

representatives to the Senate, and these representatives should be placed in a position to speak with authority in the matter. If they are left uninformed as to the prevailing wish of the teachers they must be left to express and act upon their own views as masters, and the rest of the Senate must be left to determine what weight should be attached to their individual opinions.

Let me add here a plea, as strongly urged as brevity will permit, in favor of continued variety in the texts selected for matriculation. The teaching of English poetry will never be what it should be until our English masters have a wide acquaintance with poetry outside of the prescribed work of the year. This is the most important and indispensable of all qualifications; how is it to be obtained? It is easy to say that the teachers should privately read widely in poetical literature, but I know enough of high school work to be quite sure that we need not expect, and ought not to assume that men and women, overworked as our English masters are, will to very great extent devote their leisure time to this purpose. Their natural inclination will be to resort to some other form of recreation as a means of counteracting the evil effects of nervous tension, and the impulse to do so is right as well as natural.

A better way of solving the difficulty is to keep changing the English authors from year to year so long as fairly good selections can be made. If I have my way this year, not one of the poets of the current quinquennium will find a place in the next one. Just think of the difference in qualification between a teacher who in ten years has taught the poetry of ten different poets and one who has been kept going the round of three, even if those three are indisputably pre-eminent. By affording the maximum of variety to the teachers we are doing the very best thing for

the pupils, even if we admit that the texts selected are of varying degrees of excellence. I know of nothing so likely as an uncultured teacher of English to keep the class-study of poetry from rising into something higher than the merest common-place—so unlikely to create in the minds of pupils an enthusiasm for poetry as a means of recreation for after life.

I intend to propose, as a member the Senate's committee on the matriculation programme, that the work for the next few years be selected from Bryant, Whittier and Lowell, in America, and from such British poets as Cowper, Burns, Goldsmith, Gray, Campbell, Byron, Moore, Coleridge, Shelley, Keats, Arnold, Browning, and Mrs. Browning. It may be found expedient to select from two authors for one year's reading, but a little variety in that matter may do no harm. I know, as a member of the Senate committee which first suggested the one-author-a-year system, that the aim then was to minimize biographical and bibliographical side reading, but to prescribe selections from two authors in one year would not open a very wide door for injudicious treatment by either teachers or examiners, and it is moreover quite apparent that the tendency to attach undue importance to side reading is not at present very pronounced. Much progress has been made during the past few years in the treatment of English poetry in schools. It is important that the reform so well begun should be allowed to develop, and it is just because I think continued variety of selections is the best means of securing progress in this direction that I have resolved to oppose such a limitation of choice as Dr. Alexander hints at.

WM. HOUSTON.

Toronto, April, 1893.