

teacher who has a recreation hour on Friday afternoon would make it a point to read or tell some of them to her scholars, I believe the effect on their English literature course a few years later would be highly satisfactory. What could the high school teacher who has no time for this do? He can procure three or four good volumes of mythology for the school library, and insist that his pupils read them as a part of their English course. If he insist that pupils in Grades VI, VII and VIII also shall read them, so much the better,—the effect on them will probably be better than on the scholars of the higher grades, the latter having passed the age of credulity and having come to feel themselves somewhat superior to legends. Even they, after reading Bulfinch's "Age of Fable," or the "Beauties of Mythology," will not be apt to tell you that "Apollo was a sort of god who was supposed by the Romans to drive the chariot of the sun," accompanying the information with a smile of lofty contempt.

To summarize: If our high school pupils are weak on words, let us insist that they add to their list of books a small pocket dictionary and use it for every lesson; let us take the necessary time to set their tangled ideas straight on the subject of punctuation and figures of speech; let us endeavor to put in their way some attractive and fuller information on mythology, and see if that dull, unresponsive, spiritless class of ours will not wake up under this treatment to take a more lively interest in Gray's "Progress of Poesy."

But all that we have said chiefly concerns the teaching of words and not of the thought, which is the very soul of prose or poem. In literature we are dealing with two great factors, words and the thoughts behind them, but if we have done our duty in teaching words as thoroughly as they ought to be taught, the natural intelligence of the pupil can safely be trusted, with very slight guidance, to understand the thoughts which they convey. Teach the technique of literature, and when you have a class which really understands words and their uses you will have no necessary but painfully inadequate explanations to make, and can leave to their young imaginations the beauty and the largeness of the informing thought.

It seems to me if there is one fault which ought to be avoided in all lessons, but most especially in a literature lesson, it is dryness. There is a great

temptation to teachers sometimes to introduce bits of knowledge, seemingly very important, but so dry and uninteresting that they can transform a piece of prose or poem, which ought to be a refreshing oasis in the school day, into a positive desert. For instance, one does not need to be very observant of children to know that there is scarcely anything which has more power to interest them than biography. The doings of real men and women have a strong fascination for them. But it has to be administered in the proper form. When the author was born, when he died, where he went to college, when he took his degree, what public opinion said of him during his lifetime and after his death, when the extract under consideration was written, what its chief merits are,—these do not interest children. I suppose we have all at one time or another been members of the listless, covertly yawning classes who have had to learn these things; and, after all, what do they matter in comparison with that stirring incident of the author's youth which draws attention to himself as a boy,—as a man.

Many poems have an historic setting which is a great lever for the teacher. When it is well emphasized the lesson is invariably forcible. The Battle of the Baltic, After Blenheim, and even much more difficult poems, such as Gray's Bard and Dryden's Alexander's Feast, are sure to interest pupils familiar with the history to which they refer. After studying chivalry and the feudal system in the world's history, how much more appealing do Sir Walter Scott's martial ballads and all the wealth of mediæval literature become.

Come away, come away,
Hark to the summons!
Come in your war-array,
Gentles and commons.
Faster come, faster come,
Faster and faster,
Chief, vassal, page and groom,
Tenant and master.

Lastly, from experiences as a pupil, I would say that the successful teacher of English must realize the power over his scholars of his own appreciation and encouragement. The most excellent lesson, showing every interest in the theme, but aloofness from the class, will not accomplish as much as a simple talk from a teacher who is willing to show keen personal interest in his pupils and to respect