. With this start, the natural step forward is the fitting of words to set metric forms. Any word will do—the more nonsensical the better, for the nonsense keeps the group in good humor and helps to dissuade them from the suspicion that the teacher is trying to make Miltons or Shakespeares of them. For instance, the teacher may write upon the blackboard:

$$\begin{array}{cccc} X - & | & X - & | & X X - & | & X - \\ & & X - & | & X - & | & X X - \\ X - & | & X X - & | & X X - & | & X - \\ & & X - & | & X X - & | & X - \end{array}$$

A call for a first line to fit the indicated meter will bring forth, after some hesitation, much gulping, and more blushing, such an offering as

We try to think of a verse to write. . . . and the class, quick to take the hint, will gradually develop the rest

And scratch our heads for a thought;
We think and we puzzle and we bite our
nails

But all of it comes to naught.

To direct the work into more serious and worth-while channels is the next problem. But if the start has been successful, if the interest of the class has been caught, the problem is not so stupendous as it may appear. Some members of the group will never advance beyond the nursery rhyme stage, but experience has led me to believe that at least half of every class of average intelligence will respond to instruction and will produce creditable verse.

As a matter of method, I maintain that, when once a class has arrived at the stage where they begin to take the work seriously and where one may really feel that the basic principles are understood, it is wise to set them to work on hard rather than easy assignments; for example, the writing of old French forms or the sonnet. These forms are particularly valuable for training, since the strict character of their structure creates at once a respect for form, a consideration too frequently ignored by the beginner. What is more, when the student later writes the simpler verse, he finds that his training in observing the exacting rules of the more artificial types helps him greatly to make his poems more accurate in technic.

I am in no sense trying to establish a formula for the making of poets. I have simply attempted to indicate something of my own methods in teaching a form of composition that is quite generally taboo. I conclude my paper with a number of verses written by members of my poetry class. No claim of great literary distinction is made for these, but I offer them as examples of the work that any average class can be reasonably expected to produce—if given the chance.

H. AUGUSTUS MILLER, JR.

ROSEBUD

Your life, dear child, is a rosebud bright
That comes in the spring so fair,
And when it is blessed by the morning dew,
Is twined in your flowing hair.

Then comes a time in your beautiful life
When you become lovely and fair
Like the rose that has blossomed from the bud
That waved in the perfumed air.

But to you, as well as to the rose,
The cold, long night must bring
A blight that will wither your very life,
When it is no longer spring.

LUCILE MILBY

A THOUGHT

A placid, tranquil stream was flowing by
A soft and mossy bank, whereon I lay
And watched each ripple strike the rocks and
die;

And where above, in his full-throated way,
Some bird sang notes of sweetest harmony.
Blithe bird! how care-free you seemed that
day in Spring!

What joyful, happy thoughts you brought to
me,

When on the ground I lay and heard you sing!
In the vale a million flowers of brilliant hue
Were sheltered by a mass of cooling shade:
Though here and there on lingering drop of
dew

The sunlight gleamed. I thought, "If God
has made

This earth so fine to live in and to see,
Like what will the eternal Heaven be?"

FOSTER GRESHAM

A TRIOLET

'Tis oft I sit alone at night,
Beneath an autumn moon,
And watch its golden beams of light.

'Tis oft I sit alone at night,
And looking at God's satellite,
I croon some childhood tune.

'Tis oft I sit alone at night,
Beneath an autumn moon.

EDWIN R. BOWMAN, JR.

JOY

A Triolet

It's good to be alive to-day,
The world is shining bright and new,
With friendly flowers to nod and sway.
It's good to be alive to-day,
And if you send a sunbeam ray
Your life will brighter seem to you;
It's good to be alive today,
For the world is shining bright and new.

DOROTHY CROSS

THE TREES

(A Rondel)

Is there anything lovelier than a tree,
In this world that God has made?
The oak, and the beech, and the willow, all
three,
Do change their dress as the seasons fade.

From green to scarlet with Jack Frost's aid,
Their snow cloak in winter I like to see.
Is there anything lovelier than a tree
In this world that God has made?

The pines shelter birds after flight so free,
When the fierce storms of winter invade.
There is nothing more useful, it seems to me,
Than the various woods, and their shade.
Is there anything lovelier than a tree
In this world that God has made?

MARGARET SEVERS

THE PROBLEM

(Rondel)

How in the world can they write—
These poets—this stuff you call verse?
They sing of the stars gleaming bright,
My songs go from verse to worse!

Ye gods! this will lead me to curse,
These rhymes that haunt me all night,
Oh, how in the world can they write—
These poets—this stuff you call verse?

Wouldn't it be a delight
If my thoughts rhymed? but quite the re-
verse—

I've tried to make it seem right
But *first* simply *won't* sound like *purse!*)
Tell me, how in the world can they write—
These poets—this stuff they call verse?

KATHERINE HATCHET

A FEAR AT NIGHT

(Rondeau)

I

The door flew open, but naught saw I;
The wind came in so cold and dry
That it chilled me from my foot to head,
And filled me with a nameless dread;
O, from that place could I but fly!

II

But me the blankets so did tie
That I could scarcely move an eye,
For it was just as I'd reached the bed
The door flew open.

III

At last an opening I did spy,
And for that opening I did try
To move myself, and then I fled,
But suddenly stopped as if struck dead,
For I discovered the wind was why
The door flew open.

GORDON RENNIE

WHEN

When April skies are turning blue,
When boats have come out on the bay,
I'll be coming back to you.

Long before the grass is new,
And before the reaping day,
When April skies are turning blue,

When every lad to his lass is true
When not a lassie dare say nay,
I'll be coming back to you.

When birdies on the branches coo,
When chickens roost in the new-mown
hay,
When April skies are turning blue,

When early morn is wet with dew,
When there are no gathering clouds of
gray,
I'll be coming back to you.

I'll be glad to see you too,
If you will wait until that day;
When April skies are turning blue,
I'll be coming back to you.

JANET COHEN

SCHOOL

(A Ballade)

I like to go to school

To study and learn to spell;
I wish I wasn't such a fool
But knew all things so very well;
I'd always in all things excel,
And win in every student race,
But why I can't I cannot tell—
For school is such a foolish place.

They make me study every rule
And learn where all the races dwell,
And fuss with me and ridicule
From opening to closing bell;
And then I let out such a yell,
I run home at a wondrous pace;
My great delight I cannot quell,—
For school is such a foolish place.

Sometimes I dream I'm at a pool,
Down in some nice old shady dell,
A-fishing where it's still and cool
And with my dog, old faithful Nell—
But this is really what befell:
The teacher saw my smiling face
And put me in the caitiff's cell—
For school is such a foolish place.

L'Envoy

But I must go to my death knell;
(At least that seems to be the case.)
I wish they soon would me expel—
For school is such a foolish place.

VIRGINIA BROCKWELL

YOUNG SEBASTIAN CABOT BLACK

When young Sebastian Cabot Black
'Lowed as how he'd sail the sea,
He up and bought the Nancy Fajr,
From Soloman Sampson Lee.

He bought a big sou'wester,
And an oil skin coat to match,
And he polished up the brasses,
From the crow's nest to the hatch.

He shipped a crew and a mate or two,
And headed down the bay,
But young Sebastian Cabot Black
Now rues that fateful day,

He steered 'er round the Cape 'o Cheer,
And headed for the sea,
But doomed was he to meet his fate,
Far from a peaceful lee.

The wind was blowin' 'alf a gale,
And the craft, she pitched and tossed,
And young Sebastian Cabot Black
Knew that his ship was lost.

He reefed the sails and kept his course,
But the wind and waves and rain
Was more than he could overcome,
Tho he fought with might and main.

At last he headed for a port,
But the dreaded deed was done,
And now a derelict, on the rocks,
Shows where the weather won.

Now young Sebastian Cabot Black
Has a grave in the deep sea lan'
Which shows that 'tain't the clothes, my
friend,
That makes a sailorman.

EDWIN R. BOWMAN, JR.

THE BUTTERFLY AND THE BUBBLE

In a valley one night
I found a beautiful butterfly.
The moonbeams gently touched its snow-white
wings,
As it softly kissed each drooping lily.
I blew a beautiful bubble—
For I was a blower of bubbles—
And in it I placed my pure little creature.
What a beautiful thing it was,
The little butterfly—its pure, white delicacy—
Its lepidopteran beauty and grace,
Surrounded by my wonderful bubble—
A bubble made of dreams, hopes, desires.
How I wished to clasp it to my heart!
How I loved it! How I craved it!
But, no, I must not:

It would break my beautiful bubble of dreams.
But then, my pretty little butterfly became
restless.

It did not mean to hurt me, I know;
But, oh! What pain it caused to see my dream
broken,
And vanish into the cool, blue atmosphere!
The butterfly was gone.

What a fool I was to think that it would
stay!

MAURICE W. BUTLER

THE SCHOOL ASSEMBLY— ASSET OR LIABILITY?

IN so many of our schools throughout the country is found the problem of the school assembly or chapel. This is especially true of the type found in smaller communities where the school system is represented by one elementary and one high school usually under the same roof.

From the knowledge of the way in which this important adjunct of the school's curriculum is conducted and the attitude of many principals toward it arises this question: Is this period, in which the entire school comes together as a unit, really an asset or a liability? Is it a gathering which materially aids in the progress toward the goal of education or is it conducted along the lines which tend to discredit and overlook some of the fundamental values of school life?

The school assembly period is fraught with many possibilities for the development of the pupils along the lines of the school's avowed purpose for being. The principal who does not realize this opportunity or more often assumes an indifferent attitude is losing the best results in training for citizenship and larger social intelligence.

The city schools with their more progressive systems, better trained supervisors and principals, are becoming more and more alive to this factor and are studying ways and means of broadening its usefulness. They are developing programs and testing various schemes of making the school assembly a vital part of the life of the school. They are experimenting on the subject matter with as much concern as on that of any course in the curriculum.

But many of the heads of the schools are not awake to what their more active and resourceful brethren are doing. They have received the traditional chapel period as a bequest from their predecessors along with the stone steps in front of the building and the old maple trees in the rear. And truly said, it gives them no more concern than the steps or the trees. They conduct the period with the same deadening routine and lack of interest that have characterized it in the past. In such a place the assembly is a liability and the reaction on the pupils is harmful.