

## III

HELPS FOR THE TEACHING OF  
VIRGINIA HISTORY

## FIFTH INSTALMENT

THE CELEBRATION OF HOLIDAYS AND  
ANNIVERSARIES

The live teacher will seize the time, the occasion, as it presents itself, to vitalize her work through appropriate celebrations, thus enabling the children concretely and objectively to embody their notions and their ideals.

Each month a fine project in manual art may be provided by having some pupil make a large calendar for the month, using a full-size sheet of Bristol board or some other suitable card board of equal size. Marking off the spaces accurately and putting in the letters and figures neatly will afford a task worthy of the highest skill, yet possible in some degree to the inexperienced worker. The letters should not fill their respective spaces, but they should be large enough to be easily readable across a large room.

The days of special historical interest should be indicated in red letters, and the calendar should be fixed on the wall during the whole month or at least until all the red-letter days have been accounted for.

In connection with this scheme of a monthly calendar, a program of the notable days chosen for special celebration during the school year could be prepared and posted. It would be unwise to attempt in any one year to celebrate all of the days that would be found worthy and appropriate for such distinction. Every day in every month, almost, is a red-letter day somewhere in the United States; and even when one limits himself to Virginia history the list is remarkably long. Accordingly, it is suggested that a sort of cyclical order be adopted whereby the number of celebrations provided for each year is limited to four or five, or possibly six; with a view to comprehending the whole available number in five or six years. Such a plan will avoid too much repetition and monotony and will at the same time present some educational advantages by

making the pupils acquainted with a large number of characters and occasions.

Below are presented several tentative programs, each one covering the school year and all together composing a five-year cycle.

## I

September 24—John Marshall  
November 19—Barnas Sears  
January 19—Robert E. Lee  
February 22—George Washington  
April 12—Henry Clay  
May 13—Jamestown Day

The date given in each case is the birthday of the person honored or the date of the incident celebrated.

Barnas Sears was not born in Virginia, but he lived several years in the state and was an influential figure in the educational movements of the time.

In outlining a year's program an effort should be made to select characters and occasions that will represent different phases of life—education, literature, government, science, etc.

## II

October 12—Discovery Day  
November 3—John Esten Cooke  
January 21—Stonewall Jackson  
March 16—James Madison  
April 13—Thomas Jefferson  
May 13—John Smith

October 12 is not only the anniversary of the discovery of America by Columbus, it is also the anniversary of the death of General Lee. The exact date of John Smith's birth is perhaps not known, but Jamestown Day may certainly be devoted to him now and then with entire propriety. In like manner, a program relating to Pocahontas will be fitting to the same occasion. See next outline.

## III

October 7 — Campbell and King's  
Mountain  
November—Thanksgiving Day  
February 22—Washington's Mother  
April 13—Jefferson's Dream  
May 13—Pocahontas

## IV

September 23—William H. McGuffey  
 November 11—Armistice Day  
 December 28—Woodrow Wilson  
 January 24—Matthew F. Maury  
 April 28—James Monroe  
 June 5—J. L. M. Curry

It would add a fine touch to the occasion of the McGuffey celebration if one or two of the older members of the community, who as pupils in school years ago used McGuffey's readers or spellers, could be enlisted to take part in the program. It might be possible here and there to find enough of the old McGuffey books in the neighborhood to supply all the materials necessary for the celebration.

## V

October 19—Yorktown Day  
 November—Thanksgiving Day  
 January 19—Edgar Allan Poe (Also, Robert E. Lee)  
 March 29—John Tyler  
 April 30—First Inauguration of Washington.  
 May 29—Patrick Henry

For materials, the reference reading lists in the textbook (*Wayland's History of Virginia for Boys and Girls*) may be found of service. In addition, every school library should contain that excellent set of books, *Library of Southern Literature*, edited by President Alderman and others and published by the Martin-Hoyt Company, Atlanta, Ga. In the attractive volumes of this monumental work will be found valuable materials regarding every Virginia author of recognized standing. That is to say, almost or quite every person named in the above programs is given generous space and treatment in *The Library of Southern Literature*.

In a large school it might be found practicable to assign all of the above programs for use at the same time (for the same year), each one being given to a particular department or grade.

## IV

## MODERN ARITHMETIC

"The mathematical ignorance of the average educated person has always been complete and shameless, and recently I have become so impressed with the unedifying character of the arithmetical teaching to which ordinary children are liable to be exposed that I have ceased to wonder at the wide spread ignorance."

The above quotation from the preface of a little book written some fifteen years ago by an able Englishman, in which he referred to the arithmetic teaching to which English children were liable to be exposed, seems to be just as applicable to American children of today. Although the Perry Movement started a wave that has to a large extent wiped out the old textbook of "rules and cases" with little rational explanation and with its hordes of puzzle problems, it went too far and substituted rational explanations which were not rational to a child of arithmetic age and which therefore must be committed to memory in order to be recited by the child. It produced a set of arithmetic texts which made no careful distinction between the fundamental rules, the operation of which must become mechanical, and the rational processes to which these fundamental operations should be applied, and left in the texts and in the courses for which these texts were used as a basis numerous comparatively useless topics. Take for an example a course of study outlined for one of the states not so very long ago:

Grade 1, ages 6-7 years. Number space to 100, Addition tables, Process of carrying, Subtraction.

Grade 2, ages 7-8 years. Multiplication to 9x9, Carrying in multiplication.

Grade 3, ages 8-9 years. Multiplication to 12x12, Multiplication of more than one figure, Long division, Measures.

Grade 4, ages 9-10 years. Fractions—all operations, Measures—all tables.

Grade 5, ages 10-11 years. Decimal fractions, Denominate numbers.

Grade 6, ages 11-12 years. Review of frac-