

WE are requested by the Educational Department to announce that the following selections from the Literature prescribed for third class teachers non-professional examinations, will be repeated for 1887-8:

*Prose.*

No. XV.—Addison—The Golden Scales, pp. 88-92.

No. XXII.—Goldsmith—From "The Vicar of Wakefield," pp. 127-133.

No. LXIII.—Thackeray—The Reconciliation, pp. 308-315.

No. LXXIV.—George Eliot—From "The Mill on the Floss," pp. 356-359.

*Poetry.*

No. LXVII.—Longfellow—The Hanging of the Crane, pp. 336-342.

No. LXXIX.—Tennyson—The Lord of Burleigh, pp. 370-372.

No. LXXXI.—Tennyson—The Revenge, pp. 373-377.

No. CV.—E. W. Gosse—The Return of the Swallows, pp. 437-438.

PRESIDENT DWIGHT says that he cannot help feeling that "the great defect of the past and the present education lies in the want of personal and individual intercourse between the teacher and his pupils—inmediate contact of the mind of the former with the mind of the latter—in such a degree as is to be desired for the pupil's highest inspiration. Our system of education, which has been growing in popularity of late in all our higher institutions of learning, places the student far too much in a kind of great machine, where his individuality is lost in the working of the machinery. It is the mind and the man which we need to develop, and to this end something more than textbooks and examinations are necessary." This is a most important truth. The main cause of the defect lies in the fact of the great disproportion in numbers between teachers and pupils. The ideal system of education, whether in school or college, would be, to our thinking, that in which each educator had to do with not more than from half a dozen to a dozen pupils at once. In the crowding and confusion of the fifties and the hundreds, the individuality of the pupil is in a large measure lost sight of, and the power that would be engendered by close personal contact is dissipated. Moreover, in the Public Schools an immense amount of time is lost to both teacher and pupil in the management and movement of the ponderous machinery. We do not know that there is any help for it, save in the case of those who are able and willing to pay for more and better teachers. It is better that the masses should have these imperfect advantages than none at all.

QUITE a little war is being waged by some of our United States contemporaries over the vexed spelling-book question. The radical reformers condemn, as behind the age, every form of the spelling-book which requires children to spell "words from columns, words which are out of their connections, and which mean nothing to the speller." They contend that the art of spelling is to be learned from the reading-books, where the meanings of words are indicated by their connection and use. This is going to the extreme. We have no doubt that the ordinary pupil learns both the forms and the meanings of words

mainly from reading. The philosophical teacher will make a note of this fact, and so conduct his class exercises as to cultivate the habit of observation in this direction. Spelling is learned chiefly by the eye, and the ease with which some pupils learn to spell is, no doubt, mainly attributable to their keen perceptive faculties, using that term in its literal rather than figurative sense. But these faculties can be trained and sharpened, and the series of exercises which compels a pupil to observe closely both the forms and meanings of words in the printed page is the most valuable lesson in both reading and spelling.

If it were true, as some of the iconoclasts contend, that the ordinary reading of the pupil will cover the vocabulary which he will need to use in after life, we should join them in crying "Away with the spelling-book in every form." But is this true? Far from it. It will be admitted that in order to be an average English scholar, one must know how to spell the whole vocabulary in common use in books, letters, and speech. Now it is well known that every writer has his own peculiar vocabulary, and that the vocabulary of even the most versatile master of the language includes but a small part of the words in actual use. Hence it follows that the pupil whose knowledge of words is confined to the range of his reading-books must fall far short of having a knowledge of the language. Moreover, each writer is likely to use a number of words which can scarcely be said to be in common use, and reason would suggest that the time of the average pupil would be much more profitably employed in acquainting himself with a well chosen list of words in common use, than in fixing in memory the uncommon few which may appear in the pages of a few individual writers.

BUT how about the columns? We are strongly disposed to draw a line here. We confess to a horror of the long, dry, lists of words in columns, dissociated from all connection with other words, which appear in the ordinary spelling-books. We can think of few drearier tasks than conning by rote such lists. And it is as unintellectual as dreary; no mental power, save memory, is necessarily called into play. Instruction in spelling is as capable of being reduced to a science as any other pedagogical work. The model speller is the book which combines in sentences and paragraphs, either borrowed from a great variety of authors or constructed for the purpose, the whole vocabulary of English words in common use by good speakers and writers—all those words, we mean, which present any orthographical difficulty. Nor should such a book be put into a pupil's hands to be pored over and have its contents painfully memorized. As before said, the main thing is to cultivate the power and habit of observation. In order to do this let the pupil be asked to read over the paragraph or the page carefully once or twice, and then let him be asked to reproduce it, sometimes from memory, sometimes from dictation. The child of average ability will soon learn to detect by his eye anything wrong or unusual in the spelling of a word. When the habit is formed it will be carried with him in all his reading and writing—and every pupil should be required to do much of the latter—and he will