

viction as to the lasting benefit to be derived by young scholars from committing passages to memory, more especially of poetry. Though this is a recognised portion of the regular school work of all grades of schools in Britain, it has been but partially introduced in Ontario. It is but a few years since the Central Committee, after repeated representations, introduced anything worthy of the name of English Literature into the examination of public school teachers. Now we have got so far as to have the study of English classics form a part of the regular High School course, and we are not without hope that as fresh light breaks in upon that body from the minds of the more active members of the profession they will awake to the desirability of recommending an allotted portion of English Literature in some shape to the pupils of our Public Schools. Perhaps it may help them more speedily to an opinion if we quote what Professor Bain says:—"Committing passages to memory, having the great merit of being plain and manageable, is adapted to the lowest teaching capacity, and nobody can say that it is devoid of useful results. It certainly stamps upon the mind the material both of thought and of language, and they must be very hopeless subjects who cannot turn it to some account. . . . Poetry has a natural preference in this exercise. The impressiveness of the measure, and the elevation of the style, the awakening of emotion, favour its hold on the memory. Now a store of remembered poetry is a treasure in itself; its first effect is emotional, and its secondary uses are intellectual; it contains thoughts, images, and language of more or less worth, and such as are capable of taking part in our future intellectual constructions. Impassioned and rhythmical prose holds the next place; if it be inferior in form to poetry, it is yet more likely to be available in our own compositions. . . . If poetry is to be made a task it should be at an early age, when the despotic measures of the school are less taken to heart, and easily effaced. From seven to ten, the mind is in every respect more pliable to this particular work, than from ten to fifteen."—pp. 331-2. "At the age of critical understand-

ing, the committing of pieces at length should give place to the impressing of selected exemplars, in the shape of short sentences or short series of sentences made alive by critical exegesis, or the singling out of merits and defects."—p. 334.

Our author approves of and recommends extensive preliminary exercises in composition, somewhat similar, we should say, to those given in Swinton's "New Language Lessons," before beginning what he calls "the greatly vexed matter of grammar teaching." The uses he claims for Grammar are: 1. The avoidance of the grosser forms of grammatical impropriety. 2. The isolation of the pupil's attention upon the language itself as such. 3. Its aid to readiness, ease, correctness, and effectiveness of composition, since the scholar is led to examine the structure, arrangement, and constituents of the sentence by syntactical parsing, and the analysis of sentences. 4. Its advantage in the departments of Derivation and Inflection, in adding to the pupil's wealth in the vocables of the language. In this enumeration it will be observed, he does not make the slightest recognition of any benefit to the mind from the intellectual exercise involved in the study. He has no word of encouragement for those who would teach Grammar without a text book, and he supports his opinion by cogent arguments which he thus concludes:—"The grammar teacher working without books, either tacitly uses some actual grammar, or else works upon a crude, untested, irresponsible grammar of his own shaping."—p. 345. He gives but faint praise to the tracing of words to their ancient originals, observing that: "present meaning and use are the only guidance to the employment of the language; the reference to archaic forms may sometimes account for a usage but can never control it." In regard to the formal teaching of Composition, he does not approve of Theme writing for young pupils, remarking with much truth, "the finding of matter requires more than one-half of the student's attention, which is diverted from what is of far more importance—the style." He considers the