

read within the past year, and in one class sixty-four biographical sketches were given by the pupils to their classmates, and the constant allusion to other lives than those under actual discussion led to a wide field of further research. Let me say here, that in a class in United States History, I would not confine the biographical to our own country, but would encourage the children to read and recite sketches of noted personages of other countries and of different ages. If the method briefly indicated above be pursued the class will become enthusiastic in the subject of history, and will gain a vast amount of valuable information of which they would otherwise remain in ignorance; but, above all, they will form the habit of and a taste for reading good books, which will remain with them through life.

And another mistake consists in giving too much time in the reading lesson to mere imitative reading, and not enough to logical analysis—to ascertaining the meaning of the words and sentences. Children should be impressed with the fact that the principal object of reading is to obtain the ideas and thoughts of others, and therefore they should early accustom themselves to ascertaining the meaning of what they read, that in word, no sentence may be passed over without being understood. Let me say that the dictionary should be the almost constant companion of the pupil of our Grammar and High Schools. Would you neglect the elocutionary side of the subject? I am asked. By no means. No one places a higher value on elocution, on the beautiful rendering of the reading lesson, than I do; but I insist that it is the duty of the teacher to see that the passage is thoroughly understood by the pupils before she attempts to drill them in the elocution.

I will close this part of my essay by referring to the fact that the almost universal tendency in this country, of late years, has been to crowd too much into the High School course by putting in subjects which properly belong to Colleges and Universities. To attempt, as I said in one of my annual reports, to make the High School a substitute for the College and University, must result in failure. The pupils are too young. They have not the maturity of mind required to comprehend thoroughly such a course of study. In my opinion, much of the present opposition to the High School system is directly due to this cause. To remedy the defects, and make the High Schools more efficient and popular, there should be a more judicious selection of studies, and much more time should be given to English Literature and to Composition. At least one lesson per day should be devoted to these subjects throughout the entire course.

GENIUS OF LITERATURE.

Morality—if under this head may be placed honesty, patriotism, and goodwill to men—ought to come within the scope of school work, for morality in this sense is the dearest element of the good citizen, and the good citizen is the prime object of education. Our country has less lack of intelligence than of public honesty and private fair dealing, less lack of knowledge than of inclination toward a noble life—which facts show that something in the present order of society is either fundamentally wrong or deplorably weak. But where shall we seek a remedy? When and how begin to mend? The subject of moral progress does not belong solely to the religious world. It is not altogether a matter of religion; it is a matter of that good sense, that idea of public utility which considers the welfare of the immediate present, and looks with a benevolent eye to an improved manhood in the future. For morality is almost as beautiful when viewed as a guiding element to man in this world's transactions as it is when viewed as an essential to happiness in the world to come.

We cannot serve the future of this world in a better way than in taking care of the present of the children. It is in our power

greatly to elevate the world in morals. We can do this by introducing into our present educational system a factor whose object shall be to give the proper direction to the child's thoughts—to implant in his mind correct conceptions of the world and his place in it—true ideas of his duty to his neighbor and his country, and of his relations to the inferior world around him, which, sinking deeper and deeper and deeper with each generation, shall eventually supplant evil, and leave a soul worthy of the inspection of gods. "As a man thinketh, so is he." Children should be led to think properly, that they may be enabled to act justly and generously. And it would be far safer both for them and the community if their acts were directed by fixed principles rather than by sudden and untrustworthy impulses. Now, as it is undeniable that to many the age of maturity does not bring with it those established ideas of right and wrong—those healthy conceptions which characterize the model citizen—I for one feel the necessity for a new feature in education, whose object shall be advancement in a moral way. I consider it our duty to attempt what I have indicated above. We owe it to the pupils as being our fellow-creatures; to the State, as being essential to that good citizenship which is the first object of free education.

The question is as to the method. My idea, as many of you know, is to make use of the gems of literature.

The literature of the world embodies a universal moral creed. In its fulness here and there may be found the holy teachings of the Bible in language pleasing to the ear of youth, and in form adapted to his understanding. It inculcates all the substantial teachings of the Scriptures without awakening the suspicion that the private realm of devotional form is to be invaded.

A broad-minded selection of noble passages, though it may not be able to do all we could wish in a moral way, can certainly do much to raise men to a high moral, political and social plane. It may not make men prayerful, but it can make them respectful and respectable. It may not give them the wisdom of statesmen, but it can make them intelligent voters and fervent patriots. It may not fit them for a future life, but it can do much toward making this one pleasant to themselves and for their fellow-men. It can put a light into their hearts that will illumine many of earth's darkest places.

I believe that gems of literature introduced into our schools, if properly taught, will be able to do these things, partly by their own directive influence on the young mind, but principally as being such a draft upon the fountain of higher literature as shall result in an abiding thirst for noble reading. The right kind of reading will induce the right kind of thinking, and proper thinking will insure correct acting.

What harmony the introduction of literature into our schools assures us! The religious world will get from it all it ever asked or expected of the Bible. The secular world will get from it nothing it could possibly object to. At the shrine of noble thoughts the devotees of all creeds may bow as brothers. Let the public schools be the instrument of forming this common love for the noble and beautiful, and who but will acknowledge they have performed a work of greatest utility to man, and added a thousand-fold to their present value as factors in human progress. Heretofore the boy's education has been no broader than his business expectations—his happiness as a man and his worth as a citizen have not been taken into account. The principles are too narrow for an age that is looking for good men as well as for good accountants and grammarians. They are unnecessarily narrow; they leave broad fields of noble soil untilled, and this soil must be tilled to bear fruit. For example, a man cannot be a patriot, except negatively, until he has been led to understand and value patriotism. But on abstract or grand subjects like patriotism, there is