MISS MILLIE SMILED, pushed her bifocals up on her nose and settled back to enjoy the meeting. She agreed with everyone else, that Center County was fortunate to have secured the services of this speaker for the County Institute. They said at the University that this young man was brilliant, and no doubt had a promising career ahead of him.

But Miss Millie was finding it a bit difficult to keep her attention on what he was saying. After all, when one has been going to Institutes for forty-odd years, a bit of mind-wandering is understandable and permissible, perhaps. All she caught were phrases here and there.

"Understand the little pathetic ones . . ." the young man was saying earnestly. Isn't it funny, Miss Millie mused, how people always think of the pathetic ones as little? Often it isn't that way at all. It's apt to be the big and fat or the tall and gawky ones who are the most pathetic. For example, big, woe-begone Rob Williams had been one of the saddest youngsters she'd ever had. He certainly looked unpathetic, with that red hair standing on end and his big clumsy hands and feet that he never knew what to do with, even as a little fellow. The pathetic part was all inside where people couldn't see it, but Miss Millie knew what a struggle it had been for him because he couldn't seem to be like the other boys.

"The new concept of readiness . . ." the young man on the platform was saying.

Yes, that was Rob. Never quite ready when other boys were. She'd seen it the very first day when he couldn't shinny up the swing ropes, although the others went up like monkeys. "Never mind," she'd said to him, "it'll come to you." And it had, finally, after days of blistered hands and futile trials and that sad, hopeless look in his eyes. By the time Rob could shinny up the rope, the other boys had gone in for football, and Rob was stumbling around trying, again, to catch up. And it was the same with reading. Miss Millie had thought he'd never learn. He'd just keep sticking his nose in the book and looking unhappy, while all the other young ones were reading stories. Until that day . . . Miss Millie caught herself just in time. She had almost chuckled out loud, and just as the brilliant young man was about to say something important! But Rob had been amusing that day. Miss Millie had been discussing geography with the upper-grade boys and girls when all of a sudden there was a commotion among the 'lowers'. Rob had jumped to his feet and started yelling, "Miss Millie, Miss Millie, it's happenin'. I'm reading!" The look on his face had been something to see. Big, awkward, pathetic Rob Williams was catching up. "I'm very glad I'm a teacher," Miss Millie
said to herself.
And then there
had been the mat-
ter of the multi-
plication tables.
Again she check-
ed herself in time,
for a chuckle had
almost broken
through. Rob had
struggled and
struggled to
memorize the
tables but he
wasn't too good
at memorizing.

Then suddenly
one day that look had come on his face and
he'd burst forth with: "Why, it's just like
rabbits, isn't it!" Miss Millie had been a bit
fearful lest he was being somewhat too literal
in his interpretation of the word "multiply,"
but he'd gone on: "If you have six rabbits and
every one of them has six baby rabbits then
there'll be thirty-six rabbits." It had been said
in a tone of awed wonderment. Numbers had
found meaning. He never missed on his tables
after that. Several years later he'd confessed
that he always saw rabbits when he said the
multiplication table. Miss Millie took time
to wonder if he still did.

And there had been a host of other pathetic
ones in those days. At least there were fewer
since Rob, thank goodness,—fewer who
looked unhappy with noses in their books
and fewer who had to memorize multipli-
cation tables
without knowing
what it was all
about. Rob's ex-
perience had
taught her that.
She supposed he
should have
known it earlier.
Even shininn up
the rope should
have made it ob-
vious. Boys and girls do come to things
if we give them time. Since Rob's day, she
had given youngsters more time and had seen

that pushing before it's time is useless and
futile,—no, worse than that, it's pathetic for
both the youngster and the teacher.

And how interesting it had been to watch
to see when the time to learn would come,—
slowly for Rob, quickly for little Betsy,—
and amazing to discover that the time doesn't
necessarily show how far a youngster will
go. Take little Betsy, now. She snapped up
learning like a turtle when she was a wee
thing. She'd married at seventeen and had a
nice family. Sweet girl, but not one to set
the world on fire. While slow
lumbering Rob Williams—

"Goodness," thought Miss
Millie, "here I go dreaming
again instead of listening to all
the modern ideas of this smart
young man. I must pay atten-
tion."

"... and that is what is
meant by rate of growth and
the new concept of readiness," said the young man on the
platform as he concluded his
speech. As he sat down, there
was applause throughout the room, and Miss
Millie clapped as hard and fast as she was able.

As they were leaving, the County Superin-
tendent stopped Miss Millie and asked how
she'd liked the talk. "Very helpful," said Miss
Millie. "Very inspiring. These modern ideas
are wonderful, aren't they?"

"Yes," said the Coun-
ty Superintendent,
"very. And young Dr.
R. S. Williams did
well, too. They say he's
a coming young man in
the field of education.
Do you remember, Miss
Millie, when Rob Wil-
liams was in your
room? Not too long
ago, was it?"

"Yes," murmured Miss Millie. "Very help-
ful. Very inspiring."

The County Superintendent smiled politely.
He figured Miss Millie didn't hear very well,
but Miss Millie's hearing and vision are per-
fect.
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