

our pupils to turn passages of Milton and other writers of verse into prose; but, leaving out of the question for the present the utterly destructive effect of this practice, it may be asked how the limited vocabulary and the still more limited knowledge of style will permit of this task being well done? As teachers, we may feel provoked—and in this respect I don't go far from home—and *show* what we feel, at the very poor success that almost always attends these efforts at prose renderings, even when we say that the words of the text are to be used as far as possible. The reason of the failure lies in the lack of an adequate knowledge of language on the pupil's part, from a cause already indicated. I am not merely theorising; I speak to a large extent from practical experience. I lately gave to the "Intermediate" class the speech of Belial, in the Second Book of "Paradise Lost," to turn into prose; three readings alone were fair, and each of these was the production of an ardent reader—they were boys under fifteen—while the renderings by bearded men in the same class were poor. It must be borne in mind that we teachers are not to set *ourselves* up as model writers, nor to make our prose renderings models for imitation; because this would strongly tend to destroy any special independent turn of mind in our pupils and fashion them mentally after the model of ourselves. Of course, in this case, there is the probability of some scholar getting a deeper and clearer glance than we obtain, using a more felicitous expression than we do—a circumstance that I, for one, would rejoice at, though in bestowing commendation, there might be present just a little annoyance at being surpassed: none of us like to be beaten!

Again: Bad English is by no means of necessity ungrammatical English; indeed grammar has but

little to do with good English;—I might even risk the assertion, though it may seem paradoxical, that good English may be ungrammatical. The smooth flow of the sentence; the full, rounded period; the felicity of expression; and the accurate use of words, by which the thought of the writer or the speaker is clearly transferred to the minds of others—all this is entirely independent of formal grammar. Now the study of poetry will undoubtedly have a decided tendency to impart felicity of style and strength of expression; but the flow of the poetical period is different from the flow of the prose one, and except with the master poets, accuracy of expression often has to yield to the demands of measure and rhyme.

Poetry is not then a safe guide in the acquisition of language, grand as may be the thought that it enwraps, and happy as may be its phrases. It is to prose rather that we must chiefly look.

But here now the question meets us, "What books shall we use?" Not "*Readers*," not books of "elegant extracts;" but short complete works, characteristic of their author, both in thought and language; not essays such as Macaulay's on Milton, or the one on Clive, or any other of his historical essays; for although these may display the characteristics of the author, yet the amount of previous knowledge they require to appreciate them and even to make them comprehensible to the young student, will completely over-shadow the language, overlay it with a load of learning, and turn the book into a history, and a disconnected one to a great degree, at that. But we should have such essays as Addison's, Goldsmith's, Lamb's, De Quincey's—or those of numerous other writers. It is needless for me to particularize—the store is practically inexhaustible—works characteristic of their authors, of pure, for-