

Dickens, the seventh, historical, the eighth, patriotic; and in the High School the earlier English writers with Milton and Shakespeare. Let the reading and study be systematic, and the examinations as regular as in other branches of study, and then the seeds of a taste for literature and of literary habits have been early planted, and the plant having had time for growth before the pupil leaves the schools, he will be more likely to read when he goes from us." A committee of the Association has been appointed to report on a plan for carrying into effect these suggestions.

If such a course as I have outlined be given in the Public School, the High School master will no longer have reason to complain that he has no foundation whereon to build, and that he is unable to begin his proper work until he has given an elementary training which should have been obtained in the Public Schools.

I have concerned myself mainly with the Public Schools; but, in view of the recent strictures on the teaching of literature, I know that I shall be pardoned if I say a few words respecting the methods practically forced upon the High School by the character of the examinations.

What do the best books do for us? Do they not introduce us to best thoughts of the best men? Should not then the *thought* of the author be the central idea of the teaching, and other matters secondary? Have we not been studying books about literature rather than literature itself? Has not the editor occupied our attention almost as much as the writer? Is it the author or the commentator whom we are endeavouring to know? Literature is itself and not annotations. Let us saturate the student's mind with the fine spirit of a poem rather than lumber his brain with philological minutiae. Let us cease

"hammering" away continually at points of grammar and etymology, and spend our force on the sense and meaning of what is read. "When common people," says Hudson, "read Shakespeare, it is not to learn etymology, or grammar, or philosophy, or lingual antiquities, or criticisms, or the technicalities of scholarship, but to learn Shakespeare himself; to understand the things he puts before them, to take in his thought, to taste his wisdom, to feel his beauty, to be kindled by his fire, to be refreshed with his humour, to glow with his rapture, and to be stolen from themselves and transported into his moral and intellectual whereabouts; in a word, to live, breathe, think and feel with him." And he adds: "I am so simple and old fashioned as to hold that, in so reading the poet, they are putting him to the very best and highest use of which he is capable. All of which means, to be sure, that far more real good will come, even to the mind, by foolishly enjoying Shakespeare than by learnedly parsing him." Elizabeth Barrett Browning makes "Aurora Leigh" say:

"We get no good
By being ungenerous, even to a book,
And calculating profits
It is rather when
We gloriously forget ourselves and plunge
Soul forward, headlong, into a book's
profound,
Impassioned for its beauty and salt of
truth—
'Tis then we get the right good from a
book."

Our examiners hold different views, however, if we are to judge by their papers, and as I heard an English master say, "we accordingly parse and analyse and give the derivation of words, and criticise the language if we can. We explain historical and other references, and give some literary history — the result being an absolute killing of any taste of literature that may have existed in the