

the class, the lesson is closed and history or geometry comes to the fore. And yet no subject is more pleasing, more refining, none so subtle and potent an influence for good on morals and manners as this one. It polishes the ideas, broadens the conception of the human mind and human speech and is one of the truest of educators. Nor is any of the mental equipment with which the pupil approaches it wasted. His knowledge of botany, history, geography, music is taxed to contribute to his appreciation of an English lesson. Not only is the three years' high school course in English important for itself but also for the love of books which it can foster. In the rush of subjects which jostle each other on our time-tables, do we keep our sense of real values true enough to put the due time and emphasis on English literature? I shall make a few suggestions, which are suggestions merely. They are offered more from the standpoint of the student than that of the teacher.

English literature is *not* a scientific subject, but perhaps more of the scientific method enters into the proper teaching of it than we suppose. We would not expect the pupil, who had never been taught interest to work questions on true discount. How are we to take up Gray's Bard and Milton's Sonnets with a class which cannot properly define words used in every newspaper and magazine, and which cannot compose a grammatical, fluent, and properly punctuated paragraph? From the time the six-year-old enters Grade I his work along the lines of language, his grammar, reading and composition should be so thorough and so exact as to stand the test of the classic that may be imposed in Grade IX. It seems to one that this foundation for the intelligent study of English contains some elements so necessary that we might well bestow a little thought on each, since success in the teaching of literature is not the result of chance any more than success in teaching chemistry.

(1) The importance of grammar is at once so plain that it is not apt to be slighted in public schools and pupils advanced into Grade IX generally have a good working knowledge of the English sentence. This subject, then, may be dismissed with a passing mention as one of the fundamentals.

(2) Would that the same might be said of the next point in our list. Vocabulary with definitions! Why is it that many boys and girls in advanced departments throughout the country, who can spell

long lists of words of three or four syllables very well, never use these words either in speech or composition? Because they are either uncertain or ignorant of their meaning. If we inquire the reason of this, let us consider that a child learns words largely from reading; but if the school reader which he studies contains no definitions he disregards the meaning and simply learns the spelling and pronunciation of unfamiliar words which therefore do not become a vital part of his vocabulary. The old Royal Readers were superseded by the present series about eight years ago. The selections in the latter are good, but no better than the others. What has become of the neat lists of unfamiliar words at the head of each lesson, followed by their definition, which slowly and surely increased the pupils' vocabulary better than the dictionary or oral teaching can do it? No doubt the teacher explains the meanings of these words, but how many of the class will remember them a week later? No doubt the dictionary does very well for the high school, but how many pupils before entering high school are going to consult it for every word which they do not know? Why dispense with those valuable pages of the old Readers containing the long lists of words, derived from foreign roots, from names of people, from names of places, couplets of words similar in sound but different in meaning, all of which gave the Grade VIII pupil a good conception of the depth, scope and possibilities of the English language which he must now wait to get later on or do without. This is not work for the reasoning faculty but purely for the memory, and as such is far better given in preparation for the high school. A new school-book may be cheaper than the old one, but if it is not also an improvement on it, it represents a false standard of economy. However, it does not do to be too critical, and I realize that I have to plead guilty to the charge of extreme partiality for the old Royal Readers, having been brought up on them.

(3) Punctuation is a part of language training which is almost wholly overlooked. How much faulty reading and worse writing shows that the pupil does not grasp the purpose served by the dash, parenthesis, semicolon, comma. If the teacher would teach two careful lessons on each punctuation mark and its functions, giving a few composition exercises on the same, I believe he or she will