

strongly urge the extension of such reasonable latitude to the teachers in our Collegiate Institutes and High Schools as shall leave room for the full play of capacity in a good teacher. The mere drudge will readily comply, in a more or less perfunctory manner, with any rules formulated by the Department; and plod on in a daily round of prescribed tasks. But to any man gifted with the innate capacity of a teacher, such restrictions are impediments instead of helps. I cannot doubt that to the ablest of our High School teachers the restriction of their reading to prescribed fragments of authors dictated to them, is peculiarly irksome; and the limitation of examination for pupils at the close of their High School course to such texts is most objectionable. They have been drilled and crammed till they know their answers by heart, while some of them would be baffled by a like examination on any subsequent page of the same author. Some general scheme of study and examination is indispensable for the guidance both of teachers and examiners; but reasonable latitude is required for the exercise of intelligent judgment by both.

It would be unjust to our educational authorities to overlook the fact that important steps have been taken towards a greater simplification of the school programme. In 1871 no less than nineteen subjects were prescribed for the first four forms in the Public Schools, whereas they have since been reduced to twelve. Yet even now the tendency, under the influence of social reformers actuated by the highest motives, to encroach upon the limited school hours with hygienic physiology, scientific temperance, and other extraneous subjects of a like character, requires to be very judiciously restrained; or we shall be compelled to fall back on the simple rule of "the three R's," as the only escape from a

multiplicity of subjects, and the neglect of the essential elements of general education. It is a fact, of which many educational reformers seem still to be in ignorance, that the adding a subject to the prescribed programme is no guarantee that it will, or can be, overtaken in the studies of the school.

Some little indignation appears to have been excited by an inaccurate report of remarks made by me at a recent meeting of "The Modern Languages Association" on certain slovenly defects in Canadian English. One, to which I was led to refer, quite incidentally, when discussing the character of the Anglo-Saxon verb, is the common confusion of the *shall* and *will*; another is the indifference to the distinction between *these* and *those*. Again, the prevalent Americanism of dispensing with prepositions seems to me to be on the increase. But besides such obvious errors, the test of prose composition cannot fail to furnish to a good teacher the best opportunities for dealing with all the essential niceties of grammar. The very blunders of the pupil supply to the teacher more useful examples on which to base instruction than he can readily find in any other way.

It may be more difficult to define a good test system of examination in English literature; yet here also experience suggests the avoidance of obscure and minute niceties. Some examiners seem to imagine they have achieved a triumph when they hunt up some unheeded foot-note, or hit upon a little detail of history unknown to anybody but themselves. Three or four broad questions, offering to the candidate a fair opportunity of showing what general knowledge he possesses on the literary history of the prescribed period, will allow the thoroughly informed student to give evidence of his mastery of the subject; and will no less surely expose the ignor-