

attention were directed to his immediate and present experiences. A teacher cannot do better sometimes than to stop all other work and call the attention of his class to sights and sounds outside of the schoolroom—the fluttering of dead leaves to the ground, the bare limbs of the trees, the moaning wind, the leaden sky, the cheerless air. Thus a larger stock of vivid experiences is gained as ground for poetic appeal.

There is no surer way of killing interest in a poem than the use of it as a spelling or defining or grammatical exercise, or worst of all, as an imposition to be written out after school-hours as a penalty for misbehaviour. Definition or analysis may be an advantage on occasion, but this is a feature that is easily overdone.

After the pupils have had their interest aroused, they are ready to be led to discover the real ends of the study of the piece: what effect or impression did the writer seek to produce, how did he go about securing it in planning his work and carrying out the details, and what is the value of this effect or impression in relation to our character and conduct?

It is in regard to this last particular that the highest work of the teacher should be done. For, after all, what do education and culture amount to if they do not lead to refinement and elevation of character? The teacher's function is generally to make clear, to reinforce and emphasize the purpose of the poet, but occasionally he needs to check or correct the impression made by his work. In dealing with "Ye Mariners of England," for instance, or "Rule Britannia," the teacher would fail in his duty who neglected to correct the jingoistic and materialistic ideas that these poems usually convey. A good antidote to the evil can be

found in *The Battle of Blenheim*, *Before Sedan*, *Recessional*, or some chapters of Stephen Crane's "*The Red Badge of Courage*." Here is a fine opportunity to do missionary work by warning pupils against confounding patriotism with militarism, by showing that war is, in general, murder by wholesale, and that the true greatness of a nation cannot be symbolized by a bull-dog and a flag, nor does it consist in vast territories, or of miles of iron-clads and hosts of armed men, nor in manufactures and trade and size and wealth of cities, but in "the kind of man the country turns out."

On the other hand, in dealing with such poems as "*The Song of the Shirt*," the teacher should use all his resources to bring home to his pupils the force of the lesson. Let him show them the unspeakable meanness of making wealth by paying only starvation wages to employes. Let him read to them "*The Cry of the Children*" and "*The Man with the Hoe*." Let him quote the Christian "*Golden Rule*," and show how its application in business would prevent such appalling evils. Let him read the awful denunciations by the Hebrew prophets of those who rob the workers of their right and grind the faces of the poor.

In this way alone will the teacher of literature do his whole duty by his pupils and employ the highest value of his subject. Hear how Walt Whitman puts the matter:

"I say that the profoundest service that poems of any other writings can do for their reader is not merely to satisfy the intellect, or supply something polished or interesting, nor even to depict great persons or passions or events, but to fill him with vigorous and clean manliness and religiousness, and give him a good heart as a radical possession and habit."