

ENGLISH LITERATURE IN SCHOOLS—HOW THE TEACHER AND THE EXAMINER SHOULD DEAL WITH IT.

(Continued from March Number.)

• **PARAPHRASING.**—There is frequently so much misunderstanding connected with the meaning of the term "paraphrasing," that I must ask leave to treat the matter somewhat fully. I have called it the complete interpretation of passages. I might also call it an exercise in thought-reading. It is not a rearrangement or change of words which is demanded, but the unpacking and exhibiting clearly and at large of the whole meaning of a passage which, in the author in question, is expressed in a brief and condensed or figurative form, or perhaps, at times, rather suggested than expressed. It requires in the pupil a knowledge of the real force of the allusions, and of the bearing of the passage as a whole on its context, and the occasion on which it is used. It requires an appreciation of the exact force and intention of the metaphors, similes and epithets, and a consciousness of that associated meaning or colour which certain words and phrases acquire, and which are brought out most distinctly in the contrasts between so-called synonyms. It is only when this knowledge of, this insight into, what the author desires to convey to us has been sought for and gained that we are in a position to truly appreciate, and really delight in, the art and beauty of his mode of expression. To ascertain whether our pupils have gained this knowledge and insight, we must require them to tell us what the passage has told them. This exercise in giving outward expression to the thoughts and feelings which they have made their own is of great value educationally. We do not substitute our much

lesser selves for Milton or Bacon, but strive to observe, understand and feel the power and beauty of their language; nor is there a better way than the exercise proposed to "prevent a boy from contenting himself with that vague knowledge which is not knowledge at all, but mere impression supported by dim disconnected images, or, it may be, by the mere musical sounds or rhythm of the language." Let me take a particular instance—from Wordsworth:

"I have learned
To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes
The still sad music of humanity."

What we want our pupils to do is to think out and tell us in their own way—but in a connected statement—what is meant by the metaphor "music of humanity," and why this music is said to be "still sad," and in what respects the attitude of mind implied in this, differs from that "in thoughtless youth," and why this newly acquired power is also a "joy." When these things have been grasped, and understood, and stated, then, and not till then, shall we be able to appreciate the skill and beauty with which Wordsworth has expressed the ideas.

There is another mode of interpretation which I have used in literature-teaching with the happiest results—the translation of word-pictures into form-pictures by means of drawing, or, as I prefer to call it, "graphic representation." We make no demand for art in such work; and the exercise can be used with the youngest pupils. It consists in requiring the pupils to "represent" on paper a