MORAL AND LITERARY TRAINING IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

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I SHALL not discuss the methods by which English literature is now taught in our high schools and colleges, as the literary work which I shall advocate in this paper will not interfere in the least with that which these institutions are endeavouring to accomplish, but will be additional and supplementary to their noble work. That my position may not be misunderstood, I desire to say in the outset that I am decidedly in favour of retaining the present systematic study of English literature as a *distinct branch* in these institutions; instead of substituting anything for this work, as some erroneously suppose, I would give much more of it. In my opinion, however, our high-school course of study in English literature *should begin with the authors of to-day (American) and go back to Chaucer*, instead of beginning with Chaucer and coming down to the present time.

I desire, before entering fully upon my subject, to call the attention of educators to some of the mistakes that must be corrected before the public schools of our country can reach the highest standard of excellence in literary and moral training. One of these is the disproportionate amount of time given to the subject of arithmetic. Arithmetic has been and ever must be one of the fundamental branches of our common-school curriculum, and I yield to no man in my estimate of the importance of the subject, both in regard to what is usually considered as its practical bearing upon the business affairs of life, and its excellence as a means of mental discipline. Nor am I among those who would cut down the course of study in arithmetic to a few subjects, to those only that are generally considered absolutely necessary for all to know, to that only which is called "practical." Practical! there is a higher practical than the mere use that some of us make of it in adding up our grocers' bills, or perchance in calculating discount and interest. The mental discipline, the strengthening of the mind, the intellectual power that the scholar obtains by the study of this subject, is the *real practical*, the *higher practical*. It will never do to confine our courses of study in mathematics to that only which popular opinion considers practical. I object, therefore, not that there is too much ground covered in the arithmetic, or that it is too well taught, but that there is too much time given to it.*

* This has grown out of the mistaken notion of parents and teachers that the more time there is given to a study, the more the pupils will necessarily learn of that study. Paradoxical as it may seem, the children of our *district schools* would learn just as much arithmetic as they now do if less than one half of the present average amount of time were given to it. A little child can learn something of a number of subjects, and not much of any one. It can learn as much arithmetic on an average, in one hour a day as in ten; for in the hour its mind will take all it can assimilate, and any attempt to teach it more than this becomes a cramming, a stultifying process, and defeats its own end.

Teachers should therefore bear in mind, in making out their time-tables of study and recitations, that only a limited amount of time per day can be *profitably* given to any one subject in the lower grades of the schools.

It will be remembered that in London a few years ago half-time schools were established for the youth who were compelled by necessity to work in factories, etc. The school inspectors thought, of course, the pupils who attended these schools could accomplish only one half as much as those who attended the full time. Imagine their surprise and astonishment to find, after careful and thorough investigation, that the half-time pupils not only kept up with the others, but surpassed them in their studies. Let me say