

scene or action or figure from their poem. It induces a close examination of what the poem actually says; it causes the formation of definite, clear mental images; it allows the pupil to use in expressing himself that kind of language most intelligible to the young—pictures; and it affords the teacher an excellent means of testing how far the pupils have understood what has been described. Often enough the pictures are awkward, hard to understand, very droll indeed. Don't laugh at them—at least, while the children are present. Try to understand them, to be able to read them. It will be worth your while as teachers, for this is one of the best means I know of for finding out the contents of children's minds—yes, and of adult minds too. Moreover, remember that many (especially novices in the use of language) can express even in the clumsiest diagram or outline what they cannot express in any other way.

Allusions.—There are two points to be attended to in dealing with allusions, viz., the origin from whence the allusion is drawn and the application of the allusion to the context in which it is used. Teachers and annotators of text-books are usually careful enough about the former point; but the latter they frequently omit altogether. To take a few instances: When the Elder Brother in "Cosmos" calls for "some gentle taper" to be his "Star of Arcady or Tyrian Cynosure," it is not sufficient to give an account of Calisto, daughter of Lycaon, King of Arcadia, and of her being changed into the constellation of the Greater Bear, while her son Arcas was changed into that of the Lesser Bear or Cynosure. We still require to be told that the brother is asking for a light or star to steer by. Indeed, the latter information is the more important of the two. The same remark applies to what is

usually dragged in the wake of such expressions as "Bellona's bridegroom," "caviare to the general," "it out herods Herod," and the like. The last named is sometimes a peculiarly unhappy instance of mistaken learning. Under "Herod" we are usually given a short biography—not always of the right Herod. Unfortunately, the reference is not to the historical Herod at all—has nothing to do with the massacre of the Innocents—the reference is to the Herod of the Miracle Play, a blustering ranting character; and the phrase only means "it out-rants the greatest ranter." This we usually are not told. So again, Keats'

"She could have ta'en
Achilles by the hair and bent his neck"

does not need a long account of the Trojan War; nor does Gray's

"Some mute inglorious Milton here may
rest"

require a life of the great Puritan poet. In the former case, what we have to bring out is the idea of size and strength; in the latter, "Milton" is used as the term for a poet notably neither mute nor inglorious. This mistake runs through a great variety of degrees, and is closely akin to that constantly made when dealing with similes—everything is told you except what would make the meaning and beauty of the simile clear.

Words and Phrases.—If in our work with our class we meet with a very rare and antiquated word, its meaning, I think, had better be given at once. If there is anything very striking in its derivation, and if this be really to the point, this may perhaps be added. So, when little Ellie sends to her warrior lover "a white rosebud for a guerdon," we may explain guerdon as a gift for warlike service, referring to the French if the children know that language. "Saturnine," a rare word for children, may be made