

in so securely as the memory of a school boy or a school girl." It is also in accord with the advice of Arthur Helps, who says, "We should lay up in our minds a store of goodly thoughts in well-wrought words, which shall be a living treasure of knowledge always with us, and from which, at various times, and amidst all the shifting of circumstances, we may be sure of drawing some comfort, guidance, and sympathy."

The idea of its introduction is not new in the history of education. In a similar manner the Germans have been long in the habit of training their children in the knowledge and admiration of the literature of their own land. The Arabs, the most civilized nation of the ancient world, taught their young to repeat the undying thoughts of their poets, under the beautiful name of "unstrung pearls."

Plato pictures the boys on long benches in the schools of Greece, receiving moral instruction through learning and reciting the poetry of her classic authors.

For the greater part, the selections for the younger children should consist of entire pieces, and of such as are calculated to develop their emotional natures—the imagination, love of home and parents, kindness to dumb animals, etc.,—and to give them correct rules of action. Those for the more advanced pupils should consist principally of brief extracts, containing grand and ennobling thoughts calculated to incite them to higher aspirations in life, to lead them into pure fields of English literature, and to teach them to love and reverence our great authors. In the selection of gems, poetry has the preference, for it inculcates a double beauty—beauty of thought and beauty of composition. It is more easily committed, and as a rule longer retained. "The taste for harmony, the poetical

ear," says Miss Aiken, "if ever acquired, is so almost in infancy. The flow of numbers easily impresses itself on the memory, and is with difficulty erased. By the aid of a verse, a store of beautiful imagery and glowing sentiment may be gathered up as the amusement of childhood, which in riper years may beguile the heavy hours of languor, solitude, and sorrow; may enforce sentiments of piety, humility, and tenderness; may soothe the soul to calmness, rouse it to honorable exertions, or fire it with virtuous indignation."

"They who have known what it is," remarks Willmott, in the "Pleasures of Literature," "when afar from books, in solitude, or in travelling, or in intervals of worldly care, to feed on poetical recollections, to recall the sentiments and images which retain by association the charm that early years once gave them, will feel the inestimable value of committing to memory, in the prime of its power, what it will receive and indelibly retain. He who has drunk from the pure springs of intellect in his youth will continue to draw from them in the heat, the burden, and the decline of the day. The corrupted streams of popular entertainment flow by him unregarded."

The great Coleridge says, "Poetry has been to me 'an exceeding great reward.' It has soothed my afflictions; it has multiplied and refined my enjoyments; it has endeared my solitude; and it has given me the habit of wishing to discover the good and beautiful in all that meets and surrounds me."

All the selections should be recited in concert and individually from the platform.

You are aware that years ago it was almost the universal custom for teachers to set apart Friday afternoon for declamation; but the exercise in declamation differed widely