

pose five lines of decent English upon the most familiar subjects.

Is not this a most unnatural result of at least nine years of studying that which should be most readily interesting, the sole branch with which the student has any acquaintance at the time of his entrance, namely, the expression of thought? The one branch most useful and at the same time most ornamental in after life, is a positive disgrace to him.

I make a practice of inquiring what are the favorite studies of each new class I meet; some members say arithmetic, some geography, some history, etc., but when I suggest English literature and grammar, a chorus of "Noes" greets my ears: every one is at once a dissenter.

But how shall we remedy this condition of affairs? Wherein lies the fault? Not wholly with the teachers surely, for all are alike in fault. Nearly all the successful teachers I have met claim that they can teach but little English, but they are at home in the mathematical branches. There, under the teacher's supervision, the pupil begins with first principles and evolves the various complex relations of practice; he becomes a discoverer; new worlds rise before him at every turn, and the student finds his work a round of pleasure.

But is not language as capable of satisfaction to the enquirer as mathematics? As a matter of fact it is very much more so. Why, then, is the study of English so meagre in results as compared with the results of mathematical investigation. Some one may say (and I think him right in the main) we need more time for this subject. But would more time alone remedy the evil with our present school course and our teachers unprepared to teach English, besides disliking that subject.

Moreover, the parent demands that James shall be taught book-keeping, algebra, cube root, stocks and shares, and bills of exchange, by the time he is thirteen years of age, remarking by the way, "I used to be good in algebra when I went to school." But he never requests that the youth study even one poem, and as a matter of fact he never does. He goes away from school entirely ignorant of the wealth of enjoyment and refinement lying ready at his hand. Nay, rather, he regards poetry as "silly stuff," and despises any one who can solace himself with a poem, while James himself is transported by the "Headless Horseman" and tales by Old Sleuth, his best English being a copy in a small way of these.

Our school course, though in many respects an excellent one, is in some measure perhaps accountable for this lack of study of our native tongue.

A child is led along (wisely or otherwise) through

the mazes of reading and no recitation, coupled with some writing and much mathematics, till he reaches the Fifth Grade, when he is orally, or not, introduced to some of the forms of speech. From this onward his course in English is a chequered one. Names of relations and names of the elements of sentences are indiscriminately and, I may add, irremediably mingled in his mind; if henceforth chaos reigns not supreme there, happy is he. Yet those hasty oral lessons, snatched by the over-worked teacher from her other subjects, produce her best results. These points brought out in oral lessons serve as hooks upon which the future grammatical knowledge may be hung. Nevertheless the pupil is in the condition of a man who has a well appointed clothes press, but only one suit, and that on his back.

At this stage the pupil has the text-book placed in his hands and is expected to memorize particularly principles so abstract that it is no wonder that he turns away his head, saying, "I hate grammar."

We call the prescribed book in grammar a text-book. About the merits of that work I shall say nothing—but how many teachers use it as such? How many take up a connected series of subjects and deliver a homily on each member of the series, referring to the text for the enunciation of the principles upon which the discourse is based?

"Oh, oh!" cries a chorus of teachers, "we have already so much work that we have scarcely time to prepare our pupils for grading let alone teaching anything after that fashion. Would you add to our burdens?" I answer no, I would not add to those burdens, but am desirous of their better adjustment. Since the teacher has such scant time, why might we not add a year of English to the common school course, distributed over the whole period, from the fifth year upward.

In the matter of text-books let us have a much more comprehensive work than the present compendium, and let it be a text-book. Then, as an accompaniment, an exercise book adjusted to the text-book—somewhat as White's First Lessons in Greek is adjusted to Goodwin's Grammar—yet differing in its construction as is required by its different purpose, its aim being to aid in our acquisition of the power to translate our thoughts into English, not English into some other language. This companion should comprise the references to the text-book and copious exercises upon each member of the progressive series into which the author has classified the subject matter of the text-book—nothing more.

In the matter of reading, let us have more of it, studying each portion with a view to becoming acquainted with the modes of expression of thought,