

haunt me like a familiar tune, are those that I had to turn into Latin and Greek verse ; and this I reckon the chief, if not the only, gain from more wasted hours than I care to think of. True, the analytic process cannot go on simultaneously with the meditative or appreciative ; true, we need a wise passivity to enjoy a work of art ; true, " we murder to dissect." But after a time we feel all the more intensely the beauty of the living whole. " The glory dies not, and the grief is past." A rose smells as sweet, nay sweeter, to a Linnaeus than to a village schoolgirl.

I wished to have said a word or two on Histories of English Literature. Speaking as a schoolmaster, they are, in my eyes, an abomination,—one and all of them, from Professor Morley's learned Sketch to Mr. Brooke's tasteful Primer. I am heartily sick of such questions as, " Name the first English tragedy, comedy, and newspaper ; " " Name the authors of the ' Purple Island,' ' Morte-meriados,' and the ' Anatomy of Melancholy.' " What is a boy the better for having such facts stuck in his brain like pins in a cushion ? What does it profit him to know that Donne is sententious, Browne profound but paradoxical, Cowley Pindaric but methaphysical ? It is true that we must be prepared, on my plan, for abysses of ignorance. I was told by my Form this morning, that Dryden was the author of " Paradise Lost," and that the " Apocalypse " was a modern French novel ; but this sort of ignorance is to be cast out not by text-books of English Literature, but by raising the general level of culture.

I had also meant to have touched on editions of English School Classics, to have besought Mr. M. Arnold when next he condescends to edit for us a School Classic, to write a hundred notes as good as the one note on " Little Dicky " (a feeble spark to guide a boy through six of Johnson's Lives) ; and, in particular, to have joined issue with Mr. Aldis Wright, and pleaded the cause of " æsthetic notes," or, as I should prefer to call them, notes on the matter and manner, as opposed to notes on the words. But I am warned by the " World " of this morning, where I see two Principals of Colleges gibbeted for having written school books. " Vous êtes orfèvre, M. Josse." I forbear.

To recapitulate, and keep the discussion (which I have delayed too long) to the point, I will lay down four main theses :—

1. English Literature, as a subject of school teaching, should consist in the perusal of a few of the chief works of a few of our chief classics. Selections may be admitted sparingly. Histories of Literature should be tabooed.
2. English ought to form the main subject in preparatory schools,
3. In the lower forms of higher schools, not less than six hours a week ought to be devoted to English.
4. To provide the necessary time for English, Latin should be begun later, and Greek later still,—not before 14, or, I should prefer 16.

Such is the programme I propose,—a programme which, if carried out, would, I verily believe, work a revolution in education, and turn our " stocks and stubs," our " un-idea'd " athletes, and Jingoos of the Music Halls, into educated gentlemen and good citizens, trained in the school of Milton and of Mill. But I fear that I shall seem to many nothing but a dreamer of dreams.

Mr. Magnus said that the experience he had had in the examination of schools fully bore out the statements of the lecturer. He agreed with him as to utter inade-

quacy of the text-books of literature hitherto published to give any intelligent views of this large subject. Then, as to the setting of a " period " of English literature to be prepared by the candidates of the Local Examinations, he could not conceive what good object could be effected by getting young pupils to learn by heart the dry criticism contained in the text-books manufactured for the purpose. No intellectual training whatever could be got from such a method of study, and teachers should lift up their voices against it. If English literature could be generally taught in the way the lecturer had exhibited in the case of his typical lesson, a valuable intellectual training would be acquired. Professor De Morgan used to say that *any* subject could be made an intellectual study, if treated in the proper way ; but where were the teachers to be found for this sort of work ? He (Mr. Magnus) was inclined to the opinion that elementary science teaching would, on the whole, supply the best kind of training for very young pupils ; but, in the higher classes of a school, there could be no question that the study of the mother tongue and of the national literature should occupy a considerable portion of the time at present devoted to Greek and Latin.

Mr. Wilson regarded as a day-dream the expectation that its due position could be assigned to every one of the manifold subjects that were now being forced on the attention of teachers of the young. Natural science, mathematics, ancient and modern foreign languages, all had their claims, and something must go to the wall. He was of opinion that too much was being attempted, now-a-days, in making the paths of learning easy for the student ; and thus the discipline to be obtained by grappling with difficulties and overcoming them was in danger of being lost. There were other subjects which would, he thought, better call out the mental powers, and sharpen the faculties of boys, than the special study advocated by the lecturer. You could not get a boy really to understand a great author, for whose appreciation not only a fine sense of the niceties of language, but the experience of life, was required. In the process of analysis the delicate fibre of the poetry would be destroyed, and only a verbal knowledge remain. There was no need to force a boy to take an interest in the literature of his own country by making it a task.

Mr. Mast thought that the study of English literature should run like a golden thread through the whole of English child's education. The chief object to be attained was to stir up an intelligent interest in the literary productions of the present and past times. He was of opinion that the practice of public recitations should be encouraged, as well as of committing to memory the best passages of the best authors.

Mr. Bond gave it as the results of experience that the best effects were found to follow from beginning the study of the ancient languages at a later period than usual in the school course ; and when the ground had been prepared by a thorough study of the vernacular, the rate of acquisition of other tongues was found to be greatly accelerated, and the conquest more secure. The question was, what was to be aimed at in the study of English literature in schools—whether the facts, or the thoughts, or the mechanism of the language ? By placing the bare text in the hands of the pupils, by making the lesson an entirely oral one, and bringing out the essential points by active questioning, the subject might be made a good mental gymnastic. Paraphrasing, too, was useful in its place. He thought that it would not be advisable to confine the study to one or two classical works, and leave the rest ; the