

cible, elegant English, not overburdened with learning, containing a strong human interest—narrative, essay, fiction; this, I think, is what we need.

And here perhaps is the most fitting place to say a few words about the Literature for our Third-class teachers. I regarded the introduction of this subject into the examinations for such teachers as a step in the right direction; but why a few extracts are given, and not a continuous work, as in the "Intermediate" in High Schools, is what I cannot understand. It is a great pity: the candidates get a fragment of knowledge here and a fragment there,—nothing complete and connected, nothing satisfactory; no opportunity to become familiar with any one style—a mere patchwork; the pieces in the book are selected at random; there is nothing to recommend them in any one particular—caught up from any source; the language is often the poorest imaginable. And, as if this were not enough, the candidates are liable to be questioned from other parts of the book than those from which the extracts are taken; they must know not only the biography of the writer, however insignificant he may be, but also of his contemporaries. "Notes" on the extract are obtainable as *helps*—nay, rival sets of notes, in which, by the way, the authors strive to shew their own learning, or else *do actually* shew their utter inability to comprehend what literature means. It is necessary at times to yield to prejudice, or to the established order of things; but it should be done under protest, if we believe the prejudice or the established order is wrong.

And then, as further "helps," the same candidates for third-class certificates have "sets of questions." I give a specimen question from one of these "sets" founded on a short extract in the Fifth Reader from a play of Shakspeare. "Name all the plays

of Shakspeare and divide them into tragedies, comedies, and histories." Is it not perfectly amazing that anyone in his senses should propose such a question? Are these candidates supposed to have read over, and studied, the whole of the works of Shakspeare? Or is it that they somewhere are to get a list of the plays with the divisions indicated by the question, and to commit it to memory? If the former is correct, the requirement is absurd; if the latter is the expectation, the knowledge so acquired is utterly valueless. It often seems to me that these candidates for Third-class certificates are like Issachar—an ass crouching between two burder s.

I trust that this injustice to Third-class teachers will soon be remedied, and I hope that prose literature, such as I have indicated, mingled with a fair proportion of poetry, will soon be prescribed for our schools; that Fifth Books and Fourth Books, as now compiled, will soon give place to real literature. I do not wish to blame our educational authorities over much—I fully appreciate the great responsibilities resting upon them; but I should myself be blameworthy if I did not point out what my experience suggests as improvements in the method of teaching literature to the class of teachers to whom I have referred. And, returning from this digression, let me repeat that I think that the object of the study of literature in our schools, is the acquisition by the pupils of good English. As teachers, we are well aware that what our pupils learn should be put to use, if possible, and, therefore, the language obtained by reading should be reproduced by the pupils in compositions.

I confess that I am not able to lay down rules for the acquisition of a good style in writing, or in speaking; indeed nobody can do so—the art is not learned by rule; we can no more