

What I have been asked to contribute to THE EDUCATIONAL REVIEW is simply an account of what has been done by devoting a few minutes a day to Literature, and to offer some suggestions concerning methods of working.

About four years ago an article appeared in the *Truro Sun* showing what might be accomplished in the training of the memory by utilizing spare moments, and giving well known instances of Macaulay's wonderful capacity for retaining what he read. This suggested to me the idea of testing the power of the pupils by reading to them a short rhyming stanza which was to be written from memory after one hearing.

In a few days when this exercise was losing its attractiveness, there was added the idea of memorizing a choice bit from some standard poet, with the novelty of finding out the poem and author from which it was taken. The pupils in turn were to give the selections, with the condition that they were not to be chosen from a book of quotations, but from some complete poem, which poem was to be read aloud on Friday. In cases where the poem was lengthy, a portion was to be read, and the substance of the whole related.

This was the beginning of what has grown to be a very pleasant and important part of our school work. As the days went on, one after another way appeared in which these selections might be made of practical use. They became a means of teaching spelling, punctuation, elocution. From them also we obtained some idea of what constitutes poetry, and we learned to look more closely into what we read, and to discover as much as possible of the author's meaning.

It has been specially noticeable that in all these years I have never been obliged to condemn a single selection as worthless. Some of course were less interesting than others, but the majority have been pure, beautiful, and elevating, showing a discriminating taste that we do not always give children credit for.

For this study, besides the daily ten minutes, a longer time is given on Friday, when the quotations are revised, and poems read. Once a fortnight a talk on the life and works of some author, or a critical study of some story-poem, is made the basis of a composition for the following week. In short there are ways innumerable in which this subject may be made of interest and benefit.

We do not study books on literature, on poetry, on style; we go to the fountain head and study the writers, the poems themselves. Longfellow is the favorite for many reasons, but we do not confine our attention to one. There are very few of the standard

poets from whose works we have not had selections.

In choosing a subject for these fortnightly literature talks it would be well to begin with something bright and interesting, and to some extent familiar. If possible let it be from some author whose works are to be found in most households. Almost every pupil can obtain Longfellow, and there are so many beautiful things there. Perhaps all lovers of poetry may not know what a delightful and fascinating poem Longfellow's *Keramos* is for critical study. Our school reading books, too, offer good material for several Friday lessons. There is, however, no need to suggest. Each teacher will do best by consulting her own taste, and taking what she is most interested in.

With many of the girls who have passed through my department *Our Quotations* has become quite a proverb, and nothing pleases them more than to be able to tell me of having heard someone quote, or of having come across in a book, one of *Our Quotations*.

One day when the girls were enumerating the benefits they had derived from the study of these selections, one of them said, "It makes me pay attention in church, for our clergyman is very fond of poetry, and whenever he gives one of *Our Quotations* I always listen to the rest of the sermon."

There is a great deal written and said about the sensational novels and injurious reading indulged in by the young. This side of the subject has been so often shown, that there positively is a danger that girls and boys will live up to what seems to be expected of them. Let us try to find out something of the good reading that they do. I think that many of us would be surprised, and not unpleasantly, to find what books many young people, between the ages of twelve and sixteen are capable of appreciating.

Try the experiment of getting your pupils to cut out and bring to you from the newspapers, articles that they think interesting, and the result will be, I venture to say, at once a surprise and a delight. In the beginning when "Darkness was upon the face of the waters," the command was not, "Let the darkness disappear," but "Let there be light." Let us follow nature's guidance, and endeavor to cultivate in our pupils a taste for the good, the beautiful, and the elevating. Occupy the mind with the best, that there may be no room for what is unworthy.

A. M. C.

Mr. George R. Parkin, formerly of the Collegiate School, Fredericton, has published a school manual, entitled, *Round the Empire*, which is intended to teach English children the value and importance of the colonial empire of Great Britain. Lord Rosebery contributes an introduction to the work.