

ing the literature of western Europe. On the other hand, the various modern literatures are much more quickly and easily accessible, and come nearer to us in thought and feeling. According to taste and temperament one student will feel himself attracted to that of Germany, another to that of France, or of Italy. But, after all, the wide, varied, and splendid literature open to all of us in our mother tongue is a sufficient instrument of

literary culture, and from it, at any rate, we must begin. Literary taste and love of books must be developed there. None of us will be disposed, I think, to differ from Prof. Huxley in a remark of his with which I will close: "If an Englishman cannot get literary culture out of his Bible, his Shakespeare, his Milton, neither will the profoundest study of Homer and Sophocles, Virgil and Horace, give it to him."

ELEMENTARY COMPOSITION IN HIGH SCHOOLS.

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IN case the secondary teacher of English finds his proper work thwarted by the lack of preparation in his pupils, he must postpone everything to the recovery of the lost ground. If the primary work has not been done for him, he must do it himself. The foundations of good writing cannot be dispensed with. It is idle to attempt to pursue the study of composition from the point of view of rhetoric with pupils who have never been trained to care in spelling and punctuation. Some things must be taken for granted in the secondary schools, just as they must in life generally. It is no praise to spell common words correctly, but it is a humiliation and a disgrace to spell them wrong. If the high school pupil's essay abounds in mistakes of spelling and punctuation, the teacher cannot take it into the range of rhetorical criticism. It must be dealt with on the plane of the spelling book or the grammar. The high school teacher will naturally aim to read all that his pupils write: that is, he will require of them no more than he can read. He will examine their work carefully, to see in what stage of development they are, in

order that his own procedures may be rightly adjusted to the actual conditions. Doubtless it happens sometimes that the first high school year is partly wasted for the lack of a careful scrutiny by the teacher into the fitness of his classes for the work which he contemplates. He cannot afford to omit this personal inspection of his pupils' habits of writing. It will not do to take anything for granted. It is well known that young men even reach college in a state of immaturity as to their power and skill in expression which astonishes college officers and prompts them to cry out against the training these youth have had in school.

That the work of the high school in English is so poorly done as college instructors know it to be, is not to be ascribed to ignorance of good English in the teachers, but to their laxity of method, and especially to the easy-going habit of allowing pupils' English to be written and then to pass without ocular inspection. A teacher who simply listens to the reading of a composition knows but little about it. When a large number of these papers come in at once, there is great temptation to examine them superficially.