

Leviathan, his shield to the moon seen through a telescope, and so on; the simile to help one to realize a difficult idea by bringing in something less strange, not wholly unfamiliar, as when the rebel army on the wing is likened to a flight of locusts, or the colour of the land in Hell to ground left bare by earthquake and singed by subterranean fire; and many another kind. In other words, the teacher should call attention, not only to the meaning of a simile, but also to the particular nature of its use as a literary instrument in the case in question—in no elaborate way, of course, but just so far as to convey a sense of literary art. Try and do without the simile; change it slightly now in this way, and now in that; compare results, and the true value of the original will soon reveal itself. In any case do not imagine that you can treat a work of art by ignoring its arts altogether.

Epithets.—It will not be necessary for me to say many words about epithets, partly because they are, as a rule, less neglected than the other points I have referred to, and partly because I should have to say over again what I have already said, question out, picture out, illustrate your epithets. No one is, I suppose, so careless as not to note so striking an epithet as that in Keats' "azure-lidded sleep," which reminds one of Perdita's "violets dim, but sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes," or that in his "poppied warmth of sleep," which used to delight so keenly my old friend Cotter Morison. The quaint, or far-fetched, or highly-coloured epithet we may be sure will attract attention to itself. It is the quiet and subdued epithet of unobtrusive beauty and fitness of which constantly escapes our pupils' observation and our own; and yet it is in such that so much of the finest fancy and feeling is revealed. I will quote

two instances from Tennyson to show you what I mean :—

"Far up the *solitary* morning smote
The peal of virgin snow."

"Rolling a *slumbrous* sheet of foam below."

Try and set down all that is suggested, and meant to be suggested, by "solitary" and "slumbrous."

A careful study of, and a clear insight into, the matters I have mentioned lie, I feel sure of it, at the very base of a sound study of literature. The haziness of understanding, the confused picturing, the vagueness of appreciation so often to be noticed in minds, not only at school, with regard to what has been written or said, is largely, if not mainly, due to carelessness in these respects. The general meaning is hurriedly snatched at, and minor matters are left to take care of themselves. Such a mode of reading may do well enough for newspapers and railway novels; but dealing with works of real art, we need the attentive eye, the searching, picture-making mind, and the feeling which responds truly and clearly to the artist's touch, and which therefore helps instead of confusing his meaning. These can only be trained by the habitual exercise of observation and thoughtfulness with regard to those things which the literary artist himself studies, the means which he himself employs to convey to us what he sees and feels and thinks, with regard, viz., to epithets, metaphors and the rest; by resolutely dealing with the subject-matter (the ideas of the writer), and with the method and material which he makes use of to bring his ideas home to us. Literature-teaching is art-teaching, and should in every way be linked with art, and made intelligible by the principles of art. Let the antiquary and grammarian stand aside.

And now what about the examiner?