

many more whose names and books are still green in our memory. We must write in distinct characters over this division, the *Puritan Influence*. This period extends from 1649 to 1660, but the Puritan influence was felt in literature both before and after those dates.

In the latter year Charles II., who had been luxuriating in the gay court of Louis XIV., was restored to the throne of his ancestors, and his bad example brought many dissipations into England. There was a sudden and marked change in fashions, morals and literature. The Puritans and their sober black dress were ridiculed. The theatres, which they had closed, were opened. Lady Castelmaine, Mrs. Stewart and Nell Gwynne presented examples of voluptuous sensuality, which the minor members of court circles were not slow to imitate. But literature was marked by the debasing writing of the comic dramatists whom Macaulay has held up to deserved obloquy, and much of the other literature was also sensualized. Still there was purity in the nation. When Charles II. landed on his native soil he was presented with a costly copy of the Bible, and, in deference to the better sentiments of his subjects, the royal hypocrite kissed the sacred volume, declaring that he loved it above everything else. Could he have paid a greater compliment to the true nature of the honest English heart?

From 1660 to 1700, however, example proved stronger than precept, and our literature, instead of being sober, manly, deep, and earnest, became frivolous, effeminate, superficial, and trifling.

The next change showed a state of affairs entirely new. The essays of Addison and his associates, addressed to the higher classes, appear to have begotten the newspaper addressed to the people. The son of a non-conformist butcher, who was, of course, shut out from the public schools and universities, obtained an insight of life and nature, and wrote for the people with boldness and acceptance. From the days of Daniel Defoe to the present time, the people have not wanted champions, nor have they been slow to assert their rights, and their influence is manifest in the publications from 1700 to the present time. Popular taste has not always made the same demands upon authors, and we shall be interested to trace the changes in the standard of literary excellence during this, which we may call the period of the *People's Influence*.

The years between 1700 and 1745 were those of the literary life of Alexander Pope, who attained a somewhat exceptional popularity. He aimed at elegance and finish in composition as good in themselves, and without being a truly great man or writer, his example made a mark upon the literature of the day. We may, therefore, speak of this as the *Age of Pope*.

The central light in literary circles in England from 1745 to 1800, was Samuel Johnson. He wrote with earnestness and force, and in a peculiar style, all of which characteristics he impressed upon much of the literature of the time. Let us call this the *Age of Johnson*.

The first generation of the present century saw a galaxy of poetical writers arise and flourish. They were influenced to some extent by the new romantic school of Germany, which aimed to overthrow the artificial and pedantic style, which effort was of beneficial influence. We shall call this the *Age of Poetical Romance*.

The year 1830 saw the downfall of Charles X. in France, and the death of the last of the Georges in England, and, during the years that have passed since, the advance of the world in freedom and material prosperity has been greater than in any former period of the same duration. This material progress has given tone to literature. We cannot now continue the discussion, and must be satisfied with the general remark that no department of letters has progressed so rapidly as that of *Prose Romance*, to which the original impetus was given by Sir Walter Scott in his ever famous *Waverley Novels*.

Let us now look over our alcoves, and see how we have systematized the books on our shelves. The divisions are few and simple.

First, there are two grand periods of *Immaturity and Maturity*, corresponding with the stages of growth in the realm of Nature, which are marked by the year of Queen Elizabeth's accession in 1558.

In the first of these we found four stages of growth.

- I. *Original English*, previous to 1150.
- II. *Broken English*, 1150—1250.
- III. *Dead English*, 1250—1350.
- IV. *Reviving English*, 1350—1558.

In the second grand division we also marked four stages of growth, named from the influences by which they were caused.

- I. *The Italian Influence*, 1558—1649.
- II. *The Puritan Influence*, 1649—1660.
- III. *The French Influence*, 1660—1700.
- IV. *The People's Influence*, 1700—1870.

The last of these sub-divisions we found convenient to consider under its four aspects.

- I. *The Age of Pope*, 1700—1745.
- II. *The Age of Johnson*, 1745—1800.
- III. *The Age of Poetical Romance*, 1800—1830.
- IV. *The Age of Prose Romance*, 1830—1870.

These divisions are natural, and being in groups of four, easily remembered. Let us take them up one after another and examine them more minutely. The schedule we have delineated shall constitute the *pre-nomen* which Lord Bacon recommends every one to

establish at the outset of an investigation. "Without such an antecedent general apprehension," says Dr. Shedd in his *Philosophy of History*, "the mind is at a loss where to begin, and which way to proceed. The true idea of any object, is a species of preparatory knowledge which throws light over the whole field of inquiry, and introduces an orderly method into the whole course of examination. It is the clue which leads through the labyrinth; the key to the problem to be solved."

Let us keep our key in mind, and the labyrinth of literature will be plain and easily comprehended.

ARTHA GILMAN.

## TEACHING.

THE criticism is frequently made in regard to our public schools, that there is but little teaching done in them. The school machinery is brought to a wonderful state of perfection, and run under a high pressure; but the production is simply so much text-book. A high class-average on a text-book examination is the end and aim of all school work.

That this criticism applied sweepingly to our schools is unjust we well know; yet there is some foundation for it. All acquainted with the general working of our school system know that much which passes for teaching is not teaching, and none know it better than teachers themselves, and none deplore it more than do many of them.

They who thus criticize are apt to charge this narrowness of purpose and lowness of aim upon the teachers. But it must be remembered that but few public school teachers are free to arrange the course of study for their schools, or free even to make the assigned course subserve what may seem to them the best interests of their scholars. They are parts of a system, and must do the prescribed work. Every city and large town must have its pyramid of schools, its sides sloping up from the primary through the grammar to its apex, the high. In cities large enough to admit of such regular gradation, this pyramid must be built up in steps; so many rise to the primary, so many to the intermediate and grammar, etc. Each step is built of so much reading, spelling, arithmetic; so much penmanship, grammar, geography, etc. Now, each must run evenly all round the pyramid; so the workmen assigned are so busy getting in the full amount of material in the given time, that they cannot pay much regard to the whole structure, or consider whether the material will hold well together. They do what is assigned them; and when the measure has been applied and the right elevation proved, they have performed their part, and are commended as good workmen.

Many as are the advantages of a finely-graded system of schools, there are some disadvantages. In developing a child into true manhood or womanhood, the division of labor cannot be wisely made so minute as in manufacturing a pin. However great the number of teachers, each should have the ultimate result in view, and superintendents and examiners who have authority to direct the work and pronounce upon its character, should be vigilant in detecting all sham work, and conscientious in approving only the true; else much evil as well as much good may come from our graded systems.

What is teaching? Let us illustrate. Take penmanship. Some years ago there appeared in Boston, one A. R. Dunton. He was a masterly penman, and understood the whole matter of penmanship, root and branch. He had a system of writing he wished to introduce into the schools. He called the teachers together and explained it to them; gave them a series of lessons to show them how to teach it; went into the schools and showed how to teach it to the scholars; and the consequence was a remarkable change in the condition of this branch of study in the Boston schools. Before, writing was practised in all the schools a stated length of time and a certain number of books used up. The copy was placed before the scholar, and he was told to work slowly and try to imitate that copy. Some having a natural gift in that direction succeeded pretty well, but most would write a very bad line under the copy and spend the writing hour in imitating that. In only a few schools was there a different state of things. It is evident that though there was much that was called writing practiced, there was very little teaching.

But mark the change. The teachers had found out there was an art of penmanship, its principles had been explained to them, they understood it, they were earnest and enthusiastic in regard to it. They no longer spent the writing hour adding credits or writing letters to their friends; but were at the black-board showing what was to be done, and how it was to be done, anticipating difficulties and showing how to overcome them; were going from scholar to scholar giving such individual instruction and help as was needed. This was teaching, true teaching. The result was marvellous. The teachers taught writing, and even the most unskilful scholars learned to write.

Again. Some months ago, a scholar in the second class of one of our city grammar schools was troubled and almost sick, because she had so many pages of history to learn. She had been absent on account of sickness, and was required to make up her lost lessons. The great difficulty was that she must recite all